

Healthy Snacks – The Asian Way

If you need extra energy during the day, try taking a cue from traditional Asian diets by snacking on nutrient-dense foods.



Edamame are pods of soybeans, which are traditionally served steamed. At the grocery store, edamame are usually sold shelled and frozen, and need to be thawed and steamed. Just be sure not to eat them raw, as uncooked edamame can make you sick. One cup of edamame (in their shell) has 12 g protein, 6 g fiber, and is a good source of iron.

Rice cakes of all sorts have been enjoyed for centuries throughout Asia. While our puffed brown rice cakes are quite different from soft Asian varieties, these simple whole grain patties are great building blocks for snacks. Dress them up by adding nut butter and a sprinkle of cinnamon.

Fruits are an important component of many of the world's healthiest diets. Fill your supermarket cart with fresh fruit, such as apples, oranges, mangoes, and pears. Unsweetened dried fruit, unsweetened frozen fruit, or fruit canned in water can also be healthy options, especially when fresh is not in season. If there's an Asian market nearby, explore the offerings for a new-to-you fruit like lychee, kumquat, rambutan, or persimmon.



Dried seaweed is a popular packaged snack food, though it's most well-known for its role in traditional Japanese cooking. If you've had sushi, you've likely encountered seaweed in the wrapping. Similar to other greens like kale or spinach, seaweed is nutritionally dense, and low in calories.

Veggies like carrots, bell peppers, cucumbers, radishes, and snap peas are a great way to keep yourself satisfied throughout the day. Snacking on fresh vegetables can provide fiber and essential vitamins and minerals. For added flavor, try dipping veggies in a ginger or miso dressing, or a peanut sauce.

Brothy soups are commonplace throughout Asia, and the Western diet can feel very dry in comparison. Sometimes, our bodies can mistake thirst for hunger, so staying adequately hydrated throughout the day is an important weight-management strategy. A simple miso soup, with hardly any calories, is a satisfying way to quench the craving for something savory while upping your hydration. Look for low-sodium soups and broths.