

Topic: Food Culture – Globalization

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Thank you King Ling College. We, 6C students, can have this unforgettable experience to travel to Cambodia with our classmates. We tried to explore Cambodia other than just building our collective memories.

As Cambodia had its unique food culture, our group spent most of the time on exploring the food culture of it by taking photographs. We would like to find out the feature of typical Cambodia food.

In fact, food culture could be influenced by a kaleidoscope of factors such as the country's history, economic development and climate. We concluded the factors into two main perspectives: environmental factors and living background.

It was also important to promote the food culture of Cambodia to all students. As we all know, not many students are familiar with the types of food in Cambodia. We want to give a brief introduction of Cambodia food, so as to clarify the misconception of some students. Suggestion would be given.

We all had a great time in Cambodia and learnt beyond classrooms.

The sub-questions were as follows:

1. The influence of globalization to the food culture in Cambodia
2. How does the food in Cambodia be accepted by the global citizens?
2. How can we promote the unique food culture in Cambodia to the students as to broaden their horizon?

Chapter 2: Methodology

Choice of method

Quantitative method was used in this project. There were two methods adopted in this project, including literature review and photograph analysis. Literature review was done by doing researches on books or some TV program. Photographs analysis was conducted in Cambodia during the trip.

Classification of the studying target

As the living environment and the economy of Hong Kong and Cambodia are totally different, there are many different kinds of food in Hong Kong because Hong Kong is an international city, but only South-East Asia food can be found in Cambodia because of its geographical condition, therefore the food culture is different in two cities.

This is the reason of choosing food culture to be the topic of the project. Our group are aiming to find out the different eating habits of two cities, the reason behind the difference of the food.

Target group

The target group of this project was the Cambodians that we met during the whole trip as they have more understanding about the food cultures in Cambodia. They were able to give us more information about the food culture in Cambodia and help us make a better comparison between the food culture of Cambodia and Hong Kong

Questions asked

1. What kind of meal do Cambodians usually take as their main course?
2. Which kind of spices are commonly found in Cambodians' dishes?
3. What kinds of fruits do Cambodians usually add into their meal during summer time?
4. When do Cambodians usually go for dinner?

Problem faced and solution

There are some limitations in the literature review, photographs analysis and interview conducted in this project. Our group has to predict the outcome in an early stage. Using the second hand information from the internet, it may be outdated and contra to the later first hand that we collect in Cambodia. However, by doing more research and increasing the number of interviewees, the variation can be minimized.

Literature Review

Most of the resources found about Cambodia food culture are not in English which make it difficult for us to analyze and translate them into English.

Photographs

Although we can easily take pictures of Cambodian food, it is hard for us to identify all of the ingredients used in the dish.

Interview

Language barrier is always the biggest concern for us. During the cooking classes with the Cambodian chef, we could only communicate with the chef with simple English. We are not able to understand all of the specific terms of certain ingredients and steps to follow during the lesson.

In response to the above limitations, measures have been suggested as followings:

At first, in order to deal with the Chinese resources and materials, we decided to reach out to teachers for more opinions about how we can translate the resources in a more accurate and grammatically correct way so as to have a clear expression.

Then, we also took picture of the ingredients that we used in the dishes and labeled them one by one. We also jotted down the cooking steps to make cooking process clearer.

Lastly, we also asked our tour guide who can speak Cantonese to help us communicate with the Cambodian chef so that we can conduct a better conversation with the chef and ask for more details about the food in Cambodia.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Cambodian cuisine has drawn from the great civilizations of China and India, and has been influenced by trades with Spain and Portugal as well as relations with neighboring Vietnam and Thailand. Just like Malaysian, Vietnamese and Philippine cuisines, the Chinese influence is evident in Cambodian food with the proliferation of rice and noodle dishes.

There are various Cambodian kari dishes made with a spicy sauce similar to the Indian sauce that the Western world knows as curry. While the Cambodian kari uses many Indian spices, it also includes local spices like lemongrass, garlic, kaffir lime leaves, shallots and galangal.

Having a similar way of cooking Thai cuisine, coconut milk are more often to be used rather than yogurt for the Cambodian kari dishes.

Cambodia and Vietnam were once part of French Indochina. When French Indochina was dissolved and both Cambodia and Vietnam gained their independence, Cambodia lost many of its territories to Vietnam which led to wars between these two countries. The relation, belligerent as it was, brought Vietnamese culture into Cambodia and, with it, some of Vietnam's culinary traditions.

Economic situation in Cambodia

Having over 2000 years of history, Cambodia could be a well develop country. However, this was not the case. Cambodia is always suffering from wars which slow down their development rate. And this situation tends to be better started from 2000.

Being a late developing country, social problems such as the disparity between the rich and the poor, inadequate infrastructure, health and hygiene problems and people's lack of knowledge are all serious compare to other developed countries. Now, the four main pillars of Cambodia's economy are tourism, processing (clothing), construction and agriculture. Recently, the exporting of Cambodian domestic helpers to Hong Kong is also the new pillars brought by the Cambodia government.

Even though Cambodia economy is growing rapidly this twenty years, most of the Cambodian are still suffer from poverty, having nearly no chance to study and medical protection. This is different from Hong Kong that all citizens are giving the right to study freely and have medical subsidy.

Chapter 4: Photographs analysis

General information of the photographs

These are some Cambodian local foods in photographs, from local restaurants, markets and streets. These reflect the combination of global and Cambodian food cultures.

Details of the photographs



Photo 1

Photo 1 shows the ingredients of a Cambodian cuisine, fresh spring rolls. All students of 5C have attended a cooking class, held by a local NGO, HUSK. The Cambodian spring roll is similar to Chinese spring rolls in its taste and texture.



Photo 2

Photo 2 shows a bowl of chicken soup with lemon pickle, the soup that appears in every meal. It is healthy, with sweet and sour taste. Ingredients include: Slak krai, mushroom, onion, deep fried garlic, lemon grass, lemon pickle and chicken breast.



Photo 3

Photo 3 shows the dinner menu from a local restaurant in Siem Reap. Seafood usually serves as dishes every meals, fish is a common food in Cambodia. Due to the geographical advantage, there is stable supply of different kinds of seafood, not only fish, but also prawns and crabs.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

After the tour, we discovered a lot in food culture. Hongkongers and Cambodians are having a huge different on eating habits.

Before mention about the differences, when our group was having the presentation in the local primary school, introducing the Hong Kong local food, saqima, maltose biscuits and egg rolls, most of the Cambodian students were feeling curious to our snacks from Hong Kong. As we could observe there are a bit differences in food culture among two places. Those students have never try Hong Kong snacks before, although there is globalization on food culture.

For the food quality, due to the differences in economic and cultural development, most of the food in Hong Kong is imported from other countries. Most of the Hongkongers enjoy a better food quality and food cultures mixed with Western countries. While Cambodia is holding a different situation, the economic development is slower compare with Hong Kong, but they are having a geographical advantage. Locals would not buy imported food due to the higher prices. They rely on local produced food, such as different kinds of seafood or fruits.

About the taste of food, Hongkongers loves Chinese food like dim sum, without much seasonings and sauces. While the Cambodians loves herbs and spices. Cambodian food is mostly with spicy sauces and seasonings, to make an evocate of great taste, it is different to Hong Kong and Chinese food culture.

Time flies when we are having fun, we have a good time getting along with others. Not only the moments we have enjoyed, but also the Cambodia cultures and history we have learnt and the smiles on the locals we have met.

Chapter 6: Reflection

On the first day (30 March 2017)

On the first day of the trip, we get to the airport right after the forth lesson. Being the first class to depart from Hong Kong, we are so excited and dreaming what we will see in the following days in Cambodia. The excitement is simply beyond descriptions.

After setting of from the plane, we could immediately feel the high temperature of Cambodia. Just standing outside the airport to wait for the shuttle bus for a couple minutes, we are already sweaty and cannot to wait to get into the hotel as soon as possible.

It was already at night when we reach our hotel. We quickly put our luggage in our own room and back to the restaurant floor to have our dinner. Surprisingly, the first meal we taste in Cambodia is quick similar to Hong Kong. However, the salad is totally different from Hong Kong. There is a new ingredient call lemon grass which tastes like ginger and mint. And it spicy taste just give a bad impression to us and some students just simply refuse to taste it anymore.

Although it is only a glance on Cambodia, we could already observer the different between Hong Kong and Cambodia, either the food or the weather. Dragging our tired body back to room, we quickly take a sleep and ready for the next day. I just cannot wait to create more memories with our classmates and study about Cambodia.

On the second day (31 March 2017)

On the second day in Cambodia, we visit the Choeung EK killing Fields. Before this trip, our group have already did some research on Cambodia history. During the pass hundred years, Cambodia had suffer from wars and millions of people are dead. And this field is the site of a former orchard and mass grave of victims of the Khmer Rouge, over millions of people were executed here and their remains are stored in here.

Walking alongside with guide, we walk around the Stupa of Choeung EK, a memorial which filled with more than 5,000 human skulls, some of the weapons used to execute these people are also displaced. Seeing a hill of skulls, all of us put away out smile and respect to the dead. This is the first time I see dead that close and I can now understand the side effect of war.

Another memorable place is the Killing Tree. It is used to execute women and babies by smashing their head to the tree until they are dead. Just by listening, I can already feel the process is extremely unsettling. I cannot understand why these innocents are needed to be suffered well. These babies would not have the chances to see the beauty of the world but to end their life like this. Having this experience, I am a lot lucky than them and I will treasure my life and what I have because many kids in the world cannot go to school or even have a proper meal.

The second day in Cambodia was not a happy day. It is sad and unsettling. But still, I have my first impression on death and I learn to treasure my life.

On the third day (1 April 2017)

On the third day in Cambodia, we went to Angkor Wat. It is one of the world heritage sites and the largest religious monument in the world. I saw a reflection pool in Angkor Wat. It was so interesting. It is definitely the most beautiful view I ever seen. However, when I saw the children in Cambodia need to gain living by selling souvenirs to the tourists, I was upset.

The children in there entreated the tourists to buy their souvenirs at a very low price. Although the price of those souvenirs was very low for us, the notes given could already pay for their meal for a day or even a week.

The people in Cambodia love the way they are living. This is so impressive that the Hongkongers always focus on how to earn more money for a better life, but have denied the happiness of their living. This is why I want the Hongkongers should not be materialistic but enjoy our lifetime.

Moreover, I saw many disrespecting actions for example, sitting on the stone of the heritage etc. I hope the visitors can protect this precious heritage. Do not damage it as it is the largest monument in the world. It is protected by United Nation (UN). These heritage sites is built by our ancestors. It contains the wisdom of them. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to protect the heritage sites.



Photo 4 Memorable sunset view of Angkor Wat

It was a great day. It is known that the uneven distribution of wealth in Cambodia, so does Hong Kong. We should respect them as they just earn a living in Cambodia. They are not in same situation with Hong Kong that we pursuit a better life.



Photo 5 Sunrise in Angkor Wat

On the fourth day (2 April 2017)

We had a Cambodian cooking class on that day. We cooked several dishes such as Naem Fresh Spring Rolls, bananas with palm sugar, grated coconut flesh Chaek Chhurng and Cambodian Curry Samlor Kary. We have learnt a lot in the cooking class, such as cooking skills and how to use cooking utensils properly. This is my first time to cook without my parents next to me.

What is more, we helped a local family to do maintenance of their bamboo house. We used the bamboo sticks to construct the structures of the walls, use wires to bunch the bamboo sticks together. Although the weather was hot, we were proud of ourselves after finishing the work.

The tour guide Kim, he started learning English 10 years ago. At the beginning, he could not speak fluent English and lack of confidence. However, they speak in fluent English with confidence now. We really appreciate their effort in terms of improving their English and their cooking skills.

Moreover, I found that the fee of building one wall in Cambodia is already 100 USD, it is a heavy burden to Cambodian if they do the maintenance. As a result, we were glad that we can help them alleviate their burden.

On the other hand, we noticed that everything in Hong Kong is well-grounded in high quality, we should not envy others as we already have the best with us.

On the fifth day (3 April 2017)

On the fifth day, we visit the local primary school. After the visit, I conclude it is surprisingly the best day of the trip. We start off with the usual bus riding section. After about an hour trip, we, wearing the winter uniform, arrive the primary school. This is a beautiful day with zero cloud but a big hot sun. It is a suffering.

Entering the primary school, I expect these kids will be afraid of us, the stranger. However, this is not the case. All the kids are so welcoming of our visit. They hold our hands and take us to their classroom. Watching their sweet smile, it definitely warms our heart and started to accept the weather.

Firstly, we have our group presentation sharing some of the Hong Kong traditional snacks like saqima, egg rolls and maltose biscuits. They love the food we brought because of it sweet favor and asking for more. Seeing them enjoy our food, every hard word to brought them from Hong Kong to Cambodia are now totally worth it.

After that, we play some ball games with them. Do not underestimate what they are capable of. Wearing no shoes at all, these kids run as fast as us on the playground full of little rock. The whole game is joyful and memorable. However, time flies and we could only play with them for a short time. I think the lack of time with the kids is definitely the most pity in this trip.

On the sixth day (4 April, 2017)

On the sixth day, it is the last day we spend in Cambodia. Although there are bitter and sweet in this trip, we still miss the day in Cambodia.

We pack our stuff and settled ourselves to reflect on the pass five day what we have experienced, what we have learnt. Sitting in the plane, watching Cambodia being smaller and smaller, I feel like Cambodia has become my home in this few days. If I have a chance, I would definitely visit Cambodia again. And I know there is still a lot for me to learn.

Getting back to Hong Kong, I can tell there are really different between Cambodia and Hong Kong. Even though Hong Kong can fulfill my physical need, I could never feel the worm hospitality like in Cambodia. And I would I like to donate and help the kids in Cambodia to have better life if I am financially capable to support them.

The trip is over and I make a lot of memories with my classmates and Cambodia. I will always remember this remarkable journey. Thank you King Ling for offering us this wonderful journey.

Chapter 7: Bibliography

1. Cambodian Cooking Classes booklet, HUSK
2. History of Cambodia, Wikipedia