

## Information sheet of Exposure to Taiwanese Cuisine

A piece of nutrition advice will not be helpful if it is not culturally sensitive. A person's ethnic and cultural background has a massive impact on our relationship with food. These factors define the social structure, decision-making practices, and communication styles. While we may know little about others' culture, the competence improves with each exposure to a culture that differs from our own.

In the United States, Taiwanese dishes have often been swept under the vast umbrella of “Chinese food.” However, many are unaware of Taiwan's property and culinary individuality. Therefore, this document is designed to provide the H-E-B teams exposure to Taiwanese cuisine, aiming to improve healthcare providers' understanding of different cultures and enhance culturally appropriate counseling professionals. The document includes:

- Where is Taiwan?
- Why Taiwan is a melting pot of food cultures?
- What are traditional meals patterns in Taiwan?
- What are current practices in Taiwan?
- What are some traditional health beliefs in Taiwan and how do they relate to diet?
- What are some common cooking equipment and technique?
- What are some local vegetables, fruits, and spices?
- What are some traditional foods and dishes of Taiwan?
- Resources - Asian markets
- Resources - Recipes to try

### Where is Taiwan?



Taiwan, officially the Republic of China (ROC), is a country in East Asia. Neighboring countries include the People's Republic of China (PRC) to the northwest, Japan to the northeast, and the Philippines to the south. Due to the geography, Taiwan has been shaped by both Asian and Western influences from the various people that have lived there, and becomes a melting pot of food cultures.

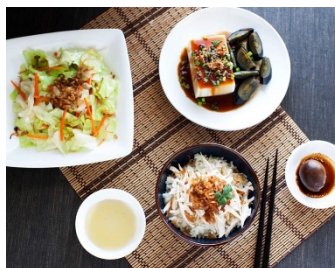
## **Why Taiwan is a melting pot of food cultures?**

Through generations of colonization and from the immigration of people from all around the world, Taiwan is home to a diverse ethnic population. Indigenous people are believed to have inhabited Taiwan for thousands of years before other settlers arrived. By the early 16th century, there were the Hakka and Fujianese, who fled from China in fear of political volatility. Since the Portuguese's arrival in 1544, Taiwan has been further impacted by not only one Western group but the Dutch and the Spanish cultures as well.

During the five decades from 1894 to 1945, Taiwan was under Japanese political rule. After Japan was defeated in WWII, the administrative control of Taiwan was returned to the Nationalist Kuomintang party, KMT (officially called the Republic of China, ROC). A few years later, KMT was forced to retreat from China after losing to the Communist Party and fled to Taiwan at the end of the civil war in China to use Taiwan as their military base. Since then, China (officially called the People's Republic of China, PRC), and Taiwan (officially called the Republic of China, ROC) has lasted a discreet relationship. Through the years, Taiwanese cuisine becomes heavily influenced by Chinese immigrants with mild impact from other countries, such as Japanese, Portuguese. As such, the Taiwanese found its way to develop a creative fusion of Taiwanese cuisine becoming a melting pot of food cultures.

## **What are traditional meals patterns in Taiwan?**

There are generally three meals a day in Taiwan with an occasional late-night supper. Breakfast often includes flour-based food items, such as dangbing and Luobogao, and beverages, such as soy milk and milk tea. Lunch and dinner are typically served in family style. Lunch is rice or noodles with stir-fried meat, vegetable, and/or soup, and dinner usually consists of similar food choices. In general, breakfast tends to have higher carbohydrate content, whereas lunches and dinners are more considered balanced meals. Late-night supper often includes a single food item bought from the night market, considered street food. Hot tea and bubble tea are the most common beverage. Drinking soda is less common among Taiwanese people. When ordering bubble tea, Taiwanese tend to choose less to no sugar.



## What are current food practices in Taiwan?

Globalization has brought even more variety and diversity to Taiwanese. Traditional Taiwanese cooking looks for a healthful balance through the mixing of colors, flavors, textures and ingredients. People prefer hot dishes. Rice is a staple throughout the country. It is eaten several times a day and can be eaten at any meal. Scallions, bean sprouts, cabbage, and gingerroot are common. Tofu is an important protein source. Being surrounded by water, Taiwan also has a strong focus on fresh seafood, from an oyster omelet to fresh succulent squids. Vegetarianism is common. While Taiwanese generally don't eat much meat, they may consume some chicken and pork. Taiwanese didn't eat much beef until the 1950s. Before then, the Taiwanese were mainly an agricultural society with gratitude and thanks to the animals used for labor, so they refrain from eating beef. This tradition still exists in some areas, especially in farmer families. In Taiwan, most people eat outside, especially in urban areas, because it is cheaper and convenient.

## What are some traditional health beliefs in Taiwan and how do they relate to diet?

A common health belief in Taiwan, especially among the older generations, is that food can be "heaty" or "cooling," and that eating too much of one type might unbalance the body and affect health. For example, an excess of fried foods, which are considered "heaty," might cause a sore throat, and drinking a "cooling" tea is meant to counteract that. Foods such as lettuce or pineapple, "cooling" foods, are often disallowed as they are said to cause body aches. "Confinement diets," diets that avoid excessive hot and cold foods, are common in Taiwan, especially following exhausting events such as childbirth and menstruation.

## What are some common cooking equipment and technique?

### Common equipment



**Rice cooker** - an equipment designed to boil or steam rice. It consists of a heat source, a cooking bowl, and a thermostat. Steam baskets can be used with a rice cooker to steam tender and flavorful vegetables at the same time as cooking rice.

**Wok** - a round-bottomed cooking pot, originating in China. It spreads heat more evenly and requires less oil than a typical frying pan, for starters



**Cooking techniques** - include stir-frying with less oil, red-braising (, steaming, poaching, and boiling; deep-frying is a less-common cooking method.

**Red-braising**, also called Chinese stewing, is a slow braising technique a technique that marinates and cooks the food in a sweet soy-based sauce and spices.

- Hongshao – can be done in less than 20 minutes, usually does not require much water
- Lu – usually requires prolonged cooking of up to several hours and the items must be submerged in the cooking liquid.

### What are some local vegetables, fruits, and spicy?

**Taiwanese Vegetables** – usually cooked by boiling or stir-frying

#### Starchy Veggies



Taro



Shanyao (yam)



Lianou (Lotus root)

#### Non-starchy Veggies



Daikon



Taiwanese cabbage



Taiwanese squash



Chinese eggplant



Baby bok choy



You-choy



Gai choy



Tong ho



Water spinach



King oyster mushroom



Hon shimeji mushroom



Enoki Mushroom



**Taiwanese Fruit** - with a tropical climate, mild winter and various altitudes, the natural environment enables Taiwan to have fertile land to produce wide range of fruits



Lychees



Longyan



Mango



Guava



Papaya



Grapes



Dragon fruit



Watermelon



Pomelo



Mandarin oranges

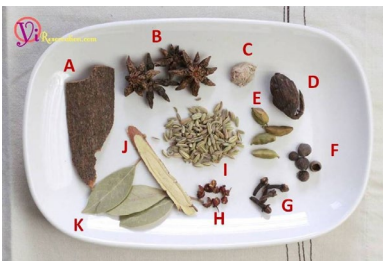


Lianwu (wax apple)



Asian pears

**Common Spicy** – usually used for red-braising



- A - Cinnamon Stick
- B - Star Anise
- C - Sand Ginger
- D - Black Cardamom
- E - Green Cardamom
- F - Allspice

- G - Clove
- H - Sichuan Peppercorn
- I - Fennel Seed
- J - Liquorice
- K - Bay Leaf

## What are some traditional foods and dishes of Taiwan?

**Traditional Breakfast** – heavily based on carbohydrate



**Mantou (Chinese steam bun)** - a soft type of steamed bread. There may be various flavors, such as plain, brown sugar, chocolate, toro, mainly starchy or sugary. There is also an option of whole wheat with nuts and dried fruits incorporated. At breakfast, Mantou may be served with a filling of sunny eggs or pork chops.

**Zhou (Porridge/Congee) with side dishes** – also known as xifan in some areas. It is made from rice, water, and other ingredients, such as corns, mushrooms, seafoods, or ground pork. When eaten as plain zhou, it is most often served with side dishes, such as pickling food items. When additional ingredients are added while preparing the zhou, it is most often served as a meal on its own, especially for a person who is ill.



**Baozi or bao** – a variations of mantou that could be either sweet or savory. The inner filling are usually meat or vegetables, or both. Sometimes, baozi could be sweet stuffed with red bean paste or black sesame paste. They are usually steamed.

**Luobogao** – Often referred to as turnip cake, which made of shredded daikon and plain rice flour. Often served with a scramble or sunny egg and soy sauce.



**Dan Bing** – often referred to as Taiwanese Egg Crepe, a quick dough made of water, flour, and cornstarch is whisked together and spread into an oiled pan. It's a thin crepe-like savory pancake with an egg cooked onto it and rolled together with the filling of your choice. Common fillings include bacons, cheese, tuna, and pork chops.

**Traditional Beverage with Breakfast** – doujiang (soybean milk) and mijiag (rice peanut milk)

## Local Dishes for Lunch & Dinner



**Niurou mein (Beef noodle soup)** - a noodle soup made of stewed or red braised beef, beef broth, vegetables and Chinese noodles. It exists in various forms throughout the nation.

**Lu Rou Fan (Braised pork rice)**- Braised pork belly, slow cooked in classic ground pork marinated and boiled in soy sauce served on top of steamed rice.



**Dumplings** – There are various food products under this category. Generally, anything filling with stuff wrapped into a thinly rolled piece of dough is categorized as dumplings. It includes jiaozi, wontons, or potstickers. There are various possible fillings, but the most common include ground pork and cabbages or chives. Dumplings are steamed, boiled, or pan-fried for serving with soy sauce. As long as they are not deep-fried and served with more vegetables, they are generally balanced for a meal.

### Other dishes

- **Chow mein (Fired noodle)** – stir-fried noodles with vegetable and sometimes meat
- **Fried rice** - a dish of cooked rice that has been stir-fried in a wok or a frying pan and is usually mixed with other ingredients such as eggs, vegetables, seafood, or meat. It is often eaten by itself or as an accompaniment to another dish

**Street Food** – usually sold in a night market in Taiwan and consume as a late-night snack



**Yansuji (Taiwanese Chicken bite)**

**pop-corn chicken**) - Small pieces of chicken are breaded and fried with a fragrant set of spices (5-spice and white pepper, and basil) style chicken bites with Thai basil. Usually to be served as an afternoon or late-night snack.

**Luwei** – A braised dish consist of ingredients of your choice. The most common ingredients are tofu, seaweed, beef shank, and eggs. This dish usually side with Niurou mein (Beef noodle soup) as protein or fiber sources.



**Gua Bao** – also known as pork belly buns. It have five defining components: the fluffy steamed bun, tender braised pork belly, pickled mustard greens, fresh cilantro, and powdered peanuts. All combined, it's a messy, colorful, glorious snack of salty, sweet, pungent, and fresh flavors, with multiple textures to boot.

## Soup

**Hot pot** - a Chinese cooking method, prepared with a simmering pot of soup stock at the dining table, containing a variety of sliced meat, vegetables. It is served with green onions, garlic, and sauces such as chili, Taiwanese barbecue sauce.



**Chinese herbal soup** – a dish of soup stewing with Chinese herbal and poultry, pork ribs or intestines for hours. Various Chinese herb, such as hong zao (red jujube) and goji (wolfberry) may be used for different types of soup. These dishes tend to add less salt with the use of herb, and people believe they are good for health and wellness based on traditional Chinese Medicine.



## Beverages

**Hot tea** – Most Taiwanese prefer to drink tea hot and plain. They make tea with either whole tea or a tea bag. Oolong tea is the most popular tea of choice in Taiwan.



**Bubble Tea** – also known as bubble milk tea, or pearl milk tea, which is a tea-based drink added chewy tapioca balls. Milk tea can be made with either creamer or whole milk.



**Taiwanese soda- Apple Sidra**



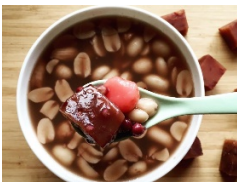
**Taiwanese soda- Hey Song Root Beer**



**Taiwanese beer**

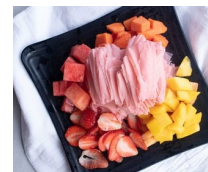
## Sweets & Desserts

**Douhua** – also known as tofu pudding, or tofu brains. Traditional, douhua is made with soy milk and gypsum powder, but now gelatin is common for solidification. The taste is smooth and silky, slipping down a treat. Douhua is usually served with sweet soup or soy milk topping with tapioca, sweet beans, or peanuts.



**Sweet soup** – also known as tang shui in some areas. It is often served cold during summer, and hot in the winter. There is a variation of sweet soup, such as hond dou tang (red beans), mung beans, taro ball, and tang yuan. It tends to load with high simple carbohydrates.

**Boa-bing** – a dessert consists of a large mound of ice shavings with various toppings on top. A wide variety of toppings exist, but the most common ones include sugar water, condensed milk, mung beans, and tapioca balls. Fruit are also used according to the season. Mango baobing is typically only available in the summer, while strawberry baobing is available in the winter.





**Chelun bing** – also known as wheel cakes influenced by Japanese. They are sweet fried dough filled with red beans, toro, or custard. There may be savory options for fillings, such as shredded radish.

**Portuguese egg tarts** – a dessert holding a creamy custard center with its crisp, flaky crust, blistered on top from the high heat of an oven. It is influenced by Portuguese.



## Holiday Treats



**Nian gao (Chinese year cake)** – a food prepared from glutinous rice flour and consumed in Chinese New Year. It is considered good luck to eat nian gao during this time, because nian gao is a homonym for "higher year."

**Tang Yuan (Rice ball)** - a ball of glutinous rice flour and water that has been either boiled and served in a hot broth or syrup or else deep-fried. Tangyuan can be either small or large and filled or unfilled. They are traditionally eaten during Yuanxiao in the Lantern Festival, but also served as a dessert on Chinese wedding day, and any occasions such as family reunion, because of a homophone for union



**Zongzi (Rice dumpling)** – a traditional Chinese rice dish made of glutinous rice stuffed with different fillings and wrapped in bamboo leaves. They are cooked by steaming or boiling. It is a special food for Dragon Boat Festival.

**Moon cake** –pastry traditionally eaten during the Mid-Autumn Festival. Traditionally, mooncakes contain a paste made from lotus seeds or beans, and they are sweet. There are also savory mooncakes, such as a combination of pork and honey. Mooncakes are offered between friends or on family gatherings while celebrating the festival.



**Resource - Recipes - Hong Shao Niu Rou Mein (Taiwanese Beef Noodle Soup)**



Total time: 3 hr 45 mins

Services: 6-10 people

Equipment

- ☐ Large pots
- ☐ Medium bowls
- ☐ bowls

Ingredients

<input type="checkbox"/> 2 lb. 14 oz. long-cut boneless beef shanks	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 tsp. sugar
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Tbsp. canola oil	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 medium yellow onions, quartered
<input type="checkbox"/> One 2-inch piece ginger, unpeeled, cut into ¼-inch slices	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 plum tomatoes, quartered
<input type="checkbox"/> 10 cloves garlic, crushed	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 pods of star anise
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 dried chiles de árbol	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Tbsp. whole black peppercorns
<input type="checkbox"/> ¼ cup Taiwanese rice wine	<input type="checkbox"/> Salt
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Tbsp. dark soy sauce	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 baby bok choy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Tbsp. black vinegar	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 lb. thin egg noodles
	<input type="checkbox"/> Pickled mustard greens, chopped, for garnish

### Instructions

1. Put beef shanks in a large pot, and add cold water to cover the beef
2. Bring it to boil and cook for 10 minutes, then drain it
3. Let the beef cool for a bit until it is cool enough to be handled (about 30 minutes)
4. Then debone the shank if needed, and cut the beef into ½-inch slices
5. Heat the oil over medium-high in the same large pot as cooking the shank
6. Add the beef slices and cook until both sides are lightly browned
7. Push the beef to the sides of the pot, then add the ginger, garlic, and chiles to the empty center; cook until fragrant
8. Stir in the rice wine, soy sauce, black vinegar and sugar
9. Add the onions, tomatoes, star anise, peppercorns, 2 tablespoons salt, and 8 cups water, and then bring them to boil
10. Then reduce the heat to maintain a simmer and cook, covered, for 1 hour
11. Turn off the heat and let stand, still covered, for 1 hour or more
12. Uncover the pot and transfer the beef to a medium bowl
13. Strain the broth and set aside, discarding the other solids
14. Return the beef and broth to the pot and reheat over medium
15. When ready to serve, bring a large pot of water to a boil.
16. Add the bok choy and cook until just tender (about 2 minutes)
17. Transfer to a bowl
18. Add the noodles to the same pot, and cook until softened (about 4 minutes), then drain
19. Divide the noodles, bok choy, beef, and broth among bowls, garnish with pickled mustard greens, and serve

Resource: <https://www.saveur.com/article/Recipes/Hong-Shao-Niu-Rou-Mian-Taiwanese-Beef-Noodle-Soup/>

### **Resources - Asian Market** – where to buy Taiwanese ingredients and snacks?

Online market - Yamibuy - <https://www.yamibuy.com/en>

Chinese market in Texas - 99 Ranch Market <https://www.99ranch.com/>

Chinese market in San Antonio - Tim's oriental market - 7015 Bandera Rd # 8, San Antonio, TX

Korean market in San Antonio – H-Mart - <https://www.hmart.com/>

Korean market in San Antonio – Korean Market - 6210 Fairdale Dr

Korean market in San Antonio - Seoul Asian Market and Café - 1005 Rittiman Rd #101