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Protein Foods of the Japanese

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COMING from any beef-eating nation, one is at once struck by the scarcity of meat and lack of milk and other dairy products in the diet of the Japanese. Protein is supplied largely by fish, poultry, eggs and the curd of the soy bean, with a growing tendency evident to supplement these with the beef and milk of western countries.

**Fish**

The lakes and the seas in and around the islands of Japan teem with a great variety of seafoods which are used raw as well as prepared in many delicious ways by all but the very poorest inhabitants.

Halibut, swordfish and whale are the largest kinds seen commonly in market variety of seafoods which are used raw curd.

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**Protein Foods of the Japanese**

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The sea-bream is considered the finest fish of all, and poor indeed is the ban­quet at which it does not appear. It is that and pike, wears a rather elongation and comes oftenthes to the table broiled. Occasionally it is stuffed with the bean curd. If it is used for broth, the head is chopped and the eye in its gelatinous sock­ket becomes the portion of the guest of honor.

Mackerel is commonly used broiled or steamed. Salmon in several varieties, is broiled plain with salt, or basted with a sauce of soy, sweet wine and sugar. Small eels are fried in rapeseed oil, drenched with soy, sugar, and served on bowls of steaming greens or potato. Scrambled with eggs is made by spreading the egg may be cooked as steak or roast in restaurants, but ther­e are special factories which put out a fair grade of beef.

The food left in the market at the close of business are made into a sort of sausage. The bones are removed and the flesh is pounded to a paste in a mortar. It is then shaped into loaves or round and is set under the heat to dry. It is oftenest used in its various forms. In China, the protein of different varieties of bean is used, but in Japan it seems that only the soy bean is used for this purpose. It is quite the same soy bean apparently, that has been preserved for several years from Home Economic extension platforms in the United States. It is soaked, ground, boiled, strained and finally the protein precipitated with a strong solution of magnesium chloride, or sometimes salt. Occasionally, in country districts, it is made in the home, but the process is a tedious one and in towns the curd can always be bought at a convenient shop, where it is made fresh three times a day, or from the vendors who bring it to the door just when it is time to prepare a meal.

The curd is supposed among Japanese to be very easily digested, and so is always recommended as food for invalids and children especially, besides being in very general use. Recent scientific in­vestigation has confirmed this estimate, and indeed has gone so far as to state that the soy bean is the secret of the Orient's ability to live on so much scru­nder fare than the Occident finds necessary because of the quantity of water soluble it contains.

**Meat and Milk**

It seems well to add here some word as to the tendencies of the growing protein consumption of the Japanese. Sterilized milk is now sold in cups by milkmen in many a town, and peddled out on railway station platforms. It is poor in fat and milk sugar but in protein does not differ greatly from the American standard. (Sawamura: Chemistry of Foods. The mass of the people cannot afford to buy it at present prices, 20-25 cents per quart, even if they cared to do so.

And with pasture as scarce as it is in a country of rocky hillocks and bam­boo grass there is little likelihood of any decrease in price. Milk production on anything like an American scale is carried on only in a few places in China. There is an excellent agricultural college and American-trained dairymen oper­ating it and their own farms. Their stock is good and the milk very high quality. Butter is made for shipment to Jarah at about twenty-five cents a pound. The skin milk is fed to chickens and to a less extent to swine. Some cheese is made but there is little demand for it among the Japanese. There are several factories which put out a fair grade of seasoned condensed milk.

Meat is mostly imported from China, and is of excellent quality. It is sold at special shops, at from forty cents per pound for shin to eighty for filet. It is cooked as beef, steaks, swine, and the large part is consumed there. But there are special "beef-stew" restaurants (gyu-nabe-ya) where at least as much is eaten. Praise the ronin—all priva­te—are supplied with braziers of gas or charcoal and the materials in the stew—raw beef sliced thin, onions, bean curd, soy sauce, "stock"—are sold by the yard. But on the other hand the customer may see the stew made, or if he prefers he may make it himself. The necessary accompaniments of rice, tea and salt pickles make a very satisfactory meal. Taking guests to such a place is a favorite way of entertaining, and the stew is only occasionally made for home or on a small scale in restaurants.

Pork is poor, and little used except in Chinese cookery which is done in homes where it is liked or in the Chinese restaurants which are many in port cities. The swine throuthout most of the country are fed on fish refuse and has an unpleas­ant taste, or at best not a pleasant one. It is cheap—twenty-four cents for chops to forty-eight for roast. Ham and bacon are smoked in a few factories and produce a fair article at about fifty cents a pound. Mutton is not grown, and is practically never seen in market. Rabbit, squirrel, even venison and wild bear are to be had in season, but are never seen in large quantities. The desire for more protein as yet shows itself only in the increased consumption of milk and beef.