

How food habits are affected by culture

[Food & Diet](#)



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Food is a necessity for all living things. What we eat directly portraits who we are. Since ancient times, food habits and culture are influenced by many factors. Food is life, and life is understood through food. Food habits are developed by the culture that which surrounds it. I believe that our culture and food habit is strongly influenced by historical events, geographic characteristics, and religious beliefs. Thanksgiving is the time of year for family to gather. Everyone who lives far away from home will return to gather for a family dinner. During Thanksgiving, family pray and be thankful for things that god has given us.

What we need to understand is that what makes us celebrate these traditions is because of the meaningful historical events. “ In the United States, certain kinds of food are traditionally served at Thanksgiving meals. Firstly, baked or roasted turkey is usually the featured item on any Thanksgiving feast table (so much so that Thanksgiving is sometimes referred to as " Turkey Day"). Stuffing, mashed potatoes with gravy, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, sweet corn, various fall vegetables (mainly various kinds of squashes), and pumpkin pie are commonly associated with Thanksgiving dinner.

All of these are actually native to the Americas or were introduced as a new food source to the Europeans when they arrived. ” - (" Thanksgiving (united states)," 2013) Wikipedia. org From this quote, we can understand that our history has helped influence what we are eating today. Native American has taught missionaries how to hunt animal so they can survive in Boston during the cold winter times. They have given the missionary hope in the darkest

time. From then, we celebrate Thanksgiving and eat the food that the Native American has introduced us until even this day.

As we all know, turkey meat does not taste tenderness and juicy compared to other types of meat, yet we still eat turkey as part of our daily diet. Throughout history these Native American has strongly influenced the food habit that we are having. Another great example of historical event which had a strong influence on culture and food habit is Taiwan food culture. Taiwanese has been strongly influenced by the Japanese invasion. During World War II, Taiwan was colonized by the Japanese for about half a century. “ Between 1895 and 1945, Taiwan (including the Pescadores) was a dependency of the Empire of Japan.

The expansion into Taiwan was a part of Imperial Japan's general policy of southward expansion during the late 19th century”-(“ Taiwan Under Japanese," 2013)-wikipedia. org There are some Taiwanese cuisines that which was inspired by Japanese cooking such as Taiwanese tempura. A signature Taiwanese Cuisine consists of a mixture of dried tofu, string beans, blood rice cake, and fish balls, is a good representation of the influence that the Japanese Culture has over the Taiwanese. Due to the historical Colonization, these Japanese influenced foods are very popular in the Taiwan night market.

These historical influences through time have transformed Taiwan food habit and culture into a whole new form. “ Taiwan population consists of a lot poor immigrant from the mainland and people from Fujian and Guangdong province of China. In the Qing dynasty, when Han Chinese crossed the Taiwan Strait from Fujian and Guangdong provinces to cultivate Taiwan’s <https://assignbuster.com/how-food-habits-are-affected-by-culture/>

wilds, their work was physically taxing, so peddlers bearing prepared food on shoulder poles would take to the streets, calling out the names of the cold and hot snacks they had to offer, and delivering them to the edge of field and forest. –(" Bustle, Not Romance Taiwan's," 2012)

In this article, we can see that the place where peddlers gave out snacks to those hard workers from China has transformed into night markets into what we all know today. This is what the famous Night Market of Taiwan originated from; a wide variety of poor immigrants that wanted to make a living selling different food to the others. From these examples, we can see that both our food habit is influence by both historical and geographic influences. Geographic location is another important factor that affects food habits. For example, Japan has a series of island that is surrounded by the ocean.

Therefore, this country has an abandoning amount of fish supplies. This leads to the invention of the world known food, Sushi. But the real reason behind why Japanese eat sushi is very different. It was not created for enjoyment but rather for a survival need. According to The Cambridge Encyclopedia in Volume Two has an article by Professor N. Ishege, “ Who says that sushi originated as a means of preserving fish to prevent putrefaction. He says that the fish are salted and placed in boiled rice and preserved by lactic acid fermentation. A souring flavor occurs in the process.

The fish is eaten only after the sticky decomposed rice has been cleaned off. ” (Newman, 2013) In Japan, fish is abundant resources because of geographic fact that Japan consist of a series of island. Due to its unique characteristics, Japan lacks in land space to grow and raise cattle. Therefore, beef and pork is more valuable than fish. Japanese food habit is strongly

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influence by this fact. On the other hand, countries such as the US have plentiful of land space for raising cattle. Their food habit lies strongly on meat such as Barbeque and Burgers. Our food habit is directly influence by the geographic location and characteristic.

Religious belief is another heavily influential factor for the food habits and culture. I-Kuan Tao is a new religion that originated in China. This is a religion that has combined three different elements, which includes Confucianism, Taoism, and Chinese Buddhism. I-Kuan Tao believe that Tao members (I-Kuan Tao followers) should become vegetarians because as stated in Three Treasures (I-Kuan Tao's bible) that we should not harm any animal for our own benefits. They also believe that the slaughter of the precious cattle needed for agriculture is another unforgettable mistake. Pork, seafood, chicken, rice, and soy are very common ingredients.

Beef is far less common, and some Taiwanese (particularly the elderly generation) still refrain from eating it. This is in part due to the considerations of some Taiwanese Buddhists, a traditional reluctance towards slaughtering precious cattle needed for agriculture, and an emotional attachment and feeling of gratefulness and thanks to the animals traditionally used for very hard labour. (" Taiwanese cuisine," 2013) As a witness of my mom's eating habit, who is also an I-Kuan Tao follower, I see that she would not eat meat during many days of the year.

She never had beef in her life. So these religious beliefs have strongly influenced her food habit as well as our diet as a family. We rarely had beef in on our menu, so I grow up dislike the taste of beef. Another example of religious factor influences our food habits and culture is the beliefs of Muslim

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have on its followers. According to Muslim beliefs, pork is a forbidden food to eat. Referring to history, Muslims believe in if God, the Creator, and the All-Wise, commands us not to eat pork, then we should obey what they said.

They believe Alla(God) is correct since he declared pig meat is harmful, so they should not eat it. “ Pork is the number one and the most important meat to a lot cultures in the world, yet it is the number one forbidden item on the list for the Muslims. ” (" faithandfood fact," 2009) My Grandmother, who has immigrated to Taiwan from China in 1940s, is a Muslim follower. She was grown in a Muslim Community; therefore, she didn't eat pork in her entire life. Base on these two examples. I believe that religious belief has a strong influence over our food habit.

From these personal experiences, I believe that religious belief places a very influential role on its follower's food habit. Religious belief, historical events and geographical characteristics have strongly influenced our food habits. I believe that we are living in a country that consists of many different unique cultures. These cultures are best understood through observing its foods. We are living in a world of diversity where we have much different background influence in our food habit and culture. It's crucial that we learn to appreciate these cultures by appreciating the food habits which has blended within.