

# After My Father Passed Away, Our Tomatoes Died, Too

Yes, I'm sure it was a coincidence. But there's also a part of me that thinks that it wasn't.



K-CULTURE WITH JAE-HA KIM

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A caprese salad and grilled pizza. I found this picture I took from a few years ago. I remember that it was our go-to dinner that summer.

I love that the main ingredients came right from our garden, and that we assembled and cooked this all together as a family on our back deck. In fact, this particular meal was so delicious that I took a bite out of the pizza before a photo could be snapped.

*Oops.*

What I remember about that summer is that we had the best batch of tomatoes we had in a long time. Maybe six years or so. I remember that timeframe, because the last time we had a healthy crop of tomatoes prior was when my father was dying. When we visited him in the hospital, we would bring a big bag of tomatoes from our garden.

He was weak, but he always smiled when he saw the sack filled with plump, red tomatoes. He would bite into them as if they were apples and tell us how delicious they were. I think he loved that we grew it for him as much as the taste itself.

When we had lived in Korea, my mother used to cut slices of chilled tomatoes and sprinkle sugar on them. We ate them as we would any other fruit for dessert. My American friends found this *weird*, because they had only eaten tomatoes as a savory ingredient. But technically, tomatoes are botanically fruit, so ...

After my father passed away, our tomatoes died, too. Each year, they suffered from blight or some other affliction. Yes, I'm sure it was a coincidence. But there's also a part of me that thinks that it wasn't. Does that make any sense?

So when our beautiful tomatoes came back after a six-year hiatus, we celebrated by including them in as many dishes as possible.

Right now, we only have a small bowl of cherry tomatoes. But in another few weeks, we'll have enough romas for our pizzas and beloved caprese salads. I'll whip up a balsamic vinaigrette dressing. My son and I will make pizza dough in our bread machine. And my husband will top the pizzas with prosciutto, tomatoes, basil, and a combination of goat and mozzarella cheese, and then grill the crust to perfection.

My father died a year before my son was born. And my son is now the same age as my father was when he became the sole financial provider for his parents and younger siblings in Seoul. I can't even imagine any teenager having to tackle that kind of responsibility.

Sunday is Father's Day — a day of celebration, but also a day of loss for many. May you each have peace and happiness with the ones you love.

사랑합니다 아버지.

## This and That:



Stray Kids

ICYMI, here's a link to my exclusive interview with [Stray Kids in Rolling Stone](#).

As for what I'm listening to now, ENHYPEN's cover of the Imagine Dragons' "Demons" is my new fave. I actually like it better than the original...

ENHYPEN(엔하이픈) - Demons [더 시즌즈-박보검의 칸타빌레] | KBS 250606 방송



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