



WHEN IN SKOPJE: ULTIMATE FOODIE GUIDE

“Eat well, travel often” is a life philosophy for many traveling souls.

Familiarizing yourself with the taste of a nation’s cuisine is undoubtedly one of the best ways to experience a destination and engage with its local population. So, if you’ve traveled all the way to Skopje it would be a shame for you not to try some of the dishes that define Macedonia’s culinary identity.

The food in Skopje, and Macedonia as a whole, would captivate any visitor with its mixture of fresh ingredients (**we are famous for having the best tomatoes and peppers** in Europe, probably in the world) and carefully prepared homemade recipes. So, for all of you passionate eaters that understand the importance of indulging in local food when traveling, below is our selection of food destinations (in no particular order) you have to try when in Skopje.



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Kalabalak Park

Ever heard of the Balkan term “kafana”? Kafana is a distinct type of local bistro which serves alcoholic beverages, coffee, light snacks (called “meze”) and other food (primarily grilled meats called “skara”). **There are over 900 kafanas in Skopje** – needless to say, you have to go to one. Our choice for a must-visit place that would best depict the concept of “kafana” and the notion of social gathering over rakija and skara is Kalabalak Park.

This kafana is located near the city park and very affordably priced. You can choose from a variety of meat dishes and traditional alcoholic beverages. Make sure to **ask for the “shopska” salad and yellow rakija.**

Lyra

Lyra has a warm rustic interior and a beautiful summer garden – arguably the **best restaurant terrace in Skopje.** They offer a wide range of traditional

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Macedonian food and have set a high standard for quality dining for over 20 years. All the products they serve are always fresh and the dishes have the warmth of home-made food. There is also a good selection of local wines that you can pair with your meal.

Locally, **Lyra is known as a place for celebrating special occasions** with close family and friends.

A tourist favorite is their **live band that comes on in the evenings and plays traditional balkan music.**

If you make it to Lyra, we recommend you try the delicious pork chops, the “shefovaska” salad and the “tufahija” (walnut-stuffed apples) for dessert.



Lyra's summer garden

Destan

Another top spot with traditional culinary delights is Destan. A restaurant that's been around for several decades and has built a reputation for quality service, original recipes and a **simple menu that is comprised of a few select dishes.**

Destan is located in the heart of the Old Bazaar (“Stara Skopska Carsija”) which means that it’s a walking distance away from most places in the city center. If you go, **try the “kebapi”** which is their signature barbecue dish. Make a combo of “desetka” (serving of 10 kebapi) and Skopsko beer.

Be warned, Destan is a bit of a tourist-trap, but don’t let that hold you back from visiting. Locals would attest that **Skopje would not be the same without the kebapi from Destan.**



Kebapi at Destan

Turist

Turist is very similar to Destan, so we recommend you pick only one of the two.

Located in the very heart of the Old Bazaar, Turist is one of the oldest and most famous kebab places in the city. Turist has a very charismatic summer

terrace, always filled with people and the sound of water dripping from the small fountain on the square.

Mekicite od Straza

Many tourists have tried to pronounce it correctly, yet only a few have successfully completed the challenge. Hint? Well, that would be quite difficult, unless you can read Cyrillic letters.

The origin of the name “Mekicite” is the plural form of “mekica” which is a round shaped, **deep-fried dough usually served with a piece of white cheese** (yes, it really is as tasty as it sounds... and yes, it's also as greasy as it sounds); whereas “Straza” is a place in Western Macedonia where the first store of its kind was opened.

This restaurant has been serving “mekici” from its **original recipe since 1942** and has become quite a recognizable brand in Macedonia. Their store in Skopje is located in what is likely the busiest part of town, “Ulica Makedonija” (Street Macedonia). Here, you can order your meal, people-watch the busy street and enjoy the sounds of jazz and blues usually played at the joint.



Macedonian folk decor at Vodenica Mulino

Vodenica Mulino

Even though it is located in the midst of the city crowd, Vodenica Mulino is a perfect getaway for a relaxed dining experience. This restaurant, with its carefully designed menu and a refined selection of wines, is considered to be **one of the best high-end gourmet destinations in Skopje.**

Silbo Bakery

Open 24/7. If you familiarize yourself with the Macedonian culture of going out and socializing, then you need to learn about the perfect way to end a night out. People from all around the city, but especially those that spent the evening in some of the popular bars and cafes in the Debar Maalo neighbourhood, all end up at the Silbo bakery for a **late night snack**.

Beyond amazing drunk food, Silbo is actually a really good bakery with a **huge variety of both sweet and salty, always fresh baked goods**. We've never tried something from Silbo that we didn't like, but if we had to recommend you one item to try, we'd have to go with the "Debar Maalo pita".

If Silbo is the first Macedonian bakery you've ever been to, then you will have to try the famous traditional Macedonian "Burek".



Macedonian burek

Fast Food 7

No true foodie guide would be completed without a fast-food or street-food joint. So, last, but certainly not least is the locally legendary, and often described as “**best place for fast-food in Skopje**”, Fast Food 7 (pronounced “fast food sed-mi-ca”).

With a tradition of more than 25 years, Fast Food 7 (or “sedmica” for short) is one of the most frequently visited eateries by locals. **We’ve never seen the place without a line**, so regardless of what day and time you show up, be prepared to wait 20-30 minutes to get your hamburger. If you are a fast-food lover, trust us – it’s worth the wait. If you are on a diet, pick another restaurant – this is not the place for you.

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