

A Taste of Ethnic Culture

Thirty years ago Canadians would not have dreamed of eating "foreign food." Today when Canadians talk about going out for dinner, lunch or "dim-sum" the first question is likely to be, "What do you feel like eating? Jamaican, Polish?" "Do you like Chinese, Italian, Lebanese or Vietnamese Canadian food?"

Perhaps no other aspect of Canada's society reveals its multicultural nature quite so vividly as the current taste in restaurants and even home cooking.

A walk along Toronto's Bloor Street, Montreal's Prince Arthur, Vancouver's Robson or Ottawa's Bank Street will show one thing these cities all have in com-

mon: ethnic restaurants. There will be restaurants specializing in Hungarian, Japanese, Spanish, East Indian, Malaysian and French food and more, much more. The choice is limited only by the experience and taste of the diner.

Canada did not always offer such culinary diversity. Forty years ago gastronomic excitement was largely confined to traditional French Canadian specialties or a late night trip to a Chinese restaurant accompanied with the hope that a knife and fork would be offered as an alternative to chopsticks. Today, if one Canadian says to another, "Let's go out for Chinese food" the response

will likely be, "North or South, Cantonese or Mandarin, Szechuan or Hunan?"

At first the trend to a more cosmopolitan palate was gradual. After Chinese came Italian, German, or Ukrainian, depending on which part of Canada you were in. But in the past 20 years there has been an explosion. Now every food of practically every nationality is available in Canada's major cities.

Today, telephone directories in Canada's metropolitan centres list restaurants in the usual alphabetical manner and under ethnic categories as well. Would you like to try Afghan or Algerian? How about Croatia, Iranian, Korean or Turkish?

Ethnic restaurants, of course, were not established as a part of Canada's multicultural policy. They were established because of Canada's multicultural *fact*. The first ethnic restaurants in most towns or cities were probably opened to serve a home-cooked meal to that specific ethnic group. Only later did the clientele expand to include Canadians of other origins.

Today, not only do Canadians have their falafels, their pizzas and their nachos, but they have made them distinctly their own.

**Canadian cuisine:
something for every
taste.**

