

suggestions for eating with the elements

Each element represents a taste: fire (bitter); earth (sweet); metal (spicy); wood (sour); and water (salty). Determine which of the five elements best represents the lifestyle you want to capture. (For a group meal, apply the same principals, but consider the mood and flow of energy best suited to the group in this moment.) Within each element, there are yin and yang foods. Yin foods are good for active people who need to slow down. Yang foods are good for people who are easily fatigued. Choose foods within your element depending on whether you are in need of yin or yang energy.

ELEMENT	YIN	YANG
Fire	olives, beets, couscous	apricots, coffee, lamb
Earth	mushrooms, pumpkin, mangoes	honey, chocolate, beef
Metal	peppermint, onions, radishes	garlic, peppers, sake
Water	cabbages, sardines	salami, caviar, blue cheese
Wood	cottage cheese, pickles	cherries, lobster

of the countertops and appliances. (A kitchen filled with stainless steel and hard objects is thought to produce "sterile" food.)

But more than the kitchen's layout, the actual preparation of food plays a vital role in a meal's chi. Yamaguchi believes, "The way you cut, chop, boil, and cook the food all have an effect on the energy. A bite of fruit tastes different than a slice. If you overcook food, you have depleted the energy." (Microwave ovens have no place in feng shui kitchens.)

Types of foods and the time of day they are consumed also play a role in the feng shui of a meal. According to Katherine Ann Lewis—the authority who created an environment of feng shui in LA's newest shopping complex, The Grove—the philosophy of feng shui is to feed the soul good energy. For her own energy, Lewis enjoys a bowl of brown rice every morning, a food that will at once clean the body and help her maintain a high energy level. Additionally, Lewis focuses on eating green vegetables when traveling because they are believed to "feed the blood."

While many of feng shui's practices seem like common sense to anyone striving to achieve a healthy lifestyle, embracing the practice in its totality is a serious discipline. Fully incorporated into lifestyle, the feng shui of food promises to control energy and archetype. In other words, the belief holds that you can eat for assertiveness, relaxation, confidence, etc.

Although Kathy Swift, a nutritionist with the Canyon Ranch Nutrition Department, supports such elements of the feng shui lifestyle as timing meals and consuming foods promoted in the philosophy of feng shui, she hesitates at feng shui's encouragement to make food choices based on the kind of lifestyle you want to live.

Dr. Adrian Pujayana of the Family Chiropractic Center of South Pasadena agrees with Swift from a scientific standpoint; however, he points out that most people dedicated to a healthy lifestyle tend to, "eat for who they want to be." In other words, athletes tend to eat for performance, academics make eating choices to help sustain attention, and those with little body awareness eat without pattern or passion.

Although he does not practice a feng shui lifestyle, Pujayana is in full support of the feng shui philosophy as it relates to food. As a matter of fact, his office has instinctively adopted many of the principals of feng shui. "Our prac-

tice has had a very good success rate with controlling ADD and ADHD without drug therapy by examining Asian diets. Asian children have a startlingly low rate of behavioral problems. They often begin their day with fish and rice as opposed to the sugary cereals that dominate the American diet. It just makes good nutritional sense."

Although nutritionist and personal trainer J.J. Flizanes of HomeBodies LA agrees, she raises the burning question, "Is a feng shui lifestyle realistic?"

It just may be more of a reality than most of us recognize. Thanks to the increasing popularity of feng shui in the 1990s, many of the restaurants we love have been designed according to the basic feng shui principals. In Britain, feng shui and food are already widely embraced. "The British are generally quicker to accept Asian customs than Americans," observes consultant Katherine Ann Lewis.

Upon its release, *Feng Shui Food*, a British self-help meets recipe book by Simon Brown and Steve Saunders, became an instant classic, although it has yet to hit the American market. In Blackpool, England, the Sala Thai restaurant has adopted the feng shui philosophy both in the design and the cuisine offered.

Stateside there's evidence that a feng shui lifestyle is on the horizon. San Francisco's Betelnut Pejiu Wu incorporates the principals of yin and yang into many of its dishes. And the popular Plump Jack restaurant in Squaw Valley, California, is noted for incorporating the five elements of chi—earth, fire, metal, water, and wood—into its seasonal menu.

As much as I would enjoy it, incorporating feng shui into your daily life doesn't necessarily require playing with your food. For the beginner, Lewis suggests one simple, life-changing step sure to start you down a path toward a feng shui life. The secret? Cut out caffeine. ☺

