

Nutrition

Nutrition plays an important role in our lives and wellbeing.

It's known that children who imbibe good eating habits at an early age, adopt a healthy lifestyle and grow up to become healthier adults.

TASTY VEGETABLES

Eating habits of the Indian culture are based on culinary traditions. Most dishes feature meat or vegetables mixed with sauce and rice. Since many Indians are vegetarian, the menu for everyday meals is based mostly upon a diet without meat. When meat is incorporated in dishes, it is most commonly in the form of chicken or lamb, and sometimes seafood, such as prawns. The majority of the Indian population is Hindu, so beef and pork are often excluded from Indian dishes due to religious requirements.

DAILY MEALS

There are three main meals in the Indian culture, so the meal timing is similar to western cultures. In India, most people eat a morning meal, a mid-day meal and an evening meal with occasional indulgences of healthy snacks. The evening meal is generally the biggest meal of the day, followed by the mid-day meal. Green tea is more apt to be served with evening meals in India.

FINGER FOODS

Cutlery is not traditionally used to eat food in the Indian culture. Food is meant to be a whole sensory experience, so an eating habit in the

traditional Indian culture is to consume Indian foods such as curry, rice and naan bread by picking it up using the hands. Bread is often used to scoop up the curry sauce and rice, and it is then dipped into traditional soups such as daal, a lentil-based soup. Indian people wash their hands meticulously before and after eating.

BRIEF BACKGROUND

In 1961 the average Indian had a daily calorie intake of 2,010. Their daily diet consisted of 43% grains (378g), 23% produce (199g), 12% dairy & eggs (108g), 12% sugar and fat (108g), 2% meat (17g) and 8% as other (68g). In 2011 the average Indian had a daily calories intake of 2,458. Their daily diet consisted of 34% produce (450g), 32% grains (416g), 18% eggs and dairy (235g), 10% sugar and fat (129g), 2% meat (29g) and 4% as other (58g).

And in the past 25 years...

The average daily protein consumption has risen from 55g per day to 59g per day in the past 25 years (from 1990-2015) with the protein from animal consumption increasing from 9g per day to 12g. The share of dietary energy supplied from cereals and roots has decreased from

an average of 66g per day to 59g.

The number of people undernourished has fluctuated, dropping from 210 million to 177 million between 1990 and 2000 before dramatically increasing between the years 2004-2006 where the recorded number of undernourished people shot up from 177 million to almost 240 million in the space of just 5 years. That figure has steadily been declining since 2006 and has remained consistent since 2009 to present at around 194 million.

So, what does it all mean?

The above statistics show that the average Indian is consuming more calories than they did 50 years ago. India's consumption of eggs, dairy and plant produce has increased more than two-fold in this time. Whilst the average Indian diet remains primarily vegetarian, the consumption of meat and animal-based products has also increased. Furthermore, the consumption of grains has decreased whilst the average daily sugar and fat intake has also increased.

Despite all the changes and regardless of its fast-growing population and economy however, India remains one of the most vegetarian countries in the world.