

World Cuisine



Invest Moldova Agency

Moldova: A Taste of Tradition and Flavor

A Culinary Journey Through Moldova Where Traditions Warm the Soul

For Japanese food enthusiasts accustomed to the delicate balance of flavors in their cuisine, Moldovan gastronomy offers a hearty and flavorful contrast. Rooted in Eastern European traditions and influenced by centuries of cultural interactions, Moldovan dishes are an intriguing departure from the subtle tastes of Japanese culinary art. While some elements, such as Moldovan soups and dumplings, may draw comparisons to familiar Japanese dishes like ramen and gyoza, others are uniquely Moldovan, offering a fresh perspective on how ingredients can come together to warm the heart and soul.

A Taste of Warmth

On a snowy day, Moldovans turn to **Izvar**, their take on mulled wine. Similar to Japan's amazake, a warm, sweet fermented rice drink, Izvar combines red wine, cinnamon, cloves, and black peppercorns to create a beverage that is both comforting and revitalizing. Traditionally served in a clay cup to retain its heat, Izvar is a beloved winter staple, much like the Japanese custom of enjoying hot beverages during colder months.

Equally soothing is **Zeamă**, Moldova's traditional chicken soup. While Japan has ramen, with its rich broths and variety of toppings, Zeamă holds a special place in Moldovan hearts. Featuring a clear chicken broth, sour borscht, and fresh herbs, Zeamă earned international recognition, ranking 95th on Taste Atlas' list of the world's best soups. This simple yet flavorful dish is a testament to Moldova's love for wholesome, soul-soothing meals.

Hearty Mains That Tell a Story

A quintessential Moldovan meal often includes **Sarmale**, tender rolls of cabbage or grape leaves stuffed with a savory mixture of rice, meat, and spices. Slow-cooked in a tangy tomato sauce, they're served with a dollop of sour cream, making them a highlight of any feast.

Răcituri, a unique dish often described as "meat jelly," is another Moldovan classic. Made by slow-cooking pork or chicken in a spiced broth, it's chilled until it solidifies into a gelatinous texture. Though unconventional for many, it's a cherished dish on festive tables.

No Moldovan feast is complete without **Mamaliga**, a thick, golden cornmeal porridge. Traditionally sliced with a thread, it's paired with brânză cheese, sour cream, and hearty pork stew, embodying Moldova's rustic charm.



Izvar



Zeamă



Sarmale



Mamaliga

Savory and Sweet Delights

Moldova's **Colțunași** finds its Japanese cousin in gyoza. Like gyoza, Colțunași features a soft dough filled with savory or sweet fillings. Whether stuffed with cheese and potatoes or tart cherries, Colțunași is versatile, offering something for every palate.

For dessert, **Cușma lui Guguță** is a must-try. This whimsical dish, inspired by a local fairytale character, comes in two preparation styles: the traditional method uses pastry, while the modern version features crepes. Both are filled with tart cherries and sour cream, making it a delightful finale to any meal.

Babă Neagră, Moldova's signature caramel-flavored cake, is baked for hours to achieve its distinctive porous texture and rich taste. It's a dessert that highlights the slow-cooking traditions of the country.

During holidays, **Cozonac**, a sweet, braided bread filled with walnuts, raisins, or cocoa, is a symbol of celebration. Its aroma fills Moldovan homes, creating a warm and festive atmosphere.

Chocolate and Creativity

No dessert table in Moldova is complete without **Chișinăul de Seară**, a chocolate treat that captures the essence of the nation's love for sweets. Over time, this iconic chocolate has been reimagined into a dessert incorporating its representative ingredients: cacao, dried plums, and almond butter. This modern twist on a classic favorite brings Moldova's culinary traditions into the contemporary world.

Preserving Flavors, Sharing Traditions

Moldovan winters also celebrate the art of fermentation. From crunchy pickles to sour cabbage, these tangy accompaniments balance the richness of the main dishes and showcase the ingenuity of preserving autumn's bounty.

Moldova's gastronomy is more than a collection of recipes; it's a heartfelt expression of the country's history and hospitality. Whether you're savoring its iconic dishes or exploring its innovative twists, Moldovan cuisine is an invitation to warm your soul, one delicious bite at a time.

(Photo credit: Invest Moldova Agency)



Cușma lui Guguță



Chișinăul de Seară