

# Difference in culture of food between China and America

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**Abstract:** "Food is the heaven to the human". Since human beings appeared on the earth millions years ago, we have had food everyday to satisfy the need of energy. Because of the influence of religion, climate, and region, different countries have different dietary cultures. China, which has a history longer than five thousand years, is one of the biggest countries in the world, and the United States is the super country that has a great influence to the whole world. We study these differences and then find out the points that can be digested, in order to facilitate the communication about cultures between China and the United States. By the analysis of the differences between Chinese and American dietary cultures, we can comprehend the respective cultural traditions of China and the west and we can also improve and create the new culture of China.

**Keywords:** China; America; Difference; Culture of Food

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## Introduction

Because of the long distance, the isolation of hundreds of years makes the United States and China be too much different in their cultures. Although every country and society must evolve by food, food culture is not the same and the positions of food in different cultures are also diverse. China has been evolving more than five thousand years. It is the country with a large population, so it is an large agricultural country and has plenty of food resources to feed its people. So, in China, food has always being put at the highest position of the country. Differently, the United States was born and bred by polity and economy. It enjoys a excellent reputation of the high level of its polity and economy. The Americans did not pay their whole attention to food. In the culture of America, food is just a small part of people's daily life. The different degrees that people focus on food lead to different food cultures.

Receiving the influence of respective cultural tradition, the Chinese and western dietary culture has had different characteristics. The differences in concepts, patterns, attribution and nature reflect the different dietary cultures in the different state characteristics; such characteristics enriched the research value of food culture. Studying these cultural differences, we can find out a joint to enhance the communication between China and America . It may be a great help to the communication of the Chinese and western cultures.

## 1. Diet idea

### 1.1 American diet idea

Nobody will deny that the Western diet is a rational concept, regardless of the color of food, incense, flavor and shape, but nutrition must be assured. It cares about the intake of calories, vitamins, protein and so on during a day. Comparing with the Chinese diet, western diet tastes stereotyped, as simple as chewing the candle, but the sense tells them: We must eat them all because of the nutrition. And then they put it bluntly, just like refueling machine.

The concept of western diet is compatible with the whole western philosophy. everywhere. In celebration, it stresses tableware, stresses the staple, stresses the servings, and stresses the color and shape mix of raw materials. But no matter how luxurious the grade is; from Los Angeles to New York, only one taste of steak, it is no art to speak of. And as dishes, the chicken is chicken; steak is steak, even in groups, which are also conducted in a shallow dish. In a dish of "French Muttonchops", one side is potato mud, and muttonchops sits next to it, another side is allocation of cooking beans, and plus a few tablets of tomato. Color is on clear, but the tastes of the various materials are separated, not to reconcile, and the entire

flavor is also simple and clear.

## **1.2 Chinese diet idea**

Chinese diet is a sense of beauty diet. When people sample dishes, they often say this dish is "delicious", and that dish is "not delicious". But if you ask what is meant by "delicious", why "tasty" and what are the aspects of "delicious", I am afraid that it will be difficult to answer. This shows that which Chinese people hanker on a diet is just the "mood" that is difficult for one to say anything. Even using the "color, flavor, shape and implement" which people often said to make the "realm" reification, I am afraid it is still difficult to crown all.

The beauty pursuit of Chinese cuisine is clearly overriding the rational pursuit. This concept of diet is also coinciding with the traditional Chinese philosophy. Chinese philosophy as a representative of oriental philosophy, its distinguishing features is the macro, visual, vague and evasive. Chinese cooking method is to reconcile, and the ultimate goal is to reconcile out of a beautiful taste. The main stress is measure and the overall co-ordination. It contains a wealth of dialectics of Chinese philosophy, and all these depend on the degree of the wonderful flavor and harmony of dish. The ever-changing within degrees decides the changeable of Chinese food, and it also decides the characteristics of Chinese food as well as the characteristics on each of the chefs.

## **2. Diet patterns**

### **2.1 Diet pattern in China**

In China, a celebration, no matter what, there will be only one form, as sitting together, sharing one feast. Banquet uses round table, which has created a unity of form, which is courtesy, comity atmosphere. Dishes are in the center of the table. They are the objects for people to appreciate and taste, and they are also an intermediate of communication. People drink together and share the vegetables, which reflect the mutual respect among them. It can also show the virtues of comity and harmony. Although in the healthy respect, this approach has several deficiencies, it is our national "happy" mentality. It reflects the classical Chinese philosophy called harmony and it is helpful for Chinese people to facilitate the collective emotional exchanges.

### **2.2 Diet pattern in America**

The more obvious difference between Chinese and American dietary patterns is buffet dinner which is popular in America. This method is to display all food, and everybody picks not fixed in his or her places to eat. They walk freely. This approach can provide the emotional interaction between individuals; they never need to put every word on the table. This also shows a western personality and self-respect. However, all the eating without jamming lacks the real affective tone like the Chinese people. Some people want to put the buffet in the Chinese food, but I think it is not feasible. The Chinese people drink and eat around the table to show harmony and unity, but the buffet has broken such pattern. It raises the personal independence and self-mentioned at the first place. This is the opposite of the scale of the great unity of all Chinese traditional culture.

## **3. Diet Attribution**

American diet tends to be scientific and rational, but the Chinese diet tends to be art and sentimental. During the underdeveloped era of diet, these two trends have only one aim – to live and never be hungry. And when the dietary culture is full developed, the tendency is shown in this different purpose: the former is in the development of nutrition, the latter is expressed as the stress on the flavor.

Therefore, the focus of American diet is only the extension of the original diet practicality. The emphasis on the flavor of Chinese cuisine caters the diet to the arts field. In China, eating is not meant to have enough. Sometimes we eat though we are full. We are overloaded with food. Why? Saying bluntly, it is to appreciate the art of cooking. Compared to the rational diet in the United States, it is not only waste, but also harmful to the human's body.

## **4. Diet tableware**

### **4.1 The differences of the diet tableware**

In the space of diet tableware, the diet cultural differences are more obvious. As we know, Chinese people including some Asian countries, use chopsticks, spoon. When they have a meal also use bowl. But how about Americans? They use plate, knife and fork to eat, there use specialized spoon to drink soup. Chopsticks and knife, fork are two kinds of representative tableware of the east and the west. They affected the different lifestyles of China and America, representing two kinds of different wisdom.

### **4.2 The development of fork and knife**

As we know, the emergence of knife and fork is much later than chopsticks, it was originally the ancient nomadic origin and the European lifestyle; they carry knives to live, and often cooked the meat, then cut off to eat. After settle the city, the knives and forks into the family kitchen, at this time, people just do not have to carry them. Western people have been using knife and fork just for four or five hundred years of history. Compared with the simple chopsticks, knife and fork are much more sophisticated.

### **4.3 The advantage of chopsticks**

Different people have different views, it is difficult to draw the conclusions that the relationship of thinking method between chopsticks and knife and fork. However, there is scientific basis of using chopsticks is better training your thinking ability. From a physiological point of view, when you eating with chopsticks, it affect the human body of thirty joints and fifty muscles. So, stimulating the activity of brain systems, it brings agility and quick thinking. There is no doubt that the chopsticks have the scientific principles.

By the text from this thesis, we can easily find that there still existing various differences between Chinese and American dietary cultures. But with the development of cultural communication between China and the United States and along with the strengthening of communication between China and the United States, China has imported various kinds of western food, such as the "KFC" "DICOS", "McDonald". These are new marks which represent western food culture exchanges and infiltration.

The impact brought by economic globalization is stronger and deeper than the internationalization. Economic globalization is a double-edged sword. On one hand, it brings the vitality of economic growth, on the other hand, the dominant culture has been put into other countries through strong economic and infiltrated every corner of the globe. Therefore, the cultural communication focus on how to assimilate advantages of the other countries' culture, abandon its shortcoming, and learn how to transform and make it localized. All countries need to study the issue. So in the face of the dietary cultural exchange problems between China and the America, we should find each one's advantages and draw the mutual advantages. When China can learn from the point that western diet stresses nutrition match, Chinese people make the Chinese cuisine more outstanding.

China is the country of a long history with an ancient culture and various cultural traditions. She feeds the 1.4 billion Chinese people, and Chinese culture is very inclusive. In the course of development, it absorbed a lot of different cultures. Moreover, now China does more efforts to draw all the outstanding achievements in the World. China's reform and opening up policy created the conditions on international relations and cultural exchanges. We need to use such an opportunity to absorb the excellent cultures from other countries, to develop and create China's new culture.

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