

Trading food between america and china research paper

[Sociology](#), [Shopping](#)



Currently the United States is exporting an unprecedented amount of food to China. China has purchasing power and is using it to increase trade between the two countries with respect to food. One of the big food items China is buying from the United States is American soybeans. The reason that China is buying up so much of the American soybean crop is that the Chinese want the soybeans to increase livestock yields as they shift their cultural food ways more toward Western eating paradigms that include a lot of milk, eggs, and meat. Interestingly, nutritionists and the medical community in the United States bemoan the American diet high in milk, eggs, and meat as being responsible for many diseases. However, there is a perception in China that this diet is nutritious. In an interview with The Washington Post, Zheng Fengtian, an Agriculture and Rural Development Professor in Beijing, explained that the reason for increased trade between the United States and China in soybeans is because in China “ people’s living standard has improved and they need more nutritious food,” the ability to import soybeans “ satisfies people’s needs for meat, eggs and milk”(Richburg 2012). The United States is also sending large quantities of wine and beer, snack foods, dairy products, and pork to China. According to Scott Sindelar of the United States Agriculture Department at the US Embassy in Beijing, the reason that the Chinese are importing American junk food culture and all it entails is because middle-class consumers in China want it: “ It’s the growing population of middle-income consumers who are changing their food preferences” (Richburg 2012). American snack foods made of tree nuts are a favorite of Chinese noshers. This has caused the demand for, and the prices of, “ almonds, pistachios and, more recently, pecans” to skyrocket (Richburg

2012). Along with alcohol and snack foods from the United States, China is consuming large quantities of American fast food. Kentucky Fried Chicken is the biggest fast food chain in mainland China and Pizza Hut is the biggest casual dining chain there (Liu 2008). The United States is importing apple juice from China in large quantities. Apple juice trade with China constituted two-thirds of the apple juice consumed in the United States in 2012. Besides the juice, the United States also imported “\$105 million worth of sausage casings, \$800 million of shellfish and \$1.8 billion of fish” from China (Gara 2013). Frozen Tilapia fish fillets were the number one import from China to the United States in 2013. More than one-third of the total fish fillets consumed in the United States are from China. According to historian Andrew Coe in his book *Chop Suey: A Cultural History of Chinese Food in the United States* American passengers on Empress of China ship in 1784 raved about the Chinese food served to them (Coe 2009). During the 1800s, Americans loved the Chinese food introduced to the western United States. Chinese food ways arrived in the United States with the men from Southern China who came to mine and work on the railroads. It was well-regarded by Americans from the beginning. It was consumed across all strata of United States society from miners to the elite. Chinese food was popular because it was exotic and offered a welcome relief from the bland diet consumed by many in the United States. After World War II, pre-made Chinese cuisine that could be bought in grocery stores was welcomed by the middle class in America. Americans have clamored for the aroma, color, and variety of spicy ingredients found in Chinese cuisine. Food from China is generally assumed to be one of the most pervasive instances of cultural exchange between the

two countries (Lovegren 1995). Chinese who moved to the eastern United States during the 19th century introduced their cuisine to New York and chop suey became a New York standard. According to Coe, Jewish New Yorkers adored chow mein and egg rolls. In the 1970s, Chinese cuisine received another boost from then United States President Richard Nixon who admired much of the food he was introduced to in Beijing. Today there are an estimated 40, 000 restaurants in the United States that served Chinese cuisine. Chinese cuisine is in fact the most popular foreign food in the United States (Coe 2009). There are several reasons why China is importing so much more food from the United States than they have historically. One reason is a series of health scares revolving around tainted food produced in China. Because of the infant formula scare and other Chinese food disasters many people in China choose to buy American food imports rather than risk eating contaminated food manufactured domestically. Another reason for the increase in food imports is strictly mathematical; China has a massive population and a dearth of arable land. A report produced for the United States Congress by Congressional Research Service calculates that in 2012 the United States traded approximately \$30 billion of agricultural foodstuffs to China, and that China traded approximately \$10 billion of agricultural foodstuffs to the United States. Currently, the United States is China's number one trade partner mostly due to China purchasing large quantities of corn, soybeans, and snack foods (Morrison 2014).

Works Cited

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