

Healthy Exchange of *Cultures*

By Yummy Times

The premise of the Yin and Yang Theory is that everything is interconnected and we each have opposite, yet complementary elements that make us whole. In order to maintain optimum health, our Yin and Yang qualities need to be in balance and harmony. When there are imbalances, disease and illness can occur.

Good Business Sense is a leading organization in Australia which specialises in business development, food, and consumer research. They have been conducting National Eating Habits Studies in Australia and overseas for over 20 years. In a recent research, Good Business Sense found that over 52% of Australians believe there is strong scientific backing to support the theory of Yin and Yang, which leads to balance.

Varying your food choices according to seasons is a way to keep your body in sync with the natural environment. Eating warmer foods when the weather is cold and cooler foods during the warmer months keeps you healthy in all seasons. People naturally eat more warming, heavier foods in the winter such as soups, stews and baked foods. Conversely, in summer we make lighter and cooler food choices that are more quickly cooked, such as steamed vegetables.

Eating in accordance with what grows in your region also keeps your body in balance. Scientists have tried to study the traditional dietary practices of indigenous cultures to find the key to their health and longevity. A common feature in all these diets is the larger proportion of locally grown vegetables, rice, and whole grains as well as an absence of sugar or processed foods. There are also smaller quantities of protein than their Western counterparts. From a Traditional Chinese Medicine perspective, this kind of diet maintains the balance in the body at any age.

China

Chinese food – surely a favourite to most people! But no, we are referring to the talk about the stereotypical sauce-laden and deep-fried dishes found at restaurants and takeaway shops. The basic Chinese diet is built around steamed rice, cooked vegetables, and small quantities of animal protein, legumes, beans and various fruits. Chinese cabbage, daikon, soy, ginger and garlic are staples in many dishes. In particular, ginger and garlic are two spices that help speed up metabolism and promote harmony.

Lemon Water

Traditional Chinese Medicine has touted the benefits of lemon for centuries. High in antioxidants and vitamin C, lemon is a superstar fruit for a myriad of health complaints and even weight loss purposes. Lemon is a natural astringent and a “master cleanser” of the body. When consumed regularly, lemon juice can help to stimulate elimination in the digestive system and help purify the liver by removing by-products and waste matter.

Drink it warm every morning on an empty stomach for optimum results. Drinking it cold, according to Traditional Chinese Medicine, can shock and stress our digestive system. It’s much easier for your body to process food and water that is closer to body temperature.

Korea

Kimchi

Koreans have been enjoying salted and fermented vegetables known as kimchi for about 2000 years. The reddish fermented cabbage (and sometimes radish) dish – made with a mix of garlic, salt, vinegar, chilli peppers, and other spices – is served at every meal, either alone or mixed with rice or noodles. And it’s part of a high-fibre, low-fat diet that has kept obesity at bay in Korea. Kimchi also is used in everything from soups to pancakes, and as a topping on pizza and burgers.

But this spicy dish is much more than a condiment. Research has shown that kimchi has a long list of health benefits including anti-cancer, anti-obesity, anti-diabetic, and anti-constipation properties. It promotes brain, skin, and colorectal health. It even reduces cholesterol and blood clots and has anti-oxidant and anti-aging properties.

Japan

Japanese citizens are renowned for their long lives and much of this is due to diet. With consumption of a large number of cruciferous vegetables such as cabbage, bok choy, kale, broccoli, and zucchini, local residents achieve harmony. They are the largest consumer of fish and whole soy in the world, both of which are good protein sources and promote a healthy heart.

Seaweed

Wakame is an edible brown seaweed or kelp common in Japanese, Korean, and Chinese cuisines. Not only is it extremely high in nutritional value, low in calories, and have minimal fat, it is even said to help burn fat. It helps to prevent heart disease, cancer, diabetes, blood clotting, and obesity. Wakame promotes a good immune system while fighting off stroke, hypertension (high blood pressure), viral infections, tumors, oxidation and inflammation.

Green Tea

Mortality rates from cancer are low in Japan and especially low in Shizuoka where the consumption of green tea is highest. The main component of green tea is catechins which have a proven effect on the reduction of cancer rates. They also work at preventing the build-up of cholesterol, controlling high blood pressure, lowering blood sugar levels, and suppressing aging.

Drinking 3 – 5 cups of green tea daily for just one week, will give your body a signal to burn around 35 – 43% of its fats. It contains a large quantity of antioxidants, so it is one of the top diet and agility drinks.

In addition, many Japanese are taught from childhood that rising from the table should be done when you are still a little hungry because greediness is not acceptable in their culture. When they are about 80 percent full, they stop and wait for about 10 minutes, then decide whether to keep going. And most times, they are full so they don’t need to keep eating more.

India

Indian cuisine features tons of spices, which adds flavour, appealing colour, and surprising health benefits. Spices like turmeric, ginger, and red pepper may help to lower cholesterol. Frequently used

aromatics like onions and garlic can lower lipid levels in blood, which could lower risk of heart disease.

Cinnamon

This amazing spice stabilises blood sugar levels and increases the metabolism of glucose. Since high blood sugar levels can lead to increased storage of fat, cinnamon helps prevent this. Cinnamon improves insulin function. Thus, you lose weight.

Folk wisdom still retains knowledge of the healing properties of both honey and cinnamon. Honey possesses natural antibacterial properties. Regular consumption of honey and cinnamon together, when combined with an overall healthy diet and moderate activity level, can prevent heart disease by clearing clogged arteries.

Drink honey and cinnamon powder boiled in one cup of water. Do this daily every morning 1/2 hour before breakfast on an empty stomach and at night before sleeping. If taken regularly, it reduces the weight of even the most obese person. Also, drinking this mixture regularly does not allow the fat to accumulate in the body even though the person may eat a high calorie diet.

Greece

Although Mediterranean dishes usually contain some olive oil, cheese, and meat, these caloric ingredients are used in moderation. Traditional Mediterranean cuisine focuses on lots of plants (fruits, veggies, grains, and legumes) with only small amounts of meat, dairy, and olive oil. Fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids round out the nutritious profile of this traditional diet.

Apple Cider Vinegar (ACV)

In ancient Greece, around 400 BC, Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, prescribed apple cider vinegar mixed with honey for a variety of ills, including coughs and colds. Traditionally apple cider vinegar is used to remedy digestive distress such as bowel irregularity, aid in detoxification, increase appetite, and to reduce intestinal bloating. Mix one tablespoon of organic apple cider vinegar into a cup of warm water and drink it every morning on an empty stomach. Apple cider vinegar also helps with weight loss by breaking down fats so that your body can use them rather than store them.

Traditional Chinese Medicine recognises that each person is different; we have different constitutions and although we can be divided into general and broad categories, ultimately we are all unique. In order to maintain optimum health, we need to listen to our bodies.

While every geographic region and cultural group around the world has its own pattern of eating, there is no one, universally “healthy” (or “unhealthy”) diet. Regardless, the traditional diets of countries with lower rates of chronic diseases tend to have a few standout elements in common. All of these diets emphasise eating a variety of fruits and vegetables, legumes, and healthy fats, as well as simply savouring meals. Mix and match elements from these different diets to create your own personalised version of healthy eating.

Be creative – Be healthy!



About Yummy Times

As an advocate for healthy and fresh lifestyle, Yummy Times is dedicated to helping businesses and community to benefit from healthy eating by following the season of nature.