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Dae Young Kwon

Korea Food Research Institute, South Korea

Korean diet (K-diet): Characteristics and historical background

Korea has developed a unique food culture connected to its long agricultural history. Recently, interest in Korean food, especially regarding its health benefits, has greatly increased. However, there are insufficient resources and research available on the characteristics and definitions of Korean cuisine. Researchers and professors of the food and nutritional sciences in Korea began working together in April 2015 in order to establish cohesive definitions and concepts to be used in dialogue related to the Korean diet (K-diet). The 100 most representative Korean dishes (K-food) were selected by evaluating their role in tradition, culture, and health promotion. Although the K-diet has been widely discussed in regards to raw ingredients, traditional cooking methods and technology, fundamental principles and knowledge is more valuable to preserve the traditional methods and knowledge of Korean foods. K-diet is composed of Bab (cooked-rice) and Kuk, and various Banchan with one serving called bapsang. Kimchi is always served at every meal. The principal aspects of K-diet include proportionally high consumption of vegetables, moderate to high consumption of legumes and fish and low consumption of red meat. Banchan is mostly seasoned with various Jang (fermented soy products), medicinal herbs, and sesame or perilla oil. Korean meals have historically been served with bap (cooked rice), kuk (dishes with broth), kimchi, and banchan (side dishes) on one table to be consumed at the same time. While various cooking methods are used in Korean cuisine, the most representative method is fermentation which enhances both the flavor and preservation of the food. As conventional baking or frying were not common methods, Koreans tended to use fermenting, boiling, blanching, seasoning, and pickling. The process of fermentation enriches food flavors and preserves foods. This talk provides the features of the K-diet, and an introduction to K-food, the traditions and health value of K-diet and K-food. Moreover, it is vital to promote the cultural values of Korea (K-value) by bringing together traditional principles and scientific evidences.

Biography

Dae Young Kwon completed his Bachelor degree in Department of Food Science and Engineering at Seoul National University; MS and PhD in Biological Science and Biotechnology at Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST). After completing his Post-doctoral training at Whitehead Institute, MIT, Cambridge, he has started his research as Research Scientist at Korea Food Research Institute (KFRI). He worked at KFRI in the field of Food Biological Chemistry. He worked as Adjunct Professor at Sookmyung University in 1997-2003. He is a Professor of United University of Science and Technology since 2004. He worked as a Vice-President of KFRI. He is a Fellow of Korea Academy of Science and Technology since 2011. He is a President of Korean Society of Food-Health Communication and Vice-president of Korea Society of Nutrition, Korean Society of Metabolomics, Korean Society of Food and Nutrition and Korean Forum of Fermentation and Food Culture. He has worked on the health effect for metabolic syndrome, anti-aging food and food culture and history. He has published more than 250 research papers in several renowned SCI international journals in the areas of ethnic foods and bioactive food components and those papers were cited about 1,000 times in SCI journals.

dykwon@kfri.re.kr

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