



Introduction to Korean Royal Cuisine

Taught by Lady Isabella Tinker



Class Content



- ▶ This class will be a basic introduction to Korean royal cuisine with a focus on the Joseon Dynasty (1392 to 1920). We will be discussing the differences between different types of cuisine (royal, noble, local, and traditional), who cooks royal cuisine, basic table settings, and importance of food to keep the body in balance.



Types of Korean Cuisine

- Royal
 - Royal court food eaten by the royal family and guests
 - The essence of Korean Food
- Noble
 - Banka food – consumed by nobles made up of cooking methods, ingredients, and leftovers from royal court banquet food
 - Janka Food – Banka food recipes passed down through generations
- Local and Traditional
 - Peasants used local ingredients based on what they could grow. Over time this became traditional Korean food.



Korean Royal Cuisine

- ▶ Focus on the Joseon Dynasty (1392 to 1920)
 - ▶ Institute of Korean Royal Cuisine
- ▶ Why not pre-Joseon?
 - ▶ There are references to Royal Cuisine pre-Joseon Dynasty, but only the large variety of food is mentioned and not types of food
 - ▶ A record of a feast held by King Munmu (reigned 661-681) told of 55 types of food with no specific descriptions of the types of food served.

Korean Royal Cuisine

- Intangible Cultural Property 38
- Oral recipes or recipes with descriptions
 - About, roughly, until the color is...
- Modern standardization
- Institute of Korean Royal Cuisine



Where Did Ingredients Come From?

- Each of the 8 provinces of Korea would send food to the palace
- Government officials
 - Rice procurement
 - Medicinal Foods
 - Alcohol Procurement
- Represented the Essence of Korea
 - Best of the best
- King personally tasted products from around the kingdom
 - Taste quality of harvest, seasonal changes, natural disasters



<https://gwangjunewsgic.com/features/jeolla-history/the-eight-regional-traits-of-korea/>



Who cooked royal cuisine?

Saongwon: department in charge of dietary life of the palace

- ▶ Women were the primary cooks of Royal Cuisine
 - ▶ Palace Women
 - ▶ Government employees
 - ▶ Chosen at an early age from the families of commoners until 1650's
 - ▶ Most palace women remain unmarried and are sent back to their families when they are no longer able to work
 - ▶ Commoners would marry daughters off early to avoid this
 - ▶ Earned wages paid monthly consisting of fabric and food
 - ▶ Taught to read and write
 - ▶ Were only allowed to marry with permission from the King
- ▶ Men who lived outside of the palace also helped cook
- ▶ Eunuchs oversaw the preparation of food



Training

- ▶ Trainee: Girls were chosen at a young age, between ages 4 and 8
- ▶ Lower ranked court ladies: after 15 years of service
 - ▶ Hair pin to mark status
- ▶ Higher ranked court ladies: additional 15 years of service
- ▶ Within 30 years, royal cooks were masters of their craft

Jang-geum (1539-1615) was a court lady that became a royal physician to the king, a position usually held by men

- ▶ Mentioned in Annals of the Joseon Dynasty 4 times. King Jeongjon said “No one knows my illnesses as well as Jang-geum.”
- ▶ Basis for Jewel in the Palace

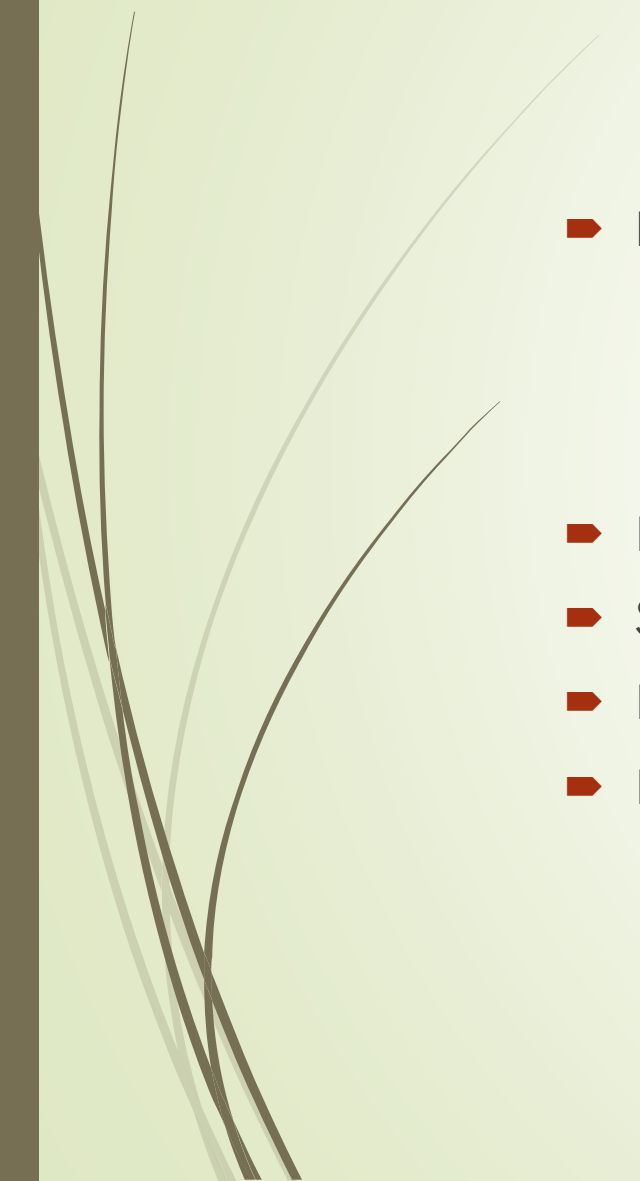
Importance of Food to Keep the Body in Balance

- ▶ Obangsaek – 5 colors and tastes of the Universe
- ▶ Harmony in the body can be achieved with 5 tastes and 5 colors
 - ▶ Royal cuisine must have 5 colors with ingredients prepared 5 ways
- ▶ Yakshikdongwon – Food and medicine are of the same origin

5 Elements	Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal	Water
5 Directions	East	South	Center	West	North
5 Colors	Green or Blue	Red	Yellow	White	Black
5 Flavors	Sourness	Bitterness	Sweetness	Spiciness	Saltiness
Body Part	Liver, gall bladder, eyes, muscles	Heart, small intestines, blood, tongue	Spleen, stomach, mouth	Lung, large intestine, colon, nose	Kidney, bladder, ears, bones
Body Function	Liver function, detoxification, fatigue	Clean blood, heart function	Digestion	Lung and bronchial tube function	Kidney function, growth, reproduction



Methods of Food Preservation

- Ice
 - Harvested in the winter from clean rivers
 - 12 cm thick by 1.8 m blocks (approximately 5 in x 5 ft)
 - Stored in stone building with technology developed in the Three Kingdoms Dynasty
 - Drying
 - Salt
 - Pickling
 - Fermentation – Kimchi
 - Over 200 varieties
- 



Daily Meals (sura)

- 5 meals per day
 - 1st meal – sunrise
 - Light meal consisting of jjuk (porridge)
 - 2nd meal – breakfast 10am
 - Main meal
 - 3rd meal – lunch
 - Light snack – porridge, tea, or broth
 - 4th meal – dinner 6pm
 - Main meal
 - 5th meal
 - Light meal – tea, milk-porridge, or a noodle dish

Basic Table Settings for Main Meals

- 3 tables per setting
 - King and Queen had individual sets
 - King sat at the east
 - Queen sat at the west
- 5 set of silverware
 - Chopsticks and spoon made of silver, gold, or brass
 - Said to change color in the presence of poison
 - 2 sets for king
 - 3 sets for palace women to serve with



Jewels of the Palace

Basic Table Settings



Basic Foods

- Sura (Rice)
 - 2 types: white and red (bean)
- Tang (soup)
 - 2 types: seaweed soup and beef soup
- Jochi (various stews)
- Jjim (Steamed meat, dish, veg)
- Jeongol (hot pot)
- Chimchae (various kinds of Kimchi)
- Jang (different fermented sauces)

Side Dishes

- Hot Grill
- Cold Grill
- Pan Fried Jeon
- Sliced Boiled Meat
- Cooked Vegetables
- Fresh Vegetables
- Braised dishes
- Pickled vegetables
- Salted fish and Seafood
- Dried side dishes
- Special dishes
- Poached eggs

Banquets and Feasts



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Held for:

- Major Holidays
 - Lunar New Year, Chusok (Korean thanksgiving)
- Auspicious events
 - Royal birthdays
 - King or Queen coming of age
 - King or Queen recovery of illness (small celebration)

Rules:

- Diagrams and rules for seating and tables
- Serving rehearsals for carrying dishes
- An official would be appointed for a large celebration
- Decorations, music, seat cushions, and placement of incense all had regulations to follow
- Large amounts of food made
 - Left over food was wrapped and delivered to relatives of royal family, government officials, and nobles



Promotion of Agriculture

People are the root of the state, and food is an indispensable necessity of the people. Because all food and clothing is produced by the farmers, our government must give them priority. – King Sejong 1444

- Land redistribution – 1390
 - Burning of previous land registration and redistribution of land
- Rain Gauge – 18th day of 8th month, 1441
 - Taxation based on the amount of rain fall in provinces
- Farming Manual “Straight Talk on Farming” – 1429
- Shift from dry rice farming to wet rice farming

Dongchimi – Radish Water Kimchi

1 large daikon radish

2 TBS salt

Kimchi Liquid:

1 apple

½ onion

4 cloves garlic

¼ C salt

1000 mL water

2 whole pepper (optional)

3 mustard leaves

2 green onions

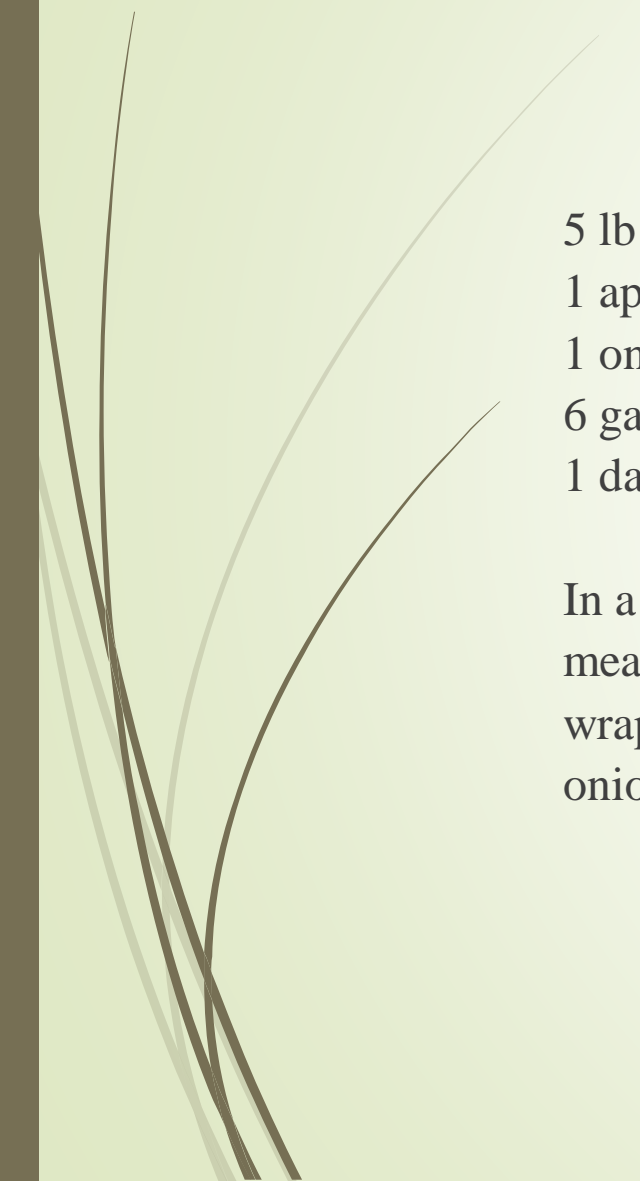


Cut the radish into 2" x ½" thick strips. (alternatively, use the whole radish. But fermenting will take much longer). Let the radish sit in salt for 30 minutes. Rinse the radish and place it into a jar.

Puree the apple, onion, and garlic. Place the mixture into a cheese cloth and squeeze out the juice. Place this juice into the jar. (Alternatively, the apple, onion, and garlic can be sliced and placed in the container until fermented, however after fermentation the apple, onion, and garlic must be removed.) Add salt to water and mix until dissolved. Add to jar. Slice pepper, mustard leaves, and green onion at a thin diagonal and add to container. Let the jar sit out for 1 day. After that, store in refrigerator for at least one week.



Braised Beef Recipe



5 lb beef – round house round
1 apple cut into 6ths
1 onion cut into 4ths
6 garlic cloves whole peeled
1 daikon radish cut into large pieces

In a large pot, boil enough water to cover meat. Add apple, onion, garlic, and radish. Add the meat. Let it boil for 1 hour. After cooking the beef, remove and wrap in cheesecloth or plastic wrap. This will help the beef stay firm for cutting. Strain and keep the broth and remove apple, onion, garlic cloves, and radish. Cool down the broth and remove fat.

Songpyeon

Ingredients

5 C wet rice flour
salt
hot water
2 Tbs mugwort powder (green)
2 Tbs magnolia vine powder (pink)

2 Tbs yellow dye from gardenia fruit (yellow)
2 Tbs cockscomb flower powder (red)
hot water
1/3 C mung beans
½ C sesame seeds
½ C pine nuts

honey
sugar
1/8 tsp cinnamon

Fillings

1. Soak mung beans for 8 hours. Rub the beans to remove the outer skin. Drain the water to get rid of the skins. Steam the mung beans for 15 minutes or until soft. Crush the beans into a mash with ¼ tsp salt. Add 1 Tbs honey, 1 Tbs sugar, and cinnamon and mix.
2. In a dry pan, toast sesame seeds for 3 to 5 minutes until lightly browned, stirring occasionally. Crush half of the sesame seeds in a mortar and pestle. Add the rest of the whole sesame seeds and add 1 Tbs of sugar, 1 Tbs of honey, and ¼ tsp of salt and mix.
3. Crush pine nuts lightly. Mix with 2 Tbs of honey.

Preparation

1. Soak clean grains of rice for 8 to 12 hours. Strain water from the rice, and grind into a fine powder in a mortar and pestle or food processor. Sift through a fine sieve.
2. Grind dried mugwort or mugwort tea into a powder.
3. Grind dried magnolia vine berries or magnolia vine berry tea into a powder.
4. Crush gardenia fruit lightly and add 1 C water. Soak overnight
5. Separate dried cockscomb flower in a bowl and add 1 C water. Soak Overnight
6. Prepare 5 bowls, each with 1 cup of rice flour and ¼ tsp salt. Add one food coloring agent per bowl, leaving one bowl uncolored.
7. Add ¼ C hot water to one bowl. Mix with a spoon until the dough is cool enough to knead by hand. The dough should feel soft and pliable, but not sticky. Knead dough long enough to evenly distribute color. Set aside in a bowl covered by a damp cloth or wrap in plastic wrap.
8. Mix and knead remaining bowls of dough.
9. Wash fresh pine needles. Drain pine needles and pat dry. Prepare a steamer with a damp cloth at the bottom. Add a layer of pine needles. Start heating the water for the steamer.
10. Roll 1 ounce of dough into a ball in your hand. Use thumbs to create a small cup from the dough. Add 1 small spoonful of filling. Seal cup in oval shape. Create a small peak on each end of the oval and pinch along the side to create a wing shape.
11. Place rice cakes on the pine needles in an even layer, spaced out so they are not touching. If the bottom layer fills up, alternate layers of pine needles and rice cakes. Cover with a wet thin cloth. Steam with a lid for 20 to 30 minutes. Rinse rice cakes in cold water. Drain the rice cakes and lightly coat them in sesame oil.
12. Serve warm or at room temperature.



References and Recommendations

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