

ASIAN AMERICAN FOODS: THE NEED OF A NUTRIENT COMPOSITION SYSTEM FOR INTERNATIONAL USE

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Asia, the world's largest continent, is of infinite diversity. As the result of thousands of years of migrations, invasions, conquests and intermingling, the people of Asia belong to numerous cultural groups. This paper discusses the nutrient composition systems in three cultural regions of Asia, East Asia (China, Japan, etc.), South Asia (India), and Southeast Asia (Thailand, Philippine, etc.).

In addition to the Food Composition Table For Use in East Asia (FAO, 1972), many of the Oriental countries have recently developed food composition tables for the comparison of common food sources within individual countries (e.g. Nutritive Value of Indian Foods, Indian Council of Medical Research, 1985; and Standard Tables of Food Composition in Japan, Institute of Nutrition in Japan, 1985). These regional nutrient data base normally provide valuable information for one specific population. However, in recent years immigrants from China, Korean, Japan, India, Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, etc. have settled in the United States (Kittler and Sucher, 1989), and created many multi-Oriental communities. Many difficulties have been associated with the evaluation of dietary intake in these communities by using single source of nutrient composition table. Therefore, a nutrient composition system for international use is necessary to solve the problems including data availability (e.g. the data may not exist or are not readily accessible in English), food nomenclature (e.g. one food may have many different names, one name could represent many different foods, etc.) and data interpretation (e.g. serving sizes, recipes, etc.).