

Youn digs dish with potatoes in Spain

By Jae-Ha Kim
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When Youn Yuh-jung won an Academy Award for her role in "Minari," she made history as the first Korean actor to be honored with an Oscar.

Already a legend in her homeland, Youn added more U.S. productions like "Pachinko" and "The Wedding Banquet" to her expansive resume.

In the second season of "Beef"—now streaming on Netflix—Youn portrays a billionaire South Korean businesswoman who will do whatever it takes to protect her bumbling boy-toyish husband.

"We shot 'Beef' in Los Angeles and South Korea," Youn, 78, said in a recent interview from her New York hotel. "This was my very first time shooting in Hollywood. We filmed some of the scenes in a North Hollywood studio. And then we went to a really expensive country club town (in Ojai), and stayed on the beach for that shoot. (We also filmed) in Seoul."

This interview with Youn has been edited for clarity and length.

Q: Many of your earlier films were filmed in Seoul and South Korea. What about some of your recent work?

A: For the other American productions, I filmed (the series) "Pachinko" in Canada and Korea, and the films "Minari" in Oklahoma and "The Wedding Banquet" in Canada.

Q: Do you have a preference for working on location



Youn Yuh-jung, seen April 15, plays a businesswoman in Season 2 of "Beef." EVANAGOSTINI/INVISION

versus a soundstage?

A: Sometimes I prefer location, sometimes I prefer the set. It depends.

Q: Is it true that when you filmed a season of the reality series "Youn's Kitchen," a diner invited you to cook at his hotel in Switzerland?

A: Yes, we were having a restaurant opening (for the series) in Garachico, Spain, and there were some guests coming in. One asked our production people if he could see the chef. So maybe he was giving me some nice compliments about the food. He came into the kitchen and said he has some resort areas in Switzerland and asked me to come over and make a menu for him. It was interesting.

Q: Did you end up going to Switzerland?

A: No, I told him this is a reality show. I'm not a chef, I'm an actress! (Laughs.) But I did visit Switzerland a long time ago, maybe it was 40 or 50 years ago. I went to Basel and Mont Blanc with my family. I cannot remember all the places that I went.

Q: You also filmed the travel show "Sisters Over Flowers" in Croatia. What are your memories of that country?

A: Oh, it was a beautiful place that wasn't contaminated by pollution and

tourists at the time. To me, it was a beautiful place. We didn't have a direct flight from Korea to Croatia. Nowadays, so many Korean people want to go visit Croatia.

Q: When you filmed another season of "Youn's Kitchen" in Indonesia, did you have time to go sightseeing?

A: Not much, actually, because we were busy cooking for the show, which had a very, very harsh schedule. We left Bali, maybe we took a ferry or some kind of boat for two hours and then reached that special place (Gili Trawangan) where we opened the kitchen. Cars aren't allowed, only bicycles and some donkey rides, I think. It was very, very different.

Q: When you travel, do you seek out Korean food?

A: I have to have Korean food. But nowadays, everywhere has Korean food so it's easier to travel.

Q: What about local food?

A: That time in Spain, I realized they had a beautiful potato (dish). I never ate potatoes like that. Maybe because of the soil? I don't know what was the difference, but it was delicious. So I kept eating their potatoes from morning to night.

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