



**TASTY FOOD:** In their book, Ansel Mullins (L) and Yigal Schleifer feature small, family-run establishments and street-food stands that do not have the marketing budget or logo-adorned dishware of chain restaurants, but serve extremely tasty food.

# Hidden tastes of Istanbul in a book

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The treasure map avid eaters have been waiting for is here: 88 reviews of the best undiscovered Istanbul eateries by the popular food blog Istanbul Eats have been published in a new book.

Written by blog creators Ansel Mullins and Yigal Schleifer and published by Boyut Yayınları, "Istanbul Eats: Exploring the Culinary Backstreets of Istanbul" features small, family-run establishments and street-food stands that do not have the marketing budget or logo-ed dishware of chain restaurants, but serve extremely tasty food.

"We chose restaurants where the owners wake up early and cook until the place closes," Mullins said, describing the kinds of establishments he and Schleifer focused on in their book. "These places had not even thought of advertising before; they did not have the budget for that."

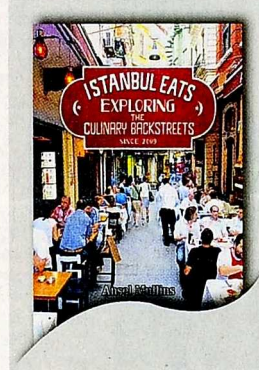
## 'Culinary backstreets'

Mullins and Schleifer, whose eight years of combined eating experience in Turkey helped them map out what they believe are the "culinary backstreets of Istanbul," say the food tips they had been sending each other as two food lovers living in Istanbul snowballed first into the blog they have been running for a year and a half, and now into the new book.

The authors say they like to think of the book as more than just a restaurant guide because of the unique qualities of the places they have featured. According to Mullins, "it is a celebration of Turkish culture that is right in line with the bigger cultural trend that is about going back to the roots."

The making of the book has been an interesting process for the authors,

**Expats Ansel Mullins and Yigal Schleifer, who run the food blog Istanbul Eats, have published a book compiling 88 of the city's best undiscovered eateries. The book features small, family-run establishments and street-food stands that would otherwise be known only by locals**



**BOOK:** 88 reviews of the best undiscovered eateries in Istanbul are compiled in the new book 'Istanbul Eats.'

who said some restaurant owners got a little suspicious when they first approached them to say they would be featuring their establishments in the book. "They thought we were asking for money," Mullins said. "When we explained to them what we were trying to do and told them we loved what they were doing, they were extremely flattered."

When asked whether some establishments, such as food carts, were harder to track down, Mullins said: "Sure. But some of them stay relatively stable, like the cucumber man by the Galata Tower." That cucumber man was one of the many vendors present and doing a booming business at the book release party Tuesday.

The blog and book have brought a change to the clientele of some of the places listed, especially "esnaf

lokantasi," small restaurants that usually serve food almost exclusively to the employees of workplaces in their immediate area. Mullins said one such a place in Istanbul's Karaköy neighborhood, where the bazaar is set up on Thursdays, told the Istanbul Eats duo with great surprise that people from all over the world were now coming to his esnaf lokantasi.

That's one of the goals of the blog and the book, Mullins said, adding, "Perhaps now, the people going out for a swanky sushi dinner will also know of the place in Karaköy."

## Cucumber vendor to beans-and-rice restaurants

The book devotes a descriptive and informative page to each establishment, noting the type of food and drinks it serves, the location and the price range. Featured eateries range from the cucumber vendor in the Galata neighborhood to a beans-and-rice restaurant in the Old City. The authors have tried to include places from all around the city that has become their home.

"Sometimes you just get lucky," Mullins said, referring to their discovery of the cucumber man, and perhaps most of the other establishments as well, places that can be easy to overlook but should not be missed.

Now that Mullins and Schleifer have done the legwork for them, Istanbul's food lovers can find great eateries in alleys, on street corners and hidden inside old shopping arcades for an investment of just 11.90 Turkish Liras.