

IUFOST2006/1397 Oriental food and health

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This paper introduces the characteristic features, nutritional values, and health benefits of oriental food with emphases on its origination, evolution, and progression. Oriental food is the products of specific geographical, national and historical circumstances. Both wheat and rice are dominant gradients in oriental food; animal products are next; soybeans and varied coarse grain products are supplementary. Majority of oriental food are well cooked just prior each serve, which ensures complete sterilization, easy ingestion, and ultimate digestion. Consequently chopsticks are commonly used as "silverware" in Oriental countries instead of knives and forks as do in the rest of the world. Processing and cooking skills are constantly articulated and stressed in oriental food preparation. The kitchens in royal palaces historically served as important laboratories for innovation and creation of high-class delicacies whereas most vegetarian and coarse-grain-based products were articulated and popularized at common people's homes. Fresh sticky, steamed stuffed-buns, and Spring (a glutinous rice dumpling) are not only examples of properly rationed food consisting of meat, vegetables, and grains but also well-cooked fast food in Oriental food. Fermentation had been skillfully and commonly implemented in traditional oriental food preparation. Fermentation is employed to preserve freshness, improve flavor, and enrich low molecular weight proteins as well as other nutrients. Liquors, ratafia, rice wine, vinegar, fermented soybean, fermented bean curd, Kimchi, ham, Natto, and steamed bread are food more or less fermented during preparation. The magic of oriental food is maintained by pursuit of perfection in its colorful appearance, appetizingly aroma, delicious taste, and articulated shapes. The final products are held fresh and healthy. "Nutraceutical Therapy" and "Medicated Diet" are extraordinary products exclusively offered in oriental food. Oriental food has been welcome worldwide for centuries and goes on blooming. Modern technologies are sought in optimizing and improving traditional processing and cooking techniques to preserve oriental food's unique place in this ever changing world.