



Culinary Institute
of America

Day 2

Asian Cuisines

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Learning Objectives

- List the basic ingredients characteristic of Indian and Southeast Asian cuisines
- Identify and describe the primary flavor components of Indian and Southeast Asian cuisine
- Identify some of the typical cooking techniques of the Indian and Southeast Asian kitchen
- Prepare a variety of Indian and Southeast Asian dishes following standardized recipes
- Apply the various techniques used to manipulate the flavors of spices (e.g., tempering)

- Population 1.3 billion
- 29 states and 7 union territories
- The states and territories are further subdivided into districts and so on
- Bangladesh and Pakistan were part of British India Empire 1858 to 1947



Geography and Climate

The northern civilizations developed on a different timeline than that of the southern civilization, mainly due to both geography and climate.

The Spice Cabinet

Some spice mixtures (masalas) are identified with a specific region of India.



Masala Dabba

Common Spices of India



Ajowan (carraway)



Amchur (Green Mango)



Cardamom



Cinnamon



Tamarind



Turmeric



Cumin seed



Coriander seed

Common Spices of India



Fenugreek



Fennel seed



Saffron



Mace



Nutmeg



Cloves



Black, white & red pepper



Mustard seed

Regional Spice Mixtures

- **North India:** Garam Masala
- **South India:** Sambhar (also the name of a dish)
- **Bengal:** Panch Phoran (the Indian 5-Spice)
- **Madras** (Chennai) Masala
- **Mumbai** Masala
- **Goda** Masala (Maharashtra)
- **Chaat** Masala
- **Xaccuti** Masala (Goa)
- **Tandoori** Masala
- **Kashmiri** Masala
- **Guarjarti** Masala

Spice Techniques

There are a variety of techniques employed to bring out the fragrant aromas and tastes of spices.





Toasting

Cook gently until the spices give off a “whiff” of fragrance.



Popping Spices

Mustard seeds, poppy seeds, sesame seeds, cumin seeds ...



Tempering (Tadka or Chhaunk)

It is best to use *ghee* (Indian cooked butter) to prepare the tadka. **a method widely used in Indian cuisine, in which whole or ground spices are heated in hot oil or ghee and the mixture is added to a dish**



Basic Cooking Techniques



Traditional Beliefs

- Holy Vedic Scriptures [basis of Hinduism]
 - Categorize commonly used foods
 - Emphasize the connection between foods, moods, fitness, and longevity of life
 - Three major categories of foods depending on the kind mind- altering, mood-provoking, and physiological influences they are believed to exert

Traditional Beliefs

- Food Categories:
 - Sattvic Foods (milk, some milk products, rice, wheat ghee, some vegetables and legumes)
 - Rajasic Foods (some meats, eggs, very bitter, salty, rich, and spicy foods)
 - Tamasic Foods (garlic, pickled and preserved, stale, alcohol, drugs)

Traditional Beliefs

- Ayurveda [code of life and longevity]
 - Classical system of medicine practiced for over 1000 years
 - Based on the belief that “humors” in the body can interact to preserve a homeostatic harmony or cause imbalance
 - Ayurvedic remedies prescribed for various ailments
 - Besides geography and climate religion and philosophy have played an important role in food choices.

Traditional Beliefs

- According to Ayurveda beliefs:
 - Kapha foods (white sugar, millet, buttermilk) are thought to be heavy, dense, mucus-producing and should be avoided by persons with persons with respiratory ailments)
 - Vata foods (gas producing like legumes)

Traditional Beliefs

- Ushna ("Hot") Foods (black mung beans, cowpeas, ripe eggplant, papaya)
 - Believed to promote digestion
- Seeta ("Cool") Foods (cereal such as rice, wheat; mung beans; kidney beans; most fruits and vegetables; milk from most animals except goats; butter and ghee)
- Impart strength and nourishment

Vegetarianism

- Lacto-ovo vegetarianism widely practiced
- Beef consumption forbidden
- The Sikh faith does not prohibit eating meat, but:
 - Sikh diet in villages is primarily vegetarian
 - Includes wide assortment of lentils and other legumes
 - Includes occasional meat
 - Includes wheat, corn, and buttermilk





Key Components of SE Asia Cuisine

Typical Pantry in Southeast Asia Includes many of these items

Condiments	Herbs/ Spices	Produce	Protein	Starches, legumes
Fish sauce	Basil	Bamboo shoots	Seafood	Noodles, Bean thread and Rice
Curry paste	Mint	Cucumber	Pork	Rice paper
Shrimp paste	Saw Leaf Herb	Bean sprouts	Chicken	Rice, long grain and sticky
Chilies	Lemongrass	Limes	Duck	Mung Beans
Palm sugar	Ginger	Scallions	Beef	Red rice
Light soy sauce	Galangal	Shallots	Tofu	
Coconut	Cilantro	Leafy green vegetable		
Hoisin Sauce	Kaffir limes and leaves	Tamarind		
Fresh or roasted Chili paste	Cilantro	Lotus roots		





RICE

"...no matter how refined, delicate, or complex dishes may be, they are merely accompaniments to the rice." *David Thompson*



Noodles

Morning, Noon, and Night: Noodles, Noodles, Noodles



Fish Sauce (Nuoc Mam, Nam Pla, Teuk Trei, Kepac Ikan)

One of the most important condiments used in Southeast Asian cuisines



Shrimp Paste

Balachan, terasi, kapi, ngapi, mắm tép and **mắm tôm** (the Vietnamese name but it depends on the type of shrimp used) **are all different names for shrimp paste.**

Essential Herbs and Spices





Seafood and Fish: A Southeast Asian Tradition

Fermented Foods

- Throughout SE Asia a wide variety of fermented foods make their presence in many dishes.
- They provide an “umami” sensation to many dishes and are often salty.
- They can be bean-based, fruit-based, fish-based, grain-based, or tea-based.





Vegetables and Herbs

Fresh Herbs-Table Salad





Fruits

The ending of a meal in Southeast Asia is fruit and there is a wide variety to choose from.

Durian “The King of Fruits”



High-Impact Flavors

Thai Curries: based on curry pastes of varying intensities



Vietnamese Curries: based on a simple mild curry powder



Malaysian and Indonesian Curries

Rempah/Sambal



Rendang (Malay)



Kitchen Tools

- The mortar and pestle are the main tools used in SE Asian cooking.
- It has a wide variety of uses, but is mostly used to make rempahs, sambals, or curry pastes.



The Five Basic Southeast Asian Tastes

In Southeast Asia, the balancing of these five tastes is key in the preparation of any dish (although, not every dish will embody every taste).

- **Sweetness:** coconut/palm sugar, kepek manis, fruit
- **Sour:** makrut limes, tamarind, coconut vinegar
- **Salty:** fish sauce, shrimp paste, soy products, salted fish
- **Pungent/Hot:** White peppercorns, chilies, dried shrimp onions, garlic, shrimp paste
- **Bitter:** herbs, dark leafy greens, eggplants, bitter melon

Elements of a Southeast Asian Dish

- **Temperature**
- **Texture**
- **Layering of distinctive flavors and tastes**
- **Balance of tastes**
- **Balance across the table**



Summary

Key Elements of SE Asian Cuisine:

- **Rice**
- **Seafood**
- **Aromatics**
- **Balance of taste**
- **Balance of flavor**
- **Balance across the table**
- **Contrast of temperatures, texture, and layering of ingredients**





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Questions?
Let's Start Cooking!

