

American Food Culture

When one thinks of American food, the things that typically come to mind are of course hamburgers, hotdogs, pizza, fast food, etc. While these are certainly things that many Americans enjoy, America actually has a very diverse food culture. Many of America's famous foods were actually brought to the country by immigrants, although many of these dishes have changed overtime or have become blended with other cuisines. With how vast a country America is, the food culture can also differ greatly depending on the region, or even depending on the state.

"Melting Pot"

The term "melting pot" is often used when describing America. The word is used to describe a mixture, or "melting pot", of cultures, nationalities, ethnicities, etc. and gained popularity in America in the year 1908 following a play by the same name. American food culture can certainly be thought of in the same way. As America is a country of immigrants, American cuisine has influences from all around the world. Fusion cuisine, which combines elements of cuisines from different countries, cultures, etc., is also quite common.

Additionally, the cuisine and food customs of the various Native American tribes across the country played an important role in shaping America's food culture, and the influences can be seen even in present day. The three primary staples of Native American cuisine are corn (maize), climbing beans, and squash, which are known as "the three sisters". These three crops are planted together and grow exceptionally well together. In addition, hunting was also an important part of tribe life. Tribes hunted animals such as deer, buffalo, rabbits, turkeys, etc. depending on where they were located. In present day, many dishes that originated from Native American tribes remain popular in America including turkey, cornbread, cranberries, etc.

An American Breakfast

It's difficult to describe a typical American breakfast as it will differ greatly depending on the location, family, etc. For many people, breakfasts also differ depending on the day of the week. For example, many people tend to eat light, simple breakfasts during the weekdays and reserve the more extravagant breakfasts for the weekends. Some people may also choose to eat brunch on the weekends.

Since many people are busy with school or work during the weekdays, breakfasts tend to be much simpler. Cereal is a popular choice especially among children, although many adults enjoy it as well. If you visit an American supermarket you will typically find an entire aisle dedicated to various kinds of cereals, and many have cute characters on the box as well as small prizes inside to entice children. In addition to cereal, other popular weekday breakfast foods include oatmeal, granola, toast, fruits, muffins, yogurt, pop-tarts, doughnuts etc. Popular drinks include orange juice, milk, or coffee.



Typical Breakfast Cereals



A Weekend Breakfast

During the weekends, when people tend to have more time to themselves, many families like to have larger breakfasts. They especially tend to reserve Sundays for a large, family breakfast. For these kinds of breakfasts, a myriad of dishes are often served, and tend to include more filling items. Some examples of popular foods include pancakes, French toast, eggs, bacon, sausages, hash browns, omelets, etc.

Breakfasts in the South also have some dishes that are more unique to the region, although overtime they have spread to the rest of the nation as well. These include dishes such as grits, chicken and waffles, biscuits and gravy, fried steak and eggs, breakfast casserole, etc.

An American Lunch

Just like American breakfasts, American lunches can be quite diverse. Many people also tend to opt for simple and light options during the week. Although many lunch and dinner dishes are the same or similar, the lunch versions tend to be smaller portion wise.

One very common and beloved lunch is the sandwich. Because it's a simple meal that takes very little time to prepare, many people choose to make a quick sandwich the night or morning before work or school. There are a variety of meats, cheeses, and other things that you can choose from, most being readily available at nearly any grocery store. As you can simply add any ingredients that you like, it's a perfect meal for just about anyone.

Probably the most famous sandwich is the simple and classic peanut butter and jelly sandwich. It is especially beloved among children and is often served for school lunches even in present day. However, even some savvy chefs have decided to take their own gourmet spin on this classic dish to make it fancier.

For those that are even too busy to make their own sandwiches at home, there are also plenty of sandwich shops that can be found just about anywhere. In addition, there are typically a variety of fast food restaurants available in most cities and towns that provide fast and cheap options.

An American Dinner



A Steak Dinner

For most Americans, dinner tends to be the largest meal of the day. Some of the most well-known American dishes such as hamburgers, steak, or pizza are of course favorites for many people. However, just like breakfast and lunch, dinners are diverse- perhaps the most diverse of the three meals.

For a typical American dinner, some kind of vegetable and a side dish are usually served alongside the main dish. These can include things such as green beans, corn, peas, carrots, potato dishes, rice, noodles, etc.

Many families also tend to make special dinners when the holidays roll around. For example, a traditional Thanksgiving meal includes turkey, cornbread, mac & cheese, stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy, rolls, pumpkin pie, etc. Christmas dinners typically include turkey or ham, vegetables, mashed potatoes, some form of pie (such as apple pie), pudding, and a fruit cake. 4th of July dishes includes hot dogs, burgers, fried chicken, corn on the cob, potato salad, potato chips, pies, lemonade, etc.



Typical 4th of July Meal

American Desserts

Perhaps the most iconic American dessert is the apple pie. In fact, there's even an expression "as American as apple pie" which is used to refer to things that are the best of American culture.



An American Apple Pie

While apple pie may be one of the most representative desserts of America, there are many other sweet and tasty dishes you can find if you visit the country. These include pies of all flavors, cakes, cheesecakes, pudding, cookies, ice cream, fudge, banana splits, s'mores, brownies, Rice Krispies, etc.



Cherry Pie



Gooey S'mores

S'mores are a common treat that many associate with camping. They consist of chocolate, marshmallows, and graham crackers. Traditionally, the marshmallows are roasted over a campfire until they are nice and brown. S'mores make for a perfectly gooey treat to enjoy while telling ghost stories and other campfire-esque activities. Recently they seem to have gained even more popularity, and you can even find ice cream, cakes, pies, etc. that are s'mores flavor!