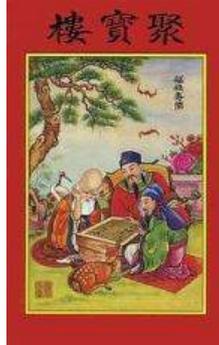


THE CHINESE

DIET



Adapted From

Tong Sing

*The Book of Wisdom based on
The Ancient Chinese Almanac*

CMG Archives

<http://www.campbellmgold.com>

(2012)

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IMPORTANT

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Introduction

*To the ruler, people are heaven:
to the people, food is heaven
(Chinese Proverb)*

The following summary of the Chinese Diet is compiled from
Tong Sing, The Book of Wisdom based on The Ancient Chinese Almanac:

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Chinese Diet

(1)

*The Chinese diet is beneficial in three ways.
It is highly nutritious,
health-giving and
superbly appetizing.*

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(2)

*The Chinese cook has three main concerns:
best ingredients,
correct preparation and
effective presentation.*

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(3)

*The Chinese diet is mainly vegetarian,
and most meals contain no more than ten per cent meat,
the main sources of protein being beans, cereals,
eggs, fish, poultry and just a little pork.*

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(4)

*Meals are made appetizing by harmonious blending of
complementary opposites in colour, flavour, texture and fragrance:
dark with bright, sweet with sour, smooth with lumpy, etc.*

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(5)

*Individual dishes are balanced on the yin-yang principle:
cooked with uncooked, acid with alkaline,
fish with cereal, and so on.*

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(6)

*The two main classes of food are the fan and the cai.
The former, which is yin, consists of cereals and vegetables,
and the latter consists of meat, fish, and spicy items.
Fan literally means "cooked grain".
It is filling, satisfying, easily digested and non-irritating.
It absorbs the excess grease and acids in the cai.*

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(7)

*Much variety ensures that one does not consume too
much of what is harmful, nor too little of what is beneficial.*

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(8)

There is a preference for fresh ingredients.

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(9)

*Ingredients are generally shredded,
diced or thinly sliced to create a greater surface area
so they are more easily blended,
cooked and digested.*

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(10)

*The main method of cooking is stir-frying.
This ensures that the ingredients are cooked quickly,
and so the nutrients are sealed into the food
and are not destroyed.*

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(11)

*Another common method of cooking is steaming.
It has two advantages.
The food will not burn or be overcooked,
for it cannot attain a temperature which
is higher than that of boiling water (100 degrees C).
Its soluble nutrients are not lost by being dissolved in the water,
as would be the case if it were boiled.*

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(12)

*The cooking methods in the west
- baking, roasting, etc. -
are also used in China,
but on a much smaller scale.
Oven cooking is quite uncommon.*

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(13)

*Soups are generally prepared by slow simmering in a sagu,
which is an earthenware pot glazed on the inside.*

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(14)

*Wooden ladles, earthenware cooking pots,
porcelain spoons and dishes,*

*wooden or plastic chopsticks and bamboo steamers
are preferred to metal cutlery and cooking vessels.
The Chinese are aware that the acids in food
react chemically with metals,
often with unhealthy effects.*

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(15)

*Some ingredients,
such as shark's fin and bear's paws,
are of an exotic character,
and some have valuable medicinal properties.*

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(16)

*There is no neglect of attractive presentation
- napkins, finger-bowls, jars of flowers, murals, joss sticks, etc. -
for the Chinese are aware that it is not only food
which whets the appetite.*

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(17)

*The main courses are supplemented with tea,
which is a mild stimulant and an aid to the digestion.*

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(18)

*Basically, a Chinese meal for a family contains three or four main courses.
An extra course is provided for each additional diner.
Thus, a meal for ten people will contain twelve or more courses.*

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(19)

*Foods which are damaging to the health are kept at a minimum or avoided altogether.
They include synthetic additives, red meat, animal fats,
refined sugar, eggs that are not well cooked, salt,
chocolate and other confectionery, unwashed vegetables and fruits,
and stale and tainted food.*

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(20)

*By tradition, the seven essentials in a Chinese household are
firewood, tea, salt, oil, rice, soy sauce and vinegar.
When buying ingredients in common use,
it is sensible to buy in bulk,
of the best quality at the lowest price.*

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(21)

A Chinese cook can prepare a wide range of dishes, from the simplest to the most gorgeously elaborate, with very few utensils. In general, a Chinese kitchen will contain a wok, strainer, cleaver, chopping block, rolling pin, teapot, all-purpose knife, roasting pan and meat/fish slice and two steamers - one large and one small - chopsticks, earthenware cooking pots, wooden and porcelain ladles and spoons and various bowls and dishes. A mortar and pestle, which may be purchased at a pharmacy, is a most useful addition to a kitchen. It is used for crushing and grinding garlic, ginger and other spices.

With a cleaver and an all-purpose knife, a Chinese cook can perform all the cutting operations required in a kitchen.

End

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