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IN THIS UNIT ...

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- A Korean meal
- Common ingredients used in Korean meals
- Buying food and meals
- Some common Korean dishes
- *Shall we ...?*



BON APPETIT.

Food, clothing and shelter are the three basic material necessities of life – and food is surely the most talked about. In this Unit, we learn about Korean food and eating habits so as to extend our ability to interact with Koreans socially.

1 Table Insa

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Here, help yourself./Take some. ‘ ’ is an interjection commonly used to encourage an action from the hearer which the speaker believes would give pleasure. See also Page 39.

...

Lit. *We've prepared nothing, but ...*; an expression used by the host/hostess when inviting you to help your self

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Bon appetit. Lit. *Take a lot.*; a standard invitation from the host for a guest not to hold back

.

Have some more.; an exhortation in the middle of the meal for the guest to refill the plate

2 A Korean Meal & Some Related Expressions

	food		fork
	cooked rice		knife
	soup	-	be hot (in taste)
	hot-pot style of soup	-	be salty
	side-dishes	-	eat (respect form)
	spoon	-	taste, try
	chopsticks	-	to like
-	use		

4 Common Ingredients of Korean Meals (2)

vegetables

Chinese cabbage

white radish

lettuce

spinach/greens

cucumber

sesame leaves

-

chili peppers

shallots

garlic

sauce

soy sauce

chilli sauce

8 Cultural Notes: Korean Food

Korean food perhaps lacks the variety to become known as one of the world's great cuisines, but nevertheless it contains a lot of pleasant surprises. From its temperate climate and surrounding seas, Korea draws a wide variety of vegetables, fruits and seafood; and from its long winters when fresh food is hard to come by, it draws the inspiration for a rich tradition of pickling or drying fresh foods for later use. It is protein-rich and relatively fat-free.

The most common meats in Korea are beef, pork, chicken and, of course, fish. The most common methods of cooking are slow simmering, for soups, or else broiling over a hot charcoal fire for beef or pork. Characteristic seasoning tends to be sesame oil and seed, soy sauce, fermented bean paste (Doen-jang), salt, white pepper, chili, spring onion, and garlic. By way of quick comparison with its neighbours, Korean food shares a number of dishes with Japanese cuisine; but is generally more robust and pungently flavoured. Korean restaurants offering bland versions of Korean dishes are widespread in Japan. Korean food is also broadly similar to Northern Chinese cooking though, as a small geographical area with little internal climatic variation, Korea lacks important sources of the culinary variety enjoyed by China.

To start off, perhaps we'd better list some of the main styles of Korean cooking. In some cases they overlap; but for the most part it's difficult to find a restaurant in Korea offering food from any

fast food outlets, catching a cheap unpretentious bowl of noodles or dumpling in the Northern Chinese style.

There are also more elaborate Chinese meals at up-market establishments usually found in the major hotels and in expensive neighbourhoods.

Other restaurants: There are various other types of restaurants in Korea specialising in particular dishes. These might include ginseng chicken (), Buddhist vegetarian dishes (), mung bean flour pancakes () or pigfoot (). Interest in foreign foods is growing slowly, but is still not very high in Korea. In cities, almost all non-Korean restaurants outside the major international hotels are either Japanese, highly indigenised Chinese or else Western-style fast food outlets.

Meals of the day

Koreans eat three meals a day, and to the onlooker there may seem little distinction between the meals in terms of the food eaten. As befits a people with strong agricultural roots, breakfast tends to be a hearty meal, with strongly flavoured soups, rice and Gimchi, although this is changing particularly in cities like Seoul. Lunch is usually little more than a snack, and the evening meal is moderate in quantity and generally eaten early.

Attitude to meat

The Korean attitude to meat is different to the Australian attitude in a number of ways. To begin with, it is extremely rare to find a Korean who does not express a strong distaste for lamb. Most cite the smell as the main reason and, seeing that no distinction seems to be made between mutton and lamb in Korea, this is perhaps not surprising. Also behind the attitude seems to be a deep-seated cultural reflex, shared with the Japanese and most Chinese, in which people traditionally contrasted their settled, agricultural, beef-eating ways with the nomadic, pastoral, mutton-eating and milk-drinking ways of the Mongols and other