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### Meals:

- **Breakfast:** or 아침 식사 is a substantial morning meal usually consisting of rice, soup, some kind of meat, and tea. Cereal, bread, fruits and vegetable are also common breakfast items in Korea.
- **Lunch:** or 점심 식사 is a small to medium sized meal eaten in the early hours of the afternoon. Rice, noodles, meat, and vegetables dishes are all popular lunch items in South Korea. Further, western food is becoming increasingly popular in Korea.
- **Dinner:** or 저녁 식사 is a slightly larger meal than lunch, but contains many of the same ingredients. Soups, rice, and noodles paired with meat and vegetables are commonplace. Most meals (not just dinner) are served with *banchan*, which is the Korean word for side dishes.
- **Snacks:** For many people in South Korea, lunch is not a daily occurrence, and instead they choose to snack throughout the day. Small cakes, rice balls, and vegetables are all common snacks, served alongside tea.
- [Korean Meals](#)

### **Frequently Used Foods:**

- **Fruits and Vegetables:** orange, pear, strawberry, watermelon, apple, persimmon, banana, raspberry, mango, kumquat, tomato, cabbage, radish, onion, cucumber, celery, pepper, bean sprout, broccoli, eggplant, perilla, carrot
- **Protein:** Beef, chicken, egg, clam, tofu, pork, cuttlefish, anglerfish, shrimp
- **Spices:** garlic, ginger, soy sauce, chili pepper, sesame oil, soybean paste, sesame salt, fish sauce
- **Oils/Misc:** sesame oil, rice wine, rice, noodles

### **Ten Regional Favorite Dishes With Links to Interesting Recipes:**

- **Ddukbokkie:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Dakjuk:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Yangnyeom Tondak:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Bulgogi:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Bibimbap:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Ganjang Gejang:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Kimchi:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Kimbap:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Galbi:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Chuncheon Dakgalbi:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))

**Religion:** Almost half the population in South Korea has no religious affiliation. The most popular religions in South Korea are Christianity (29%) and Buddhism (23%).

### **National Holidays and Dietary Requirements:**

- **Gujeong:** also known as Korean New Year, is a national holiday and marks the first day of the Korean lunar calendar. This is one of the most important Korean holidays,

and is much more important than the solar New Year's Day, which is also celebrated in South Korea.

- **Declaration (Independence) Day:** This holiday celebrates the March 1st movement of nationalists and students to declare independence for the country. Declaration Day is a very important holiday celebrated all over the country and is highlighted by a national flag raising in Seoul.
- **Memorial Day:** This holiday, recognized on June 6th, commemorates all of the men and women who have given their life while serving in the Korean armed forces.
- **Liberation Day:** Celebrated annually on August 15th, Liberation Day celebrates the day the country was set free from Imperial Japan. This national holiday is celebrated with parades, festivals, and national patriotic events. [More on Liberation Day](#)
- **Hangul Day:** This holiday, celebrated on October 9th, marks the invention and proclamation of Hangul, which is the native alphabet of Korean. [More on Hangul Day](#)

**Etiquette:** Most Korean meals are eaten with chopsticks and a spoon. Utensils like forks and knives are not common on a Korean table.

It is important not to eat any faster or slower than anyone else at the table. A steady pace for the table shows both respect and restraint.

Most meals, both in homes and restaurants, are served with *banchan*, which is a communal grouping of side dishes. It is polite not to dip any of your food into the side dishes.

**Food History:** "Korean cuisine has been affected by its geography (peninsula), climate (hot, humid summers and very cold winters), proximity to neighbors China and Japan, and the Japanese occupation from 1910-1945. European traders also had an impact in the cuisine with the Portuguese introduction of chili peppers to Korea in the 17th century. By the 18th century, chili peppers were already being widely used in the preparation of Korean cuisine."

- Naomi Imatome-Yun\*

**Additional Information and Acknowledgements:**

<http://koreanfood.about.com/od/koreanfoodbasics/a/Korean101.htm>

<http://koreanfood.about.com/od/koreanfoodbasics/tp/Korean-Table-Manners.htm>

<http://www.arirang.com.hk/eng/korean-cuisine.aspx>