The History and Health Benefits of Kimchi

History

• Kimchi is from Korea, where foods have been fermented as far back as 57 BC
• Kimchi dates back to 918 AD with different regions developing different recipes
• Colder climates use fermentation for preserving foods in winter
• Ingredients at this time included garlic, fish and salt but no cabbage

• The early kimchi was made with radish and were fermented in either brine or soybean paste
• Other vegetables were added including the Chinese cabbage (napa)
• Red pepper powder that makes it hot came later
• Kimchi was eaten grains to help digest them – millet and barley then later rice

Health Benefits

• Kimchi is a combination of vegetables and flavours such as napa cabbage, daikon radish, carrot, onions, garlic and ginger and sometimes fish and red pepper powder
• Numerous studies have been conducted and found a number of benefits
• The benefits are found in the good bacteria strain plus the benefits of nutrients in the vegetables are boosted by the fermentation process

• Kimchi helps carbohydrate metabolism and the capsaicin in the red pepper powder boost the body’s metabolism
• The cabbage and radish contain phytonutrients such as isocyanate and sulfide helpful in detoxifying heavy metals found in the liver, small intestine and kidney.
• Isocyanate may also helps prevent stomach cancer

• Kimchi causes immune cells to be more active and antibodies to be more abundant
• A high cholesterol diet and kimchi can increase immune activity better than a normal diet alone or a high cholesterol diet alone
• Garlic and red pepper powder help prevent gastritis and peptic ulcer by inhibiting H. Pylori
Health Benefits

- Lowers homocysteine in blood that causes blood vessel diseases and is a factor in developing heart disease and Alzheimer’s
- People who eat kimchi twice or three times a day had lower chances of having a heart attack
- Prevent aging of the skin and is a major antioxidant with nutrients such as beta carotene and selenium

Health Benefits

- Bacillus pumilus, found in kimchi helped detox carcinogen and xenoestrogen Bisphenol A (found in plastic)
- Kimchi with added mustard leaf, Korean Mistletoe and Chinese pepper inhibited human colon cancer cells 62-80 % (in a lab)
- 3 or 6 g of freeze dried kimchi capsules daily taking by obese women decreased body weight significantly

Health Benefits

- 1 g of well-fermented kimchi produces more than 8 hundred million lactobacilli (4 X the amount of lactobacilli in yogurt)
- Like all fermented foods, it aids digestion of all the food in the meal
- It also has antimicrobial properties
- It aids intestinal health and helps prevent constipation

Health Benefits

- Help maintain blood sugar
- Aids brain health and may help prevent dementia
- Currently it is being studied for its anti-cancer potential
- Kimchi is unique as it contains so many health ingredients and it is fermented so it will make a wonderful addition to your diet

References

1. Fermented kimchi reduces body weight and improves metabolic parameters in overweight and obese pat Bacterial community structure in kimchi, a Korean fermented vegetable food, as revealed by 16S rRNA gene analysis, Myungjin Kim, Jongsik ChunTients, Kim EK et al, Nutr Res. 2011 Jun;31(6):436-43
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