

Unit 304: Contribute to the guest experience

Handout 4b: Global influences

Asian

Chinese cuisine is quite different in the various regions. The most commonly known cuisine is **Cantonese** found in many typical Chinese restaurants around the globe. Key elements are a balanced approach to flavours and clean taste and subtle aroma based on rice wine, vinegar, broths and soy sauce. Steaming and stir-frying are used extensively and food should not be greasy!

Szechuan cuisine is a contrast of more spicy food with strong garlic and chilli flavours. Not all dishes are spicy; subtle flavours and smoked dishes are popular. Other regions are Shanghai, Beijing, Fujian, Hunan, Taiwan and Tibet, to name but a few!

Japanese cuisine is identified by its focus on **simplicity** and balance. Prime ingredients are used with a particular emphasis on seafood. Food items are kept separate, such as a **bento** plate where rice, meat, pickles and vegetables are served in different containers. Fats and oils are used in small amounts except for frying, and soy sauce, dashi and miso are key flavour additives. Wasabi is a popular condiment. Shiso and nori leaves are used as garnish to add subtle flavours.

Korean cuisine has hearty flavours and like all other Asian cuisines rice is a key staple. Kim chi or fermented vegetable is served with most dishes. Chilli, soy sauce, garlic, pepper and ginger are used in many dishes. Raw fish is eaten with wasabi and soy like Japanese sashimi. Soups are popular, as are stews. Many noodle dishes are served cold. Grills are a communal dish with items cooked over charcoal and then wrapped in lettuce. Steamed dishes are also common.

Vietnamese cuisine has an emphasis on shrimp paste, fish and soy sauce and fresh herbs. It is a light cuisine with fresh flavours and little use of oil. Rice is once again a staple food. Protein is only cooked briefly. Broths are popular with pho being a staple dish. Northern Vietnamese food is subtler, less spicy with larger use of seafood. Central Vietnam has very spicy food that is more complex and sophisticated. Southern dishes are vibrant and use lots of fruit, sugar, herbs and garlic. Influences from French and Thai cuisine is more evident.

Thai cuisine is very fragrant and spicy. It must be balanced and sweet, sour, salty and bitter are juxtaposed for a balanced finish. Curries are popular with coconut flavours and spicy pastes providing an excellent base. Tom yum is the most known hot and sour Thai soup. Sate has been adopted from Indonesia. Thai food stalls offer a plethora of exciting dishes.

Malay cuisine is very multicultural with Indonesian and Indian influences. Many dishes are spicy, fragrant and colourful. Stews are popular with rendang a favourite. Soups are also popular throughout the day. Rice is prepared in many ways with nasi goreng the most widely known. Cakes and desserts are very popular and can be based on rice flour, coconut or sponge bases.

Indonesian cuisine has various key cuisines due to its island nature. National dishes are nasi goreng, gado-gado and sate. Tofu is a rich source of protein and key flavours used are soy sauce, peanuts and coconut. Spices play an important part with sambal oelek or chilli paste being

a key ingredient. Turmeric, galangal, lemongrass, pepper, nutmeg, cinnamon, tamarind and coriander are found in many dishes.

Indian cuisine has many regional dishes and distinct differences between the cooler north and hot south. Spices such as garam masala are dominant and rice, legumes and millet are the staple foods. Vegetarian cuisine is widespread due to religious beliefs. This multicultural society has many specialities, but curry is a predominant meal. Pickles and dried seafood are popular additives. Breads are available in many varieties with roti, parathas and chapati popular choices. Stews, soups and a multitude of protein-based dishes are made based on regional influences such as biryani, korma, vindaloo and tandoori providing excellent scope.

Sri Lankan cuisine is very complex with many spices and hot curries predominant. Chutneys and sambals are popular, and coconut features widely. It has also European influences due to its colonial past. Street stall and short eat restaurants are a quick eatery options widely used, featuring simple dishes. Seafood is a key protein due to the island nature.

Pakistan cuisine is influenced by its Islam population and has regional differences with spicy Indian type food in the east and milder spiced dishes in the northern parts showing Persian influences. Kebabs and meat dishes are served with yoghurt and vegetables. Naan bread is common, as is rice.

Bangladesh cuisine has Persian influences and whilst many Indian flavours are common a key difference is the consumption of beef. Beef kebab and biryani are popular choices. Seafood both fresh and saltwater varieties are a key protein with many curries created. Atta and pulses are used extensively, and plain rice is also a key staple. Sweets are appreciated with many specialities available.

Kazakhstan cuisine uses mutton and horse meat based on the traditional products available from nomadic herding of sheep and horses as well as camels. Meats are prepared to extend lifespan, with salting and drying very popular methods. Boiling and steaming are the key cookery methods used. Pilaf rice combined with meat and carrots and served as an accompaniment. Milk products are also popular with yoghurt, sour cream and cottage cheese as well as fermented milk consumed on a daily basis.

Uzbek cuisine is based on its agriculture and noodle and bread dishes are common. Mutton is a popular meat and palov a pilaf rice similar to Kazakh style is a good accompaniment. Soups are often served with noodles. Yoghurt drinks and tea are popular beverages.

Mongolian cuisine is influenced by its nomadic lifestyle as well. Once again meat and dairy products are the key elements. Due to the proximity to China and Russia, both cuisines have provided influences. Boiled mutton and steamed dumplings with mutton meat are common. Stews featuring mutton, rice and noodles are popular. Milk is produced into cream and cheese. Yoghurt, kefir and light milk are popular and fermented mare's milk is a national beverage.

Central Asian cuisines such as those from Turkmenistan, Kyrgyz and Tajik are all similar due to the large nomadic population. Afghan cuisine is more diversified with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables available. Afghan cuisine features a variety of tastes. Lavash and naan are common breads often consumed with pickles and as a side dish with meat. Qorma stews are based on onions and meat that are slowly simmered.

American

North American cuisine has many ethnic influences due to the migration of many nations. Many chain restaurants are popular with key products such as hamburgers, fried chicken, hot dogs or tortillas and tacos. American meals are often high in sugar, carbohydrates and fat leading to concerns due to increasing obesity. Italian, Mexican and Chinese are key influences and have become mainstream. Modern American food is focussing on its abundance of product and celebrity chefs highlight its regional dishes and authenticity. A key focus is the understanding of the correct cookery method applied to local ingredients and regional dishes.

Canadian cuisine is regionally based and based on the three key populations of native inhabitants, British and French settlers. Maple syrup is the most easily identifiable Canadian export. Much of Canada's food resembles American cuisine. Unusual foods are caribou stew, fiddle head ferns and game like venison. Seafood is plentiful with sockeye salmon a delicacy as well as lobster. First nation diets include seal and fowl. Wild berries and mushrooms are plentiful.

South American cuisine differs widely. Argentina and Brazil are famous for their cattle and the Argentinean asado grilled BBQ meat and the Brazilian churrasco chargrill. Peru uses corn, potatoes and chillies in many of its dishes. Quinoa is a very nutritious grain. Some Inca influences remain with alpaca and guinea pig and the pachamanca being a celebratory dinner similar to hungi where the food is cooked underground with hot stones.

Central American cuisines are also influenced by Spanish roots and the plentiful supply of fruit and seafood. Ceviche is popular throughout South America. Starches such as yucca, yams, taros and plantains are commonly used.

Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and Africa

Italian cuisine varies from the more rice-based dishes of the north with subtler flavours such as saffron risotto and truffles to the stronger flavoured dishes of the south with its focus on pasta, tomatoes and fresh herbs. Pizza is nowadays common throughout Italy but was initially found in the south. Italian dishes use a wide array of proteins with veal saltimbocca, pork piccata, beef ossobucco and abbachio al forno, roast baby lamb, just some examples. Prosciutto and salami and a plethora of other smallgoods are available. Seafood is a big favourite, with soups, grills and fried fish used widely. Italian cuisine can be found everywhere in the world due to the large migration occurring after both world wars.

Spanish cuisine is regionally based and based on the climate and history. Typical regional examples are Valencian paella, jamon serrano of Aragon and Catalan cream. Chorizo and potato tortilla are found throughout Spain. Tomatoes, saffron, capsicums and spices are widely used. Seafood is plentiful and used in dishes such as frito. Meat and pulses are often cooked in flavoursome stews. Cheeses and wines are of excellent quality. Tapas has become one Spanish custom copied around the world.

Portuguese cuisine features many herbs, spices and garlic in its recipes. Many recipes are based on the seafood of its coast. Cod being a staple fish served in many ways. Most of it is cooked based on dried and salted fish. Offal is represented on many menus and sausages are also very popular. Breads and cakes are often unleavened. Vegetables are often made into stews and soups. Salads are common with basic vinaigrette. Cheeses are plentiful with a wide selection of goat's and sheep's milk cheeses available. Desserts are commonly spiced with cinnamon and

vanilla with rich egg desserts and rice puddings much liked. Pastries and cakes often include almonds and marzipan.

Greek cuisine has similarities with western neighbours of Italy and Spain whilst also using many recipes related to its Turkish and Balkan neighbours. Olive oil, olives, herbs and nightshade vegetables are base ingredients. Bread and grains are used widely and protein consists of seafood, lamb, pork and poultry. Meze, a collection of small dishes, is often served with wine or aperitifs. These can include dips and bread. Seasonal recipes prevail with liberal use of bay leaf, garlic, mint, oregano, mint and fennel quite common. Goat and sheep meat are the preferred meat options as the hilly countryside does not support beef rearing. Cheeses are popular and tavernas serve inexpensive food throughout the day.

Turkish and Lebanese cuisine also use olive oil, olives and fresh herbs in many of its dishes. Chickpeas and wheat are the basis of many dishes with rice and maize also increasing. Burghul, a cracked wheat is steamed up and the main ingredient in tabbouli, a rich salad with herbs and tomato. Meze are very popular featuring labna, a yoghurt cheese, grilled eggplant, dolmas, cheeses, grilled meat, olives, babaganoush and hummus. Sheep and lamb meat are common. Sweets include filo pastries and are served with strong coffee.

Israel's cuisine features many customs based on its Jewish tradition. Many Middle Eastern dishes are part of its cuisine such as falafel, couscous and hummus. Special rules in the production of kosher foods and the influence of Jewish settlers from all corners of the globe show up in dishes throughout Jerusalem. Vegetable gratins, bulgur and rice pilafs are supplemented by chickpeas and nightshade vegetables. Matzoh bread is also used for matzoh soup and challah is eaten for festivals. Rice and couscous are popular accompaniments for stews. Fish is available through fish farms and caught off Israel's coast and often grilled or fried and served with lemon. Gefilte fish is a Jewish speciality of fish balls cooked in broth. Poultry and meat are often barbecued over charcoal. Desserts are very popular.

Moroccan cuisine is influenced by its Moorish past and uses spices to a higher degree than Middle Eastern cuisines. Olives, fruit and pickled lemons are used in many recipes. The availability of spices is shown in many of its dishes such as tagine. Meals are started with a salad and beef, lamb, goat or mutton are popular proteins. Couscous is served to accompany stews or tagine. Chermoula is a rich herb and spice mixture used as a seasoning and is excellent with seafood. Sweets are often based on almonds and honey and served with green mint tea.

Tunisian cuisine is similar to Moroccan cuisine but spicier. Harissa, a hot pepper and chilli sauce is used in many dishes. The tagine and coucoussiere are commonly used cooking implements. Lamb, chicken and seafood, as well as chickpeas stews are the base for many couscous dishes. Tunisia like many other Arab cuisines likes sweet pastries with coffee. Baklava, with its mixture of filo pastry, nuts and sugar syrup, is a favourite.

Algerian cuisine features many dishes from its western neighbours and its Ottoman past. As it is a former French colony these influences can also be detected. Protein is mainly based on lamb, poultry and seafood. Merguez, a spicy lamb sausage, is a speciality. Couscous is another national dish, as is chakhchouka, a rich lamb stew served with flatbread pieces. Tagines are also popular. Ras el hanout is a popular spice mixture used to season many dishes. Pastries are once again popular for dessert and served with strong coffee. Mint tea is another popular drink.

European and Eastern European

French cuisine is often referred to as the mother cuisine. French cooking has influenced cooking around the world. Escoffier the 'chef of kings and king of chefs' organised the kitchen processes and turned cooking into a profession. Classical French cuisine has a huge following and its principles still form the basis of chef training. Its regional diversity is immense and a focus on selecting prime ingredients and using the correct cookery method to enhance it is evident in many dishes. Produce in France is excellent and all types of food are prepared in a multitude of ways. Desserts are the hallmark of a great chef patissier and classics such as profiteroles and eclairs are universal.

Austrian, Swiss and German cuisine have many similarities. The common roots see many dishes in slight variations within these countries. Smallgoods are eaten throughout the day. Schnitzel and roast pork are the most popular dishes. Meat is often braised and potatoes, vegetables and salads are common accompaniments. Many meals are heavy due to the colder climate. Seafood is eaten more in Germany's north. Cakes and rich tortes form an important part of an afternoon tea.

Northern European cuisine as found in Denmark, Sweden and Norway features many fish dishes. Meat is also popular and once again due to the colder climate many dishes are quite heavy, with rich and creamy sauces. Potatoes are popular and pastries are a must. Typical dishes are smorrebrod, frikadeller, smorgasboard and labskaus.

Eastern European cuisine as found in Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria and Russia has many similarities but also differences, of course. Cabbage and beetroot are widely used vegetables as are other winter vegetable styles. Noodles and dumplings are often served as accompaniments. Meat is popular with sausages prevalent and dessert is a must. Once again, the meals are heavier due to the climate. Borscht, schaschlik and piroshki as well as goulash are typical examples. Cakes and pancakes are popular desserts.

Antipodean

Australian cuisine is often referred to as fusion cuisine. Whilst its origins rest in British dishes, such as roast lamb and vegetables, migration and its influences have created a melting pot of dishes and ideas. These were allowed to flourish due to its lack of ingrained customs or culture. Asian influences prevail with Vietnamese, Thai and Chinese variations on traditional dishes appearing on menus. Produce is widely available all year round, but chefs have started to cook more seasonal foods and local varieties. Many chefs have taken their innovative approaches overseas with many Australian chefs working in top restaurants in Britain and the USA.

New Zealand cuisine has followed a similar path to Australian cooking. One key addition is its Maori influence and specific produce available. Once again, many new and innovative dishes are created on menus throughout the country and providing subtle twists to classic recipes. New Zealand chefs have also been highly successful overseas exporting their flair and innovation.

Polynesian cuisine as found across the Pacific Islands is often based on seafood as a key protein source. Pork is also popular, and fruit and coconut are utilised in many recipes. Taro, yam and manioc as well as plantain form a good source of starch. Fresh fish is marinated in lime and coconut and eaten raw. Ahima'a is food cooked on hot lava rocks underground. Fruit is bountiful

and excellent desserts are made with taro and fresh fruit. Coconut features in many recipes and Indian, Chinese and colonial influences can be detected in many recipes. Hawaiian recipes show the influences of American cuisine and the local ingredients; with Kalua Pua'a (roast suckling pig) being a typical example.