

Asian Cuisine



The Countries of Asia we will be focusing on

- China- The cradle of Civilization
- Japan
- Thailand
- India
- Philippines
- Other Nations : Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka etc

Asian Cuisine, like any cuisine has been determined by



- Environmental Factors: Water, weather, growing conditions, Geography
- Cultural Parameters
- Religion
- Historical Factors : Trade, Conquerors, Migration

The Oldest Civilization



- In the West : Egypt (temples and pyramids) 3,000 B.C, followed by the the Persians (2000 BC) and Hittites (Turkey, Babylon and Syria)2000-1200 BC
- In the East: Chinese culture has been flourishing since 1800BC (Shang Dynasty), The flourishing of this culture continues unto the Chou, Ch'in, Han, , Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties of China

Five Basic Condiments in Asian cuisine

These ingredients can be used as both condiments on the table while eating or as condiments in the kitchen while cooking

- 1) Extracts
- 2) Pastes
- 3) Marinades
- 4) Dipping Sauce
- 5) Garnishes

1) Extracts



- Highly concentrated liquids taken from a single flavor bearing ingredient

Examples : ginger extract for Chinese and Japanese food,

tamarind extract in South East Asian cuisine, Annato water for coloring,

coconut milk extracted from dessicated coconuts

Pastes



- Concentrates like extracts but instead of being liquid, they are thick, silky or coarse, and often times contain another ingredient, many times these pastes can be used as a marinade and added to sauces also

ex. Chinese Lotus Paste

Black Bean paste – black bean, water, sugar

Red Bean Paste – red bean, water, sugar

Miso- fermented soy bean paste

Lemongrass and Garlic pastes

Curry pastes, Shrimp Pastes

Marinades



- Flavoured liquids to soak meat, fish and poultry
- Many Asian marinades give all five flavors –sweet, salty, bitter, sour and spicy (sugar, soysauce, lemon, chilis, pepper)
- Marinades can also serve as basting liquids
- Marinating times are varied per item

Dipping sauces



- A Big part of the Asian meal
- Allows the diner to be part of the finished flavors of a meal
- Example : soy and wasabi, vinegar , hoisin sauce with pancakes and peking duck,
- Many dishes in Asian Cuisine are lightly flavored because the dipping sauce usually completes the taste

Garnishes

- Leaves , Flowers and herbs added to visually enhance the meal and lift it to its final flavor note and texture
- Unlike in Western cuisine where the garnish is simply for decoration, the garnish in Asian cuisine many times is necessary for its final flavor
- Ex. Fried shallots and garlic that top a dish
- Julienne of ginger
- Grated citrus zest and herbs added to soup
- Julienned Nori on rice



Common Asian Ingredients and Products



Edible fruit resembling a long brown bean. It is cultivated for its sour, yet slightly sweet pulp. Usually used for savory dishes but is candied in the Philippines and Thailand.

Tamarind has a distinct flavor with no real substitute although people use lemons or limes

It can be bought also in pulp, packed tightly in blocks and in concentrate

Common Asian Ingredients and Products

- Annato Seeds- reddish brown seeds that is used for coloring foods. The seeds are soaked in water and the water squeezed out. It is harvested from the seed of the achiotte plant. Common in the Carribean and South Ameriuca and grown in the Phils by the Spanish.



Fermented Fish Paste



- Philippines – Bagoong (Balayan-anchovy, alamang– shrimp)
- Trassi – Indonesia
- Blanchan – Malaysia
- Kapi- Thailand
- Mam Tom – Vietnam
- Usually eaten with rice and to accompany the food

Fermented Fish Sauce



- Used by South east asians as a cooking ingredient and sometimes as a dipping sauce on the table
- Vietnam- Nuoc man
- Philippines – patis
- Thailand and Myan mar- Nam pla
- Cambodia- Teuk trei

Soy sauce

- Developed in China over 2,500 years ago.
- Soy bean (a common food source) was naturally fermented and then later separated into the solid and liquid
- While studying in China, a Japanese Zen priest noticed the product and brought it home and started to perfect it
- Original soy sauce was made from fermented soy, but now contains wheat and soy, and sometimes these days , contains no soy at all



Soy sauce



- Chinese soy sauce:

- a) light –mainly used for seasoning; saltier and does not affect the color of the finished dish

- b) dark- aged longer; molasses added, and adds flavor and color to a dish

- c) thick soy sauce- with sugar and cornstarch; mostly for dipping

- Japanese Soy sauce: Shoyu

Slightly sweeter taste than Chinese soy ; 5 varieties available

Soy sauce

- Indonesian Soy sauce – Kecap (which means all fermented sauce)
- Malaysian soy sauce – douyou
- Korean soy sauce – a byproduct of doenjang (fermented soy bean paste)
- Vietnamese Soy sauce – Tuong
- Philippine Soy Sauce – Toyo; combination of soy bean , wheat, sugar and molasses and is more mild that its Asian counterparts



Bean Sprouts



Stalks of Fresh Soy or Mung Beans that sprout fresh white stalks full of protein. They are pinched off just before use .

They are Blanched, eaten in salads or soups or stir fried with other vegetables

Oyster Sauce

Thick Brown Sauce made of Dried oyster extract

Sugar, water, salt and cornstarch. It is added

Sparingly to stir fries or braised dishes as its flavor is quite strong.

Lee Kum Kee



COCONUT



The single most used fruit in
Sweet and savoury southeast
asian cuisine

Used for coconut milk in
curries and braises and for
making coconut oil

Ginger



Rhizome which in its earlier stages is much juicier and spicier. It evolved in Asian cuisine to cut the “fishy taste” and a flavoring ingredient .

Japanese like to pickle it, and extracts are used for ginger milk, Salad dressings, dipping sauces And marinades

Oils



- Coconut Oil
- Palm Oil- used like regular vegetable oil
- Peanut Oil – oil has a deep flavor and can sometimes taste and feel a bit heavy
- Sesame Oil- Extracted from Sesame seeds and at times roasted for a more pronounced flavor. It should be used sparingly because it has a strong flavor
- Chili Oil – infuse oil with whole red chilis and flakes over low heat for a few minutes

Vinegars



- Chinese Black Vinegar- strong vinegar of fermented glutinous rice, Asian Balsamic but more acidic
- White Rice Vinegar- clean tasting white vinegar. Often times in Asia, vinegar is paired with sugar to counteract acidity
- Coconut Vinegar- Made from coconut wine sap and coconut water exposed to air for some time and soured, it generally has lower acidity content than most vinegars
- Japanese white rice vinegar- for salad dressings and making sushi rice

Chinese Five Spice Powder



- A blend of fennel seeds, star anise , licorice, cloves, szechuan peppercorns, and cinnamon.
- It is quite pungent so just a little is used
- There are really more than 5 spices but the name comes from the fact that the flavors correspond with the five chinese flavors- salty, bitter, sour , spicy, and sweet, -- which correspond to the 5 natural elements
(water, fire, wood, metal and earth)

Star Anise

- Tastes a bit like licorice and is used in both sweet and savory dishes



Szechwan Pepper



- Not really a peppercorn; comes from the reddish brown berry of the prickly ash tree. The woody aroma is responsible for the distinct flavor of the food from the region of Szechwan where the spice originated.



Black Mushrooms

- Commonly known as Shitake, they have a more concentrated aroma when dried



Abalone



- Quite expensive, can be bought dried in Chinese medicine and dried seafood shops
- Must be rehydrated up to 24 hours



Salted Duck Eggs

- A Chinese Speciality that is also enjoyed all over South East Asia,
Made by soaking the duck eggs in brine





Fresh Tofu

- Firm, Medium Firm, Soft, Silken
- Pressed Tofu –
- Tofu Skins- flat, fresh, frozen or dried sheets. The sheets can be used as springroll wrappers. The sticks have to be soaked in water until pliable before each recipe

Pandan leaves

- Used in South East Asian Cuisine – natural green color with a butterscotch like flavor used for both sweet and



Cilantro

- Coriander or chinese parsley
- Leaves and stems are full of flavor



Galangal

- Known as the less pungent ginger



Lemongrass



Used widely in Asian Cuisine. Fibrous and Stalks must be pounded to get flavor

Scallions



Known as green
onion
Or spring onion

Eggplants

- Japanese eggplant
- Pea eggplant





Bamboo Shoots



Bittter melon



Often combined with
pork and
Shrimp to counter the
bitterness. Spongy
core and seeds must
be removed



Bok Choi

- Green leafy cabbage, best while young





Chinese Broccoli





Green papaya





Green Mango



Water Chestnuts



Grown on rice paddies and when bought Fresh still have a bit of mud on it. Can be Used raw or added to fillings



Yard Long Beans





Banana Bud



Fresh Mushrooms

- Shitake
- Enoki
- Straw Mushrooms (usually canned only available)



Flour and Starches

- Rice Flour
- Sticky glutinous rice
- Toasted rice flour (used as binder for vietnamese shrimp paste, made by toasting sticky short grain rice over medium heat and grinding it)
- Panko bread crumbs , fine white bread crumbs that give foods a nice texture
- Potato Starch- used for thickening sauces, has double the thickening power as cornstarch
- Sago pearls- from the sago palm
- Wheat Starch – gluten free, used for dumpling skins

Noodles and papers



- Dried Rice vermicelli
- Dried Rice Sticks (for phad thai)
- Dried Rice paper (for vietnamese spring rolls)
- Mung bean noodles
- Wheat vermicelli – Somen
- Buckwheat- Soba
- Cha Soba – Matcha green tea + soba
- Ramen- Egg
- Spring roll wrapper and Wonton wrappers

Equipment

- Bamboo Steamers
- Chopsticks
- Cleavers
- Flat Strainers (with Handle)
- Mortar and Pestle
- Wok
- Saute pan
- Clay pot

