

## Cuisine of Korea

### Cuisine of Korea

Korean cuisine is the traditional food of Korea. The ingredients and preparation are richly varied, and many dishes are becoming internationally popular.

Korean cuisine is based largely on rice, vegetables, soups, meats and tofu (dubu in Korean). Traditional Korean meals are notable for the number of side dishes (banchan) that accompany the ubiquitous steam-cooked short-grain rice, soup, and kimchi (fermented, spicy vegetable banchan, most commonly cabbage, radish or cucumber).

Every meal is accompanied by numerous banchan.

Korean food is usually seasoned with sesame oil, doenjang (fermented soybean paste), soy sauce, salt, garlic, ginger and gochujang (red chili paste). Korea is the largest consumer of garlic, ahead of the rest of Asia (particularly Thailand and China, excluding Japan) and the Northern Mediterranean (mainly Spain, Italy, and Greece). The cuisine varies seasonally, and traditionally relies much on kimchi and other pickled vegetables. Preparation of Korean food is generally very labor-intensive.

The foods and beverages described below are becoming more and more popular to the western palate and are all served at Seoul Restaurant and Lounge.

- Jungol: a traditional spicy Korean stew, consisting of various types of seafood, meat, and vegetables. It is generally served bubbling from the kitchen on a burner.
- Kimchi Jigae: A soup made of mainly Kimchi. Pork, tofu, or anchovies can be incorporated in the soup. It is common lunch meal or accompaniment to a meat course. It is normally served in a stone pot, still boiling when it arrives at the table.
- Soon du bu Jigae: a thick spicy stew made with soft tofu. Traditionally, the diner cracks a raw egg in it while it's still boiling.
- Bibimbap ("mixed rice"): rice topped with vegetables, beef and egg, and served with a dollop of chili pepper paste. A variation of this dish, dol sot bibimbap, is served in a heated stone bowl, in which an over-medium egg finishes cooking against the bowl. Everything (seasonings, rice and vegetables) is stirred together in one large bowl and eaten with a spoon.
- Chapchae: Boiled dangmyun or potato noodles, various steamed vegetables, and beef are mixed and seasoned with soy sauce, sesame oil and sugar.
- Soju is a clear spirit which was originally made from grain, and is now also made from sweet potatoes. Soju made from grain is considered superior (as is also the case with grain vs. potato vodka). Soju is around 22% ABV and is a favorite beverage of hard-up college students, hard-drinking businessmen, and blue-collar workers.
- Oksusu cha: roasted corn tea

### Korean Table Manners

Although there is no prescribed order for eating the many dishes served at a traditional Korean meal. Many Koreans start with a small portion of soup before eating the other dishes in any order they wish. Koreans generally do not pick up their rice or soup bowls, but leave both on the table and eat from them with spoons, in stark contrast to the Chinese and Japanese customs. Side dishes are eaten with chopsticks.

Bad manners include blowing one's nose at the table, picking up chopsticks or spoon before the oldest person starts the meal, chewing with an open mouth, talking with food in one's mouth, sticking chopsticks or spoon straight up in a dish, stabbing foods with chopsticks, picking up food with one's hands (with certain exceptions), using spoon and chopsticks at the same time (when you intend to use one of them, you should to put the other one on the table), making a sound when chewing foods or clicking a bowl with a spoon or chopsticks, stirring rice or soup with a spoon or chopsticks, stirring shared side dishes to select what you want to eat, removing a certain spices or ingredients from shared side dishes, being careless of coughing and sneezing to the persons on the same table (If you have a cough or have a fit of sneezing, you should turn your head to the side and put your hand on your mouth.), finishing your meal faster or slower than the others at the same table (you need to keep pace with them), using toothpicks with the mouth open and leaving them on the table. Obviously, this information is for educational purposes only, and in informal situations these rules are often broken.

Though diners do not need to finish all the shared food that was provided, it is customary to finish one's individual portion of rice. Banchan dishes are intended to be finished at each meal, so they are presented in small portions and replenished as they are emptied. It is acceptable to ask for refills of any of the side dishes, some of which are shown below.

