

# the world's healthiest diet


Asian food—from Japanese to Thai to Vietnamese to Indian—is not only spicy and flavorful but also surprisingly good for you. Here, 9 fabulous

low-fat recipes with Far Eastern flair. by Elizabeth Fassberg

Spicy, succulent Asian food can be healthful and possibly even lengthen your life. Sound too good to be true? There's only one catch—you have to eat traditional Eastern fare that's low in saturated fat and meat and high in grains and vegetables. In other words, a heaping serving of sweet-and-sour pork at your local Chinese restaurant doesn't count! But actually, the traditional, veggie-laden recipes of Asia pack as much flavor as their deep-fried, meaty counterparts. Here's the good-for-your-health news about the time-honored Asian diet.

- Asian fare is one of the world's most healthful cuisines. The incidence of heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, and certain cancers is lower in Asia than in the United States. In fact, the Japanese live longer on average than any other people in the world.
- Rates of osteoporosis are lower in Asia, despite the fact that women get most of their calcium from plant foods such as tofu, vegetables, and seeds—not dairy products.
- Asian food may help lower the risk of asthma and allergies, according to a new study published in August by the American Lung Association.

So, how do the Asians eat? As you can see in the Diet Pyramid on page 103, the foundation of this cuisine is rice, grains, noodles, vegetables, legumes (such as soy and black beans), fruits, nuts, and fish. Cooks in Asia use a variety of wonderful



## vietnamese summer rolls

- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| 4 eight-inch round rice spring roll skins                              | 1 cup bean sprouts           |
| ½ cup vermicelli or rice noodles                                       | dipping sauce                |
| 12 large mint leaves   | 2 Tb. hoisin sauce           |
| 8 large shrimp, boiled, peeled, chilled, and sliced in half lengthwise | 4 Tb. water                  |
|  | 2 Tb. finely chopped peanuts |

- 1 In large bowl, soak spring roll skins in warm water about 3 to 5 minutes or until soft. Drain and wrap in plastic wrap until ready to use. Do not oversoak or skins will become too fragile to work with.
- 2 In separate bowl, soak vermicelli in hot water 6 minutes or until soft.
- 3 Place 1 spring roll skin on flat surface. Add 3 mint leaves in single layer from top to bottom, making sure to leave a border on outside of round.
- 4 Add ½ cup vermicelli to center of round, on top of mint leaves. Place 4 of the shrimp slices on top



## steamed vegetable dumplings

- 1/2 tsp. chopped garlic
  - 1 scallion, minced
  - 1/4 cup canned water chestnuts, minced
  - 1/4 cup canned shredded bamboo shoots, minced
  - 1/4 cup bean sprouts, minced
  - 1/4 cup shredded carrots, minced
  - 1/4 cup red pepper, minced
  - 16 wonton skins, wrapped in plastic until ready to use
- dipping sauce**
- 2 Tb. low-sodium soy sauce
  - 2 Tb. water
  - 1/2 tsp. minced ginger

- 1 In medium-size bowl, mix garlic, scallion, chestnuts, shoots, sprouts, carrots, and red peppers.
  - 2 Coat small frying pan with vegetable spray and heat on medium flame. Add vegetables and stir-fry about 2 minutes to dry mixture and blend flavors.
  - 3 Place one wonton skin on flat surface. Dip finger in water and wet outside rim. Place 1 1/2 tsp. of mixture in center. Gather corners of skin and pinch together, making a purse. Set aside and continue doing same thing with remaining skins.
  - 4 Line bamboo steamer or vegetable steamer with parchment (available in supermarkets) so that dumplings don't stick. Steam wontons about 10 minutes or until skins are translucent.
  - 5 While dumplings are cooking, in small bowl mix together soy sauce, water, and ginger. Serve with dumplings. (They should be eaten as soon as they come out of steamer.)
- Yield: 16 small dumplings.  
*Per serving (4 servings), 112 calories; 15% (4 g) protein, 4% (1 g) fat, 81% (23 g) carbohydrate. 3 mg cholesterol; 488 mg sodium.*

herbs and spices to enhance their food: cloves, coriander, cumin, curry powder, ginger, mint, sesame seeds, five-spice powder (a blend of star anise, fennel, clove, cinnamon, and Szechuan pepper), chili peppers, and sweet basil. Poultry and meat are eaten only occasionally and are mainly used as flavorings.

This is a big departure from the typical American diet, in which 38 to 40 percent of our daily calories come from fat, and 70 percent of our protein is derived from animal products. Marion Nestle, Ph.D., chairperson of the department of nutrition and food studies at New York University, says that following the Asian diet is an excellent way for Americans to improve their nutrition, because it makes eating vegetables and fruits more enjoyable.

Here are nine low-fat recipes with Asian flavors. They're zesty, healthful, and you can fix them in a flash. You can buy the Asian ingredients and cooking supplies at your local Asian or gourmet market or order them through the mail (see Buying Guide).

*Elizabeth Fassberg is a food stylist in New York City. Her flavorful Asian dishes were inspired by time spent sampling the local cuisine in Vietnam.*

of vermicelli in single layer. Finally, add 1/4 cup sprouts.

5 To fold: Take top of spring roll skin and fold into center. Do same with bottom. Take left side and fold all the way to other side. Then take right side and fold all the way over to other side, cinching it into tight

package. Then turn whole roll over so seams are on bottom.

6 Set aside and do same procedure with other 3 skins. Refrigerate until ready to eat.

**To make dipping sauce**

1 In small saucepan, combine hoisin sauce, water, and peanuts.

On low heat, bring to boil and let simmer 1 minute. Remove from heat and serve with summer rolls. Yield: 4 rolls.

*Per serving (4 servings), 144 calories; 23% (8 g) protein, 18% (3 g) fat, 59% (21 g) carbohydrate. 30 mg cholesterol; 190 mg sodium.*

## 3 tuna in banana leaves

- 2 eight-oz. tuna steaks, cut into bite-size pieces
- 8 Tb. dried Asian mushrooms (½ cup), soaked in water and finely diced
- 4 Tb. chopped scallions
- 1 cup vermicelli, soaked in cold water 5 minutes and roughly chopped
- 16 pieces of banana leaves (leaves of the banana palm), 8 by 12 inches—the idea is to have pieces big enough to completely cover tuna; plus 4 strips, about 12 inches long, for tying. You may substitute aluminum foil for banana leaves.

### fish marinade

- 2 Tb. Vietnamese fish sauce
- ½ tsp. sugar
- 2 Tb. low-sodium soy sauce



- 1 In medium-size bowl, combine tuna, mushrooms, scallions, and vermicelli, and mix well.
- 2 In small bowl, mix fish sauce, sugar, and soy sauce. Pour on fish mixture and toss.
- 3 Turn broiler on. Place one banana leaf on top of another leaf. Spoon ¼ of mixture into middle of leaves. Fold leaves around tuna as if you are wrapping a present: Fold top to center, bottom to center, then fold left side and right side into center. Tie each with piece of banana leaf. If you're us-

ing foil, follow same procedure (you don't need to tie packet). Make 3 more packets. Place packets on baking sheet and cook about 4 minutes on each side, or longer if you like your tuna well done. Cut open banana leaves, fold them back, and eat tuna out of leaves. If using foil, remove fish from foil and serve with white rice. Yield: 4 servings.

*Per serving (4 servings), 303 calories: 44% (32 g) protein, 21% (7 g) fat, 35% (26 g) carbohydrate. 43 mg cholesterol; 646 mg sodium.*

## 5 green beans with lemongrass

- 1 lb. green beans, trimmed
- 4 Tb. minced lemongrass (peel tough outer layer and use tender inner part; discard outer leaves and trim ends), or substitute 4 Tb. grated fresh lemon zest moistened with 1 Tb. fresh lemon juice
- 2 Tb. minced garlic
- 2 Tb. lemon juice
- ¼ tsp. salt and pepper, or to taste

1 In large pot, boil water. Add green beans and cook about 4 minutes or until beans are crisp-tender and still bright green. Pour immediately into colander.

2 In large frying pan over medium heat, coat pan with vegetable spray. Add lemongrass and garlic and sauté 2 minutes but make sure not to burn. Add beans and lemon juice and sauté until beans are hot. Season with salt and pepper and serve hot or cold. Yield: 4 servings. *Per serving (4 servings), 46 calories: 17% (2 g) protein, 7% (0 g) fat, 77% (10 g) carbohydrate. 0 mg cholesterol; 144 mg sodium.*

## 4 vegetable and beef lo mein

- 8 oz. spaghetti or Chinese lo mein noodles, cooked according to package instructions

### sauce

- 1 cup chicken stock
- 4 Tb. hoisin sauce
- 4 Tb. oyster sauce
- 2 Tb. seasoned rice wine vinegar
- 2 Tb. reduced-sodium soy sauce

- 2 large cloves garlic, sliced as thin as possible

- 6 oz. London broil, sliced in thin strips, optional

- 2 cups shredded carrots

- 1 cup snow peas

- 1 cup canned sliced bamboo shoots, drained

- 4 large scallions, cut into 1-inch pieces

- ½ cup canned water chestnuts, drained

- 3 cups sliced mushrooms

- pepper, to taste

1 Cook pasta according to package instructions. Set aside in colander until ready to use.

2 Mix sauce and set aside.

3 In large frying pan coated with vegetable spray, sauté garlic and beef on high heat until beef is brown on all sides. Remove from pan. (If not using beef, sauté garlic, add ¼ of vegetable mixture, and continue using directions in step 4.)

4 Place all vegetables in large bowl. Coat frying pan that meat was cooked in with vegetable spray. Add ¼ of vegetable mixture and cook about 2 minutes on highest heat, stirring constantly. Remove vegetables from pan; add to beef mixture. Spray pan again and cook another ¼ of the vegeta-

bles. Follow same procedure until all vegetables are cooked.

5 Put half of vegetable and beef mixture back into large frying pan. Still on highest heat, add half of sauce, and stir constantly. Add ½ of pasta and toss with vegetables. Slowly add more vegetables, more sauce, and pasta until all is in pan. Cook about 4 minutes until all sauce has been absorbed, stirring very often. (If you don't have a large enough pan, cook half of it at a time.) Remove from heat, sprinkle with pepper, and serve. Yield: 6 servings.

*Per serving without beef (6 servings), 248 calories: 15% (9 g) protein, 5% (1 g) fat, 80% (49 g) carbohydrate. 0 mg cholesterol; 1,175 mg sodium.*

# 6

## vegetable sushi

It's important to use sushi rice in order to achieve the right consistency for these rolls. You can get sushi rice in Asian specialty markets, or from the mail-order sources listed in the Buying Guide.

### rice

2 cups rice

2 1/2 cups water

### rice seasoning

1 tsp. sugar

1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 cup rice wine vinegar

4 sheets sushi nori (seaweed) sheets

assorted raw vegetables of choice, such as carrots, peppers, cucumber, avocado, sliced in very thin strips (cut, about 1 1/2 cups)

### garnish

low-sodium soy sauce, optional

prepared wasabi (green horseradish), optional

seasoned sliced ginger, optional

① In medium-size pot, add rice and water. Bring to boil. Cover and simmer 15 to 20 minutes, or until water is absorbed and rice is cooked. Remove from heat.

② In small bowl, mix sugar, salt, and rice wine vinegar.

③ Turn rice into wooden or stainless-steel bowl. Add vinegar mixture and stir into rice.

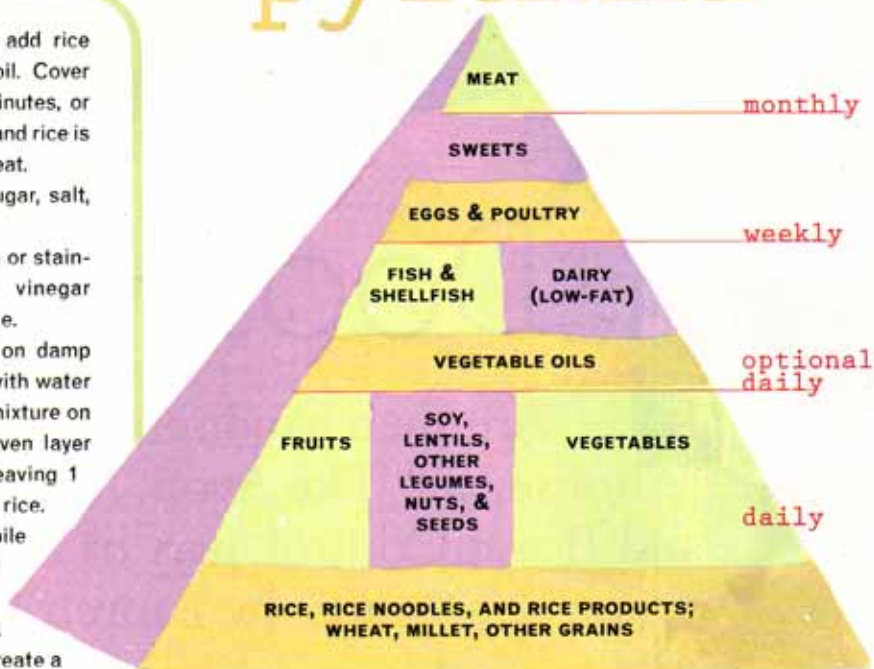
④ Place sheet of nori on damp towel. Moisten hands with water and spread 1 cup rice mixture on one side of nori, leaving 1 inch on the top without rice.

⑤ Place vegetables in pile in center of rice. Hold vegetables firmly in place with fingertips.

Then roll up towel to create a sushi roll, keeping firm pressure on rice so that a neatly packed cylinder results. Let rolls sit 5 minutes. Then, using wet, sharp knife, slice into 8 one-inch rounds. Turn slices rice-side up, and serve with soy sauce, wasabi, and ginger. Yield: 4 rolls.

*Per serving, without garnish (4 servings), 379 calories; 8% (7 g) protein, 2% (1 g) fat, 90% (84 g) carbohydrate. 0 mg cholesterol; 315 mg sodium.*

# the asian diet pyramid



The healthful and delicious Asian diet calls for generous daily servings of rice and other grains, and fruits, vegetables and legumes, with smaller amounts of vegetable oil, fish, and low-fat dairy products. Always see your doctor before starting a diet program.

©1995 Oldways Preservation & Exchange Trust

## chicken curry over wheat noodles

1/2 cup light coconut milk

1 cup chicken stock, low-sodium and reduced-fat

1/2 cup water

2 Tb. fish sauce

2 Tb. hot curry powder, or to taste

2 dried red chilies, or to taste

2 cups canned shredded bamboo shoots, drained

1 lb. skinless, boneless chicken breasts cut into bite-size pieces

8 oz. Japanese buckwheat (soba) pasta or whole wheat linguine

20 cilantro leaves

① In medium pot, combine coconut milk, stock, water, fish sauce, curry powder, and chilies. At medium heat, bring mixture to boil. Add shoots and chicken and cook 12 minutes.

② While chicken is cooking, bring large pot of water to boil. Add pasta and cook 6 to 8 minutes (if using soba); otherwise, follow directions on package. Drain and divide among 4 bowls.

③ Spoon chicken mixture over noodles. Top with cilantro. Serve hot. Yield: 4 servings.

*Per serving (4 servings), 383 calories; 39% (38 g) protein, 10% (4 g) fat, 51% (50 g) carbohydrate. 67 mg cholesterol; 859 mg sodium.* ▷ 143



## SKIN SMART

continued from page 119

### Lip Fixes

Your poor lips are constantly exposed to all the nastiness winter has to offer. Protect them every day with lip balm or lipstick with vitamin E and sunscreen. If they remain very dry and flaky, you can gently exfoliate them manually with a soft, wet washcloth or with a lip mask that crumbles dead skin away. But remember, you *can* have too much of a good thing. Excessive exfoliating can irritate lips and make them rougher than when you started. Some treatments to try: I Natural Lip Silkener, BeautiContol Lip Apeel, Monteil Lip Line Defense, and Christine Valmy Vegetal Peel.

### Extra Rx

Winter definitely takes its toll on two of the most neglected parts of the body—the hands and the feet. Thick gloves and heavy boots may keep your extremities warm, but maintaining healthy skin requires an additional layer of protection. Just a few minutes from your daily schedule along with the help of a few products can eliminate flaky winter skin and bring softness back to the hardest-working parts of your body.

Originally developed in Norway for Arctic fishermen, Neutrogena Norwegian Formula Hand Cream is highly concentrated, so just a dab will do. Don't let the name fool you; this emollient-rich formula works just as well on elbows, knees, and feet. But if you insist on using site-specific products, Neutrogena now makes a counterpart to the popular hand cream: Norwegian Formula Foot Cream. Specially formulated for the thicker skin of the sole and heel, this foot cream boasts a moisturizing period of more than 17 hours.

Taking care of dry skin doesn't have to be a chore; turn it into an opportunity to pamper yourself. Sarah Michaels Foot Care Ensemble, a first aid kit for rough, dry feet, has everything you need to give yourself a soothing at-home beauty treatment, including a smoother to exfoliate calloused skin, lotion to moisturize, and a wooden massage roller to relax tired feet.

For those with severely dry hands and feet as well as a high tolerance for the scent of camphor, there's Porter's Lotion. Created more than 60 years ago for the weathered skin of Montana's farmers and ranchers, this unique liquid lotion conditions and moisturizes dehydrated skin exposed to extreme conditions. □

## THE WORLD'S HEALTHIEST DIET

continued from page 103

steamed bean curd  
with ginger  
scallion sauce 8

14 oz. medium tofu, cut into  
bite-size pieces

4 cups broccoli florets

1 cup carrots, peeled and sliced into  
thin rounds

sauce

3 scallions

1 1/2 tsp. minced ginger

1/4 cup reduced-sodium soy sauce

① In a steamer (either bamboo or stainless steel), cook tofu about 5 minutes or until very hot. Then set aside in covered bowl. Steam broccoli and carrots until softened but still brightly colored and crisp—about 3 minutes. Keep warm in steamer.

② Coat large frying pan with vegetable spray. Add scallions and ginger. Sauté 1 minute. Add soy sauce and bring to boil. Turn heat down. Then add vegetables and tofu and stir about 1 minute, until mixture is hot. Remove from heat.

③ Serve with brown rice and Chinese hot mustard. Yield: 4 servings.

Per serving (4 servings), 209 calories: 37% (22 g) protein, 35% (9 g) fat, 28% (17 g) carbohydrate. 0 mg cholesterol; 656 mg sodium.

plum wine  
and fruit medley 9

1 cup plum wine

1 fifteen-oz. can lychee nuts in  
light syrup

1 eleven-oz. can mandarin orange  
slices in light syrup

1 cup pineapple chunks, fresh or  
canned in clarified pineapple juice

2 tsp. minced crystallized ginger

① In medium-size pot bring wine to boil. Add lychees, oranges, and pineapple, and turn off heat. Cover and let steep 15 minutes. Divide evenly among 4 bowls and top each with 1/2 tsp. ginger. Serve with nonfat vanilla yogurt or frozen yogurt. You can also serve cold: After steeping, put in refrigerator and chill. Yield: 4 servings.

Per serving (4 servings), 261 calories: 2% (.8 g) protein, 1% (.3 g) fat, 97% (52 g) carbohydrate. 0 mg cholesterol; 48 mg sodium. □

# OIL of OLAY.



For Beautiful,  
Healthy  
Winter Skin

Preserving the natural beauty of your skin can be a challenge—especially during the winter season! Oil of Olay's Daily UV Protectant Cream is a rich, greaseless formula that replenishes essential moisture that winter can strip away. It combines Olay moisture with SPF 15, a level dermatologists recommend year round.

To give your entire body treatment during the coldest months, moisturize while you shower with Oil of Olay 2-in-1

Moisturizing Body Wash.

A blending of cleansers and unique Olay moisturizers which are actually absorbed by your skin. No wonder it's the #1 dermatologist recommended and used leading body wash.

Even while you dream, you can counter the effects of winter with Night of Olay. This remarkable cream infuses skin with the precious replenishing moisture it needs. And as you sleep you can improve elasticity and firmness.



For your personalized skin care program, call  
1-800-OLAY-4-YOU (1-800-652-9496).



A lifetime of beautiful skin.