



Culinary Institute
of America

Asian Cuisine



Learning Objectives

- List the culinary regions within China, Thailand, Vietnam, South Korea, Japan, and India.
- Explain the elements of taste in each Asian country.
- List the key ingredients used in each Asian country.
- Explain the common cooking techniques used in each Asian country.
- Describe the popular dishes representative of each Asian country.
- Prepare a variety of dishes representative of these Asian countries using standardized recipes.

Basic Knife Cuts

Julienne & Dice

1. Square off ends and sides
2. Slice into even slabs of the same thickness
3. Stack slabs, slice into even sticks (julienne)
4. Gather sticks and cut into even cubes (dice)

Large Dice = $\frac{3}{4} \times \frac{3}{4} \times \frac{3}{4}$ in.

Med. Dice = $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2}$ in.

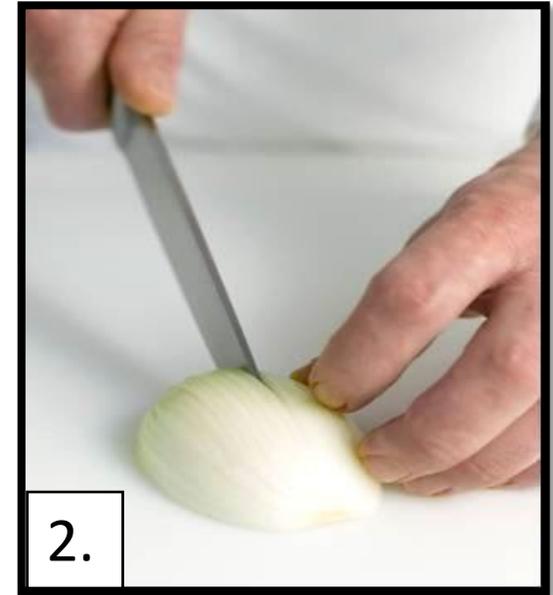
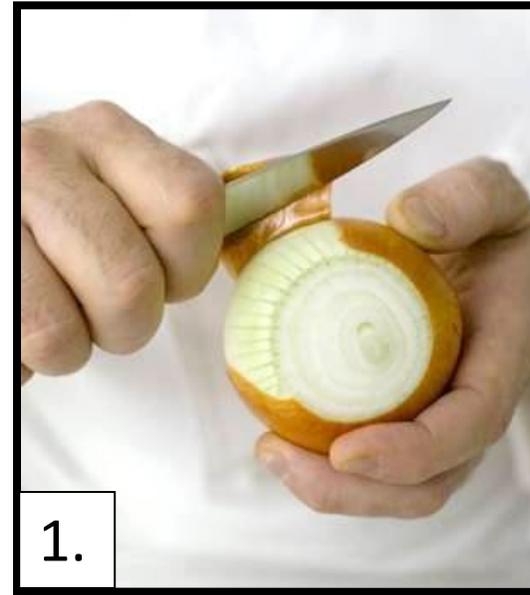
Sm. Dice = $\frac{1}{4} \times \frac{1}{4} \times \frac{1}{4}$ in.



Basic Knife Cuts

Dice & Mince (Onions)

1. Cut off tip end, peel, and cut through root to tip.
2. Make several evenly spaced parallel cuts, without cutting the root.
3. Make two to three horizontal cuts, without cutting the root.
4. Make even crosswise cuts working from tip to root.



China: Culinary Regions

Xin Jiang

- Muslim influence
- Stewed lamb dishes
- Kebabs
- Millet

Sichuan

- Hot/spicy food
- Szechwan "fagara" peppercorns
- Foo Young-Hibiscus Egg

North

- Wheat
- Corn
- Millet

South

- Rice

Beijing

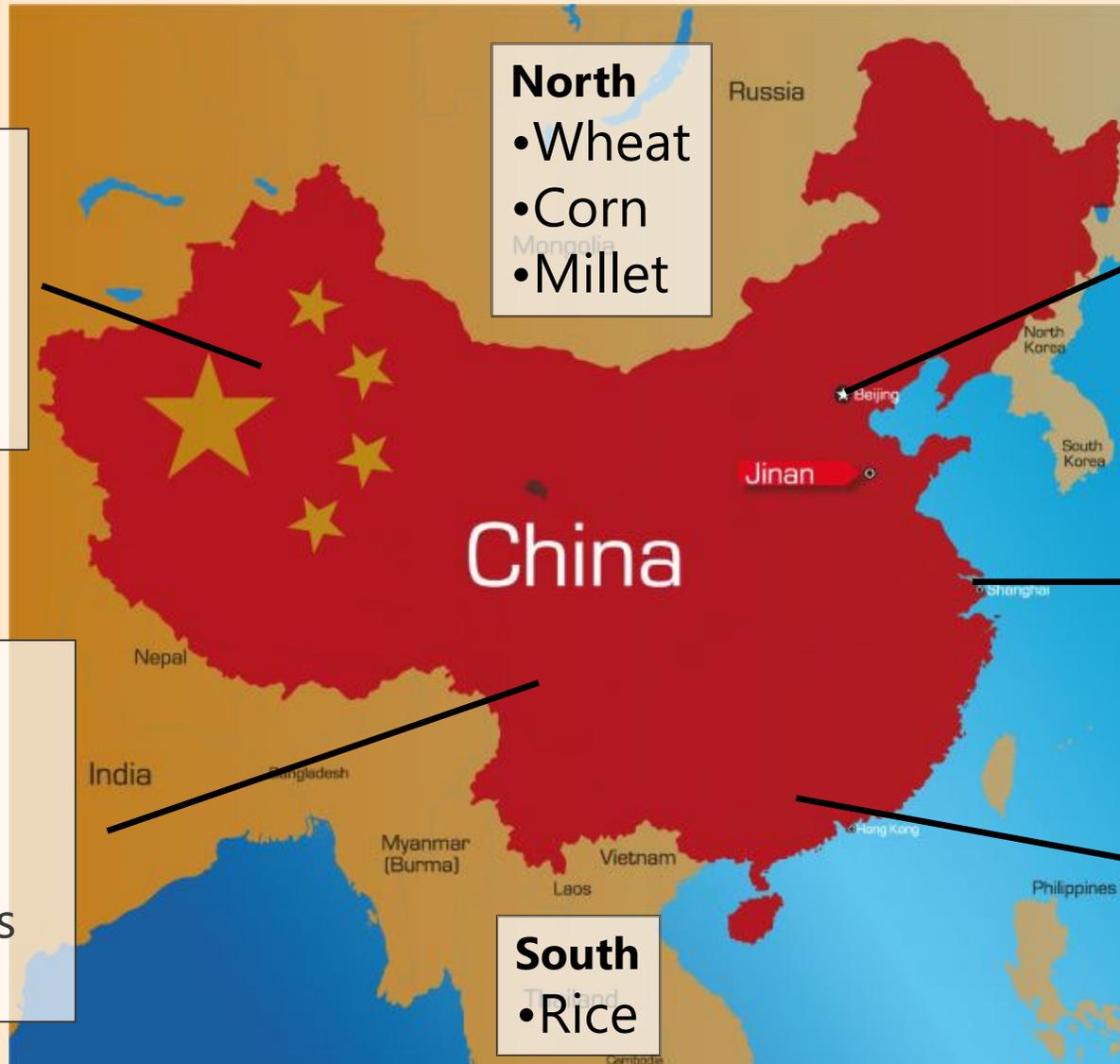
- Steamed buns
- Peking duck
- Table bbq
- Mongolian fire-pot

Shanghai

- Red cooking
- Bird's nest soup
- Chingkiang vinegar

GuangDon (Canton)

- Lacquer roasting
- Cha shiu "cha shao"
- Fruits in cooking "Sweet and sour"
- Black bean sauces



Elements of Taste

Aroma: 4 key ingredients: green onions, ginger, garlic, wine

Key aromatic pairings:

- Ginger + garlic + green onion
- Green & red chiles
- Hot chili paste + fermented soybeans
- Five spice powder: star anise, Szechwan pepper, cinnamon, clove, fennel
- Fermented black beans

Flavors: sweet, sour, salty, bitter, pungent/spicy

Textures: each dish offers one or several



Key Ingredients

Tofu: can be fresh or processed; varying softness levels

Vegetables: bok choy, broccoli, cabbage, string beans, water spinach, Chrysanthemum leaves (*Tong hao*), shitake mushrooms, dried lily buds, pickled vegetables

Noodles: various types/uses, enjoyed at all meals

Spices: Sichuan peppercorns, white pepper

Condiments: soy, oyster, hoisin sauces

Other: sesame oil, sesame seeds, peanut oil, black vinegar, Shaoxing rice wine



Cooking Techniques

Stir-frying: quick cooking, food cut into small uniform pieces

Velveting: marinating & gentle cooking, tenderizes proteins

Steaming: delicate foods, no stirring, locks in flavor/moisture

- Types: bamboo & wok

Hot pot: cooking various ingredients in a pot of broth at the dining table

Common daily techniques: deep-frying, simmering, boiling, smoking, roasting



Popular Dishes



Biang Biang noodles:
thick, broad, hand-pulled noodles seasoned with chili, garlic, Sichuan pepper



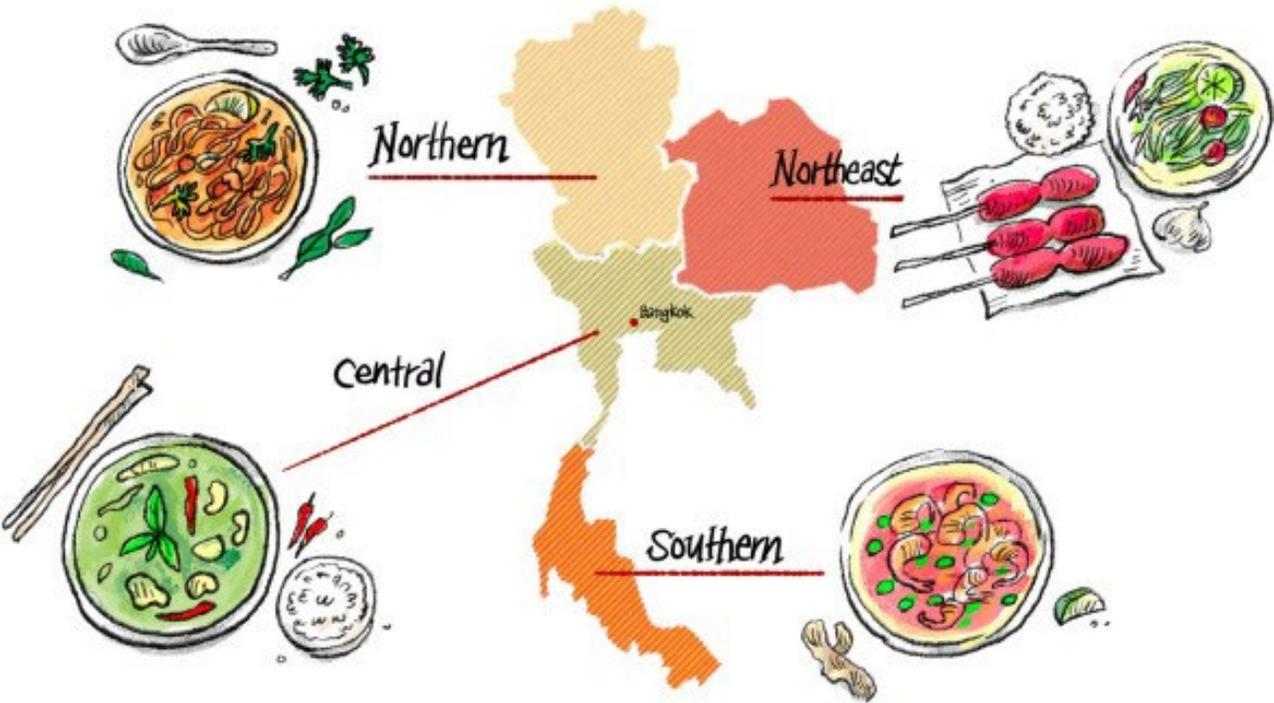
Dim Sum:
a variety of small, steamed or fried dishes, including dumplings, buns, pastries



Peking duck:
crispy-skinned duck served with thin pancakes, scallions, and a sweet bean sauce

Thailand: Culinary Regions

Thailand's Regional Cuisines



Regional variations correlate to neighboring countries, climate, geography

Northern: cool valleys/ forested mountains; shares dishes with Burma, Laos, Yunnan China

Northeast: arid plateau; influenced by Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam

Central: flat, wet, rice-growing plains; coconut milk

Southern: bordered by seas; curries, chiles, spices; elements of India, Malaysia, Indonesia

Elements of Taste

Flavors

- **Sweet:** mild contrast to bold flavors (palm sugar, coconut milk, fruit)
- **Sour:** tangy, adds depth (lime, unripe fruit)
- **Salty:** balances sweetness, acidity (fish/soy sauce)
- **Spicy:** adds intensity; Thai chilies

Textures: varied; crispy, soft, chewy

Colors: vibrant, from chilies, basil, turmeric

Aroma: lemongrass, galangal, garlic, coriander, basil, cardamom, nutmeg



Key Ingredients

Noodles: egg (*bah mee*), glass (*woon sen*), rice

Rice: basmati, Jasmine, long/short, broken, black, sticky

Proteins: tofu, chicken, shrimp

Thai Bird's Eye Chili: fruity taste, mellow, lasting heat (50k-100k Scoville)

Galangal: peppery, spicy rhizome with a zesty bite and hint of pine

Herbs: lemongrass, cilantro, chives, Makrut lime leaves

Spices: tamarind

Condiments: fish/shrimp paste



Cooking Techniques

Stir-frying: in a wok, quick cooking

Grilling: charcoal fired

Steaming: often wrapped in banana/bamboo leaves, locks in moisture/flavors

Simmering: soups, develops flavors

Common daily techniques: deep frying, pan-frying



Popular Dishes



Pad Thai:

Stir fry with rice noodles, eggs, tofu (or other protein) and a sweet and savory sauce



Thai Curry:

Spiced coconut milk-based sauce with vegetables and meat



Mee Krob:

Deep fried rice noodles with sweet and sour sauce

Vietnam: Culinary Regions

Northern

- Less spicy, sour flavors: tamarind, limes
- Light + balanced flavors highlight natural taste of ingredients

Central

- Intensely spicy: chili peppers, shrimp sauces

Southern/ Mekong Delta

- Pronounced sweetness: palm sugar, coconut milk
- Melting pot of regional, foreign flavors



Elements of Taste

Flavors

- **Sweet:** balance sour/bitter (sugar, fruits, certain vegetables)
- **Sour:** tangy (vinegar, tamarind, unripe mangoes)
- **Salty:** depth, enhances flavors; fish/soy sauce
- **Spicy:** pungency (chili peppers, ginger, garlic)
- **Bitter:** cleanses the palate (cilantro, bitter melon, dark chocolate)

Textures: contrasting in a single dish

Colors: vibrant hues from turmeric, pandan, beetroot, ramie leaves



Key Ingredients

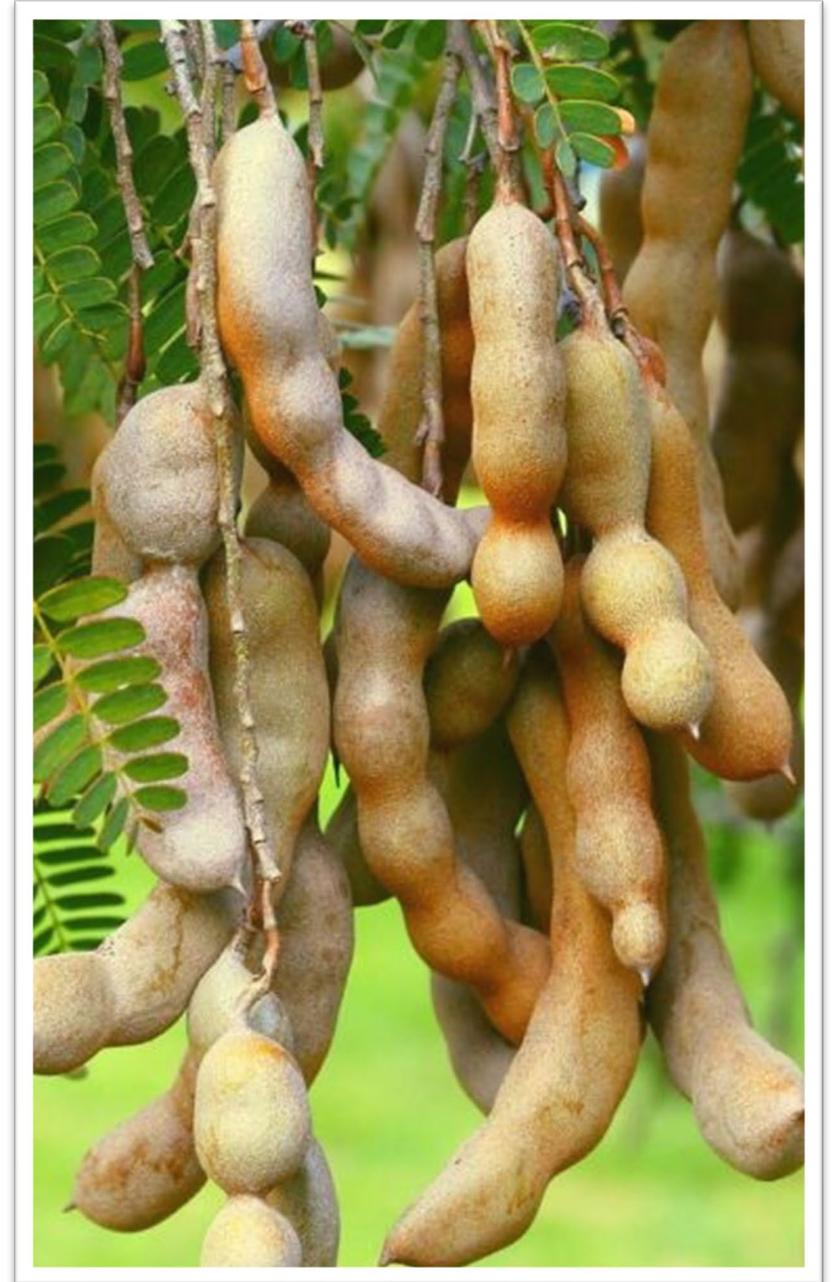
- Banana blossoms
- Tamarind fruit
- Salted black beans
- Peanuts

Herbs: Vietnamese coriander, Thai basil, perilla leaf, lemongrass, sawtooth, fish mint

Rice: Jasmine, sticky, brown, purple, red cargo

Noodles: rice vermicelli, rice sticks, yellow/wheat/egg, glass, tapioca

Sauce: fish (*Nước Mắm*), oyster, hoisin, soybean, light soy



Cooking Techniques

Grilling: over open flame; adds smoky flavors, creates crispy edges

- Grilled pork with rice noodles (*bun cha*)

Stir-frying: quick cooking of vegetables, seafood, meat

Simmering: cooked in broth to develop flavors

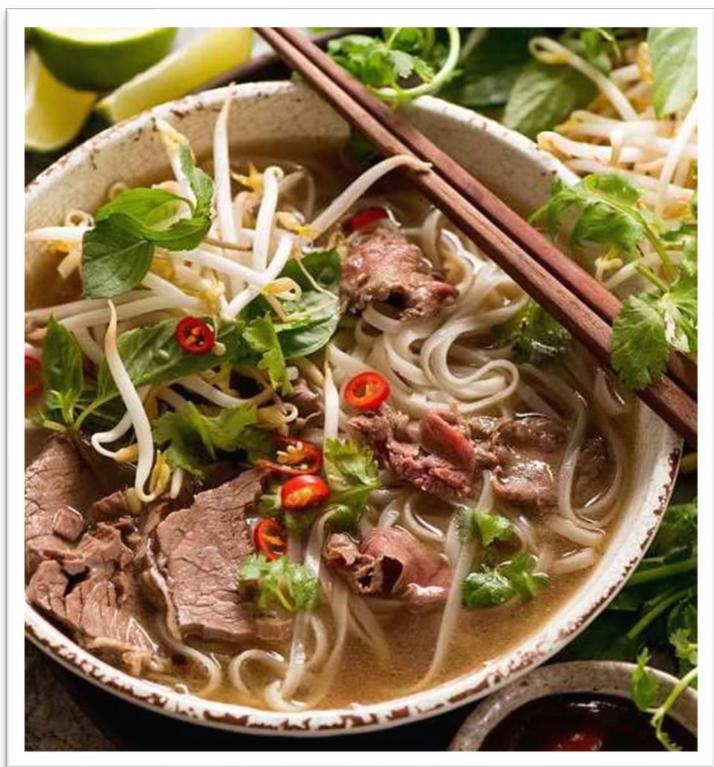
- Noodle soup (*Pho*)

Pan-frying: common for meats and vegetables

Blanching: quick cooking of vegetables; preserves color and texture



Popular Dishes



Pho:

salty broth with rice noodles, herbs, meat



Cha Ca:

Firm white fish marinated in galangal, turmeric, fish sauce, lemon juice



Summer Rolls

(*Gỏi cuốn, Nem cuốn*): rice paper wrappers filled with fresh herbs, vegetables, protein, vermicelli noodles

South Korea: Culinary Regions

Gyeonggi: balance of sweet, salty, spicy flavors

- *Bibimbap*, noodles with Korean black bean sauce (*jajangmyeon*)

Jeolla: rich, savory, earthy flavors

- *Jeon*, *kimchi*, *banchan*

Gyeongsang: bold, spicy, seafood-centric

- Cabbage soup (*Haejangguk*), *Milmyeon* (from Busan)

Chungcheong: light, mild, clean flavors

- Pond loach soup (*Chueotang*)

Jeju: smoky, savory, slightly sweet flavors

- Black pork, fresh seafood



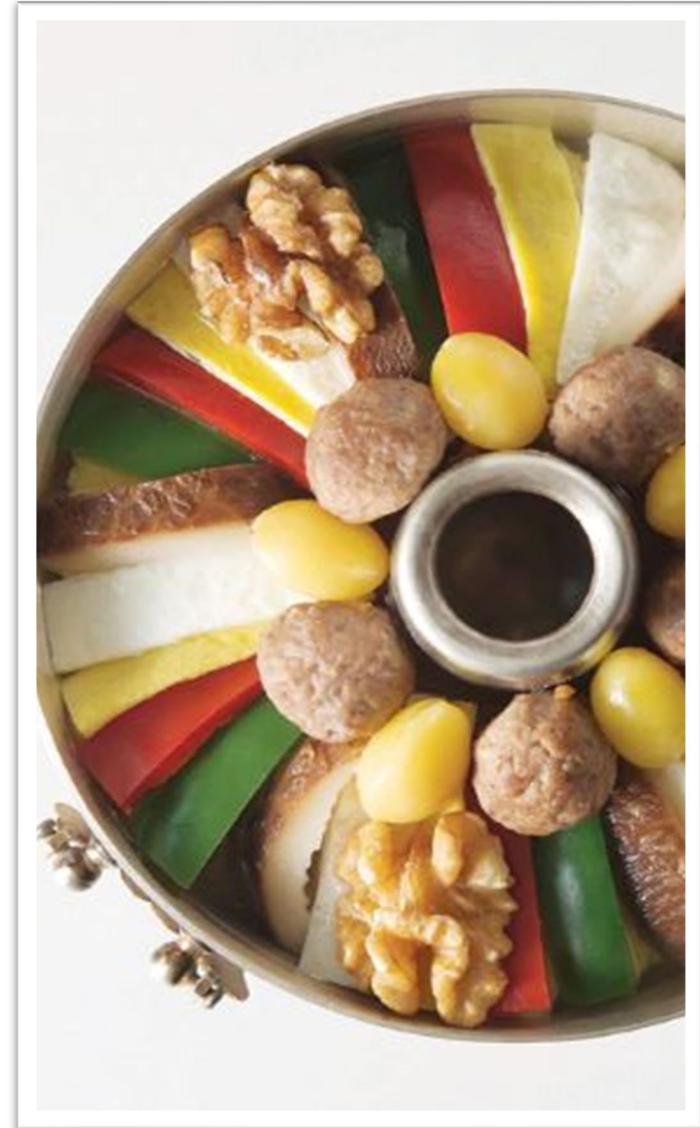
Elements of Taste

Flavors

- **Savory:** provides depth (fermented ingredients)
- **Spicy:** bold heat (chili pepper flakes & paste)
- **Subtly sweet:** balance/enhances savory flavors (honey, Asian pear, Mirin)
- **Sour:** cleanses the palate (vinegar)
- **Salty:** enhances flavors (soy sauce, fermented paste (*doenjang*))
- **Aroma:** ginger, garlic, scallions

Textures: diverse range

Colors: 5 directions (red, yellow, white, green, black)



Key Ingredients

- Red chili powder (*gochugaru*)
- Sesame seeds, ginkgo nuts (*eunhaeng*)

Starch: glass noodles, rice

Protein: beef, pork, seafood, eggs

Vegetables: cabbage, radishes, spinach, mushrooms, carrots, onions, bell peppers, bean sprouts

- Kimchi: fermented vegetables

Condiments: soy sauce (*ganjang*), fermented red pepper paste (*gochujang*), fermented soybean paste (*doenjang*), fermented fish paste (*jeot*), rice wine (*mirin*), sesame oil



Cooking Techniques

Fermenting: preserves vegetables, develops depth

Simmering: for stews, soups, broths

Steaming (*jjim*): seals in flavor, nutrients

Braising: slow-cooks tough meats, veggies

Stir-frying: quick, high heat for tender ingredients

Roasting: gentle heat for large/tough cuts

Grilling: flame-cooked, ideal for thin, tender cuts

Boiling (*suyuk*): tenderizes meat in seasoned brine



Popular Dishes



Bibimbap:
rice topped with
vegetables, meat,
gochujang sauce



Kalbi:
grilled beef short-
ribs in a sweet soy
sauce marinade



Jap Chae:
sweet potato-based
glass noodles stir-fried
with meat and
vegetables

Japan: Culinary Regions

Northern regions: hearty, seafood dishes

- Hokkaido: sapporo ramen, crab, uni
- Tohoku: rice skewers, sweet edamame paste

Central regions: light, savory dishes

- Kanto: sushi, tempura
- Chubu: misu, soba
- Shikoku: udon

Southern regions: bold, umami-rich dishes

- Kansai: kobe beef
- Kyushu: tonkotsu ramen
- Okinawa: tropical flavors with goya, rafute



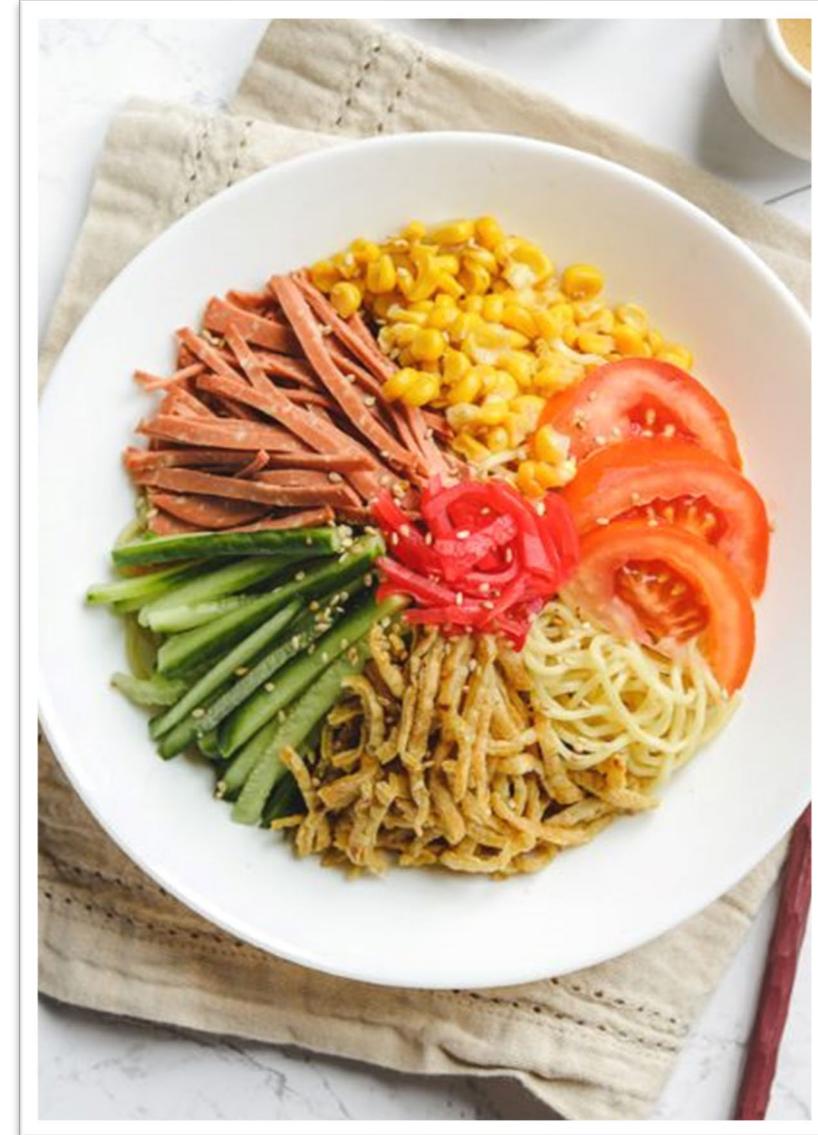
Elements of Taste

Favors

- **Savory:** adds richness, depth (fermented ingredients)
- **Subtly sweet:** balances savory, salty; (honey, fruits, sugar)
- **Sour:** refreshing tanginess; contrasts rich flavors (vinegar, yuzu, ponzu)
- **Salty:** enhances flavor in broths, dressings, pickled vegetables (soy sauce, miso)
- **Bitter:** earthy notes (herbs, vegetables)

Textures: contrasting combinations

Colors (*Goshiki*): red, yellow, green, white, black



Key Ingredients

Dashi: basic soup stock; rich, savory flavor

Miso: fermented soybean paste (up to 3 years); used in soups, dressings, sauces, marinades

Noodles: *Soba, Udon, Somen, Ramen*

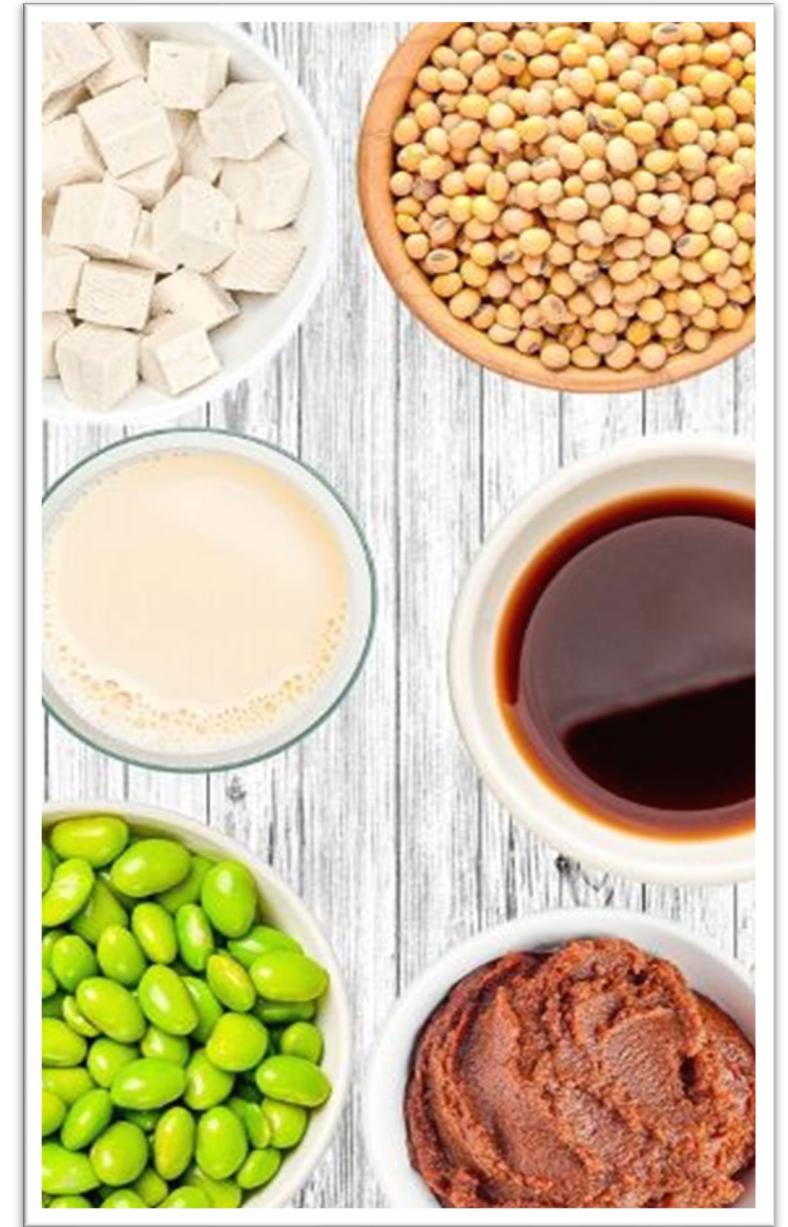
Seaweed: *Hijiki, Kombu, Nori, Wakame*

Roots: lotus root, white radish, burdock root

Soy: beans, sauce, tofu, milk, paste

Herbs: perilla leaf (*Shiso*), parsley (*Mistuba*)

Other: Sichuan pepper (*Sansho*)



Cooking Techniques

Grilling (*yakimono*): used for beef, fish, chicken, vinegar-soaked vegetables

Steaming (*mushimono*): used for egg custards, meats, vegetables

Simmering (*nimono*): used for stews

Deep-frying (*agemono*): used for tempura, croquettes

One-pot cooking (*nabemono*): also known as Japanese hotpot

Slicing, serving (*sashimi*): used for sushi, raw fish



Popular Dishes

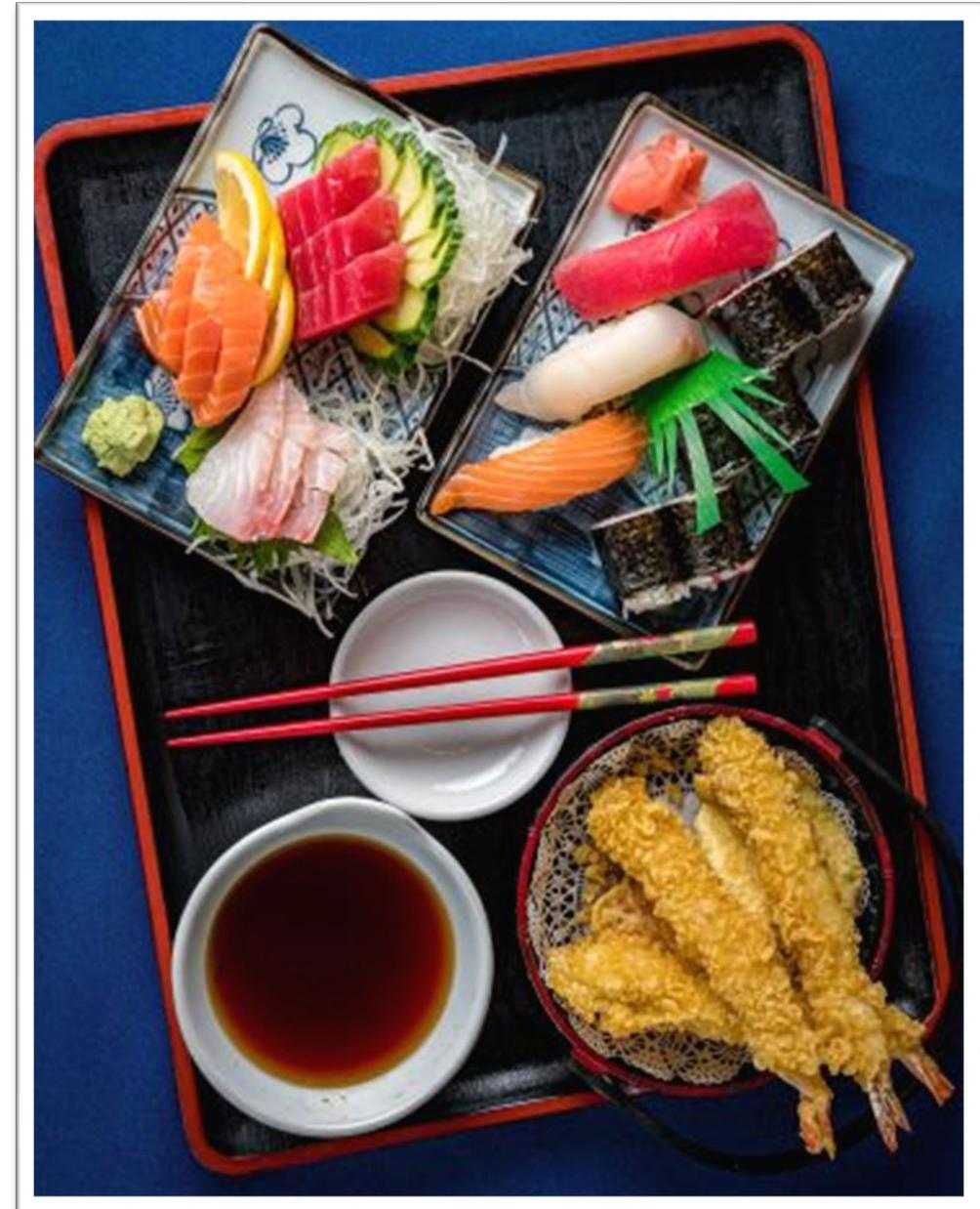
Sushi: cold rice dressed with vinegar, garnished especially with bits of raw seafood or vegetables

- **Shapes:** rolled (*Maki*), finger (*Nigiri*), pressed (*Battera*), scattered (*Chirashi*)

Sashimi: sliced, raw seafood

- **Slicing styles:** rectangles (*Hira-zukuri*), thin strips (*Usu-zukuri*), squares (*Kaku-zukuri*), triangles (*Sogi-sukuri*)

Tempura: deep-fried seafood/vegetable with a thin, crispy crust



India: Culinary Regions

North

- Central Asian Influence
- Dairy
- Tandoor breads
- Creamy curries
- Meat
- Garam masala
- Amchoor (dried unripe mango)

West

- Wheat Breads
- Legumes
- Fiery hot curries
- Coconut milk



East

- Rice
- Seafood
- White wheat flour

South

- Portuguese influence (Goa)
- Tropical appearance
- Oil not ghee
- Steamed food
- Rice
- Lentils
- Stews

Elements of Taste

Flavors

- **Sweet:** natural (jaggery, palm sugars, honey, rose)
- **Salty:** balances bitter/sour, enhances sweet/savory
- **Sour:** acidity (tamarind, lime, palm vinegar)
- **Spicy:** heat/intensity (chiles, garam masala)
- **Savory:** complex/rich (onions, garlic, turmeric)
- **Bitter:** dimension (fenugreek, mustard greens)

Textures: creamy, rich (North); drier, stews (South)

Colors: vibrant; from turmeric, saffron, spinach, annatto



Key Ingredients

Flatbread: North—milled wheat; South—fermented rice & dal

- **Naan:** milk/yogurt-based flatbread

Curry: vibrant, spiced sauce base for many dishes

Basmati rice: white, brown; pairs with curries

Dal: lentils, peas, beans—dried, split, cooked

- **Forms:** unhulled, split & hulled, split & unhulled

Condiments: raita (yogurt + herbs), chutney

Spices: *ajowan, amchur, asafoetida, fenugreek, anardana*

- **Masalas:** mix of dried spices, herbs



Cooking Techniques

For Dishes

- **Tandoor oven:** flatbreads slapped to sides, meats on skewers
- **Bhuna:** sautéing at low heat to reduce moisture/caramelize
- **Dum:** slow cooking with steam in sealed vessel
- **Dhungar:** smoking with live coal and ghee
- **Bhapa:** pot-in-pot steaming
- **Balchao:** pickling in vinegar and spices
- **Talna:** deep-frying

For Spices

- **Toasting:** cooked gently over medium-low heat until fragrant
- **Popping:** whole spices will “pop” after heat is applied
- **Tempering** (*Tadka*): whole or ground spices heated in hot oil or ghee

Popular Dishes



Butter chicken:
chicken in a creamy,
tomato-based sauce
with butter and cream



Chicken tikka masala:
yogurt and spice
marinated chicken in a
spicy tomato sauce



Malai kofta:
vegetable dumplings
cooked in creamy
gravy



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Any Questions?