

- **What was the History of Chinese Food? How did it evolve to what we have today?**

<http://www.chinesefoodhistory.com/#:~:text=History%20of%20Chinese%20cuisine%20starts.and%20cooking%20also%20reflected%20that>. - History of Chinese Food

<https://www.topchinatravel.com/china-guide/history-of-chinese-cuisine.htm> - History of Chinese Cuisine

5000 years ago - records of China have already grilled fish and other foods. Zhou Dynasty - Mostly grains (Beans, Millets, Barley, Brown Rice) - not the same as what we have today in the modern agriculture industry. During the late Zhou Dynasty, people started to have white rice (considered a very rare and highly costly food for the rich class).

Ba Zhen Tang(Eight Treasures) - very influential for future generations. Medicinal soup which helps one regain strength and stamina - combats “Blood and Qi deficiency”, helps with pale complexion, shortness of breath, irregular/ painful menstruation. Ingredients:

- Chinese Angelica Root - Gui Shen/ 归身
- White Atrocytlodes rhizomes - Bai Zhu/ 白朮
- Rehmannia - Shu Di Huang/ 熟地黄
- Eucommia bark - Du Zhong/ 杜仲
- Codonopsis root - Dang Shen/ 党参
- White peony root - Bai Shao/ 白芍
- Poria - Fu Shen/ 茯神
- Sichuan Lovage - Chuan Xiong/ 川芎
- Honey Fried Licorice Root - Zhi Gan Cao/ 炙甘草

These ingredients are put into a pot along with water, boil for 1 hour.

Qin Dynasty - Sour flavour = welcome. Plums - remove fishy odd from meat. Cinnamon, green onion, soybean sauce, vinegar had also been in use in kitchen,

Han Dynasty - Salty Flavour - more favoured. Time when Chinese Cooking took a big step forward. Opening of Silk Road - merchants and economical exchange brought many imported eating/ cooking materials for people at that time (Like Pepper, Pomegranates, Grapes, Walnuts, Sesame, Watermelon, Cucumber, Spinach, Carrots, Fennel, Celery, Lettuce, Onion, Garlic). Firm stone of developments in later Tang and Song Dynasty.

Han, Wei, South and North Dynasty cuisine developed quickly, and more famous cuisines appeared. “Qi Ming Yao Shu” - written by Jia Sixie - 200 kinds of cuisines recorded.

Introduction/ Influence to Buddhism - vegetarian dishes gradually had an impact on people's lives.

Tang Dynasty - Developed to a quality level, people often had banquets/ parties to enjoy their lives.

Song Dynasty - Climax of development of Chinese Culture. Hot/ Cold dishes with soups and colour dishes.

Yuan, Ming, Qing Dynasty - Thousands more cuisines developed. Qing - emperor ruled under the Manchu people. Manchu styles & flavours added to Chinese cuisine. Ming Dynasty - Chilli pepper plants imported to China as fancy flowers. Discovery of great value in the cooking process. Foreigners came to China to introduce elements of western cuisines.

After Establishment of the People's Republic of China (especially 1979) - Traditional cuisines of various regions and ethnic groups came back and appeared in the lists of restaurants.

Now - Famous for colour, aroma, flavour, and well design.

One of the oldest in the entire world, first reaching through the last 4 millenia. One of the first asian civilisations that achieved stability and regular growth. China quickly acquired very specific taste in food that enabled its cuisine to grow and change with incredible pace.

Oldest finding of the oldest noodle food - found in the upper reaches of the Chinese Yellow River (Huang He). Han Dynasty (200 BC - 220 AD) - manufacture of various grain food became very organised and cooking reflected that.

Tradition of tea drinking - earlier southern and northern dynasties (During 5th century AD). Tang dynasty - team = popular in elite societies, signifying wealth and balance of health.

Song Dynasty - Trade and manufacturing jobs enabled the Chinese population to access better quality of life and food. Chinese cuisine blossomed. Mixing cooking, medicine, religion - strict rules for maintaining "balanced" meals. Expands ways in which food can be prepared, processed and served.

Southern China - Famous for Rice. Food from North China - Focused on Flour Products.

- Are there different foods in different areas of China? (i.e. Cantonese)

<https://www.chinahighlights.com/travelguide/chinese-food/yue-cuisine.htm> - Cantonese Cuisine

Cantonese Cuisine (also known as Yue cuisine) origins - Guangdong Province (South East China). Most widely served style of Chinese Cuisine in the world - Most Chinese immigrated and set up restaurants overseas were from Guangdong.

Distinguishments - Lightly cooked fresh vegetables and meat, and sweet sauces.

Locations - Southeast China - Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Honk Kong, Macau, ...

Distinctives - Sweeter, favouring braising and stewing, adding various sauces

8 culinary chinese cuisines :

- Anhui: Cooking style of people from Huangshan Mountains region in China. Similar to Jiangsu cuisine, but less emphasis on seafood and more on a wide variety of locally grown herbs and vegetables from land and sea.
- Cantonese - Incorporates almost all edible meats (includes chicken feet, duck's tongue, snakes, and snails). But due to availability, lamb and goat are rarely eaten. Cooking techniques (like Wok Hei (stir frying) and steaming). Spices used moderately. Dishes includes Dim Sum, Barbecue char siu, Broths flavoured with meat stocks
- Fujian - Influence of coastal position and mountainous terrain. Known for emphasis on umami (savory) taste - dishes are light but flavourful
- Hunan - Similar to Szechuan cuisine, known for hot and spicy cuisine. Garlic, chilli peppers, shallots used liberally. Difference - purely hot as opposed to searing, numbing heat of Szechuan cooking
- Jiangsu - Different styles of Chinese cooking (Huaiyang, Yangzhou, Nanjing, Suzhou, Zhenjiang). Cuisine known as soft, but not to the point of falling apart (i.e. Meat tastes tender, but it won't fall off the bone)
- Shandong - Northern Coastal Province of China. 2 Predominant styles: Jiaodong (light seafood dishes), Jinan (use of soup in the dishes). Less available in the west but considered one of the most influential styles of cooking in Chinese culinary history.
- Szechuan - Bold Flavours: Chilli, Garlic, Szechuan Pepper used liberally throughout the dishes. Szechuan pepper - intensely fragrant, citrusy, causes numbing sensation in the mouth. Contain food that are preserved through pickling, salting, drying
- Zhejiang - Fresh and Light rather than greasy. Four Cooking styles: Hangzhou (rich foods and bamboo shoots), Shaoxing (poultry and fish), Ningbo (seafood), Shanghai (Xiao long bao)

<https://hakkasan.com/stories/eight-culinary-traditions-china/#:~:text=These%20eight%20culinary%20cuisines%20are.%2C%20Shandong%2C%20Szechuan%20and%20Zhejiang>. - 8 culinary cuisines of China.

<https://www.usmaniachinese.com/2019/12/12/all-you-need-to-know-about-chinese-food-culture-and-culinary-magic/> - All you need to know about chinese cuisine

Southern China - Rice farming is common, so rice is the staple

Northern China - Wheat farming is more prevalent - staple food consists of grains, cereals, and sweet potatoes.

Vegetables and fruits are also an important part of Chinese culture.

- Why are some ingredients a staple in Chinese Culture? (For instance, Rice)

<https://connect2local.com/l/131619/c/177737/why-is-rice-a-staple-in-chinese-cuisine/> - Why is Rice a Staple in Chinese Cuisine

<https://www.les-croupiers.co.uk/why-are-rice-and-noodles-staple-foods-in-chinese-cuisine/> - why are Rice and Noodles Staple Foods in Chinese Cuisine

<https://labs.plb.ucdavis.edu/rost/rice/introduction/intro.html> - Rice, Introduction

Staple Food - What we rely on, providing necessary 'energy' for people's life activity. Some include: Rice, Steamed Bread, Noodles, Dumplings - Contains rich nutrition, such as starch, protein, and vitamins.

Some misunderstandings - staple food contains high calorie, leads to fatness. No nutritional value, while eating meat can supplement iron, vegetables for dietary fibre, fruits for Vitamin C. - Most, if not all, of staple food can provide for these things. Eat staple food for health and Fitness.

Rice - traces back 10,000 years ago to East Asia, the origins. Domestication and Cultivation of Rice spread across the entire Asian Continent, then introduced to the rest of the world. Rice has been farmed in China for 1000s of generations - terraced mountain slopes have been flooded to enable the crop to thrive (common sight across the continent). Particularly in Southern China - Climate is particularly suited to growing rice, which is why it is grown in preference to wheat or oats.

Chinese Mythology - After the disastrous flood, all plants have been destroyed and no food was available. Rice was given as a gift from the animals after a large flood, giving the Chinese People a source of plentiful food. - Dog ran through the fields to the people with rice seeds hanging from his tail. The people planted the seeds, rice grew and hunger disappeared. Thus, some people may recognise the food as "a gift from the animals".

Rice thrived in China's rural environment - became the primary food staple of the region.

Enormously versatile and can be used to make sweet, savoury dishes. Fried Rice is common. In Chinese Cookery, rice or wheat flour may be mixed into paste then cut into long strands to make tasty noodles.

- How did the use of Chopsticks come into play?

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/the-history-of-chopsticks-64935342/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20California%20Academy,retrieve%20food%20from%20cooking%20pots>. - The History of Chopsticks

<https://www.history.com/news/a-brief-history-of-chopsticks> - A brief history of Chopsticks

Chopsticks developed 5,000 years ago in China. Earliest versions (maybe) - twigs used to retrieve food from cooking pots.

Chinese have been wielding chopsticks since at least 1200 BC. By 500 AD, slender batons had swept the Asian continent from Vietnam to Japan.

Fabled ruins of Yin (Henan Province) - Not only the earliest examples of Chinese writing but also the first known chopsticks - bronze sets found in tombs at the site. Early chopsticks were mainly used for cooking. 400 AD - people started using the utensil - population boom across China sapped all resources and forced cooks to develop cost-saving habits.

400BC - Chefs figured how to conserve food - chopping up food into small pieces, cooks quicker. Made it so that it is unnecessary to have knives at the dinner table.

During Chinese Dynastic Times - Silver chopsticks were sometimes used - belief they would turn black if they came in contact with poisoned food - unfortunate misunderstandings. Can change colour if it comes into contact with garlic, onions, or rotten eggs - release hydrogen sulphide.

Different cultures have different chopsticks styles. Chinese chopsticks have a blunt pointed end, being longer than their other counterparts.

CHOPSTICKS

Different Chopsticks. Different Cultures.



- What cooking utensils do this culture usually use?

Wok and Wok Lid - One of the most important cooking tools, since it has cooked so many foods that we know of today. Has a wide and shallow dome pot that gets hot. Wok Lid to be used for steaming/ boiling purposes. Round Dome on the bottom so that the wok can sit on top of the stove tops, and the food can cook evenly around it.

Because of the shape and size, there are many things to do with it:

- Stir Frying
- Steaming
- Pan Frying
- Deep Frying
- Boiling
- Braising
- Searing
- Smoking
- Stewing

Metal Spatula / Hoak (Metal Ladle) - Mostly used along with the wok. Usually Sturdy - also serves different uses just like the wok.

Rice Cooker - Cooking rice, of course. But can also serve other purposes, such as steaming up food/ making soup (like congee) etc.

Steam Rack - Goes to the bottom of the steam rack of a deep pot/ wok to hold up a dish on a plate.

Chinese Cleavers/ Chopping Knives and Boards

Metal/ Bamboo Steamers -

- Are there Table Manners? If so, what are they?

<https://www.usmaniachinese.com/2019/12/12/all-you-need-to-know-about-chinese-food-culture-and-culinary-magic/>

Chinese people like to eat together. Eldest/ Chief Guest - usually sits facing towards the entrance. They initiate eating and the rest would follow.

Separate individual bowls for each person, containing rice. Other dishes are served on plates in the centre of the table so that people can pick the food they want and take some of it. Each person also has a spoon; they are usually for soup.

Playing/ Pointing at another person with chopsticks is considered disrespectful.

Being Graceful and modest while eating - not making too much noise/ mess

Pick up your own bowl to eat rice

Thanking the host at the end of the meal.

<https://www.chinahighlights.com/travelguide/chinese-food/dining-etiquette.htm#:~:text=You%20should%20pick%20up%20your.regarded%20as%20bad%20table%20manners>. - How to eat in China - Chinese Table Manners

Let older people eat first/ if you hear an elder say “let’s eat”, then you can start eating. (“大家吃饭了”)

How you should pick up your bowl - Thumb on the mouth of the bowl, first finger, middle finger, third finger supporting the bottom of the bowl and palm empty. Regarded as bad table manners if you bend over the table, don’t pick up your bowl, and eat facing towards your bowl. It also has the consequence of compressing the stomach and restricting digestion.

Helping yourself with dishes - You should take food first from the plates in front of you rather than those in the middle of the table/ in front of others.

Bad Manners: use your chopsticks to burrow through the food and “dig for treasure” and keep your eyes glued to the plates.

When finding your favourite dish - don’t gobble it up quickly. Consider others at the table - if there’s not much on the plate and you want to finish it, ask others first.

Bad Habit if you are watching TV, using your phone, doing something else while having a meal is considered a bad habit.

Some Table Manners are similar to Western Culture as well (such as not talking with your mouth full, cough/ sneeze into a handkerchief/ hand or turn away)

<https://yoyochinese.com/blog/learn-mandarin-chinese-dining-etiquette-chopstick-manners-paying-the-bill-toast-phrases-seating-arrangement#:~:text=Seating%20Arrangements&text=The%20guest%20of%20honor%20sits.guests%20sit%20nearest%20the%20door>. - Chinese Dining Etiquette Survival Guide

Sitting Position - Eldest sits opposite to the entrance since being far away from it is a sign of honour.

Flipping Fish over - Bad Luck. It is like capsizing a boat over, which in a sense means you’re capsizing your fortune. Some even reject eating it once it gets flipped over.

Solution - Once you eat the upper half of the fish, wriggle the bone out to get the other side of the fish

- Are there superstitions/ beliefs in Chinese Food?

Belief that if you get given an uneven pair of chopsticks, you will miss your boat (ferry) or plane. Old Korean superstition - the closer to the tip one holds a pair of chopsticks, the longer one will stay unmarried. Some may be offensive, such as sticking a pair of chopsticks into a bowl of rice (resembling the incense sticks at funerals). Allowing tears of soup to drip from your chopsticks.

<https://culinary.com/the-weird-world-of-chinese-food-superstitions-3746/> - The wired world of Chinese Superstitions

Longevity Noodles (Changshou Mian) - 2 ft long - to represent the long life you hope to have. The longer the noodle, the luckier you would be. If you accidentally break/ cut a noodle whilst cooking, your life will be cut short. Typically eaten on birthdays and during Chinese New Years.

Older generation of Chinese people - eating rare and obscure parts may offer health benefits. I.e. Eat a tiger's phallus (penis) to cure erectile dysfunction. To make yourself smarter, eat a monkey's brain.

<https://time.com/4578166/traditional-chinese-medicine-tcm-conservation-animals-tiger-pangolin/> - Traditional Chinese Medical Authorities are unable to stop the Booming Trade in Rare Animal Parts

'Business is good at the **Guo Lizhuang penis restaurant**, which has 19 outlets across China. At Zhang's branch, in Beijing's well-heeled Sanlitun neighborhood, tables are booked weeks in advance, and the overwhelmingly male patrons of late middle age typically part with several hundred dollars for dishes that they believe will restore masculine or "yang" energy and, in turn, libido and sexual virility. A bull's penis comes cheapest at 200 renminbi (\$30); the most coveted is a fur seal's penis at 2,800 renminbi (\$400). "Fur-seal penis is the most expensive as it has lots of elements that are good for the body," says Zhang, "but it's also quite mild so you don't get the inner fire."

- "In terms of nourishing the yang, tiger penis is definitely the top. If you handle tiger penis properly, and mix together with Chinese Herbs, it really has the best possible effect - much better than Viagra." "Lots of people come here asking for tiger penis, but it's illegal, so we don't sell it." - says Zhang.

<https://ethnomed.org/resource/chinese-food-cultural-profile/#:~:text=Food%20is%20an%20important%20part.essential%20for%20all%20Chinese%20cooking.> - Chinese Food Cultural Profile

Yi Xing Bu Xing - using any shape/ part of the animal the same part of the human body can be replenished and strengthened. Shark Fin soup and Bird Nest Soup served to replenish strength and increase appetite. Crocodile meat strengthens the bronchial, dehydrated tiger testicles increase stamina for men.

Yin Yang Foods -

Northern China has cold, damp weather - people there eat hot/ spicy food - belief in increasing blood circulation and helping get rid of the coldness and dampness. South - mild, cooling foods because of the warmer climate - reduces hot and dryness. Theory - balancing "Yin and Yang"

Positive and Negative Energy in the Universe. Yin = negative, Yang = Positive. Need to be equally balanced to create a harmonious, healthy state - otherwise, chaos and disease. Some elements belong to yin or yang. Has been part of Chinese Culture for thousands of years.

Food belonging to Yin (Cold Food):

- Bitter melon, winter melon, Chinese green, mustard green, water chestnut, Napa cabbage, bean sprout, soybean, mung bean, tulip, water chestnut, cilantro, oranges, watermelon, bananas, coconut, cucumber, beer, pop, ice cream, ice chips, grass jelly, clams, and oysters.
- Too Much = stomach aches, diarrhoea, dizziness, weakness, coldness in body

Food Belonging to Yang (Hot Food):

- Chili pepper, garlic, onion, curry, cabbage, eggplant, tomato, pineapple, mango, cherry, peanuts, beef, turkey, shrimp, crab, French fries, fried chicken, and pizza.
- Excessive intake of these foods are thought to cause skin rashes, hives, pimples, nose bleeds, gas, indigestion, constipation, redness in the eyes, and sore throat.

Illness = Unbalance that can be influenced by dietary intake. Questions like, "Is there anything that I should not eat?" - Differs from western culture - limits food for certain illnesses, such as Sugar Intake for Diabetes, Salt and Fat Consumption for Hypertension/ Heart Problems.

How do you make (Stewed Pork with Red Bean Curd)

From Youtube Vid

Ingredients:

- Red Bean Curd (2 tbsp)
- Chinese Cheese (2 pieces)
- 700g Pork Belly
- Shaohsing Wine
- Garlic
- Ginger
- Spring Onions
- Black Fungus
- Leek
- Light Soy Sauce
- Oyster Sauce
- Rock Sugar
- Cornflour

- 1) Wash the pork belly, keep the skin on the pork to make the dish more delicious
- 2) Cut them into 1 inch pieces
- 3) Soak the pork belly into boiling water for 10 mins
- 4) Pour out excess water
- 5) Heat up wok, stir fry the pork belly pieces (no need for oil) until meat turns brown.
- 6) Make the sauce - 2 tbsp Red Bean Curd, 2 pieces of Chinese Cheese (However, this can change based on person's taste) and 1 tbsp Shaohsing Wine. Beat until the cheese is completely beaten up.
- 7) Slice up some Garlic, Ginger, Spring Onions, Black Fungus, and Leek.
- 8) Add the pork belly into a pot. Add the sauce with it. Stir.
- 9) Add the ginger and garlic into the pot, 3 tbsp Shouhsing Wine.
- 10) Add hot water, and 2 pieces of rock sugar. This will infuse the flavour into the pork
- 11) Add 1 ½ tbsp Light Soy Sauce. 1 Tbsp of Oyster Sauce - should be enough flavour now.
- 12) Set to low heat and simmer for approx. 35 mins. (Depends on how much water there is in the pot) Cover lid.
- 13) Add the fungus and cook for another 10 mins (For the fungus to have flavour)
- 14) Add the leek and cook for another 5 mins (until the leek gets cooked)
- 15) Remove from the pot to the Wok, stir fry at high temp. Once boiled, add Cornflour to thicken.

