

Story #611 (1966, Tape #2)

Narrator: Nilüfer Dereli, c. 60

Location: Narrator is from
Isparta of Isparta
Province; taped at Ankara

Date: Summer 1966

611
1,000 (Hamsi) Dishes

One day a Laz was praising the cuisine of his native area in Turkey: "The dishes of my region are so numerous and so delicious, that I just cannot describe them all adequately for you."

"Well, what kinds of dishes are they?" asked the bystander.

"Oh, the hamsi fish alone is equal to all the other dishes in the entire world."

"Well, what can you do with a hamsi?" his listener inquired.

"You can fry it, and that is about all."

"Oh, no! First of all you can make a hamsi confection--a sweet dish."

"That's enough! I don't want to hear the rest. If you can make a sweet dish out of the hamsi, then I am sure that you can produce not forty but a thousand dishes from it!"

¹The hamsi is a small herring-like fish (6 to 9 inches in length) that lives in the Black Sea. During spawning season they swim on the surface and are easily netted in great quantities. The Laz people are especially fond of the hamsi, and they preserve them so that they are part of their diet during much of the Year. The hamsi is so much a part of their culture that one finds it frequently in their own stories as well as in the ethnic jokes and anecdotes told about Lazes.