

SPICEOLOGY

흥미 초점

AKA THOSE BIG, BOLD AND COMPLEXLY FUNNY FLAVORS

# KOREAN CUISINE

한국 요리

WE CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF.

There's no end in sight for the Korean cuisine craze. And for good reason - there's never been more access to this addictive culture via streaming and social media. The more K-dramas, K-pop and overall K-culture we consume the more we crave. Just like the Korean dishes that are blowing our minds and expanding our palates.

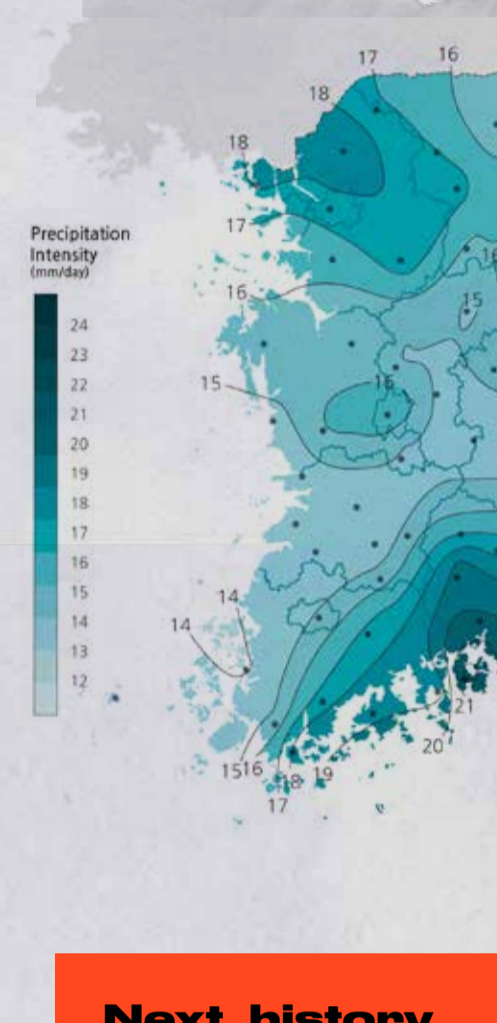


**KIMCHI, BULGOGI, KOREAN BBQ, FRIED CHICKEN, BIBIMBAP, JAPCHAE, FISH CAKES, TTEOKBOKKI - THE LIST GOES ON.**

Join us as we dive into the world of intense flavors, shades of heat, honored ingredients, and where food is medicine as we explore the heart and soul of Korean cuisine.

CRED CHECK CHEF

## MEET CHEF CLARA PARK



**Name:** Chef Clara Park  
**That Handle:** @claraparkcooks  
**In the Industry:** 20 years

**Known For:** Executive Chef at Quaker Kitchen at the University of Pennsylvania, Competitor on FoodNetwork's Chopped and Netflix's Snack vs. Chef, alumni of Le Moulin Bregeon (France), Gary Danko (SF), Town Hall (SF), Osteria (Philly), and Momotoku Ko (NYC).

**Awards:** Chopped Champion, Best Burger in Philadelphia (Korean BBQ Bulgogi Burger)

One day Philly-based and Korean-American Chef Clara Park found herself sitting across the table with the late Chef Anthony Bourdain and Chef Eric Ripert and giving tips on Korean dishes and dining etiquette - and thus forever cemented her cred. She's here to be a sounding board for this month's Flavor Focus.

박옥환

## THE BRIEFEST OF HISTORY (AND GEOGRAPHY) LESSONS

A note from the writer... this is quite possibly the most challenging section to write - we're condensing a long and complex history (we're talking more than 1,000 years) into a high-level and digestible look at a few defining factors that shaped Korea's food culture.



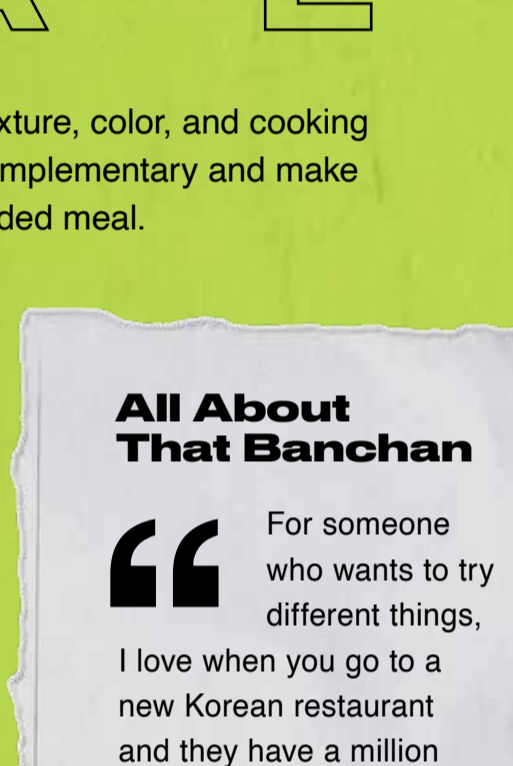
**First, geography.** Thanks to its location, Korea's climate resembles the north central United States: cold winters, warm summers and long autumns. Those cold winters were the catalyst for the fermented food culture that became a key aspect of Korean cuisine aka need shaped culture.

And, with a geography composed mostly of mountains and many microenvironments, each region has its own dishes unique to its climate; that means a large variety of native ingredients, techniques and overall dishes.

**Next, history.** Reminder, we're keeping it brief.

**Three Kingdoms Period (4th-7th Century)**  
New food preservation techniques including fermentation, salting and drying become popular.

**The Goryeo Dynasty (10th-14th Century)**  
There's a 13th century Buddhist-driven vegetarianism phase followed by a meat-eating Mongol rule stint where Korean BBQ emerges. Most importantly a dish called Bulgogi becomes a thing.



**The Joseon Dynasty (14th-19th Century)**  
Confucianism brings the importance of balance in every aspect of life, including food, which gives rise to the "food as medicine" ethos. Later the Royal Cuisine movement gains momentum through the early 1900s.

**20th Century**  
Rice shortages and government restrictions follow in the wake of the Korean War through the '50s and '60s. Nutritionists in turn urge a more Western diet of bread and meat. Fast forward to the 1980s when there's a backlash against the Western diet and more champion indigenous ingredients and traditional cooking techniques.



And with the resurgence of traditional dishes came a global appetite for Korean cuisine.

## A BALANCED MEAL



A traditional Korean meal is made up of many (small) dishes where each element is meant to balance each other: taste, texture, color, and cooking method are complementary and make for a well-rounded meal.

**Let's set the table:**

- Bap - cooked rice
- Banchans - vegetable and protein side dishes
- Kimchi - fermented vegetables
- Namul - green vegetables
- Kuk - broth-based dish
- Jang - fermented sauce used to enhance the flavor of banchans

### All About That Banchan

For someone who wants to try different things, I love when you go to a new Korean restaurant and they have a million different banchan - the variety, the heartiness and really strong delicious flavors. Korean food is also a cleaner way of eating, with no steadfast rule - they are as numerous as they are delicious.

Banchan are one of the great joys of Korean cuisine, complementing the entree, such as a grilled meat or a bubbling stew, but treasured in their own right. Many people like to eat them as appetizers, though they're meant to go alongside the rest of the meal. Most restaurants serve them on the house, as a gesture of hospitality.



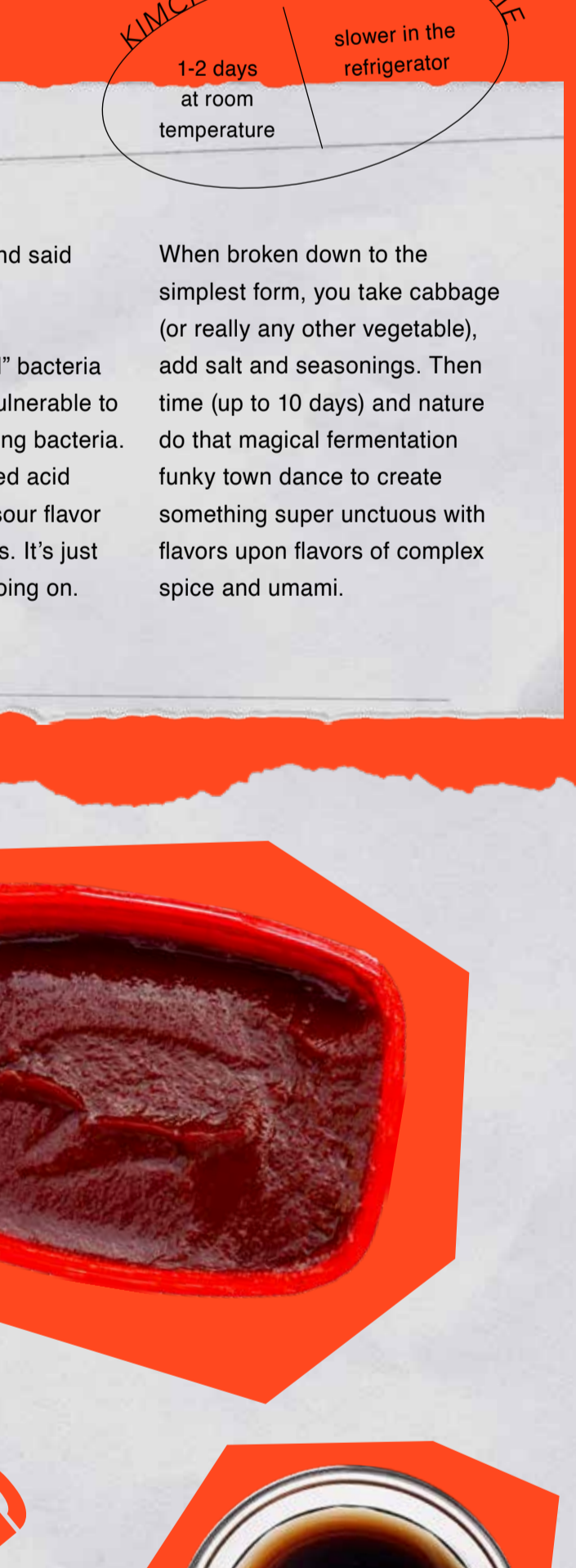
- New York Times

"Banchan are assorted side dishes always presented at a Korean table, usually one or more kinds of kimchi, sauteed or pickled vegetables, maybe a piece of marinated fish or a soy sauced stir-fry, there is no steadfast rule - they are as numerous as they are delicious."

- Chef Clara Park

## LET'S TALK KIMCHI

Kimchi is much more than a traditional dish. It's an essential element of Korean meals that transcends class and regional differences and helps define and share cultural identity.



Kimchi is not just cabbage salad - it is essential to the culture of the country. There are hundreds of different varieties of kimchi in Korea, and about 1.5 million tons of it is consumed each year. Even the Korean stock market reflects this obsession: The 'Kimchi Index' tracks when Napa cabbage and the 12 other ingredients - chili, carrots, radishes and anchovies among them - are at their best prices.

I think kimchi makes a lot of things better. Like I love grilled cheese, but then you put kimchi in it. And wow. Quesadillas, but then you put kimchi in it - next level.

- Chef Clara Park

**KIMCHI FERMENTATION TIME**  
1-2 days at room temperature | slower in the refrigerator

**On to kimjang - the tradition of making kimchi (and the science behind it).**

Fermentation occurs when a chemical reaction is caused between naturally present bacteria on a food and said food's sugars. This growth of "good" bacteria makes a food less vulnerable to "bad" spoilage-causing bacteria. Plus, there's no added acid required to get that sour flavor from fermented foods. It's just 100% natural funk going on.

When broken down to the simplest form, you take cabbage (or really any other vegetable), add salt to seasons. Then time (up to 10 days) and nature do that magical fermentation funky town dance to create something super unctuous with flavors upon flavors of complex spice and umami.

## HOW TO HANG WITH THE JANGS

A jang is a fermented sauce that can be made from a variety of ingredients, including soybeans, fish, chiles, and more.

Here is a breakdown of some of the most widely used jangs to add to your pantry and Chef Clara Park's favorite dish uses:

**Ganjang (Soy Sauce)**  
Deep umami flavor and not as salty as you might think.

Great In Japchae (Stir-Fry Noodles), also base for many Korean BBQ marinades

**Ssamjang (Spicy Sauce)**  
Very umami with spicy, intensely savory and slightly sweet notes.

Great On Galbi or Bulgogi, typically you add Ssamjang to your lettuce and add the beef and make a wrap

**Doenjang (Bean Sauce)**  
Resembles miso but with a stronger pungent, salty flavor that's tangy and bitter.

Great On Boiled Pork Belly Wrap (Bossam) or in Stews

**Eojang (Fish Sauce)**  
Packs a fishy and umami punch.

Great In Kimchi

People think it's Japanese shiso since it's in the same mint family. But perilla is not as floral, it's more fibrous, and we use it a lot in Korean cooking - like chopping it up into stews or adding to wraps.

- Chef Kyung-Bin Min

A pretty and perfectly sized leaf that does double duty as a food vehicle and source of flavor? The perilla leaf is one of the great unsung heroes of the Korean culinary world, and we're here to give it its day.

A member of the mint family with an intense aroma and flavor (think if basil and mint had an herb baby) and notes of licorice or star anise, the powerful perilla leaf also has some serious medical chops, including antioxidant, anti-allergic, anti-inflammatory, antidepressant, GI, and dermatologic properties.

## EXPERIMENT WITH FLAVOR

We asked our Spiceologists for their takes on classic Korean-inspired dishes.

- Breakfast:** Orange Gochugaru Chile Kurobuta Ham Slider with Blood Orange Marmalade
- Lunch:** Bulgoggi Beef Skewers with Black & White Sesame Seeds
- Appetizer:** Umami Punch Chicken Lettuce Wraps
- Dinner:** Korean BBQ Chopped Cheese with Rice Cake
- Sides:** Sour Power Shacha BBQ Green Beans
- Dessert:** Panna Cotta with Korean Chili Flake Brittle
- Cocktail:** Soju Mojito with Orange Gochugaru Chile Lemon

## KOREAN-INSPIRED INGREDIENTS & BLENDS



- Black Sesame Seeds MIN# 10252
- Chive Rings MIN# 10126
- Fiery Sweet MIN# 11114
- Garlic Powder MIN# 10380
- Ginger Powder MIN# 11590
- Gochugaru Korean Chili Flake MIN# 10121
- Korean BBQ MIN# 10193
- Mustard Powder MIN# 10209
- Onion Powder MIN# 10179
- Orange Gochugaru Chile MIN# 11465
- Red Pepper Chili Flakes MIN# 10120
- Sour Power MIN# 11116
- Umami Punch MIN# 11115
- White Sesame Seeds MIN# 10254

### Chef Quickie Q&A

**WHEN DID YOU FIRST FIND A LOVE OF COOKING?**

My mom is a great cook and my dad loves to eat, so I grew up in this house where we always had freshly steamed rice and stews and fish and

barbecue. We always had a pretty hearty table. I think one of my earliest food memories - I must have been around five or six years old - and my grandma had grown all these zucchini and when they get really, really big they turn into

what Koreans call old zucchini or old squash. She'd make hobakjuk or a porridge with all the squash, and it was sweet and savory and a really amazing color and cool texture. To this day squash porridge is one of my favorite things to eat."

Read the entire Periodically Inspired interview with Chef Clara Park over at [Chefs.Spiceology.com/Blog](https://chefs.spiceology.com/blog).

**SHOP KOREAN BLENDS & INGREDIENTS**

Reach out to your distro rep or [sales@spiceology.com](mailto:sales@spiceology.com) with any questions.