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## Lincoln chef, Turkmenistan native, pens cookbook of traditional recipes

NICOLE DOTZENROD, Valley Breeze Staff Writer  
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Lincoln resident Gyulshat Esenova, a professional chef, has written a cookbook sharing traditional recipes and pieces of her Turkmen culture.

LINCOLN – “Sachak: Traditional Turkmen Recipes in a Modern Kitchen” is much more than a cookbook, immersing readers in a culinary journey.

The book, written by Gyulshat Esenova, a Lincoln resident originally from Turkmenistan, started as a resource she would pass down to her children, she said. "I wanted to share my knowledge, skills and good memories about my homeland, Turkmenistan, where I am originally from," she said. "It started with the idea to pass these traditions and my love of our roots onto my children."

Her book includes 50 traditional recipes, photographs, maps, and cultural and historical information about Turkmenistan. Esenova said in general people in the United States don't know much about her country of origin or its culture.

While reading the book, she said one will experience a village in the evening, "when the heat releases its grip and gives way to a cool night." They'll be invited to "immerse themselves into the atmosphere of the traditional Turkmen rite of sacrifice, enjoy a typical hot summer day in Turkmenistan, and visit a bustling bazaar."

"It's not just a collection of traditional Turkmen recipes, it's discovering and traveling through an unknown country," she said of the book. "The dishes are simple and delicious, and are all tested and adapted to the Western kitchen so that Americans can make them at home."

Esenova said the recipes are made with ingredients that can be found at most any grocery store, so people don't need to shop at a specialty market to create the dishes.

"Like any traditional cuisine, they're made with love," she said. That's the philosophy, she said. "You cook with love and soul for your family."

She has a few favorite recipes, including a mung bean soup and steamed stuffed lamb dumplings. The book also includes some unique dishes, like fermented camel's milk, which she said is rising in popularity.

"The food is all minimally processed, using fresh and seasonal ingredients, and the recipes do not require additional kitchen equipment."

Esenova has been a citizen of R.I. for more than a decade. She graduated from Turkmen State University with a bachelor's degree in German language and literature, and from Johnson and Wales University with a degree in culinary arts/chef training.

She is currently employed as a private chef.

“It means a lot to me to be able to share my love of this food, all of my skills, and what I’ve gathered from relatives and family members,” she said. “It feels like being at home when I cook these dishes.”

The book is now available for order at [sachakcookbook.com](http://sachakcookbook.com).