

Which countries dominate the world's dinner tables

“The destiny of nations,” wrote Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, an 18th-century French **gastronome**, “depends on how they nourish themselves.” Today a nation’s **stature** depends on how well it nourishes the rest of the world, too. For proof of this, consider the rise of **culinary** diplomacy. In 2012 America’s State Department launched a “chef **corps**” tasked with promoting American cuisine abroad. South Korea pursues its own brand of “**kimchi** diplomacy”.

gastronome 美食家

stature 身高；身材

culinary 烹饪的

corps 军队

kimchi 泡菜

But which country’s cuisine is at the top of the global food chain? A new paper by Joel Waldfogel of the University of Minnesota provides an answer. Using restaurant listings from TripAdvisor, a travel-review website, and sales figures from Euromonitor, a market-research firm, Mr Waldfogel estimates world “trade” in cuisines for 52 countries. Domestic consumption of foreign cuisine is treated as an “import”, whereas foreign consumption of domestic cuisine is treated as an “export”. The balance determines which countries have the greatest influence on the world’s palate.

The United States is the world’s biggest net importer of cuisine, **gobbling** down \$55bn more in foreign dishes than the rest of the world eats in American fare. China comes next, with a \$52bn dietary deficit; Brazil and Britain have shortfalls worth around \$34bn and \$30bn respectively. Italy, meanwhile, ranks as the world’s biggest exporter of **edibles**. The world’s appetite for pasta and pizza, plus Italians’ relative **indifference** to other cuisines, give the country a \$168bn supper surplus. Japan, Turkey and Mexico also boast robust surpluses.

gobble 狼吞虎咽

edible 食物；可食用的

indifferent 冷漠的；中等的

surplus 剩余；顺差