

6 Things You Must Know About Asian Noodles



Because, hey, you live in **Asia** now.

"Noodles are **easily available in Singapore**, and they're probably more affordable than some of the grains you ate back home – a big pack of noodles costs \$2, compared to \$3 or \$4 for couscous or bulgur wheat," says Jaclyn Reutens, a dietician at Aptima Nutrition & Sports Consultants (www.aptima-nsc.com). Plus, you surely want to savour some of the **local flavours**.

Try these three tips to pack **more nutrition into your meals**:

1. Start Smart

"Fresh or dried noodles are both fine," Jaclyn says. Look for the fat

[instant noodles](#), which are often fried before they're dried. And go with rice noodles over egg noodles, if you're watching your fat intake. Rice noodles are actually gluten free, too, as they're made from rice flour (egg, or [Hokkien](#), noodles are made from wheat flour and chicken or duck eggs), and come in various thicknesses: from very thin (called mee sua in Singapore) to wide, flat noodles (hor fun).

2. Consider the Glycemic Index

Cellophane, or glass, noodles (called tang hoon here) are made from mung beans, so they have a very low GI. Meaning? They release glucose more gradually into the bloodstream – and keep you feeling full longer. The same goes for buckwheat [soba](#) noodles, which are made from buckwheat flour derived from a seed. Cooking your noodles al dente ups the glycemic index slightly, though it doesn't affect the noodles' overall nutritional profile.

3. Watch those Add-ins

"If you're stir-frying at home, use [olive oil](#), but don't be heavy handed," advises Jaclyn. "It's okay to add a little oyster or soya sauce for flavour, just make sure to include lots of veggies or even tofu." When eating out, Jaclyn says to watch out for noodles with a "greasy sheen" – it's a sign of higher fat and calories (yes, we're talking about you, delicious mee goreng "fried noodles"). Manage portion size, too. "In Singapore, the sizes for things like ramen are quite generous – there can be more than 800 calories in one bowl," Jaclyn says. "Eat half of the amount instead."

Noodle-eating Etiquette

4. Japanese way



Try this technique for ramen, in particular: Use your chopsticks to fish out a small amount of noodles from the bowl. Pop the end of the noodles into your mouth. Slurp – feeding the noodles into your mouth with your chopsticks – until you get them all in. Bite off the noodles, your mouth gets too full. Use your spoon to sip the broth and savor the bits.

5. Singaporean way



Holding your spoon in your left hand, pick up a small amount of noodles with your chopsticks in your right hand. Then, carefully ease the noodles into the spoon so that they spiral or spill into a neat pile. Eat the noodles on the spoon. Use this technique to eat any [vegetables](#) or meat in the bowl as well. Use your spoon to sip any broth.

6. Western way



You've probably learned that a spoon alone is no match for a bowl of steaming noodles. Don't stress if you're not confident with chopsticks. Channel your inner [Italian](#) and spin a small amount of noodles into your spoon with a fork. Or, try a hybrid Western-Singaporean method and drop your noodles or ingredients into the spoon with your fork.

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