

Replacing Western Fast Food with Asian Convenient Food Can Create a Healthier and More Active Society

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Abstract

The high level of consumption of Western fast food has become an integral part of modern life. Busy schedules and quick and cheap accessibility have made it a basic requirement of living. However, the emerging requirement has a detrimental effect on human health, which silently creeps in with diseases. Highly unhealthy fats, sugar, salt, and a lack of hygiene cause chronic illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity. While some visible effects also accompany these, such as skin dullness, hair fall, mood swings, irritation, tiredness, laziness, anger issues, and impatience. Our research highlights the need for action to be taken so that Asian convenient, nutritious healthy food can be introduced to replace Western junk fast food. In this research, we targeted the new generation youth who are influenced by advertisements and group influence, and individuals in their mid-forties, who consume fast food regularly as a requirement of their busy schedule. Both segments of people consume fast food. We need to focus on Asian convenience food, which can be made healthy, retain the tradition of Asian culture, and can be made conveniently in less time. Asian foods are tasty, filling, and require readily available ingredients, easy cooking techniques, and variable recipes. People should be made aware of the consequences and should be convinced that Western fast food can be replaced by healthy, convenient food for regular consumption. Fast food stalls can also provide healthy Asian local delicacies as a better business formula, which will be unique and not against the well-being of humanity. This can significantly make society and the environment more productive and healthier. The local ingredients and Asian cuisine reflect the culture and tradition, and can be healthier for consumption.

Keywords: *Consumption of Western Fast Food, Asian Delicacy, non-communicable disease, Asian culture, heritage*

1. Introduction

The dietary patterns of Asian countries have undergone massive changes over the decades, significantly marked by a shift from traditional basic cuisine to the adoption of Western diets. This change has remarkably increased the consumption of fast food and animal products, oils, unhealthy sweetening products, and processed food. Such a change in mass consumption has led to the rapid growth of fast-food establishments across Asia. This contributed significantly to the poor health conditions of the nation, mainly among the youth and middle-aged segments.

As introduced by Merriam–Webster, “fast food “is defined as food that can be swiftly prepared and served. This means that food can be prepared rapidly in large quantities and varieties. The establishments, such as restaurants, food stalls, and various outlets, try to give a rapid food supply to satisfy the need to quench the hunger of people in a very short time. Even some timetable services are not needed as takeaway food can satisfy the needs of working people who wish to dine in between office breaks. The fast-food industry has grown globally due to unavoidable factors such as globalisation, urbanisation, trade, liberalisation, and technological advancement. Starting from the United States, fast food culture has penetrated the small towns of Asia. International giants like McDonald’s, KFC, and Pizza Hut drive this growth, with significant sales in international markets. Asian markets have been receptive to Western fast-food chains due to changing lifestyles, increasing urbanisation, and a growth in the middle-class standard. The rising demand is due to convenient and affordable dining in a minimum time. the market was valued at USD 270.22billion in 2024 and is projected to reach USD 465.12 billion by 2033, growing at a CAGR of 6.22 % from 2025 to 2033.

Fast food is highly palatable and has a wide variety containing higher levels of refined carbohydrates, sugar, saturated fat, cholesterol, and high salt, with very low nutritive value and fibre. Unhealthy additions to the diet and constant consumption lead to various unfair circumstances, such as obesity, leading to non-communicable diseases, including cardiovascular diseases, deadly cancers, mental disorders, liver disease, and metabolic disorders, leading to greater economic and social burdens. The risk of being overweight among children and weight gain in adults in their 40s leads to an unhealthy nation with inappropriate performance. In children, this leads to malnutrition and defective growth. This has a negative impact on the health status of the nation. Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, and India are all victims of this emerging situation.

Various important aspects that contributed to the growing consumption of fast food in Asia is the concept of urbanisation, as people are now located at various destinations away from home, leading to an increasing demand for quick, yet convenient food to manage their busy schedules. Again, the change in taste was more inclined to the Western style of fast food. With the growing population, countries like Indonesia and the Philippines are now more into fast food addiction. Advertisements for the expansion of grant brands like KFC and McDonald’s are creating a network worldwide. Even local Asian fast food brands compete with Western brands by incorporating local regional ingredients and blending the taste, price, availability, and scope of business.

However, the impact of fast food on society and health is a concern. Due to the increasing consumption, the risk of non-communicable diseases is evident, including the risk of cancer. In different parts of Asia, there is a visible change in food habits, shifting from traditional food habits to the adoption of Western taste, and dining out has been a very common phenomenon, leading to status upgradation.

India’s fast food consumption is on the rise, especially among young adults, with International Chains. In China, the fast-food market is growing, with brands such as Yonghe King and KFC competing for market share. Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and the

Philippines are experiencing a surge in fast food consumption due to urbanisation and changing lifestyles, as stated by Arya and Dubey in their critical review of fast food consumption patterns among South Asian and Southeast Asian young adults. ijcmph.com. The percentage of fast food consumption among children is significantly high across Asian LMICs, depending on their socioeconomic conditions. Data collected from India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Bhutan show a very high consumption rate. In India, approximately 98% of school students consume Western fast food, with 85% consuming it regularly and the remaining 15% consuming it three times per week. Similarly, the percentage of fast food consumption in Pakistan is about 96% among children, whereas in Bhutan, 90% consume fast food weekly.

2. Literature Review

A broader study covering 45,772 traditional recipes across 22 regions showed non-random flavour blending—either uniform or contrasting—and highlighted ingredient popularity as a key determinant across cuisines worldwide. TLC offers a range of programs that elaborate on the diverse world of Asian Cuisine through food shows like Luke Nguyen's *Memories of Vietnam* and Kylie Kwong – *My China*, showing chefs and cultural experiences from various Asian countries, including Chinese, Vietnamese, and Japanese food. These are not only experiences but also showcase the nation's traditions and flavours. The *Dailymotion* cooking Channel shows that great Chinese food can be prepared by a very simple method, with the use of a huge range of vegetables; even leftover food can be part of the ingredients in the show *Gok Cooks Chinese*. The *Pickled Plum*, an Asian food blog, features many unique Asian recipes using daily ingredients and traditional methods of preparation.

Some of the best quotes from Instagram about Asian food

1. Dumplings are a little pocket of happiness #asianfoodquotes #foodie
2. Sushi is not just food, it's an art form #sushilove #foodquotes
3. Spice up your life with some delicious Thai curry #thaifoodlover #spicyeats
4. Bao buns never fail to bring joy to my taste buds #baobunlove #foodinspiration
5. Let us work and roll into the weekend with a tasty stir fry! #wokandroll ##weekendvibes
6. Pho real, Vietnamese cuisine is always a good idea! #pholove #vietnamesefoodie
7. Bibimbap: the perfect harmony of flavors in one bowl #koreanfoodcravings ##bibimbapgoals
8. Tempura improves everything. Am I right? #tempuralovers ##comfortfoodfix
9. Dim sum more, worry less! #dimsumdaydreams ##yumchaforever
10. Curry on and indulge in the rich flavours of Indian cuisine!

11. Happiness is a warm bowl of ramen on a cold day!
12. Life's too short for boring food – spice it up with some kimchi!
13. Elevate your sushi game with fresh sashimi slices and a wasabi kick!
14. From Pad Thai to green curry, Thai food brings all the flavour vibes!
15. Wonton soup: soothing broth for the soul

From the different bloggers' opinions and posts, it is evident that Asian food is all about diversity yet reflects tradition from Asia's various regions, including East, Southeast, and West Asia. Distinctive ingredients, such as rice, noodles, spices, and sauces, add vibrant flavours and taste to the food.

Famous chefs praise the bold flavours and cultural richness of Asian cuisines, with Gordon Ramsay calling Laos and Vietnam top food destinations and complimenting Filipino food as the "king of comfort foods", while other chefs highlight the diversity and simple yet complex nature of dishes like Chinese dim sum or the humble approach to eating in Vietnam. Gordon Ramsay's Enthusiasm for Asian Food, he declared Laos and Vietnam as top food destinations, noting the "off the charts" food quality in Laos' countryside and the "extraordinary melting pot of food" in Vietnam, appreciating its humble approach to eating. Filipino food, the "king of comfort foods" excels in the global culinary field. Thus, we get a clear idea from the famous chef and the worldwide bloggers and various channels that Asian food is vibrant and delicious and available in a wide variety, with very easy and time-saving cooking techniques. In East Asia, China has dumplings and noodles; Japan has sushi, ramen, and tempura; and Korea has kimchi. Southeastern Asia, Thailand has the nutritious Som tam, and Vietnam has Goi cuon, a famous spring roll, among many others. Ranveer Brar, a renowned celebrity chef, has emphasised the diversity and richness of Asian cuisine. According to him, food is a reflection of culture, history, and tradition. He also stated that Asian cuisine offers a wealth of opportunities for creativity and innovation. He notes that 'Every dish has a story to tell and as a Chef my job is to bring that story to life' While specific interviews on the nutritive value of Asian food aren't abundant, chefs like David Chang have explored the historical and cultural significance of Asian ingredients, while Jet Tila and Ken Hom have significantly brought the authenticity and balanced Asian cuisines and its culture. Many Asian dishes emphasise fresh vegetables, lean proteins, and diverse cooking methods, contributing to their healthful properties. Many Asian culinary styles prioritise fresh vegetables, grains, and various proteins, including fish and lean meats. Techniques such as stir-frying, steaming, and boiling are common and help preserve the nutritional integrity of ingredients by minimising fat content. The use of fermented foods, herbs, spices, and a balance of flavours (sweet, sour, salty, and spicy) can also contribute to overall health benefits, as seen in many traditional Asian dishes. Nobu Matsuhisa, a famous and celebrated chef, known for his modern Japanese and Peruvian fusion cuisine, promotes a style of cooking that relies on fresh, high-quality ingredients like fish and vegetables. This reflects the

generally healthy profile of traditional Japanese cuisine, which is rich in omega-3s and other nutrients. Pailin Chongchitnant's popular YouTube channel *Hot Thai Kitchen* is known for its authentic Thai recipes. She educates her audience on creating flavourful Thai food from scratch, which, in its traditional form, is often vegetable-based and full of nutrient-rich herbs and spices. It's truly understood that Asian food can be consumed in a nutritious pattern.

2.1 Impact of Asia food on society compared to Western Fast food

The study of Asian food has a huge impact on Western fast food, which is commonly known for its speed and convenience, causing tremendous health issues, leading to cultural differences. Traditional Asian food focuses more on whole grains, vegetables, and lean proteins, such as fish and tofu. This naturally leads to a high fibre, vitamin, and antioxidant content. Cooking methods such as steaming and stir-frying are preferred over deep-frying, as they are more beneficial for heart health, adding less saturated fat to the diet. The availability and diversity of dishes reflect the traditions and culture of the people. People should emphasise their own ingredients, which can bring out the health food, but are very convenient in nature. For example, steamed dumplings from China are very flavourful, low-fat, and convenient food items filled with lean proteins like chicken or shrimp and vegetables. Moo goo gai pan: A stir-fry with a light sauce, lean chicken, mushrooms, and other vegetables like Bok choy and water chestnuts. It is a light yet healthy option that can be easily prepared and carried for breaks. Beef and broccoli: With a high-protein beef base and fibre-rich broccoli, this stir-fry option is an extremely healthy meal, with a side of brown rice instead of white rice. Various options from Japan, such as Sushi and Miso-glazed tofu bowls, are available. Miso paste is a flavourful, baked, or pan-fried tofu served over rice with fresh vegetables. This wholesome meal serves as an authentic combination of health, culture, and taste of the region. Pad Kra pao gai is a combination of lean ground chicken stir-fried with Thai basil, garlic, and chillies. When served with a modest amount of rice and plenty of vegetables, it is a balanced and flavourful meal. Vietnamese summer rolls are fresh, non-fried spring rolls wrapped in translucent rice paper and filled with shrimp, herbs, rice vermicelli, and vegetables. Indian dal roti adds strength and provides proper diet options for individuals. There are many healthy and tasty varieties of convenient food available in Asian cuisine, and the dependency on Western fast food can be limited for a healthier nation. The economy can also be encouraged by maintaining traditional eating habits. This can ensure the well-being of people without compromising taste and health. The younger generation should be encouraged to taste and understand the benefits of the nutritive value of traditional Asian foods. The dependency on Western fast food should be replaced to protect human health. The convenience and availability of the ingredients and the variety can create a replacement for Western fast food in the middle-aged segment and the young generation, who are always in a hurry but in constant need of variety and diversity. Awareness and understanding of tradition and availability will make people more inclined toward Asian food than Western fast food. This will create a dependence on local cuisine, thus helping to extend local food stalls and outlets. This will also benefit the nation economically through the extension and multiplication of businesses.

3. Methodology

This research on the awareness of the consumption of local nutritious food over western fast food is a consistent process. Data collected from different journals show that the consumption of Western fast food is increasing every day due to prompt service, easy availability, and varied taste. This indicates that fast food consumption is diverting people from the traditional taste and culture of food. From the quotes of various Chefs like the Celebrity chef Ranveer Brar, we get to know how uniquely flavorful Asian cuisine can. Other famous chefs have stated that the nutritional value of the ingredients used in Asian cuisine cannot be denied. The convenience of preparing such extremely nutritious food with grains, vegetables, and herbs makes the dish wholesome and rich in vitamins and other nutrients. The different quotes collected from Instagram state that Asian cuisine is not only about emotion but also about taste, authenticity, and tradition. The mass opinion states that the balance of taste, from salt to sweetness, sourness, and spiciness, brings about a wonderful combination of taste, culture, and tradition. The easy and fresh availability of ingredients makes the food more nutritious and fresh for consumption. The innovation and creativity of the cuisine come from experimenting with diverse ingredients and cooking techniques.

4. Limitations of the study

With the diverse food culture of Asian Cuisine, understanding dietary patterns is challenging. With the innovation and experimentation of various methods and recipes, the cuisine has become complex and widespread. With socioeconomic factors and lifestyle changes, and with the change in population, the study of Asian cuisine has become very difficult to obtain accurate data for research.

4.1 The specific limitations are as follows.

Standardising the definition of cuisine and its pattern: Asian food is very diverse from region to region and does not concentrate on the dietary pattern of the population; for example, the Japanese consume less red meat and more plant-based food with simpler cooking methods, which is very different from other regions of Asia.

4.2 The unique food pattern, unique style of cooking, and experimentation with techniques create a wide difference in food; sometimes, the nutritional values are compromised due to innovation and reflection of taste. Taste is sometimes prioritised to meet customer needs. The various sauces and the use of different types of flavours are not always beneficial or nutritious by themselves. To compete with the Western fast-food culture and taste, and to survive in the market, taste enhancers are used, creating a different pattern for the cuisine.

4.3 Geographical and socioeconomic diversity are also important factors. Due to the vast expansion of Asian countries, their people, cuisine styles, economic conditions, and social conditions are all diverse and elaborate. From such a vast layout, the research offers data from limited areas, concentrating on a limited mass; thus, the acquired data are generalised and lack specification.

4.4 Changes in food consumption patterns and balancing food costs: With changes in lifestyle and income patterns, food habits also changed to some extent. As the Western influence

of fast food entered the preferences of people, food habits changed, and some fast-food centres started copying the West's fast-food delicacies using some Western products and some local products to bring about some similarity. Therefore, it is confusing to gather data as many of the masses are inclined to this change.

4.5 Future Awareness Project

As the research proceeded, we found that due to changes in lifestyle, time constraints, and even due to advertisements and promotions, unhealthy Western fast food had captured the market widely. In addition to unhealthy Western fast food, local food stalls are competing to excel by copying and raising the demand for fast food to meet the rising demand for convenient food. Not only middle-aged people but also children are getting addicted to fast food, which is in turn spoiling their health with the harmful effects of salt, saturated fats, non-edible colours, and harmful taste enhancers. It is regularly consumed by many people in Asia. Due to area changes and job transfers, people are more into a different dietary pattern. Awareness of the various non-communicable deadly diseases should be spread to make people more alert to the prevailing health conditions of the nation. Sampling showed that more than 85 % of the people with regular consumption of fast food are obese and have many digestive issues, and others are developing mental issues, attention deficiency, and more. To eliminate such disastrous health conditions, people should rely on Asian traditional food, which, through this study, has been proven to be healthy, tasty and takes less time, and convenient in terms of preparation and consumption. The variety cannot be ignored.

5. Conclusion

Asian Cuisine is a traditional, flavourful cuisine. It is not only a delicacy but also a reflection of the culture, tradition, and authenticity. The cuisines of different parts of Asia have been designed to portray the cultural heritage of each country. The availability of the ingredients, the combination of flavours, the merging of ingredients, and the tastes are unique, far better, and diverse. The use of fresh vegetables, herbs, lean meats, and medicinal spices is of great health benefit to the consumer. The preservation of culture and tradition is evident in Asian cuisines. The variety of items and their taste have already won many hearts through the sample analysis. Medicinal and flavourful herbs, such as lemon grass and mint, have immense health benefits. The inclination towards Western fast food is only towards the harmful effects on health, culture, and even the socioeconomic conditions of the people. Asian food has global acceptance as being vibrant and flavourful. Many famous chefs have put their hands on the effort to make Asian cuisine tastier, more nutritious, and more varied in nature, keeping the tradition and local flavour in consideration. We should also promote the goodness and vibrancy of the cuisine to protect the Asian culture and tradition and the health of the nation by emphasising local traditional Asian Cuisine rather than Western fast food.

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