

February Spice Club:

Gochugaru



Gochugaru, pronounced ko-chu-ka-ru, is a vibrant and essential ingredient in Korean cuisine, renowned for its distinctive flavor and heat. This coarsely ground red pepper powder is crafted from sun-dried chili peppers, creating a nuanced spice that offers both a rich sweetness and a fiery kick.

In Korean cooking, gochugaru is a foundational element, finding its way into an array of dishes such as kimchi, stews, and marinades. Its unique texture and balance of heat and sweetness set it apart, allowing it to enhance flavors without overwhelming the palate.

Beyond its traditional roots, gochugaru has gained global popularity, becoming a staple in kitchens worldwide. Its versatility extends beyond Korean dishes, adding depth to sauces, rubs, and even non-traditional recipes. The vibrant red hue of gochugaru not only imparts a visually appealing quality to dishes but also signifies the dynamic flavor it brings to the table.

Explore the world of Korean cuisine and beyond with gochugaru, a spice that encapsulates the bold and harmonious flavors of a rich culinary tradition. Whether you're creating traditional Korean delicacies or experimenting with your own cuisine, gochugaru invites you to elevate culinary creations with its unique and exciting profile.

Kimchi Stew

Urvashi Pitre

Serves 4 | Prep time: 20 mins. | Cook time: 35 mins.

“On a cold night, there’s nothing more comforting than a hearty, spicy soup. Using prepared kimchi packs a huge punch of flavor with very little effort.”

2 cups kimchi	1 Tbsp gochugaru
1 cup chopped onion	(OR ½ TEASPOON cayenne pepper)
1 cup dried shiitake mushrooms	½ tsp granulated sugar
3 cloves garlic, minced	½ tsp kosher salt
1 Tbsp minced fresh ginger	2 cups water
1 Tbsp toasted sesame oil	½ cup chopped green onions
1 Tbsp dark soy sauce	1 8-oz package firm tofu, diced

In the Instant Pot, combine the kimchi, onion, mushrooms, garlic, ginger, sesame oil, soy sauce, gochugaru, sugar, salt, and water.

Secure the lid on the pot. Close the pressure-release valve. Select **MANUAL** and set the pot at **HIGH** pressure for 3 minutes. At the end of the cooking time, allow the pot to sit undisturbed for 10 minutes, then quick-release any remaining pressure.

Stir in the green onions and tofu and serve.

NOTE: Dark soy sauce – also called Chinese black soy sauce – is a dark brown and slightly thick soy sauce. It is less salty than regular soy sauce and has a lightly sweet flavor.

Vegan Stir Fry Noodles

Anh Tran, VeggieAnh.com

Serves 2-3 | Prep time: 15 mins. | Cook time: 30 mins.

“This recipe is my go-to weeknight dinner when I need to use up my leftover veggies. It uses a variety of vegetables, rice noodles and a savory, umami sauce. It is delicious, easy to make, and full of flavors!”

1 red (or yellow) onion
1 thumb-sized piece of ginger
3 cloves garlic
1 head of broccoli
1 carrot
2 stalks scallion
1 Tbsp oil
Rice noodles
Vegan minced meat
(or crumbled tofu)
2 tsp sesame oil
Sesame seeds

SAUCE:
2 Tbsp soy sauce
1 Tbsp hoisin sauce
1 Tbsp gochugaru
(or other chili flakes)
1 Tbsp rice vinegar
½ tsp black pepper

Thinly slice the red onion, ginger, and garlic. Chop the broccoli into bite-sized pieces and the carrot into thin slices.

Chop the scallion into thin slices.

In a separate bowl, add the rice noodles and pour hot water on top. Let it sit for 4-5 minutes.

In a pan, add the oil and sauté the red onion, ginger, and garlic for a few minutes. Add the broccoli and stir for about 5 minutes. Then add the carrot slices and stir fry for another 5 minutes.

Add the vegan minced meat and mix it together. Drain the rice noodles and put them into the pan.

In a bowl, combine all the sauce ingredients to make the sauce and pour it into the pan. Mix together until everything is cooked.

Finish with some sesame oil.

Garnish with scallion slices and sesame seeds.

Suggested Reading on Korean Cuisine

Junghyun Park and Jungyoon Choi, *The Korean Cookbook*

Christy Lee, *Instant Pot Korean Cookbook: Traditional Favorites Made Fast and Easy*

Joanne Lee Molinaro, *The Korean Vegan Cookbook: Reflections and Recipes from Omma's Kitchen*

Hi Soo Shin Hepinstal, *Growing Up in a Korean Kitchen: A Cookbook*

Deuki Hong and Matt Rodbard, *Koreatown: A Cookbook*