

Refined Cooking vs Plain Cooking

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Food, for humans, is something cooked. Does cooking itself have moral consequences? Yes, according to two persistent but radically opposed positions from a couple of millennium BC to the eighteenth century.

Most of Eurasia

Western Tradition, perhaps elsewhere

Refined Food (The More Cooked the Better)	Plain Food (The Less Cooked the Better)
Cooking = Mixing and Perfecting	Cooking = Falsifying or Corrupting
Mixing Adjusts Humors, Fire Purifies (Refines) Foodstuffs to their Essence or True Nature	Cooking Disguises or Destroys Natural Foodstuffs
Cooking Separates Humans from Animality and Barbarism and Enhances Virtue	Cooking Produces Unnatural Appetites Inducing Illness and Gluttony in Individuals and War, Despotism and Decline to the State
Associated with Monarchies, Cavalry, Monastic Orders	Associated with Stoics, Republicans, Foot Soldiers, Church Fathers, Protestants
Ideal Foods are White Bread, White Rice, Wine, Ghee, Sugar, Made Dishes	Ideal foods are Whole Wheat Bread, Vegetables, Water, Milk, Plain Dishes

NB. This is not the same as (a) vegetarian/non vegetarian or (b) delicious/disgusting

NB The near-simultaneous discrediting of the theories of humors and virtues in the 18th century meant that the arguments for Refined Food became aesthetic not moral.