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NESTLÉ PROFESSIONAL NUTRITION MAGAZINE

Two Sides
of the Table

Interviews with
Nestlé Chefs

Health: The
World View



East Meets West

east



A World Apart

As the world gets smaller, people from different cultures are finding more opportunities to meet and share ideas, and one of the most fascinating places to do that is at the table. Traditions, favorite foods, and beliefs about nutrition vary widely from East to West, and learning about other cultures can be a fascinating and delicious way to connect with customers and differentiate your operation.

west



A World Together

In this issue, we will take a look at some of the food and nutrition ideas that define Eastern and Western cultures, then provide tips on ways you can borrow from other cultures to attract new customers and enhance their dining experience.

TWO SIDES OF THE TABLE

east

HIGHLIGHTS:

Communal dishes

Hands, chopsticks, or silverware

**Foods frequently mixed
in dishes**

In Japan, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries suggests:¹

- Eating more grain and vegetable dishes.
- Limiting milk and fruit to two servings a day.
- Keeping water or tea at the core of your diet.
- Incorporating exercise for optimum health.



west

HIGHLIGHTS:

Individual plates

Usually silverware

**Foods frequently served
separately**

The USDA uses MyPlate to represent a healthy meal.² Consumers are encouraged to:

- Enjoy your food, but eat less.
- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- Make at least half your grains whole grains.
- Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk.
- Choose foods and drinks with little or no added sugars.
- Limit salt (sodium) in foods you buy—it all adds up.
- Eat the right amount of calories for your body and activity level.



DID YOU KNOW?

Two trends are present around the globe: Fewer meals are eaten with the family, and snacking in between meals is on the rise.³

Chef Sheldon Fernandes

"I believe that chefs have the responsibility to lead and provide direction to the whole discussion on nutrition. We are at a point in history where chefs are opinion leaders and have the forums available to make a positive impact. We have to use the global access and advances in technology to find better culinary solutions to today's nutritional challenges."



Meet Sheldon, a Research and Development Chef at Nestlé's Product Technology Center in Germany.

Are you an Eastern or Western trained chef?

My formal training was in Western cuisine, but coming from India, I grew up with Asian cuisine and later trained in Asian cuisine as well.

What differences do you see in each of these styles?

The key differences are a wider variety of ingredients, especially vegetables that are available in the East. This array allows for a bigger range of flavors and textures. In the East, food is also seen as medicinal and the use of spices, herbs and vegetables for curing ailments is quiet common.

What are your recommendations to new chefs working on both sides of the culinary world?

I would say that we need to respect the individual cuisines for their authenticity. Having said that, one can maintain the essence of the original cuisine or dish, but still give it a new dimension. After all, most cuisines as we know them today have evolved from the interaction between East and West over many years. A genuine appreciation of a culture and its food will take us a long way in making the right choices for great tasting, healthy foods.

How does the approach to nutrition affect the style of cuisine?

The primary difference that I see is that in the East, it is common to eat smaller amounts of varied tastes and textures during the same meal. This allows one to combine various cooking techniques in one meal, making it more interesting and providing a balanced meal.

What type of cuisine are you currently working on?

I have been working on combining Eastern and Western cuisine for a while now since there is a lot to learn and experience from both cuisines. Also, there are many similarities between the two approaches, and bridging the two cuisines has been an interesting experience.

What are the challenges of working in a cuisine style different from the one in which you were trained?

One observation of mine has been that some Western chefs are challenged when it comes to preparing vegetable dishes. This is where looking to the East can help provide inspiration. Also there is the danger of looking at the opposite cuisine superficially or through the filter of one's own cuisine. This is a pitfall one must try and avoid.

Chef Richard Brogan

Meet Richard, a chef who shows how East meets West in the kitchen every day in his role as a Nestlé Culinary Innovation Manager.

Are you an Eastern or Western trained chef?

Western. However Sydney is very multicultural with a very large Asian influence. This is very apparent in the style of food that is popular here.

How has Western cuisine been integrated into Eastern cuisine, and how are chefs creating the future in this area?

Trends in Australia are continually evolving and we are seeing that some Asian dishes are no longer considered ethnic in the same way pizza is no longer considered Italian. After pizza, Pad Thai is the No. 1 take-out meal. Dishes such as butter chicken are now almost as Aussie as cooking a few sausages on the barbecue. Yum Cha (Chinese dumplings)—particularly on the weekend—is as much a part of the local culture here as going to a café.

In retail, noodles are a very big category and continue to grow. Stir frying in home is also part of the repertoire for many Australians.

What differences do you see in each of these styles?

Western is more meat-driven, often using slower cooking techniques. Asian cooks tend to have more respect for ingredients and tend to have more fresh or lightly cooked foods.

What are your recommendations to new chefs working on both sides of the culinary world?

Whatever cuisine type is being used, less is more is the best advice I can give.

How does the approach to nutrition affect the style of cuisine?

As a very general overview, an Asian meal occasion is still quite traditional and can often take quite some time for the meal to be consumed. This generally means that the amount of food consumed is less. Meals are put together with consideration for health benefits of each ingredient, whereas Western culture’s meal occasions are often hurried and more about quick satisfaction.

How can chefs fuse traditions?

All cuisine types can offer great taste and texture, but it is important to continually explore new flavors and techniques from other cuisines and adapt them using local ingredients and techniques to create truly contemporary and aspirational dishes.

An example of this can be found in many leading-edge restaurants in Sydney. By tapping into a popular trend, e.g. Mexican, but then combining with other influences we find dishes such as ceviche of scallops with charred jalapeno flakes, mango salsa and crispy fried onions. This is a great example of staying true to the core cuisine, Mexican in this case, using Asian influences (crispy fried onions) and bringing these together with indigenous produce (mango).

A meal such as this will create great flavor combinations, but at the same time the minimal cooking ensures that essential nutrients are not lost.



“It is important to continually explore new flavors and techniques from other cuisines and adapt them using local ingredients and techniques to create truly contemporary and aspirational dishes.”



Chef Mark Han

Are you an Eastern or Western trained chef?

Even though I am a Chinese, I was trained as Western chef in my early days, but my working experiences encompassed Eastern and Western cuisine skills.

How has Western cuisine been integrated into Eastern cuisine, and how are chefs creating the future in this area?

The availability of technologies have had a broadening effect on the food that is consumed today. Travel influences the types of cuisines featured in the contemporary modern restaurants. Foods from the Caribbean, the Middle East, France and Italy have started to see a decline in popularity. Chefs and patrons are now discovering the pleasures of food from China, Japan, Indo-China, Singapore, Australia and even Latin America. When chefs see it, smell it, touch it and finally eat it, they are able to translate this world of food into their own recipe repertoire.

What differences do you see in each of these styles?

Historically, the Chinese have believed that all foods are classified as yin or yang principles. Yin is cooling and neutral. It is balanced by yang which is warming and energetic. A good example is the marriage of herbs like spring onion (yin) and ginger (yang), stir-fried with

meat or seafood and seasoned to taste. The result is a harmonious balance.

Importantly in Chinese cooking, chefs compliment traditional Chinese medicine using herbs like wolfberry, ginseng, red date (jujube) and longan creating a nutritious, harmonious balance.

What are your recommendations to new chefs working on both sides of the culinary world?

The beautiful thing about the world of food is the tastes and favors that are always being developed and acquired. My recommendation to new chefs is that they must always continue to develop new concepts of familiar modern dishes based on tastes and flavors. Taste is always evolving and exciting consumers. They will continue to take comfort in the familiar and traditional food—as they will always be sources of nourishment and comfort. Food presentation is also important to convey the message that the food will taste good.



Meet Mark, Nestlé's Senior Culinary Advisory Chef from Singapore.

How does the approach to nutrition affect the style of cuisine?

In the search for good food, medicine and nutrition, experts have sifted through the latest scientific studies and reports in order to separate the myths from the facts and help chefs create the most up to date food reference. With practical advice about the foods they eat every day and how to buy and prepare them, chefs can help consumers change their diet to pay off in big health benefits over time.

These food references have spurred fundamental changes. Dishes from both the classical and traditional are being re-evaluated to reduce or eliminate fats, sodium and cholesterol with an increasing emphasis on fresh ingredients.

What type of cuisine are you working in now?

My cuisines stretch to Chinese, Western, contemporary and modern, Indian, Indo-Chinese, Malaysian, Indonesian and others. Chefs from restaurants, hotels, hospitality of F&B, institutions, QSR and others, are prominent members in their own food industries.

What are the challenges of working in a cuisine style different from the one in which you were trained?

When I took my first step into the food industry, I knew there would be many challenges. Each challenge has helped me grow as a chef—to make me what I am today.

In whichever cuisine I am cooking, I first must understand where it comes from, the cooking techniques, ingredients and culture. This has created a steady supply of new information and a source of innovation.

What else has your experience taught you?

Having worked with Nestlé R&D Center Singapore for almost 21 years has given me great opportunities to enrich my culinary skills into a profound knowledge of delivering taste and nutritional innovation. This R&D experience has now prepared me for my next challenge with Nestlé Professional—being a trusted leader and solution provider.



PERSPECTIVES
ON NUTRITION:

east



Traditional beliefs in the East are often based on holistic balance and harmony. These centuries-old ideas rely on natural ingredients to provide health benefits. They have been handed down from generation to generation and are deeply rooted in their countries of origin.

DID YOU KNOW?

Knives are never used at Chinese meals since they are considered weapons of war.⁴

AYURVEDA

Often practiced in India and Sri Lanka

Ayurveda is considered one of the world's oldest medical systems. The guiding principle is inner balance between the body, mind, and spirit.

According to Ayurveda, there are three life forces called doshas, which control the activities of the body. Each person has a unique combination of doshas, although one is usually prominent. Doshas are constantly being shaped and reformed by food, activity, and bodily processes.⁵

DOSHA	MADE UP OF	LINKED TO	AGGRAVATED BY
Vata	Ether and air	Basic body processes such as cell division, the heart, breathing, discharge of waste, and the mind	Dry fruit or eating before a previous meal is digested
Pitta	Fire and water	Hormones and digestion	Eating spicy or sour food
Kapha	Water and earth	The throat, lungs, lymph, fatty tissue, and connective tissue	Sweets, over-eating, and too much salt and water

YIN & YANG

Often practiced in China, Japan, Korea

Yin & yang are two opposite forces that when put together create harmony and balance. The theory applies to many aspects of life including food. An imbalance between the two forces is traditionally thought to cause illness.⁶

FIVE ELEMENTS

Often practiced in China

In this traditional Eastern approach, each of the five elements is identified with food flavors and certain body organs,⁶ and food solutions are used to offset physical ailments.

YIN	YANG
Moon, shade cold and passivity	Sun, light, heat and activity
Feminine	Masculine
Act of eating	Act of drinking
Bananas, vegetables, fish, juices and other cold drinks	Beef, coffee, ginger, vinegar, wine

ELEMENT	FOOD FLAVOR	ORGANS
Fire	Bitter	Small intestine, heart, tongue
Metal	Pungent	Large intestine, lungs, nose
Wood	Sour	Gallbladder, liver, eye
Earth	Sweet	Stomach, spleen, mouth
Water	Salty	Bladder, kidney, ear

Example: If your stomach (an earth organ) is bothering you, eat a sweet food to create harmony.

PERSPECTIVES
ON NUTRITION:

west

The industrial revolution in the West created a new interest in supplying factory workers with the key nutrients, including certain amounts of proteins and vitamins, they needed to maximize their productivity.⁷

More recently, Western nutrition has focused on removing “negative” ingredients which, when consumed in excess, can lead to poor health. These include calories, fat, saturated fats, trans fats, sugar, and salt (or sodium). Overconsumption of these ingredients has been associated with what is known as “westernized or non-communicable diseases,”

which includes cardiovascular disease and certain cancers. During the short, 50-year-old history of nutritional science, we have learned many things about our diets, but there is still much more to learn about how what we eat can help us stay healthy and active throughout our lives.

From a dietitian’s point of view, it’s wise to be selective about what we eat.

MORE

FRUIT & VEGETABLES

These typically nutrient-dense foods provide many vitamins and minerals in comparison to the amount of calories provided.

FIBER

Globally, most populations do not get enough of the fiber they need to promote good digestion and other benefits.

WHOLE GRAINS

Whole grains come with a whole package of nutrients, fiber, and energy.

WATER

Water is necessary for life, and even foods and beverages that contain water can count toward recommended intake targets.

ANTIOXIDANTS

Found in many types of plant foods, such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Antioxidants may help reduce the risks of some diseases.

LESS

SODIUM

Sodium can aggravate hypertension in people who are sensitive to this condition.

SATURATED FATS

These types of fats have been shown to increase the risk of heart disease by clogging the blood-carrying arteries and reducing blood flow.

SUGAR

Sugar can easily add “empty” calories, which means they don’t provide many vitamins or minerals.

TRANS FATS

These types of fats have been shown to increase risk of heart disease.

CALORIES

People who are looking for weight management solutions typically limit the amount of calories they consume.

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Sources

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DID YOU
KNOW?

The fork did not become popular in North America until near the time of the American Revolution.⁸

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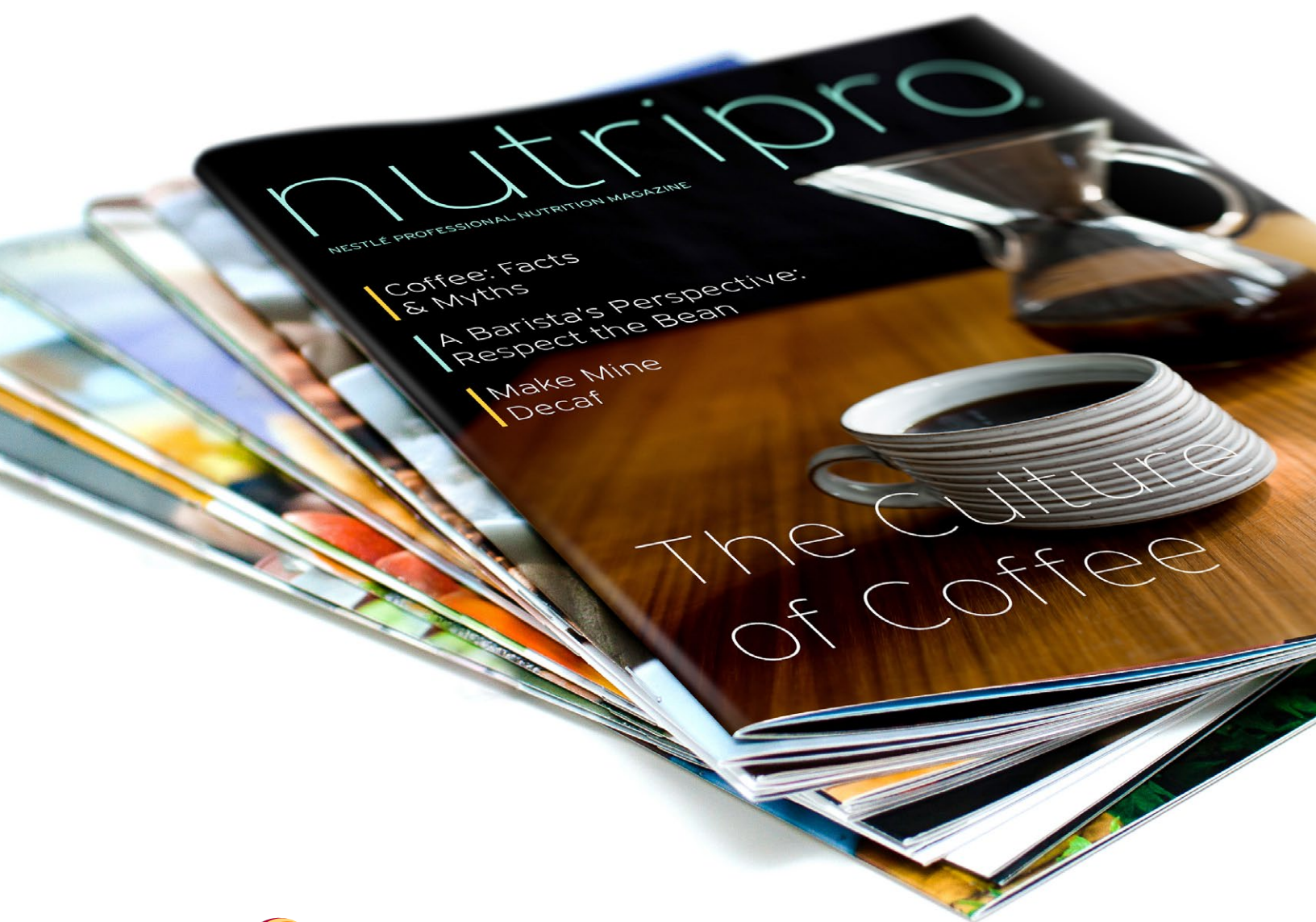
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