

## How do genes interact with culture to shape food preferences?

Two random humans from a single group tend indeed to be more genetically different from each other than two different human populations on average.

Does this hold also when it comes to lifestyle and culture?

In a [recently published article on PNAS](#) from the Universities of Tartu, Turin, Trieste and Padova, the authors investigated the matter by taking dietary choices as a proxy for that and by examining food preferences over 79 different foods within six populations along the historical Silk Road route, spanning across the whole of Central Asia.

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As differences in genetic makeup and food preference between countries could be translated into “genetic” and “food” distances, these were plotted on a geographic map for comparison with the actual geographic distances between sampling locations. The emerging map showed culture to be only slightly more comparable to geography than genetics for the analyzed groups, consistently with what emerged from the rest of the results.

“No matter where you live or where you were born, it turns out that your choices (at least as far as food consumption is concerned) are more dependent on your sex and age and on other cultural features” concluded Dr. Serena Aneli, the first author of the study.

[\*\*This is an excerpt. Read the original post here\*\*](#)