Why is pepper such a popular spice? - Carolyn Beans — 中英對照學習本

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掃碼開啟影片

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In 1606, a large trading ship struck a rock off the coast of Lisbon, Portugal. As the vessel's valuable contents floated to the surface, locals flocked to the sea to scavenge what they could. But it wasn't precious metals, silks, or gemstones they were after— it was black peppercorns. Black peppercorns are the small, berry-like fruits of a tropical vine. The spice has a subtle wood and citrus flavor, and a not-so-subtle spicy kick that comes from piperine, a compound that binds to a heat and pain receptor on our tongues. Humans have sought out this peppery sensation for millennia.

> 1606 年，一艘大型商船在葡萄牙里斯本外海撞上礁石。船上值錢的貨品浮上水面，附近的居民紛紛跑到海邊，盡量撿走能撿到的東西。但他們覬覦的不是貴金屬、絲綢或寶石，而是黑胡椒粒。黑胡椒粒是熱帶藤本植物結出的漿果狀小果實。這種香料帶著若有似無的木香與柑橘香，也有一份不容忽視的辛辣勁道，那辣味來自胡椒鹼——一種能與我們舌頭上的熱覺與痛覺受體結合的化合物。幾千年來，人類一直在尋找這種帶勁的刺激。

(v.) **scavenge**
撿拾；拾荒

(adj.) **subtle**
細微的；若有似無的

(n.) **compound**
化合物

(n.) **receptor**
受體（感受刺激的分子）

(n.) **millennia**
數千年；千年的時間

(n.) **peppercorns**
胡椒粒

(adj.) **precious**
珍貴的；貴重的

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Thousands of years ago, people on the Malabar Coast of what's now India began growing Piper nigrum, the black pepper that we eat today. In northeastern India, growers planted Piper longum, a sweeter relative that's now far less common. Black, green, red, and white peppercorns were all produced using the same plant by processing the fruit differently. To create black peppercorns, for example, growers picked the fruits before they ripened and left them to dry and darken in the sun. In India, pepper was prized, both as a culinary spice and as a medicinal plant. Ayurvedic texts from 8 millennia ago praised its healing properties, especially for digestive issues.

> 幾千年前，今日印度的馬拉巴海岸開始有人種植 Piper nigrum，也就是我們今天吃的黑胡椒。在印度東北部，種植戶栽種的是 Piper longum——一種比較甜、近來已經罕見得多的近親。黑胡椒、青胡椒、紅胡椒和白胡椒，全都是同一種植物的果實，只是加工方式不同。以黑胡椒為例，種植戶在果實成熟之前就把它們摘下來，讓它們在陽光下曬乾、曬黑。在印度，胡椒既被當作廚房香料，也被當成藥用植物，備受珍視。八千年前的阿育吠陀（Ayurveda）典籍已稱讚它的療效，尤其是對消化方面的毛病。

(n.) **relative**
近親；同類事物

(n.) **processing**
加工；處理

(v.) **ripened**
成熟；變熟

(adj.) **culinary**
烹飪的；廚房的

(adj.) **medicinal**
藥用的；有療效的

(n.) **properties**
特性；療效

(adj.) **digestive**
消化的；與消化有關的

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Early migrants and traders helped move pepper from India to Indonesia and beyond. Egyptians were early adopters— the spice was found in the nostrils of the 3,000-year-old mummy of Pharaoh Ramesses II. Black pepper reached China and Rome over 2 millennia ago via the Silk Road and was quickly embraced. A Roman cookbook from the 4th or 5th century BCE called for pepper in 81% of the 400 recipes. And when Visigoths captured Rome in 410 AD, they demanded over 3,000 pounds of black peppercorns as part of the city's ransom. In the Middle Ages, Alexandria, Venice, and Genoa grew rich on the pepper pouring in and out of their ports.

> 早期的移民與商人，幫忙把胡椒從印度運到印尼以及更遠的地方。埃及人是最早的採用者——這香料曾在那具三千年前的法老拉美西斯二世（Ramesses II）木乃伊的鼻孔裡被發現。兩千多年前，黑胡椒沿著絲綢之路傳到中國和羅馬，並且很快就被接受。一本公元前四、五世紀的羅馬食譜，在四百道菜裡有八成一用上胡椒。公元 410 年西哥特人攻陷羅馬時，更要求以三千多磅黑胡椒粒作為贖城款項的一部分。中世紀時，亞歷山大港、威尼斯和熱那亞都因為進出港口的胡椒而變得富足。

(n.) **migrants**
移民；遷徙者

(n.) **adopters**
採用者；最早接受的一方

(v.) **embraced**
接受；欣然接納

(n.) **cookbook**
食譜；烹飪書

(n.) **recipes**
菜式；配方

(n.) **ransom**
贖金；贖城款項

(v.) **captured**
攻陷；俘虜

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The wealthy piled pepper, along with other spices, onto their food. Myths spread that the pepper grew on trees guarded by serpents— a justification for the high price. In the late 15th century, Lisbon became Europe's new leader in the pepper trade after Vasco da Gama discovered a direct sea route connecting Portugal to India. But this pepper dominance wasn't without contest. Over the following two centuries, Spain, England, Portugal, and Holland battled to gain control over spices and the people who grew them. Black pepper was also among the spices that sent Christopher Columbus searching for a new route to India.

> 有錢人把胡椒連同其他香料，一層層堆在食物上。流傳開的說法是：胡椒長在有蛇守著的樹上——這正好成了胡椒身價高昂的理由。十五世紀末，達伽馬（Vasco da Gama）找到一條連接葡萄牙與印度的直接海路之後，里斯本躍升為歐洲胡椒貿易的新霸主。但這份霸權並非無人爭奪。在之後的兩百年裡，西班牙、英國、葡萄牙和荷蘭為了控制香料，以及種植香料的人，爭戰不休。胡椒也是促使哥倫布（Christopher Columbus）出海尋找通往印度新航線的香料之一。

(n.) **myths**
傳說；神話

(n.) **justification**
理由；辯解

(n.) **dominance**
霸權；主導地位

(n.) **contest**
爭奪；競爭

(v.) **battled**
爭戰；抗爭

(n.) **route**
航線；路線

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Upon landing in the Americas, he thought he'd found the spice— though he was actually biting into a much hotter, larger, and completely unrelated fruit: the chili. Experts believe that ancient civilizations in what is today Mexico first domesticated chilies many millennia earlier. Like black pepper, chilies activate heat and pain receptors, but with a more potent chemical compound called capsaicin, leading Europeans to dub this hot fruit "pepper" as well. Unlike black pepper, chilies happily grew in a variety of climates, which soon made them the far cheaper option. In India, chilies were embraced, becoming a standard ingredient and garnish.

> 哥倫布登陸美洲後，以為自己找到了那種香料——他咬下去的其實是另一種水果：辣椒，比胡椒辛辣得多、大得多，而且完全沒有親緣關係。專家相信，今日墨西哥一帶的古代文明早在數千年前就已開始馴化辣椒。跟黑胡椒一樣，辣椒同樣會活化熱覺與痛覺受體，不過它靠的是效力更強的化學物質辣椒素，於是歐洲人也把這種火辣的水果叫作「胡椒」。與黑胡椒不同，辣椒在多種氣候下都能長得很好，很快便成了便宜得多的替代品。在印度，辣椒同樣大受歡迎，成為標準食材與配料。

(adj.) **unrelated**
毫不相干的；沒有關係的

(v.) **domesticated**
馴化

(adj.) **potent**
效力強的；濃烈的

(v.) **activate**
活化；啟動

(v.) **dub**
把…稱為；稱作

(n.) **climates**
氣候

(n.) **ingredient**
食材；配料

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And in China, chili peppers became synonymous with Sichuan cuisine, alongside Sichuan peppers, another unrelated spicy plant labeled "pepper." By the mid-17th century, black pepper production had spread well beyond India and the cost of pepper fell. But while it lost its allure as a status symbol, it remained in wide use. In France, a new culinary movement favored recipes lacking spices, with the exception of two: salt and pepper. The trend spread, bringing the now seeming inseparable pair to tabletops across Europe and North America. Today, black pepper makes up 20% of the global spice trade. It stands among many other heat options.

> 在中國，辣椒更與川菜畫上等號，並與花椒——另一種被冠以「胡椒」之名的、毫不相干的辛辣植物——並列。到了十七世紀中葉，黑胡椒的生產已經遠遠擴散到印度以外，胡椒的價格也隨之下跌。雖然它失去了身為身分象徵的吸引力，卻依然廣泛使用。在法國，一股新的料理風潮推崇不含香料的菜式，只有兩樣例外：鹽和胡椒。這股潮流四處傳開，把這對如今看似形影不離的搭檔帶上歐洲與北美各地的餐桌。今天，黑胡椒佔全球香料交易的兩成。它是眾多提供辣味的選擇之一。

(adj.) **synonymous**
同義的；不可分割的

(v.) **labeled**
稱為；冠以…之名

(n.) **allure**
吸引力；誘惑

(n.) **status symbol**
身分象徵

(v.) **favored**
偏好；推崇

(n.) **exception**
例外

(adj.) **inseparable**
分不開的；形影不離的

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We can spice up our meals with chilies in salsas, harissa, and gochujang. Or we could simply reach for the pepper shaker. So, how did salt come to join pepper at so many tables?

> 我們可以用辣椒調成 salsa（莎莎醬）、harissa（哈里薩醬）和 gochujang 辣醬，為每餐添味；又或者，伸手拿起桌上的胡椒罐就好。那麼，鹽究竟是怎麼跟胡椒一起，登上這麼多張餐桌的呢？

(n.) **meals**
膳食；一餐

(v.) **reach for**
伸手拿取

(n.) **shaker**
胡椒瓶；調味瓶

(n.) **tables**
餐桌