



I Eat Scalding Hot Soup in the Summer and You Should, Too.

Plus my recipe for an easy-to-make Kimchi Jigae



K-CULTURE WITH JAE-HA KIM

JUL 11, 2025



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K-Culture with Jae-Ha Kim

I am a bit of a weirdo when it comes to my food choices. My son will point out that I am always cold during the winter. But I still add ice cubes to most of my drinks and seek out ice cream.

But when it comes to my love of hot (and spicy) stews in the middle of a summer heat wave, I have *science* to back up my choice. OK, maybe *culture* is the better descriptor. I don't know. You tell me.

Most of my non-Korean friends find it peculiar that I crave super hot soup when it is 90° out. But it's not that unusual for Koreans, especially when the soup in question is samgyetang (삼계탕) — a savory and healthy chicken ginseng soup, which is one of South Korea's go-to meals when it is desperately hot outside.

The thought process is that the nourishing soup will restore the nutrients you lose from excessive sweating — kind of like Korean Gatorade, only in soup form (and more delicious).

Unlike a lot of Korean food that is shared, each serving of samgyetang is meant to be eaten by just one person. The main ingredient is a young chicken (cornish hen) that's stuffed with rice, garlic, jujube, ginseng, and whatever else you'd like to add. All of this is boiled in water until it becomes a fragrant soup.



The delicious samgyetang (삼계탕) — ginger chicken soup — I had on a boiling hot day in Seoul. It's especially tasty eaten with kkakdugi (깍두기) — a Korean radish kimchi.

I ate samgyetang in Seoul not long ago with a group of people who were unaccustomed to Korean food. Honestly, they didn't want to eat this soup. It was beige and boring looking. And you could see the steam rising from the bowl. Not exactly what most people think of as refreshing when it's hot outside.

But what the dish lacked in color and pizzazz, it more than made up for in flavor. (And I'm

convinced it cured my jet-lagged stomachache.)

I'd love to share a recipe for samgyetang with you all, but I've never made it. But what I can share with you is another favorite stew that I eat year-round: kimchi jiggaе (김치찌개).

As most of you already know, I only use recipes for desserts. My cooking style for most meals relies on son-mat (손맛), which literally translates to hand (손) taste (맛). You know, a little bit of this, a little bit of that.

FWIW, this is an easy-to-make version of kimchi jiggaе that my mother taught me how to make, without any meat, because she knew I was too impatient to make it the way she does. While it doesn't taste as rich and delicious as her cooking (*nothing does*), it is good enough to satiate my cravings.

I hope you enjoy it, too!



Kimchi jiggaе

If you don't have a ttukbaegi (뚝배기) — an earthenware pot designed to retain heat (like in my

video above) — you can make this stew in a small sauce pan.

Also, I didn't grow up eating pork and am not a huge fan of it. So I don't put pork in my kimchi jiggae (김치찌개). But you can always add it to yours! That said, my recipe isn't vegan either, since I do use myeolchi (멸치), those small dried Korean anchovies.

As I mentioned above, my cooking style is son-mat. So if you're not sure if the ingredients I've listed below will be too strong or not to your liking, start off with a little bit of it at first. You can always add more to suit your taste during the cooking process.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 10 small myeolchi (or 1 teaspoon myeolchi garu — anchovy powder — or dashida)
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 2 cups of kimchi (preferably extra ripe and/or sour — the kind that's been sitting in your fridge, uneaten)
- 2 teaspoons gochugaru (if you don't have this, you can use gochujang instead)
- 1 cup of kimchi liquid + 1 more cup of water or mild unsalted broth (if you don't have enough kimchi juice, just add 2 cups of water; if the broth tastes too bland, add a bit more myeolchi powder and/or gochugaru)
- Block of tofu, cut into ½ inch thick slices
- 3 green onions, cut about 3 inches long

NOTE: You do *not* need to add salt or soy sauce to this dish. The kimchi, myeolchi, and gochugaru

provide the sodium and seasoning.

DIRECTIONS:

— Heat up your ttukbaegi and add the sesame oil.

Once the oil gets hot, add in the myeolchi and minced garlic. Let it cook for a minute or so.

(FWIW: the dried myeolchi is edible unheated.)

— Add the kimchi and stir it into the pot for a couple of minutes

— Add the kimchi liquid and water; and stir in the gochugaru. Bring to a boil. (Taste the broth: if it tastes more like water than kimchi juice, add in more gochugaru.) This will take about 10 minutes.

— Once the jiggae looks and smells like it's done, carefully add in the tofu slices.

— Add the green onions and let it all cook for another minute.

Serve the hot stew with a bowl of rice and any banchan you might have in the fridge.

This recipe will feed two people. Enjoy!

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