

# ROY CHOI

—

Teaches Intuitive Cooking



MasterClass

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# MEET YOUR INSTRUCTOR **ROY CHOI**

This boundary-busting chef can teach you how to cook from the gut and the heart

**Y**ou might know Roy Choi—or Papi Chulo, to use an old kitchen nickname—as the godfather of America’s gourmet food truck movement. The 2008 launch of Kogi, his taco-focused food truck in Los Angeles, California, blew up the boundaries between fancy restaurant cuisine and street food and put Roy on the map as one of America’s most original chefs. But Kogi’s wild success was only the start of Roy’s culinary revolution.

In the years since, he’s opened nearly a dozen acclaimed restaurants, including Kogi Taqueria in Los Angeles and Best Friend in Las Vegas, Nevada; coauthored *L.A. Son*, a bestselling memoir and cookbook; appeared on the “100 Most Influential People” list assembled by America’s *TIME* magazine; and starred alongside American filmmaker Jon Favreau on *The Chef Show*, a hit

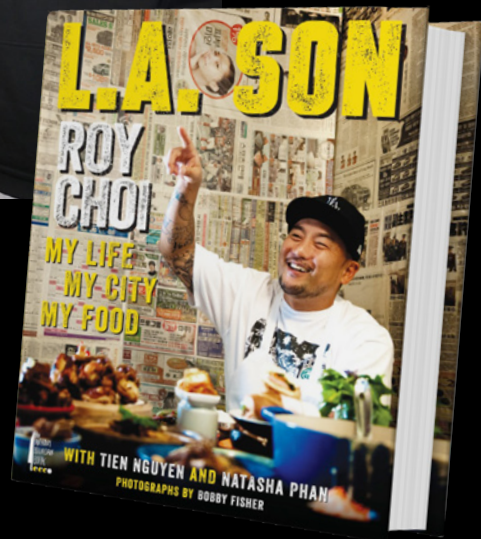
docuseries on the streaming platform Netflix.

Roy has also emerged as an ally of the food justice movement, helping communities exercise their right to cook, sell, and eat nutritious food: In 2016, he and California chef Daniel Patterson launched Local, a healthy fast-food concept designed to support low-income neighborhoods. The flagship locations (in Los Angeles and Oakland, California) closed two years later, but the Local vision lives on within a new venture called ChewBox—a food-delivery app designed to benefit underserved communities.

Throughout his career, Roy has championed the idea that cooking is for everyone, that delicious food doesn’t need to mean fancy food, and that intuition is more important than precision. “I grew up with food everywhere: dumplings on stainless steel countertops, bubbling jars of fer-



Roy (right), Jon Favreau (center), and members of the Chef cast at its 2014 premiere



Roy's 2013 book, a mélange of wild stories and bold recipes

menting vegetables, kimchi stains on everything,” he says. “When I went on to culinary school, those things were not necessarily frowned upon, but people didn’t get it—didn’t get that it was a part of cooking.... It took me a long time to understand how to merge the two worlds together.”

Born in Seoul, South Korea, and raised in Los Angeles, Roy spent his adolescence working at Silver Garden, his parents’ family-oriented Korean restaurant in nearby Anaheim. In his free time he feasted on his neighborhood’s eclectic cuisine—from Korean to Mexican to fast food—and got into plenty of trouble. A turbulent young adulthood ensued, during which Roy jumped between achievement (a bachelor’s degree in philosophy, an impressive stint as a banker) and danger (hard drugs, a gambling addiction). After dropping out of law school, he happened to catch a television broadcast featuring American chef Emeril Lagasse. Lagasse seemed to speak directly to Roy through

the screen, reminding him of the vital importance of food in his life. It was just the push he needed: Roy decamped for the Culinary Institute of America, in Hyde Park, New York, in 1996.

He spent the next decade cooking at some of America’s finest hotels and restaurants, but after the global economy crashed in 2008, he was ready to take a chance on something new. With an assist from the social media app Twitter, which had launched two years before, and a dented secondhand food truck, Roy and his business partners rolled out a concept that would alter the trajectory of American food culture: Korean barbecue in a taco, on wheels.

Bold, spicy, and unrelentingly flavorful, Kogi’s offerings combined the soulful tastes Roy had grown up on—carne asada burritos, spicy pork belly, mushroom dumplings, fast-food burgers, grilled corn—with the insight and ingenuity of his classical culinary background.

“At the end of the day,  
I’m just an L.A. kid  
who really loves  
tacos—and dumplings,  
and kimchi, and  
pickles, and pancakes.  
To me, food is  
all about  
connection.”

—ROY

“It’s not Mexican. It’s not Korean. It’s not even Korean American; it’s just American food,” he says. “Just because I look a certain way doesn’t make me any less American, and just because I cook a certain way doesn’t make it any less American food.”

These days, gourmet food trucks and multi-ethnic “fusion” restaurants are international mainstays, and countless chefs and restaurants have taken inspiration from Roy’s streetwise philosophy and dynamic approach to food. He hopes that by sharing his time-honed techniques and road-tested recipes, he can instill in you the confidence to discover your own personal cuisine, whatever that may be.

“I want to teach you about instinct. About feel. About seeing things, hearing things, smelling things,” Roy says. “To me, that’s cooking. You didn’t just learn how to make a recipe. You learned how to cook.”



# Southern California à la Roy

A culinary life story in 11 locales

## 01. SILVER GARDEN

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Roy was eight when his parents conceived this down-home Korean restaurant in Anaheim, California, built off the popularity of his mother's kimchi, which she'd been selling to friends and neighbors. The restaurant closed after a few years, but Roy credits the family business for teaching him the power of food and how to properly wrap a dumpling.

## 02. EL TAURINO

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One of the area's oldest surviving taco purveyors, El Taurino opened in Koreatown (under a different name) in 1974 and was a pioneer in L.A.'s two-bite corn tortilla taco scene. Roy has frequented El Taurino since he was a high schooler and calls it "a rite of passage" for K-town kids.

## 03. BEVERLY HILTON

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In the mid-2000s, before he rose to fame with Kogi, Roy worked as chef de cuisine, or head chef, at the famed Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills. Corporate life wasn't for him, however; soon he ditched the toque and chef's jacket in order to take his food to the streets.

## 04. UCLA

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Kogi's explosion in popularity in 2008 was due in large part to hungry students at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), who spread the word on social media. The truck attracted long lines at one of its early parking spots in the neighborhood of Westwood, where UCLA is centered,

as undergrads eagerly queued up for late-night munchies.

## 05. CHEGO! CHINATOWN

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In 2010, Roy opened his first brick-and-mortar restaurant, Chego!, a popular rice-bowl spot that served buttered kimchi fried rice and cheese fries with chilies and garlic. A few years later it moved east from its original westside location to Chinatown, portending the revitalization of L.A.'s historic Far East Plaza, now a well-known food hub.

## 06. DAN SUNG SA

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Part restaurant, part dive bar, Dan Sung Sa is the late-night K-town hangout where Roy and American chef, author, and television personality Anthony Bourdain clinked glasses of makgeolli (a milky Korean rice wine) in 2012 for an episode of Bourdain's travel show *The Layover*. Don't miss out on the spicy-sweet Korean fried chicken or the famous cheese corn.

## 07. HATFIELD'S

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This now-closed Hollywood hot spot appeared in *Chef*, a 2014 comedy about a man who quits his fine-dining restaurant job to launch a food truck. Roy served as the film's head culinary consultant and taught Jon Favreau, its writer, director, and star, how to work the line.

## 08. POT

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In 2014, Roy opened a full suite of food concepts inside the Line Hotel

in Koreatown. Those concepts included a flagship restaurant called POT, which served inspired takes on Korean stews and barbecue; a cocktail bar; a coffee shop and bakery; and a rooftop-garden diner with a plant-focused menu.

## 09. LOCOL

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Roy teamed up with San Francisco, California, chef Daniel Patterson in 2016 to open Locol, a health-minded fast-food restaurant in the underserved neighborhood of Watts (a second location popped up in Oakland). The concept offered inventive takes on burgers, nuggets, and more while bringing jobs to members of the community.

## 10. CHOSUN GALBEE

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There are too many great restaurants in Koreatown to count, Roy says, but for traditional Korean barbecue, Chosun Galbee is a cut above. The upscale restaurant is beloved for its ample spread of panchan (side dishes) and its excellent meat cooked on grill-equipped tables.

## 11. BEST FRIEND

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Roy opened this restaurant—a self-described "remixed and remastered" love letter to L.A. and its many immigrant cuisines—at the Nevada hotel-casino Park MGM Las Vegas in 2018. The freewheeling menu includes eggplant schnitzel, slippery shrimp, and uni dynamite rice.



VAN NUYS

BURBANK

ANGELES NATIONAL FOREST

HOLLYWOOD

11

BEVERLY HILLS

03

07

CHINATOWN

WESTWOOD

04

KOREATOWN

08

06

05

ALHAMBRA

SANTA MONICA

10

02

HUNTINGTON PARK

09

ANAHEIM

01

COMPTON

TORRANCE

LONG BEACH

# A GUIDE TO Roy's Pantry

You can pick up most of these at your local grocery store or online (although you're more likely to find some items at Korean or Asian markets)

## AROMATICS (GARLIC, GINGER, AND SCALLIONS)

Known for their bold fragrance, these ingredients can ground or finish off countless dishes. Peel garlic by vigorously shaking it in a jar until the skins come off; peel ginger with the side of a spoon instead of a knife; keep scallions fresh by wrapping them in a damp paper towel and storing them inside a zip-top bag.

## CANNED FRUITS

Roy believes these pantry staples are severely underrated. Use canned pineapple, mandarins, or lychees to add a pop of sweetness to savory dishes, or toss them with All-Purpose Kimchi Paste (see page 26), sesame seeds, and chives to

create a quick sweet-salty relish. Or just eat a chilled can of fruit cocktail for dessert.

## CANNED MEATS

Keep a few of these long-lasting items in your cupboard, and you will always have a protein to accompany fried rice, noodles, or breakfast eggs. Popular options include Spam (a pork-based product), Vienna sausages (miniature hot dogs made of beef or pork), and corned (meaning brined and boiled) beef.

## CHILIES

These pungent peppers come fresh, dried, or canned. Dried chilies are excellent for soups, stews, salsa, and chili oil; lightly toast them in a pan first to unlock their aroma.

Fresh chilies can be used raw or roasted in salsas, or add them to a stir-fry or soup. Canned jalapeños are a lively topping for rice bowls or pizza, while canned chipotles can be used to make sauces or dips.

## CHIVES

Roy often uses Asian chives, a relatively flat, wide variety with a strong garlicky flavor. There's not a huge difference between the varieties, however, so when you see "chives," know that Asian chives, European chives, and scallions are all acceptable.

## CILANTRO

Roy uses every part of this vivid green herb, chopping it from leaf to stem for maximum

flavor (and no waste). Unlike parsley, cilantro has mild, tender stems. Keep it fresh by wrapping it in a damp paper towel and storing it inside a zip-top bag.

## COTIJA CHEESE

This crumbly semisoft Mexican cheese (somewhere between Parmesan and feta) is perfect for sprinkling over everything from rice bowls to enchiladas to salads.

## DOENJANG

A salty, savory soybean paste that is used to season many Korean dishes, doenjang is fermented in a similar way to miso paste, a Japanese staple, but is much more robust and rich in flavor.

## DUMPLING WRAPPERS

It's always a good idea to have a package of premade dumpling wrappers in the cupboard. They're sold in a variety of sizes and in round or square shapes. Find them in the refrigerated section of your supermarket.

## FISH SAUCE

A popular condiment made from salt-brined fish—sharp and salty, with a deep umami flavor and strong aroma. Various brands from across Southeast Asia can be found in most supermarkets. Look for additive-free varieties that list only anchovy and salt as ingredients.

## FURIKAKE

This Japanese seasoning condiment is made up of crushed dried seaweed (nori), sesame seeds, salt, sugar, and sometimes dried fish. Sprinkle it on rice, vegetables, and meats, or use it as an ingredient in rice balls.

## GOCHUGARU

Also called kochukaru, this Korean chili powder or chili flake is used in salads, kimchi, stews, and elsewhere. It has a vibrant red color and a smoky flavor that is also a little fruity. The heat level depends on how many of the pepper seeds end up in the final product. Gochugaru usually

comes in coarse or fine-ground varieties (stick with coarse for this class). You can store it in the freezer, which can preserve the flavor for one to two years. At the store, look for products labeled Korean chili flakes, Korean pepper powder, or Korean chili powder.

## GOCHUJANG

This bright red chili paste is similar to gochugaru but blended with glutinous rice and salty soybean paste. Thick and sticky, it is often added to marinades and sauces.

## HOT SAUCE

You can never have too many hot sauces, Roy believes—and he doesn't hesitate to mix them. His must-haves: Tapatio (a Mexican-style product), sriracha (a popular Thai condiment),

sambal oelek (of Indonesia), Tabasco (made in Louisiana), and chili oil (commonly linked with Chinese cuisine).

## OILS

Two broad categories here: cooking oils and finishing oils. Use canola, vegetable, peanut, grapeseed, or avocado oil for high-heat cooking, like sautéing or frying; these varieties have a high smoke point and are flavor neutral. Use more flavorful oils, such as toasted sesame oil (see below) or extra-virgin olive oil, in sauces, in dressings, or to drizzle over a finished dish.

## OYSTER SAUCE

Made from cooked-down oyster extract (among other ingredients), oyster sauce is thick and brown with a complex salty-sweet

## SPICE INDEX

### Adjusting Heat Levels

How to scale down the spice in any of Roy's recipes

#### When using fresh or canned chilies:

Substitute spicy serrano peppers with milder jalapeños. If straight jalapeños are too much, scrape out the seeds or use a bell pepper.

#### When using dried chilies:

Reduce the amount of gochugaru (Korean chili flakes) called for by half and replace it with an equal amount of smoked paprika. This will tame the spiciness without sacrificing the vibrant red color and smokiness that gochugaru provides.



umami flavor. Think of it as you would soy sauce, but with a richer and more balanced taste. It's especially tasty in a stir-fry.

### RICE

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Rice grains come in three sizes: short, medium, and long. Basmati and Jasmine are examples of long-grain rice; short-grain varieties include Arborio and sushi rice. For this class, stick with short- or medium-grain rice. Roy prefers Calrose, a variety developed in California that is somewhere between short and medium, making it a good all-around choice for rice bowls and fried rice.

### RICE VINEGAR

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In this class, Roy uses rice vinegar (also called rice wine vinegar; yes, they're the same thing), which is

mellower than white vinegar or cider vinegar, with a relatively balanced flavor. Find it at most supermarkets, and make sure you don't buy seasoned rice vinegar, which is sweetened.

### ROASTED SEAWEED

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Nori in Japanese, gim in Korean, roasted seaweed is not just for sushi. When torn into strips or shredded, these crispy dark-green sheets become a savory topping for fried rice and noodle soups. Can't locate the pre-shredded kind? Buy a snack package of seaweed and slice it up.

### ROASTED SESAME OIL

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Let's clear something up: *Roasted* sesame oil and *toasted* sesame oil are interchangeable. Both are made from roasted (or toasted) sesame

seeds, and both lend a distinctly nutty flavor to a wide range of dishes and sauces.

### ROASTED SESAME SEEDS

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As with sesame oil, roasted sesame seeds and toasted sesame seeds are the same product. Cooking the seeds brings out their nutty richness. Roy prefers to use crushed sesame seeds, which deliver more flavor and a smoother texture. Buy them crushed or do it yourself with a spice grinder or a mortar and pestle. You can even crush them on a cutting board with a flat-bottomed pot.

### SALT

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Roy uses a flaky salt (such as Maldon or varieties labeled fleur de sel) for finishing dishes and coarse kosher salt for general seasoning. If you

can't find kosher salt, any type of coarse sea salt will do.

### SALTED FERMENTED SHRIMP

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This briny, umami-rich Korean ingredient is often used to season dishes in lieu of salt. It's also a popular ingredient for traditional kimchi-making. Store it in the refrigerator, where it will last for many months.

### SOY SAUCE

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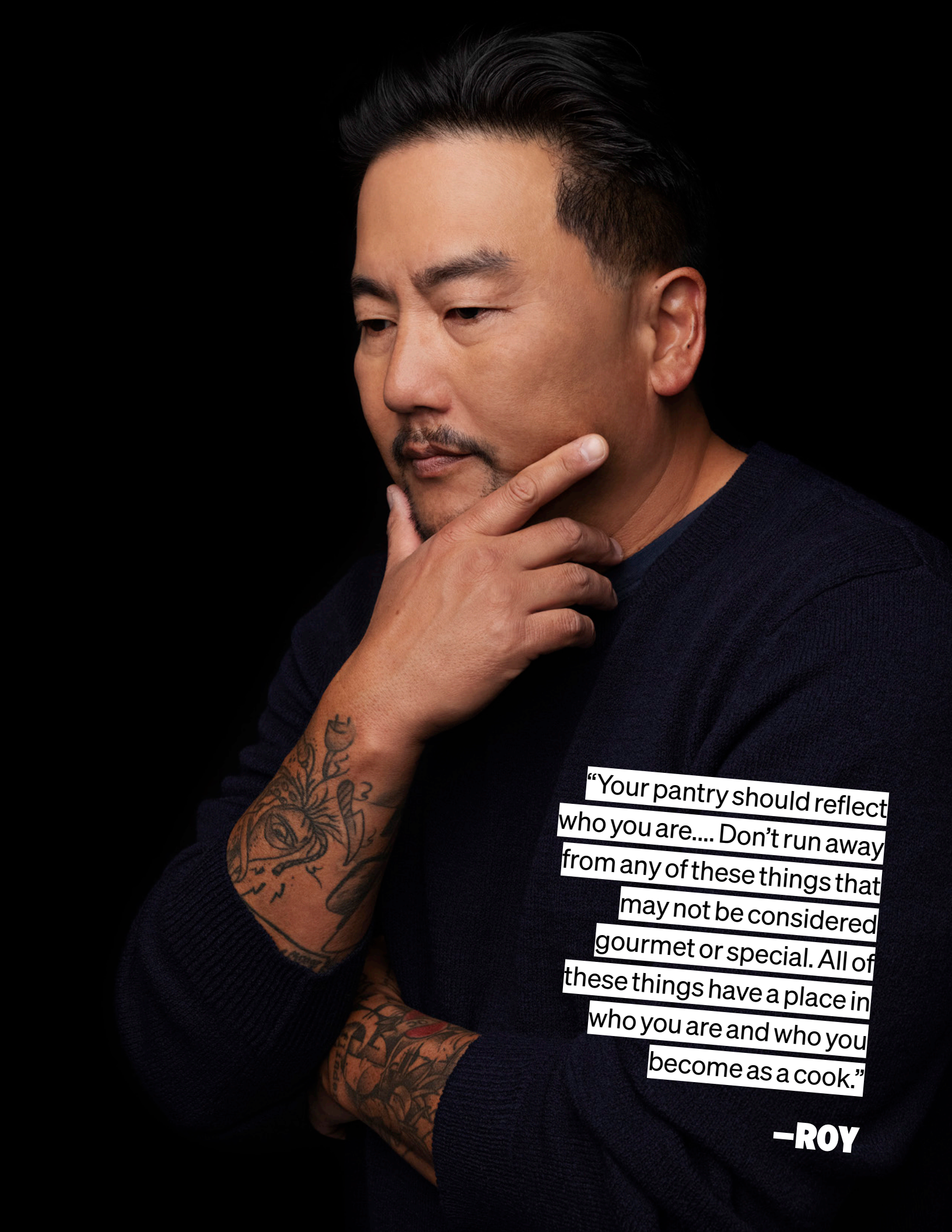
There are two basic types of soy sauce: Light soy sauce (which is not the same as low-sodium soy sauce) is thin, with a sharp, salty flavor; dark soy sauce is thick and has a sweeter taste. For this class, stick with light.

### TOFU

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This jiggly bean-curd brick usually comes in three textures: firm, medium, and soft (also called silken). Generally, firm is best for frying or baking, medium is suited for soups and stews, and soft is great as a filling for dumplings or on its own.



A portrait of a man with dark hair and a goatee, wearing a dark blue sweater. He is resting his chin on his right hand, looking thoughtfully to the left. He has several tattoos on his arms, including a large one on his right forearm featuring a rose and other floral designs. The background is dark and out of focus.

“Your pantry should reflect who you are.... Don’t run away from any of these things that may not be considered gourmet or special. All of these things have a place in who you are and who you become as a cook.”

**—ROY**



## COOKING EQUIPMENT: Don't Get This, Do Get That

There's nothing wrong with a full kitchen arsenal, Roy says, "but it's also fun to just go right back to the essence...and see where it goes from there"

### YOU DON'T NEED:

#### SOUS VIDE MACHINE

Sous vide machines just keep hot water at a certain temperature. Do the same by lowering the heat on a pot until the water

barely simmers, then adjusting the flame to keep it there.

#### MEASURING CUPS

No, you don't need to toss out those trusty cups. But learning to rely on

your senses is a critical part of intuitive cooking. Prepare a few dishes from this class by feel and see what happens.

#### HAND BLENDER

It might look cool, but there's nothing a hand blender can do that a regular blender can't. Unless you're making tomato bisque three times a week, skip it.

#### BOX GRATER

It takes up way too much room in the drawer. Opt for a small hand grater or microplane; both are great for zesting citrus and grating ginger and garlic.

#### ELECTRIC THERMOMETER

Is your steak ready to eat? Touch your thumb and middle finger together and, with the index finger of your other hand, press on the fleshy part below your thumb. That's how a medium-rare steak should feel.

#### PEELER

With a little practice, a paring knife can be used for peeling most vegetables. For veggies with rough skin, like carrots or ginger, use a spoon or the back of a knife blade.

#### FOOD PROCESSOR

Another appliance the blender knocks off the pedestal. Though a food processor might be slightly better for a few jobs (see 3 p.m. Dumplings on page 41), those jobs can also be done with a plain old knife.

#### GARLIC PRESS

A knife always does a better job when it comes to chopping garlic. Plus garlic presses are just too hard to wash.

#### CITRUS JUICER

Roll the fruit against the table with your palms to loosen the juice, then halve it and use your hands or a fork to squeeze it out. Done.

## YOU DO NEED:

### CUTTING BOARD

Wooden boards are beautiful, but a quality plastic board is lighter, easier to clean, and gentler on your knives.

### SPOONS

Use a large wooden or silicone spoon for stirring, mixing, and serving; use a smaller metal spoon for tasting dishes as you season them.

### CHOPSTICKS/TONGS

Chopsticks can be used as a precise kitchen tool. Use a large pair to gently flip foods in the fryer or to toss a stir-fry. If you're not feeling dexterous, a sturdy pair of tongs will also work.

### BLENDER

A basic blender has countless uses, from puréeing sauces to grinding spices to whipping up smoothies. Just make sure to rinse out the jar well between uses.

### SPIDER

A spider (or skimmer) is the perfect tool for blanching vegetables, skimming stocks, or draining foods from hot oil. It's a game changer for cooking pasta, too.

### SPATULA

Spatulas are multitaskers. Use a metal one to handle foods on the grill or griddle; opt for a plastic or silicone one to scrape out pots or bowls.

### KNIVES

An eight-inch chef's knife and a smaller paring knife will cover the vast majority of your cutting tasks. Make sure they feel comfortable in your hand, and keep them sharp with a handled knife sharpener. (Also, a pair of scissors is nice for snipping herbs or cutting pieces of meat.)

### BIG BOWL

Better to have one giant bowl in your cabinet than a half

dozen medium bowls. A larger bowl gives you more elbow room for stirring and tossing without bruising delicate ingredients (like lettuce).

### STRAINER/COLANDER

A lightweight strainer or colander is useful for rinsing greens, draining canned fruit or cooked noodles, and using as a steamer.

### RICE COOKER

If you're going to invest in just one single-purpose kitchen appliance, make it this one. These inexpensive machines produce perfect rice every time and turn the process into an effortless set-it-and-forget-it task.



# Mother Sauces

Fantastic flavor and vast versatility in a jar

**KOGI VINAIGRETTE**  
Best for slaw, salads, cold noodles, and grilled meats and vegetables

**KALBI MARINADE**  
Best for barbecued and braised meats, roasted vegetables, and salads

**SCALLION DIPPING SAUCE**  
Best for dumplings, rice, noodles, and general seasoning

**SALSA VERDE**  
Best for tacos, rice bowls, burritos, and general scooping and drizzling

**I**n culinary school, chefs learn the concept of so-called mother sauces. In French cooking this refers to a handful of preparations—béchamel, espagnole, velouté, hollandaise, and tomato—that serve as a base for an array of classical dishes.

But for Roy, the concept of mother sauces isn't limited to French cuisine. The soul of his unique cooking style can be found in his personal mother

sauces, deeply flavored and umami-rich creations that have been developed over the course of his career.

What qualities do these four mother sauces share, aside from being crazy delicious? First, they are versatile. They can be used as marinades, glazes, dressings, and dipping sauces. Second, they're all either mixed by hand or made in a standard blender, one of Roy's favorite kitchen tools.

(Nothing fancy here; whatever you use to make smoothies or milkshakes will work.) Third, most of them last a long time in the refrigerator. This means you can make a large batch ahead of time and grab it whenever you feel like cooking. Finally, mother sauces are adaptable. Roy hopes you'll start by experimenting with his versions and eventually feel confident enough to create your own.

# Salsa Verde

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➔ Salsa verde is ubiquitous at taco stands across L.A. (and Mexico) for good reason. Vibrant in flavor and color, salsa verde blends tart tomatillos, fresh herbs, and green chilies into a spicy-but-not-too-spicy condiment that enlivens anything it touches. Before dropping all the ingredients in a blender, Roy chars the tomatillos and

aromatics on a griddle to soften them and introduce a complex smoky flavor. Salsa verde is amazing on tacos or scooped up with a bag of chips, of course, but Roy likes to deploy it in unexpected ways, too: spooned over rice bowls, tossed with grilled vegetables, or added to a Bloody Mary cocktail.

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## INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp cooking oil, plus more as needed  
2 large tomatillos, peeled and rinsed  
3 garlic cloves, peeled  
6 scallions  
2 jalapeños  
2 serrano chilies  
1 bunch cilantro, with stems, roughly chopped (about 1½ cups)  
2 limes  
½ cup rice vinegar  
3 large pinches kosher salt  
2 large pinches freshly ground black pepper

## METHOD

- Drizzle the oil in a large skillet or on a griddle set over medium-high heat. Add the tomatillos, garlic, scallions, jalapeños, and serranos. Slowly and patiently char the vegetables on all sides, turning often, until they begin to blister and blacken in spots, about 10 to 15 minutes. Not all the ingredients will char at the same rate, so keep an eye on them and take them off the heat when they've started to soften but aren't totally burnt. Transfer the charred vegetables to a cutting board or sheet pan, and let them cool slightly.
- Blend the ingredients on high speed just until a smooth salsa forms, about 15 seconds. If the mixture seems too thick or chunky, add small amounts of water or oil while running the blender on low speed until the salsa is the desired consistency. Season it with more salt and pepper, to taste. Pour the salsa into a sealable jar or container, and store it in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.
- Once the chilies are cool enough to handle, remove their stems. (For a milder salsa, slice the pods open and scrape out the seeds.) Add the chilies and the rest of the charred ingredients to a clean blender jar, and pack the cilantro on top. Roll the limes against a hard surface with your palms, slice them in half, and squeeze them over the blender jar using your hands. Add the rice vinegar, salt, and pepper.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Kogi Vinaigrette, Salsa Verde, Kalbi Marinade, Scallion Dipping Sauce

MAKES ABOUT 8 CUPS

## Kalbi Marinade

➔ This is Roy's version of a classic marinade for kalbi, or grilled short ribs—a staple at any proper Korean barbecue feast. It's one of those recipes that every practitioner makes a little differently, but it's always garlicky, sweet, and savory with a nutty sesame flavor. You'll use this sauce when making the BBQ Kalbi (see page 20) and BBQ Mixed Vegetables (see page 21), but it's not just a marinade; it can

also be used as a braising sauce or salad dressing.

Roy blends in the tangy flesh of the kiwifruit here, but you can swap in pears or pineapple or whatever fruits are available. Mirin, a sweet Japanese rice wine, can be found at Asian markets or online; if you don't have a bottle, use apple juice instead.

### INGREDIENTS

1 large onion, peeled and roughly chopped  
1 cup peeled garlic cloves  
1 bunch scallions (about 8 scallions), roughly chopped  
5 tbsp toasted sesame seeds  
1 cup sugar  
2 large kiwifruits  
2 cups soy sauce  
1 cup mirin, apple juice, or water  
2 cups fresh orange juice  
1 cup toasted sesame oil

### METHOD

- Add the onion, garlic, scallions, sesame seeds, and sugar to a clean blender jar. Halve the kiwifruits, and use a spoon to scoop out the flesh. Add the flesh to the blender, and toss out the skins. Add the remaining ingredients, and purée the mixture on high speed just until a smooth sauce forms, about 10 seconds. Pour the marinade into a sealable jar or container, and store it in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

MAKES ABOUT 4 CUPS

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# Scallion Dipping Sauce

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➔ If you prepare only one sauce from this section, Roy urges you to make this one. Salty, spicy, and tangy, this soy-based seasoning is an easy way to boost the flavor of whatever you're eating, which is why you should always have a container on hand (plus, it'll keep in the refrigerator for ages). Try it over anything crispy or starchy—think dumplings, pancakes, fried chicken, fried rice, or potatoes—or drizzle it into soup broths or a bowl of noodles.

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## INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp crushed toasted sesame seeds  
2 cups soy sauce  
3 tbsp gochugaru (Korean chili flakes)  
½ cup toasted sesame oil  
¾ cup rice vinegar  
2 tbsp sugar  
1 bunch scallions (about 8 scallions),  
trimmed and thinly sliced

## METHOD

- Combine all of the ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Whisk or stir them until they're well mixed. Adjust the seasoning to taste, and add a little water if you want the sauce to be mellower in flavor. Pour the sauce into a sealable jar or container, and store it in the refrigerator for up to 3 months.

MAKES ABOUT 6 CUPS

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# Kogi Vinaigrette

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➔ You can't talk about the Kogi truck without highlighting this sauce, says Roy. The inspiration came from a dish that's often served at L.A.'s Korean barbecue restaurants: a crunchy fresh slaw of scallions, lettuce, and cabbage that's tossed in what Roy calls a "really, really pungent, kind of acidic, sweet vinaigrette."

When Roy launched Kogi, he took those flavors and pushed them into a new dimension: A handful of his spicy-tangy slaw crowned each taco, creating a flavor combination that was uniquely L.A. The flavors of garlic and ginger come singing through, while fragrant Korean chili flakes add just enough spice. Slaws and salads are the most obvious applications, but this vinaigrette can also be drizzled over vegetables, grains, or proteins as a finishing sauce.

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## INGREDIENTS

1 2-inch knob of ginger  
4 garlic cloves, peeled  
3 scallions, roughly chopped  
¼ cup gochugaru (Korean chili flakes)  
¼ cup sugar  
1 tbsp kosher salt  
2 tsp black pepper  
1 cup soy sauce  
2 cups rice vinegar (unseasoned)  
½ cup toasted sesame oil  
1 cup neutral oil (canola, grapeseed, etc.)

## METHOD

- Use the side of a spoon to scrape the skin from the ginger, then roughly chop the knob into thin discs. Add the ginger discs to a clean blender jar, along with the rest of the ingredients. Purée the ingredients on high speed until a smooth dressing forms, about 15 seconds. Pour the dressing into a sealable jar or container, and store it in the refrigerator for up to 3 months.

# Kalbi

The magic of Korean barbecue is in your hands



**K**albi, also known as grilled short rib, is often thought of as the king of Korean barbecue (KBBQ for short). Sweet, salty, quick-cooking, perfectly tender yet nicely charred, it's all the things people love about this vibrant cuisine. And it's at the very heart of the creation that made Roy a culinary superstar.

Korean barbecue in taco form is a flavor mashup that might seem obvious in hind-

sight, but back when Roy was starting the Kogi truck in 2008, it was revolutionary. "We were all out of a job, and we were just trying to cook some delicious food and put it out there on the streets," Roy recalls. "We were just tryin' to make a food that tasted like where we were from, which is Koreatown." The World Famous Short Rib Taco, as it's now known on the Kogi menu, is the quintessential Roy Choi dish. It's bold and complex in

flavor but simple in concept and unfussy in presentation. It's street food from the mind of a chef. And it's remarkably easy to make.

In this section you'll learn how to make kalbi with ribs and, for those who want this flavor experience without the meat, mixed vegetables. From there, you'll find out how to make those earth-shaking tacos in the privacy of your own home.

# BBQ Kalbi

→ Start off on the right foot by looking for flanken-style short ribs, which are thinly cut across the bone rather than between the bones, and are available in bone-in or boneless varieties. This cut is often referred to as L.A.-style kalbi: When Korean immigrants arrived in the city, they found that the local shops sold short ribs cut crosswise into strips, which eventually became the preferred style. If you don't see them in the meat case, ask your butcher for Korean-style short ribs and they should be able to help you out.

Remember the Kalbi Marinade (see page 17)? This is its moment to shine. Massage the marinade into the ribs, and let them sit overnight or at least for a couple of hours. The marinade will cure the meat slightly and give it a ten-

der texture. Since kalbi is a thin cut, it will cook quickly on a hot grill. Keep a close eye; the meat should be charred but still look moist.

Good news for anyone seeking a meat alternative: You can use vegetables instead of short rib. Marinate the veggies briefly, then grill them until they're charred and tender. If you want the full Korean restaurant setup, serve your KBBQ on a heated cast-iron plate (also called a sizzle plate) covered with a layer of raw onions and a drizzle of oil. Enjoy your barbecue traditional style by serving it with panchan (see pages 51–56), savory mung bean pancakes (see page 39), and plenty of rice. Or use the vegetables to make some tacos—yes, *those* tacos (see page 23).

## INGREDIENTS

### For the kalbi

2 cups Kalbi Marinade (see page 17)

4 lb boneless or bone-in flanken short ribs, sliced ½-inch thick

### To serve

1 large white onion, thinly sliced

## METHOD

- Prepare the Kalbi Marinade according to the instructions on page 17. Add the ribs to a large container, and cover them with the marinade. Use your hands to gently massage the marinade into the meat. Transfer the ribs to the refrigerator, and let them marinate for at least 2 hours and up to 1 day.
- When the meat has been marinated, prepare a grill or grill pan for medium-high heat. Let the grill heat up for 5 to 10 minutes, then brush or spray the grates with oil.
- Remove the ribs from the marinade. Grill the ribs, turning once, until they're charred all over, about 4 minutes on each side. When they're done, they should glisten with beautiful char marks.
- Arrange the sliced onions in a heated cast-iron pan, then stack the grilled ribs on top of the onions. Eat immediately.



# BBQ Mixed Vegetables

## INGREDIENTS

### For the vegetables

2 cups Kalbi Marinade (see page 17), Kogi Vinaigrette (see page 18), or a mixture of the two

4 lb seasonal young vegetables (asparagus, carrots, baby bok choy, fennel, onion, gem lettuce, etc.)

### To serve

1 large white onion, thinly sliced

## METHOD

- Prepare the Kalbi Marinade and/or the Kogi Vinaigrette according to the instructions on page 17 and page 18, respectively.
- Trim the vegetables, and cut them into halves or quarters, depending on their size. (They should all be roughly the same size so they cook at about the same rate.) Add them to a large bowl or pan, and gently toss them with the Kalbi Marinade, the Kogi Vinaigrette, or the Marinade-Vinaigrette mixture. Let the vegetables sit for 20 to 30 minutes while you heat the grill.
- Prepare a grill or grill pan for medium-high heat. Let it heat up for 5 to 10 minutes, then brush or spray the grates with a high-heat oil (Roy recommends grapeseed).
- Remove the vegetables from the Kalbi Marinade, the Kogi Vinaigrette, or the mixture. Working in batches, grill them, turning once, until they're charred all over, about 6 minutes on each side. When they're done, the veggies should be slightly tender but not soft, with distinct char marks.
- Arrange the sliced onions in a heated cast-iron pan, and lay the veggies on top. Eat immediately.



# Kogi Short Rib Tacos

→ Roy starts by gathering the toppings: a basic street taco relish made with onions, cilantro, and lime; some leftover Salsa Verde (see page 16); and a zesty Scallion Slaw inspired by the salad that often starts a meal at Korean barbecue restaurants (made with the Kogi Vinaigrette, see page 18). Next, tortillas are heated on an oiled griddle until they're pliable and slightly crisp, along with chopped BBQ Kalbi (see page 20). Roy calls this "double-caramelized"

meat, since the short ribs are seared once on the grill and again on the griddle before serving.

Then it's time to assemble: hot tortilla, seared kalbi, relish, salsa, Kogi slaw, and a squeeze of lime over the top. Devour and repeat.

**NOTE:** For an easy vegetarian version, swap out the chopped BBQ Kalbi for chopped BBQ Mixed Veggies (see page 21). Everything else can be prepared the same.

## INGREDIENTS

### For the Cilantro-Onion Relish

½ medium white onion, finely chopped

¼ cup cilantro, finely chopped

Juice from ½ of a lime (about 1 tbsp)

Kosher salt or coarse salt, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

### For the Scallion Slaw

Kogi Vinaigrette (see page 18), to taste

6 scallions, trimmed and sliced into thin strips on the diagonal

½ cup thinly sliced green cabbage

½ cup thinly sliced romaine lettuce

Pinch of kosher salt or coarse salt

Pinch of freshly ground black pepper

### For the tacos

Salsa Verde (see page 16), to taste

Neutral oil (canola, grapeseed, vegetable, etc.), to coat the pan

8 corn tortillas (4½ inches each)

1 lb cooked BBQ Kalbi (see page 20), chopped into small chunks (if the kalbi has bones, remove them first), or 1 lb grilled BBQ Mixed Vegetables (see page 21), roughly chopped

Lime wedges, for serving

## METHOD

- Make the Cilantro-Onion Relish. Combine the onion, cilantro, and lime juice in a medium bowl, and stir. Season with salt and pepper, to taste, and set the bowl aside.
- Make the Scallion Slaw. Prepare the Kogi Vinaigrette according to the instructions on page 18. Combine the scallions, cabbage, and lettuce in a medium bowl, and season with salt and pepper. Add a few big spoonfuls of the Kogi Vinaigrette, and gently toss. Add more Kogi Vinaigrette as needed. The slaw should be generously dressed, with a small pool of dressing at the bottom of the bowl.
- Prepare the Salsa Verde according to the instructions on page 16. Set it aside.
- Make the tacos. Drizzle just enough oil to lightly coat the surface of a large skillet or griddle set over medium heat. Add the tortillas (work in batches if your cooking surface can't accommodate all 8 at once), and cook them for about 30 seconds, or until they're soft and pliable and just starting to crisp. Flip the tortillas and repeat.
- Arrange the tortillas two-high on the edge of the skillet or griddle; you can also place them on a plate and cover them with a towel to keep them warm. Add the chopped BBQ Kalbi or BBQ Mixed Vegetables to the griddle or skillet, and cook them for about 2 minutes, or until they caramelize and become lightly browned on the edges.
- To serve, stack 2 tortillas on a plate, and top them with the BBQ Kalbi or BBQ Mixed Vegetables. Spoon the Salsa Verde over the meat or vegetables. Layer on the Cilantro-Onion Relish, and top the taco off with the Scallion Slaw. Serve with lime wedges, and eat immediately.





# All-Purpose Kimchi Paste

➔ If you take one lesson from this section, let it be this: Kimchi is a verb. So what, exactly, does that mean? While it's best known as spicy fermented cabbage, kimchi can be made with pretty much any vegetable or fruit, from kale and tomatoes to pineapple and persimmon—as in, Roy is going to kimchi these pears he just picked up at the farmers' market.

The unifying element among all the kimchi recipes presented here is the seasoning paste: a spicy, funky,

shockingly red mixture of chili flakes, garlic, ginger, and fish sauce that you slather all over the fruit or vegetables. It's easy enough to whip up kimchi paste in your blender, and you can make it far in advance; the paste will only deepen in flavor the longer it sits in the refrigerator.

Can't find salted fermented shrimp at an Asian market or online? Don't sweat it. The combination of fish sauce and oyster sauce will still provide the umami-rich brininess that's the mark of great kimchi.

## INGREDIENTS

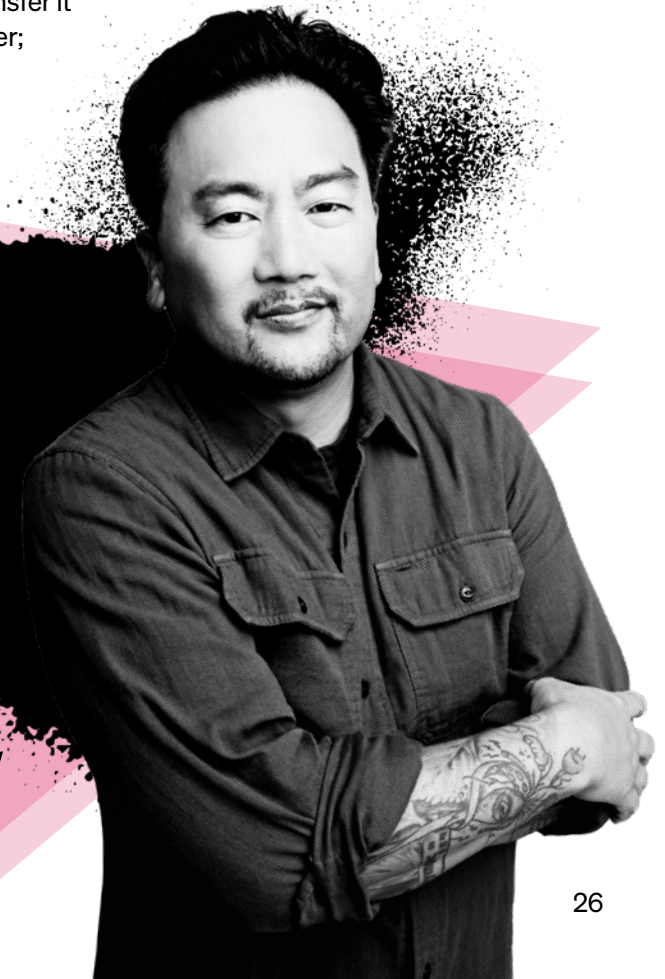
15 garlic cloves, peeled  
¼ cup peeled and roughly chopped ginger (from a 4-inch knob)  
1 tbsp salted fermented shrimp (optional; store-bought is fine)  
2 tbsp kosher salt or coarse sea salt  
2 tbsp sugar  
1 cup gochugaru (Korean chili flakes, available at Asian markets or online)  
1 large white or yellow onion, peeled and roughly chopped  
¼ cup fish sauce  
1 tbsp soy sauce  
2 tbsp rice vinegar (unseasoned)  
2 tbsp oyster sauce  
½ cup water

## METHOD

- Add all of the ingredients to a clean blender jar, and purée them until a smooth paste forms (if the mixture is too thick to blend, add more water, a few spoonfuls at a time). Use the All-Purpose Kimchi Paste immediately, or transfer it to a tight-sealing container; it will keep indefinitely in the refrigerator.

**“Get a bunch of gloves, bottle of wine, and make kimchi. It’s the new club. And then y’all can eat this kimchi and kiss each other.”**

**—ROY**



# Napa Cabbage Kimchi

➔ There are two main steps to cabbage kimchi-making. The first is to soak the raw cabbage in salt water, a process called brining that changes the cabbage's texture and helps it soak up the kimchi paste. The second step is where it gets messy: rubbing and massaging the kimchi paste all over the cabbage leaves. Rubber gloves and an apron are strongly recommended.

Once the cabbage is rubbed down, tightly pack it in a jar and let the fermentation begin—first at room temperature

for a few days, then in the refrigerator for as long as you'd like (1 to 2 weeks is a good starting point; be sure to sample and taste along the way). If you're in more of a hurry, chop the brined cabbage into pieces before mixing it with the kimchi paste.

If it seems like you'll end up with too much kimchi, don't fret. It's terrific as a snack, and it's also a must for making two of Roy's favorite homestyle recipes: Kimchi Fried Rice (see page 29) and the Kimchi Tuna Melt (see page 31).

## INGREDIENTS

All-Purpose Kimchi Paste, as needed (see page 26)

2 tbsp kosher salt or coarse sea salt

2 quarts water

1 large napa cabbage (about 3 lb), split lengthwise in quarters

½ bunch fresh Asian chives or 6 scallions, trimmed and cut into 2-inch segments

## METHOD

- Prepare the All-Purpose Kimchi Paste according to the instructions on page 26. Set it aside.
- In a large plastic tub or a bowl big enough to hold the cabbage, mix the salt with the water until it is dissolved. Add the cabbage quarters to the tub or bowl, and let them soak for at least 3 hours at room temperature (overnight is fine, too).
- When the cabbage is slightly wilted, remove it from the salted water, and drain it well.
- Place the cabbage quarters on a cutting board or large sheet pan (or any surface you don't mind getting messy). Use a spoon to rub All-Purpose Kimchi Paste inside each layer of cabbage, making sure to get deep between the leaves. Coat them completely. Massage more paste all over the outside of the cabbage—don't be shy here.
- When the cabbage is covered with the paste, tuck a few pieces of chive or scallion between each layer, then roll each cabbage quarter into a log. Place the quarters stem side down into a gallon-size jar with a sealable lid, packing them down firmly. Jam any remaining cabbage pieces on top. The fermentation process produces a small amount of gas, so leave a few inches of headroom between the kimchi and the top of the jar. That way, the kimchi won't bubble over or pop open the jar; just make sure to seal it tightly.
- Let the kimchi sit at room temperature and out of direct sunlight for 2 days, then transfer the container to the refrigerator. The kimchi will be ready to eat in 1 to 2 weeks and can be kept indefinitely in the refrigerator.

Don't forget to slather up every inch of every cabbage leaf.



### #1: QUICK KIMCHI

Cut the quartered cabbage into 2-inch pieces and soak them in the salt water for 1 to 2 hours. When the cabbage is slightly wilted, drain it well, and toss it with about 2 cups of All-Purpose Kimchi Paste plus the chives or scallions. Massage the paste into the cabbage. Quick Kimchi can be eaten immediately, or you can transfer it to a large jar with a sealable lid and let it ferment in the refrigerator for a few days. It keeps indefinitely in the fridge.

### #2: RADISH KIMCHI (KHAKGUGI)

Substitute the chopped cabbage with 1 large daikon radish, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes. Prepare the radish as you would the cabbage in the recipe for Quick Kimchi. Radish Kimchi can be eaten immediately, or you can transfer it to a large jar with a sealable lid and let it ferment in the refrigerator for a few days. Radish Kimchi will keep in the refrigerator for up to 1 year.

**BONUS**

# Kimchi Fried Rice

➔ For Roy, kimchi fried rice is pure comfort food. And since it's likely that after this class you'll have leftover kimchi and rice, it's also a food of convenience and economy. *And* kimchi fried rice is one of the few dishes that tastes better when it's made with leftovers.

Roy's colorful version of kimchi fried rice—crowned with a runny fried egg—is all about creating layers of flavor and texture. It starts with caramelized kimchi, cooked down with butter and sesame until it develops a savory richness that will play against the zip of the fresh kimchi you'll add later. Another trick: Fry the rice alone in the pan, which allows it to develop that crispy-crunchy brown layer.

Be patient and don't flip the rice too quickly; listen for the crackle and sizzle in the pan. It's those small details that turn an unfussy homestyle dish into some of the best fried rice you've ever had.

You can also get creative by adding whatever meats or vegetables you'd like once the rice is fried. Diced Spam (a pork-based canned meat product) and hot dogs are classic options. Roy uses three garnishes—sesame seeds, shredded nori (roasted seaweed), and furikake (Japanese rice seasoning)—for maximum effect, but even using one will create dramatic contrast in texture.



**WARNING:** You might never think of leftovers the same way again.

## INGREDIENTS

2 tsp All-Purpose Kimchi Paste (optional, see page 26)

3 tbsp Scallion Dipping Sauce (see page 18), plus more to taste

4 tbsp neutral oil (canola, grapeseed, vegetable, etc.), divided

1½ cups roughly chopped Napa Cabbage Kimchi, divided

Pinch of kosher salt or coarse sea salt

¼ cup butter, divided, plus 2 tsp

Large pinch of crushed toasted sesame seeds, plus more for garnish

¼ cup water, soju, sake, or dry white wine

3½ cups cooked short-grain rice (day-old rice is best)

6 scallions, cut into 2-inch segments, plus 2 scallions, thinly sliced

4 eggs

Furikake seasoning, for garnish

Handful of shredded nori, for garnish

## METHOD

- Make the All-Purpose Kimchi Paste (if using) and the Scallion Dipping Sauce according to the instructions on page 26 and page 18, respectively. Set the paste and sauce aside.
- Make the caramelized kimchi. Drizzle 1 tablespoon of oil in a medium skillet or sauté pan set over medium-high heat. When the oil is shimmering, add ¾ cup of the Napa Cabbage Kimchi and a pinch of salt. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes, stirring, just until the liquid from the kimchi has evaporated.
- Lower the heat to medium, and stir in 2 tablespoons of butter and the crushed toasted sesame seeds. Continue cooking and stirring for 2 to 3 minutes more, until the kimchi begins to caramelize and brown at the edges.
- Add ¼ cup or so of water, soju, sake, or dry white wine to deglaze the pan (a technique of adding liquid to loosen any browned bits). Use a spoon or spatula to scrape up all the crispy kimchi from the bottom of the pan. Once most of the liquid in the pan has evaporated and the kimchi is nicely browned, transfer it to a bowl and set it aside.
- Make the kimchi fried rice. Using the same skillet set over medium heat, add 2 tablespoons of oil to the pan, and swirl to coat the bottom. When the oil is shimmering, crumble the rice into the pan and spread it out to make an even layer. Cook the rice, without stirring, for 2 to 3 minutes, until a light golden crust forms on the bottom. Flip the rice over, breaking it up as you go, and cook for 1 to 2 minutes more, until the rice is completely heated through with bits of crispiness and color.
- Add the reserved caramelized kimchi to the rice, stir to combine, then add the remainder of the fresh kimchi as well as any leftover kimchi juice. Stir and toss until the kimchi is evenly mixed with the rice and the liquid has evaporated. Stir in the scallion segments, the All-Purpose Kimchi Paste (if using), 2 tablespoons of butter, and the Scallion Dipping Sauce. (If you're omitting the kimchi paste, you can add another teaspoon or so of dipping sauce.) Stir until everything is well combined, then drop the heat to the low setting while you complete the next step.
- Make the eggs. Add about 1 tablespoon of oil to a separate skillet or sauté pan set over medium-high heat. When the oil is shimmering, add 2 teaspoons of butter, then crack all of the eggs into the pan. Sprinkle each egg with a pinch of salt, and cook until the whites have just set and the bottoms are crispy; the yolks should still be runny. Remove the pan from the stove.
- To serve, divide the fried rice between bowls, making sure to get a good amount of the crispy stuff from the bottom of the pan into all of the servings. Top each bowl with the fried eggs, then sprinkle on the sliced scallions, furikake, crushed toasted sesame seeds, and shredded nori. Eat immediately.

# Kimchi Tuna Melt

➔ A good sandwich is an art form—one that Roy has studied at length, from the BLTs (Bacon, Lettuce, and Tomato sandwiches) he used to prepare in country-club kitchens to his own two-fisted tortas (Mexican sandwiches), loaded with pork belly, eggs, jalapeños, and sesame seeds. Here he's showcasing a spin on that American diner favorite, the tuna melt, jazzed up with a dose of punchy kimchi that oozes alongside molten cheddar cheese.

Tuna salad is “one of those foods that you just kind of make with your eyes and intuition,” Roy says. That means

tasting the salad often as you're mixing to get the seasoning where you like it.

Before busting out the bread, Roy likes to warm the tuna salad in a pan. This marries the flavors together and keeps you from ending up with cold filling inside a hot sandwich. Remember the secret to a killer hot sandwich: butter. Spread it corner to corner on the bread to ensure a gorgeous golden-brown crust and a gooey, mouthwatering cheese pull.



## INGREDIENTS

### For the tuna salad

2 cans flaked tuna in water, drained

1 stalk celery, diced

2 scallions, thinly sliced

Japanese mayonnaise, to taste  
(non-Japanese varieties work, too)

Yellow mustard, to taste

Tabasco hot sauce, to taste

Kosher salt or coarse sea salt, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

### For the sandwich

2 large spoonfuls Napa Cabbage  
Kimchi (see page 27), chopped

4 slices sourdough or white bread

Butter, softened, for spreading

Neutral oil (canola, grapeseed,  
vegetable, etc.), to coat the pan

4 large spoonfuls tuna salad

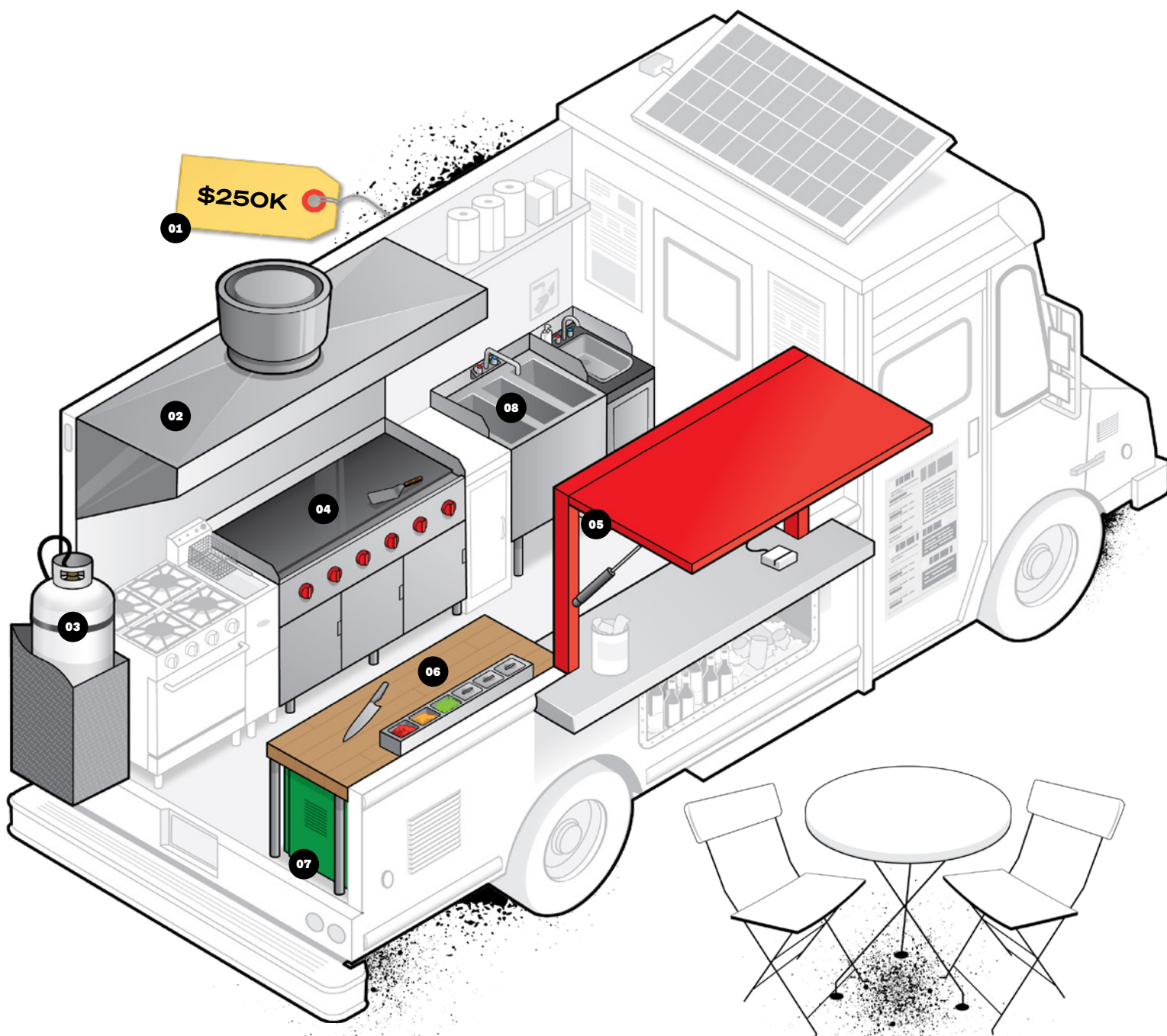
8 slices sharp cheddar cheese

## METHOD

- Make the tuna salad. Add the flaked tuna, celery, and scallions to a medium mixing bowl. Next, add a few big spoonfuls of mayonnaise, a small squirt of mustard, and a few shakes of hot sauce. Stir well. Add more mayo as needed. There should be just enough mayo, mustard, and hot sauce to bind everything together, and the mixture should look reasonably moist. Season the tuna salad with salt and pepper, to taste, then adjust by stirring in more mustard, hot sauce, salt, and pepper as needed. Set the bowl aside.
- Make the sandwiches. Prepare the Napa Cabbage Kimchi according to the instructions on page 27. Chop the kimchi, then set it aside. Generously spread one side of each slice of bread with the softened butter, making sure to coat the bread evenly all the way to the crust. Set the bread aside.
- In a medium skillet or sauté pan set over medium heat, drizzle just enough oil to coat the bottom of the pan. When the pan is hot and the oil is shimmering, add the tuna salad. Cook, stirring, for no more than 1 minute, until the tuna is heated through and beginning to clump together. Add the chopped kimchi, and toss it with the tuna. Then remove the pan from the stove.
- In a large skillet or on a nonstick griddle set over medium heat, drizzle just enough oil to lightly coat the cooking surface. When the oil is shimmering, add the bread to the pan butter side down. (You might have to work in batches depending on the size of your pan and bread.)
- Working quickly, top each slice of bread with two slices of cheese, then spoon the kimchi tuna salad equally between two of the bread slices. (You're aiming for about a 1-inch-thick layer of tuna.) Lay the remaining slices of bread on top of the tuna to form two sandwiches, then gently press the top of each sandwich down with a spatula.
- Continue cooking for another 1 to 2 minutes, flipping and moving the sandwiches around the pan so they cook evenly and both sides develop a deep, well-browned crust. Transfer the sandwiches to a cutting board, and let them cool slightly before slicing them diagonally with a serrated knife. Eat immediately.

# Anatomy of a FOOD TRUCK

Operating a business like Kogi means wedging a professional kitchen into a space as small as 70 square feet. Here's how it's done



### 01. PRICE TAG

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A new 26-foot food truck can cost around \$250,000. Many first-time owners opt for used trucks, which cost less but are more prone to breaking down.

### 02. HOOD VENT

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Atop the truck sits a powerful vent fan that filters out smoke, grease, and heat from the kitchen below.

### 03. PROPANE TANKS

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Hidden away at the rear of the truck, propane tanks are used to fuel the kitchen appliances. Most trucks carry around 50 gallons.

### 04. GRIDDLE

---

This wide flat-top griddle is perfect for searing meats or warming tortillas. Some trucks come equipped with cooking ranges, ovens, and deep fryers as well.

### 05. SERVICE WINDOW

---

The kitchen crew takes orders and passes food to customers through a long window along the side of the truck. Beneath the window, you'll often find an ice bin where customers can help themselves to cold drinks.

### 06. PREP COUNTER

---

Often across from the griddle station is a long counter used for packaging food, chopping ingredients, blending sauces, and various other kitchen tasks. Ready-to-use ingredients, known as a chef's mise en place (French for "everything in its place"), are often laid out in containers for easy access.

### 07. REFRIGERATORS

---

Below the counters are small reach-in refrigerators. These are where raw ingredients are kept cold, and they're designed so that cooks can grab what they need with minimal movement.

### 08. WASHING STATION

---

A stainless steel, three-compartment sink is often used for washing produce, pans, and utensils. A smaller separate sink is used for handwashing. Larger trucks might hold around 100 gallons of water, plus a tank for storing wastewater.



"We had this truck, you know. We had Twitter... But I didn't know if it was gonna last."

**-ROY**

# American Food Trucks Through the Ages

Roy broke ground with the Kogi truck, but the idea of mobile food has been around for centuries



**1691**

New Amsterdam, now known as New York City, enacts the first laws regulating vendors selling assorted foods from pushcarts.

**1866**

Texas cattleman Charles Goodnight builds the first “chuck wagon” to feed cowboys and wagon trains traversing the western frontier of America.

**1870s**

Horse-drawn wagons loaded with tamales (cornmeal dough pockets cooked in corn husks) become a common sight on the sidewalks of Los Angeles, where newly arrived laborers create a daily demand for street food.

**1936**

Oscar Mayer, the American meat company, rolls out the Wienermobile: a hot dog-shaped car that tours the Midwest promoting the savvy brand’s premier product.

**1950s**

Originally deployed as “mobile cafeterias” for U.S. Army bases, modern food trucks begin appearing at American construction sites and factories, where they earn the nickname roach coaches.





## 1974

Mexican American entrepreneur Raul Martinez converts an old ice cream truck into America's first taco truck, parking it outside an East Los Angeles bar. Soon he grows his business, King Taco, into a chain with more than twenty locations. (Martinez goes on to cofound El Taurino, a restaurant beloved by Roy that sits on the border of Koreatown.)

## 2008

The Kogi truck, which helps kick off the gourmet food truck craze, opens in Los Angeles and quickly attracts a massive following for its Korean barbecue tacos.

## 2010

*The Great Food Truck Race*, the first American TV competition focused on the mobile food industry, premieres; Zagat, widely viewed as the definitive American restaurant-rating resource, announces it will henceforth include food trucks in its guides.

## 2014

The National Food Truck Association is formed, creating the first advocacy group for American mobile vendors nationwide.

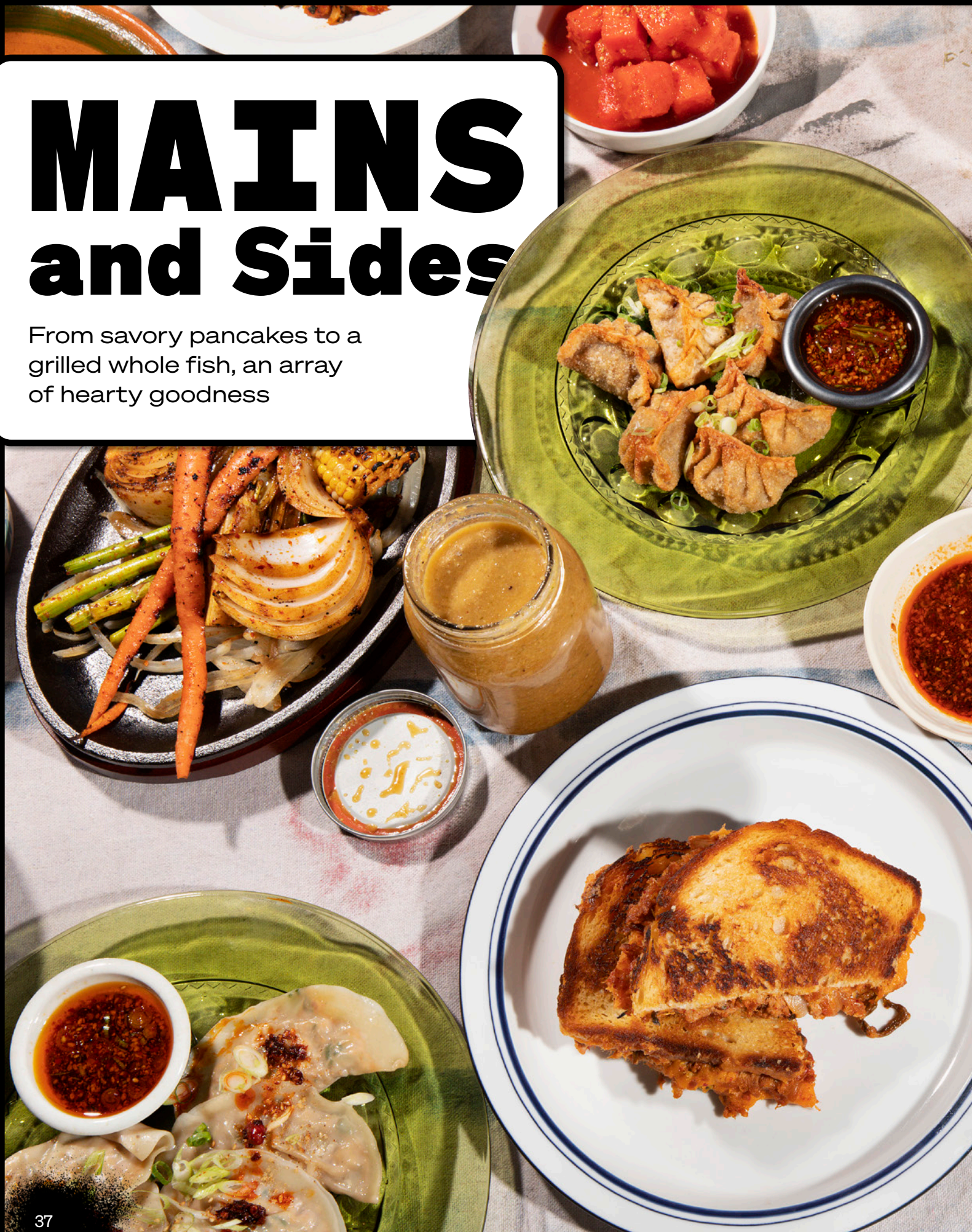
## 2022


According to recent market estimates, American food trucks now top \$1 billion per year in revenue, and the market is still growing.



# MAINS and Sides

From savory pancakes to a  
grilled whole fish, an array  
of hearty goodness





**T**he recipes in this section are eclectic in provenance and presentation—but if you’ve made it this far in Roy’s class, you probably expected that. The Savory Mung Bean Pancakes and 3 p.m. Dumplings work equally well as mains, ancillary dishes, or stand-alone snacks. The Large-Format Carnitas, or roasted pork shoulder, can be set on a bed of rice or rolled into an epic burrito *para llevar* (to go). And then there’s the Whole Grilled Fish With Ponzu Sauce: If you want to *really* impress your guests, try that one.

# Savory Mung Bean Pancakes

➔ Savory pancakes are a beloved and versatile part of Korean cuisine. Some are made with seafood; some, with scallions. Some use mung beans; some, just potatoes. You might go so far as to say there's no wrong way to make a pancake in Korea.

The version Roy likes to make is a “mutant” hybrid between gamjajeon, a potato pancake, and bindaetteok,

a mung bean pancake. The potato provides a subtle crunch, while the mung bean lends a more tender texture. Scallion Dipping Sauce, with its savory soy-and-chili kick, is the perfect complement to a hot pancake. Enjoy this combination as an anytime snack or appetizer, or add chopped meats or vegetables to the batter to create a flavor-packed one-pan meal.

## INGREDIENTS

Scallion Dipping Sauce (see page 18)

½ cup split yellow mung beans, soaked overnight in 1½ cups water (soaking water reserved)

½ cup thinly sliced chives

1 cup tempura flour mix or self-rising flour

1 tsp kosher salt or coarse sea salt, plus more to taste

½ white onion, roughly chopped

¼ cup water

1 large russet potato, peeled and submerged in cold water (to keep it crisp)

2 scallions, thinly sliced

Neutral oil (canola, grapeseed, vegetable, etc.), to coat the cooking surface

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

## METHOD

- Prepare the Scallion Dipping Sauce according to the instructions on page 18. Set the sauce aside.
- Add the soaked mung beans, soaking liquid, chives, tempura flour or self-rising flour, salt, onion, and water to a clean blender jar. Purée the ingredients on high until a smooth pancake batter forms, about 5 seconds.
- Finely grate the potato into a large mixing bowl, then add the scallions. Pour in the pancake batter, and stir until everything is combined.
- In a large skillet or on a nonstick griddle set over medium heat, drizzle in enough oil to evenly coat the cooking surface (a few large spoonfuls). When the oil is shimmering, add a small dollop of batter: This is your test pancake. Cook the test pancake until it's browned on both sides, then taste it. Season the batter with more salt and pepper as needed.
- Pour about ⅓ cup of batter into the hot pan or onto the hot griddle, fitting as many pancakes as possible. They should sizzle immediately. Cook the pancakes for a few minutes, or until tiny bubbles appear along the edges. Flip the pancakes with a spatula, and continue cooking for 1 or 2 minutes more until they are crisp and golden brown on both sides. Transfer the pancakes to a plate or tray lined with paper towels. Repeat the cooking process with the remaining batter, adjusting the heat if the pancakes are cooking too slowly or too quickly.
- Serve the pancakes with a side of Scallion Dipping Sauce, and eat them immediately.



# 3 p.m. Dumplings

➔ Why are these called 3 p.m. dumplings? Because if you walk into a Korean restaurant around that time, you'll often see the staff crowded around a table folding dumplings while catching up and "basically talking shit," says Roy.

You should approach making dumplings the same way: Gather some friends or family, and put them to work. Dumplings are best made in large batches, since you can freeze the surplus (they'll last several months). The two fillings listed here use the same base ingredients: cabbage, scallions, gin-

ger, and garlic. One dumpling contains pork, beef, and tofu, and is more traditional, while the vegetarian version is made with finely chopped mushrooms, chives, and white wine—a preparation loosely known as duxelles. Once your fillings are ready, dust a surface with flour and get ready to fold. Store-bought wrappers are a smart option; consider starting with a basic half-moon shape before working up to more complex techniques. Boiled or fried, eat them on their own or serve them as part of a large spread with soup or rice.

## INGREDIENTS

### For the meat filling

Scallion Dipping Sauce (optional, see page 18)

½ cup finely chopped napa cabbage or green cabbage

1 bunch scallions, thinly sliced

2 tbsp minced ginger (from about a 2-inch knob)

2 tbsp minced garlic

1 tsp gochugaru (Korean chili flakes, available at Asian markets or online)

1 tbsp crushed toasted sesame seeds

2 tbsp oyster sauce

2 tsp toasted sesame oil

1 tbsp soy sauce

1 tbsp rice vinegar (unseasoned)

1 egg

4 oz (¼ lb) ground pork

4 oz (¼ lb) ground beef

4 oz firm tofu, finely crumbled

Kosher salt or coarse sea salt, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Thinly sliced scallions, for garnish

Chili oil (optional), for serving

Continued on page 43

## METHOD

- For the meat dumplings: Prepare the Scallion Dipping Sauce (if using) according to the instructions on page 18. Set the sauce aside.
- In a medium mixing bowl, add the cabbage, scallions, ginger, garlic, gochugaru, sesame seeds, oyster sauce, sesame oil, soy sauce, vinegar, and egg, along with the pork, beef, and tofu. Season with salt and pepper. Combine all of the ingredients until they are evenly mixed.
- For the mushroom dumplings: Prepare the Scallion Dipping Sauce (if using) according to the instructions on page 18. Set the sauce aside.
- Add the mushrooms to a food processor, if you have one, and pulse until they're finely chopped. (If you've already read *Cooking Equipment: Don't Get These, Do Get Those* on page 13, you know that a food processor is a dispensable part of your kitchen arsenal—but it comes in handy here; a blender jar is too narrow to chop the mushrooms evenly.) You can also use a knife to finely chop the mushrooms.
- Add the oil to a medium skillet or sauté pan set over medium heat. When it's shimmering, add the shallot. Cook the shallot for less than 1 minute, stirring, until it becomes fragrant and translucent. Add the mushrooms to the pan, and cook everything for 2 to 3 minutes more, stirring, until most of the moisture has cooked out of the mushrooms and their edges are slightly browned.
- After 2 to 3 minutes, add the white wine and deglaze the pan, using a spatula to scrape up any browned bits. Season the shallot and mushrooms with salt and pepper. Once the wine has been absorbed by the mushrooms, add the chives, toss to combine, then remove the pan from the heat. Let the mixture cool to room temperature.



## INGREDIENTS

### For the mushroom (veggie duxelles) filling

Scallion Dipping Sauce (optional, see page 18)

8 oz button mushrooms

5 oz shiitake mushrooms

¼ cup neutral oil (canola, grapeseed, vegetable, etc.)

1 large shallot (about 3 oz), finely chopped

½ cup dry white wine

Kosher salt or coarse sea salt, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

2 tbsp thinly sliced chives

½ cup finely chopped napa cabbage or green cabbage

1 bunch scallions, thinly sliced, plus more for garnish

2 tbsp minced ginger (from about a 2-inch knob)

2 tbsp minced garlic

1 tsp gochugaru (Korean chili flakes)

1 tbsp crushed toasted sesame seeds

2 tbsp oyster sauce

2 tsp toasted sesame oil

1 tbsp soy sauce

1 tbsp rice vinegar (unseasoned)

1 egg

Chili oil (optional), for serving

### For wrapping the dumplings

1 cup all-purpose flour, for dusting

50 to 60 round dumpling wrappers, about 3 inches wide

1 beaten egg or a small dish of water

### For cooking the dumplings

2 to 3 inches neutral oil (canola, grapeseed, vegetable, etc.), for frying

Kosher salt or coarse sea salt, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

- In a medium mixing bowl, add the cabbage, scallions, ginger, garlic, gochugaru, sesame seeds, oyster sauce, sesame oil, soy sauce, vinegar, and egg. Season with salt and pepper. When the mushroom mixture has cooled, add it to the cabbage mixture, and combine all of the ingredients until they are evenly mixed.
- Wrap the dumplings. Dust a clean work surface with a few small handfuls of flour, then spread out the dumpling wrappers in a single layer. Spoon a heaping teaspoon (or about ½ tablespoon) of filling into the center of each wrapper, then use a finger to dab the edges of the wrapper with egg wash or water. You have three options for sealing the dumplings at this stage:
- **Half-Folding:** Close the dumplings by gently folding them in half like a

taco, then use your fingertips to press out any air pockets and pinch-seal the edges, working to keep the filling in the center.

- **Crimping:** Use your fingertips to pinch the top of the wrapper together. While holding the top seal in place with one hand, use the other to fold one side of the wrapper back over itself, forming a pleat. Repeat on the other side, and pinch-seal the remaining edges.
- **Beggar's Purse (Pinched Neck):** Use your fingertips to gather the edges of the wrapper at the top of the filling, and gently squeeze below the edge, forming a seal like a drawstring bag. Carefully twist the bottom of the dumpling to make sure the top is sealed.

*NOTE: Half-fold dumplings are generally best for boiling, while*





“This is a fun thing to do with friends, with your family. You can get creative with dumplings and put in whatever filling you want.”

**-Roy**

*crimped and beggar's purse dumplings are best for frying. But feel free to experiment; there's no firm rule either way.*

- If you're not cooking your dumplings immediately, cover them with a damp towel or plastic wrap to keep the wrappers from drying out. They'll last several months in the freezer.
  - If you're boiling the dumplings: Fill a large pot about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the way with water, and season the water with a generous pinch of salt. Bring the water to a boil, then reduce the heat until the water is at a simmer.
  - Carefully add the dumplings to the pot, working in batches of 10 or so, and cook, without stirring, until the dumplings rise to the surface and the skins become translucent and tighten around the filling, about 3 to 5 minutes. Remove the dumplings from the pot using a spider (also known as a skimmer) or slotted spoon, and drain them well.
  - Arrange the dumplings on a plate or in a bowl and, if you'd like, drizzle them with the Scallion Dip-
- ping Sauce and/or the chili oil, to taste. Top them with a handful of sliced scallions, and eat them immediately.
  - If you're frying the dumplings: Add 2 to 3 inches of oil to a large pot, making sure to leave a few inches of headroom from the rim so the oil doesn't splatter everywhere. Heat the oil over medium-high heat. Test the temperature by dipping the tip of a chopstick or wooden spoon into the oil; if there's a steady stream of sizzling bubbles, you are ready to fry.
  - Add the dumplings in batches of 4 or 5, making sure to not overcrowd the pot. Fry the dumplings for 2 to 3 minutes, turning them halfway through, until they're crispy and just golden brown. (They'll continue to darken slightly after you take them out of the oil.) Transfer the dumplings to a paper towel-lined plate or sheet pan, and repeat the frying process with the remaining dumplings. Arrange the dumplings on a plate or in a bowl, and, if you'd like, drizzle them to taste with the Scallion Dipping Sauce and/or the chili oil. Top them with a handful of sliced scallions, and eat them immediately.

How many dumplings can you eat? Roy can put away one hundred—"no problem, man."



SERVES 8 OR MORE

## Large-Format Carnitas With Pork-Fat Cilantro Rice

➔ The glorious smell of carnitas perfumes the streets of Los Angeles every weekend. Roy's take on this crowd-pleasing protein—a Mexican dish of juicy fried or roasted pork—isn't traditional, but it does turn the iconic dish into a low-maintenance affair.

Start with a whole pork shoulder, also called pork butt (it's not actually the butt), rubbed down with salt and pepper and garlic and sealed inside a large Dutch oven or other ovenproof dish covered with foil. The secret is to cook the pork at a low temperature for a long time; this

locks in the moisture and flavor and helps the meat stay exceptionally tender. (You should be able to cut the meat with a spoon by the end, Roy says.)

The rich and flavorful rendered pork fat doesn't go to waste, either. Roy adds a generous amount of this liquid gold to fresh-cooked rice, balanced with a bright and herbaceous blender sauce made from cilantro and tomatillos. It's a flavor combination that turns a basic pot of rice into a spectacular side dish.

## INGREDIENTS

### For the carnitas

Salsa Verde (see page 16)

1 boneless pork shoulder (about 5 lb)

3 tbsp kosher salt or coarse sea salt

1½ tbsp freshly ground black pepper

4 whole garlic cloves, peeled

¼ cup neutral oil (canola, grapeseed, vegetable, etc.)

3 red radishes, trimmed and quartered, for serving

4 lime wedges, for serving

### For the cilantro rice

3 cups short-grain white rice

Ice water (for blanching)

6 medium tomatillos (about 6 oz)

1 whole garlic clove, peeled

Juice of 3 limes (about ½ cup)

Kosher salt or coarse sea salt, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1 bunch cilantro (reserve a couple of sprigs for garnish)

1 bunch flat-leaf parsley (reserve a couple of sprigs for garnish)

½ cup water

1 cup rendered pork fat (reserved from the carnitas), plus more to taste

## METHOD

- Prepare the Salsa Verde according to the instructions on page 16. Set it aside.
- Preheat the oven to 225°F. Generously sprinkle the pork shoulder with salt and pepper on all sides, making sure to season all the nooks and crannies. Stuff the garlic cloves into the crevices of the shoulder, then drizzle it evenly with the oil. Transfer the seasoned shoulder to a Dutch oven or pot with a tight-fitting lid. (You can also use foil to seal the pot.) Cover the pot tightly, and place it in the oven. Cook the pork shoulder undisturbed for 5 to 6 hours, until the meat collapses easily under the weight of a spoon and a good amount of fat renders at the bottom of the pot.
- While the pork is roasting, make the rice. Add the uncooked rice to a pot or bowl (use the bowl in your rice cooker, if you have one), and rinse the grains thoroughly under cold water, agitating the rice with your fingers and pouring out the starchy water. Repeat the rinsing process 5 times or so, until the rinsing water begins to turn clear, then drain the water. Cook the rinsed rice in a rice cooker or pot according to the package instructions.
- While the rice is cooking, fill a medium bowl with ice water. Next, fill a medium pot or saucepan halfway with water, and bring the water to a boil over high heat. Once the water is boiling, add the tomatillos and the garlic clove, and cook until they begin to soften and change color, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer the tomatillos and garlic to the ice water to stop the cooking process.
- Add the cooled tomatillos and garlic, lime juice, a few big pinches of salt and pepper, most of the cilantro and parsley, and ½ cup of cold water to a clean blender jar. Blend until a smooth sauce forms, about 20 seconds, adding more water if the mixture seems too thick. Taste the sauce, and then season it with more salt and pepper as needed. Transfer the mixture to the refrigerator until the pork has finished cooking.
- When the carnitas are ready, remove them from the oven and let them cool for 20 minutes before uncovering the Dutch oven or pot. Transfer the cooked rice (you should have about 6 cups) to a large bowl, then add ½ cup of the chilled cilantro sauce plus 1 cup of the rendered fat from the carnitas pot. Stir to combine. Taste the rice, and season with salt and pepper as needed.
- To plate, spread a layer of rice on a large serving platter, and top it with large chunks of carnitas, breaking the meat apart with a fork if needed. Spoon the remaining cilantro sauce around the edges of the plate, and drizzle the Salsa Verde over that. Roughly chop the remaining cilantro and parsley sprigs, and sprinkle the greens over the dish. Garnish with the radishes and lime wedges. Eat immediately.

"I want you to waste nothing,  
and I especially don't want  
you to waste carnitas and  
cilantro-lime rice."

**-Roy**





MAKES 1 BURRITO

## Carnitas and Pork-Fat Cilantro Rice Burrito

➔ This recipe uses ingredients you should by now have on hand: leftover carnitas, cilantro rice, cheese, onions, and salsa. Everything you could want in a tortilla.

Whether this is your first burrito roll or your millionth, Roy has some tips for avoiding the dreaded burrito blowout. Always warm the tortillas on the griddle first; cold tortillas are brittle tortillas. Keep the edges (or flaps) of the tortilla tucked in as you roll, using your pinky fingers for support. And don't worry if it doesn't come out looking perfect. Wrapping your burrito in foil will cover a multitude of sins.

**BONUS**

### INGREDIENTS

Salsa Verde, to taste (optional, see page 16)

1 12-inch flour tortilla

2 heaping spoonfuls warm pork-fat cilantro rice

1 to 2 heaping spoonfuls warm carnitas

½ large white or yellow onion, diced

Shredded cheddar cheese, to taste

Leftover cilantro sauce, to taste (optional)

### METHOD

- Prepare the Salsa Verde (if using) according to the instructions on page 16. Set it aside.
- In a large skillet or on a griddle set over medium-low heat, warm the tortilla until it's soft and pliable and lightly browned on both sides. Transfer the tortilla to a cutting board or work surface, then spread two heaping spoonfuls of warm rice evenly in the center of the tortilla. Add a slightly smaller portion of warm carnitas, broken down into small chunks. Sprinkle the meat with a handful of chopped onions and shredded cheese. If you'd like, drizzle the burrito filling with a few spoonfuls of the Salsa Verde or the cilantro sauce, or both.
- Roll the burrito. Fold the sides of the tortilla inward so they cover the filling. Fold the edge of the tortilla nearest to you over the filling, and roll the whole thing forward tightly, using your pinkies to keep the sides of the tortilla tucked in as you roll. Continue rolling until the burrito is seam side down.
- Place the finished burrito diagonally in the corner of a sheet of foil, then roll the foil up over the burrito. When you're halfway across the sheet, fold the foil's sides over the ends of the burrito. Roll the rest of the way to create a cozy wrap. Slice the burrito in half and dig in, or refrigerate it for a day or two and unwrap it when you're hungry.



SERVES 2 TO 4

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## Whole Grilled Fish With Ponzu Sauce

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➔ There is arguably nothing more impressive to serve your friends than a whole fish cooked on an outdoor grill or in a stovetop grill pan. While this might seem intimidating, many supermarkets offer whole fish that are fully cleaned and ready to cook—just make sure the fish is fresh by checking its eyes (they should look clear) and giving it a whiff (it shouldn't smell too, well, fishy).

Stuffing the fish with herbs and lemon infuses it with flavor and helps keep the meat moist and tender. Any combination of fresh herbs can work, as well as any kind of citrus.

Make sure to oil the grill grates well before adding the fish; otherwise it might stick.

To go with the grilled fish, Roy serves his version of the Japanese citrus-soy sauce ponzu, accented with ginger and jalapeño. If you're eating the fish off the bone, you can use fresh herbs and lettuce to make wraps for dipping in the ponzu, or you can use a fork and spoon to remove the fillet from the fish (it's easier than you might think) and spoon the sauce over the top for a fancier restaurant-style presentation.

## INGREDIENTS

### For the grilled fish

Scallion Slaw (see page 23)

1 whole branzino, about 1½ to 2 lb, scaled, gutted, and cleaned (or another firm-flesh whitefish such as snapper, tilapia, or sea bass)

Kosher salt or coarse sea salt, enough for coating the fish well

Freshly ground black pepper, enough for coating the fish well

1 lemon, halved lengthwise

Handful of fresh herbs (basil, cilantro, thyme, chives, scallions, mint, oregano, dill, parsley, etc.), plus more for garnish

Neutral oil (canola, grapeseed, vegetable, etc.) or cooking spray for grilling

### For the ponzu

¼ cup soy sauce

¼ cup rice vinegar

Juice plus the zest of 1 lime

1 tbsp grated ginger

1 jalapeño, thinly sliced

¼ cup water

Kosher salt or coarse sea salt, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

## METHOD

- Prepare the Scallion Slaw according to the instructions on page 23. Set it aside.
- Pat the fish thoroughly with a paper towel until it's dry inside and out. Use a knife to make 3 long, 1-inch-deep slashes along the length of the fish, holding the knife at a 45-degree angle.
- Season the fish generously with salt and pepper all over, making sure to coat the outside and inside of the cavity and slashes. Thinly slice one half of the lemon into half-moons, and firmly stuff the moons into the fish's cavity, along with as many sprigs of herbs as you can comfortably pack inside (use several varieties for maximum flavor).
- Prepare an outdoor grill (gas or charcoal), or set a grill pan on the stove over medium-high heat.
- While the grill is heating, make the ponzu. In a small bowl, combine the soy sauce, vinegar, lime juice, lime zest, ginger, jalapeño, and water. Stir to combine, season with salt and pepper, and set the sauce aside.
- When the grill or grill pan is hot, brush or spray the grates with oil, and generously coat or spray the outside of the fish with oil. Make sure to coat the skin, head, and tail evenly.
- Place the fish on the grill or in the grill pan and cook it, undisturbed and uncovered, until the underside is nicely charred and the fish no longer clings to the cooking surface, about 6 to 8 minutes. Gently flip the fish over using two spatulas or spoons, and continue cooking it for 4 to 6 minutes more, or until the flesh near the gills is translucent and the underside is nicely charred.
- If you're serving the fish whole: While the fish is grilling, arrange the remaining herb sprigs on a large plate to make a bed. Cut the remaining lemon half into slices or wedges, and arrange them around the edge of the plate for squeezing.
- When the fish has finished grilling, transfer it directly to the plate and lay it on top of the herbs. Serve it with the ponzu and Scallion Slaw on the side. Eat immediately.
- If you're serving the fish as a deboned fillet: Remove the fish from the grill or grill pan, and place it on a sheet pan.
- Using a large serving spoon, gently separate the top of the fillet from the dorsal side (back) of the fish, starting at the collar and moving toward the tail. If the fish has been cooked properly, the flesh should give way easily. Use the side of the spoon to sever the end of the fillet from the tail, then continue gently working the spoon down toward the belly of the fish, separating the fillet from the spine. Using the spoon and a fork, carefully lift the fillet onto a plate, skin side up.
- To remove the other fillet, use the side of the spoon to separate the head and tail from the fillet, then carefully lift the tail up and remove the spine from the meat (it should come away easily). Use a spoon and fork to transfer the fillet to a plate, flipping it skin side up.
- Drizzle a few spoonfuls of ponzu over the fillets, and top them with a handful of Scallion Slaw. Eat immediately.



# Panchan

A slew of show-stealing small plates

**P**anchan (also spelled banchan) are the side dishes that come out at the beginning of a Korean meal—a spread of tasty bites meant to sharpen your appetite and enrich whatever else you’re eating. Potato salad, seaweed

salad, cucumbers, kimchi, and bean sprouts are just a few examples of this wonderfully expansive range.

For Roy, panchan is always personal. It’s a showcase for what’s in your fridge and a chance to flex your creativity.

Think of these dishes as little flavor poems.

The following recipes come from Roy’s Panchan Hall of Fame. You’ll also learn how to adapt them to your own tastes—or “put your swag on it,” as he says.

# Asian Pear and Watermelon Kimchis

→ You might not expect fruit and kimchi paste to be best pals, but somehow the juicy sweetness of ripe fruit and the salty funk of kimchi complement each other beautifully. Here, Roy is using pear and watermelon, which mimic the crunch you might get with a more traditional radish kimchi. But you can experiment with anything that catches your eye at the store or farmers' market, including oranges,

apples, peaches, plums, apricots, and cherries.

Since the texture of fruit is usually more delicate than that of vegetables, it's not necessary to let the fruit marinate before serving. Just toss it well in the kimchi paste, season it with salt and pepper, and garnish it with a big pinch of crushed sesame seeds for textural contrast.

## INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp All-Purpose Kimchi Paste (see page 26), plus more to taste  
2 large Asian pears or 1 small seedless watermelon (or a mix of both), peeled and cut into 1½-inch cubes  
Kosher salt or coarse sea salt, to taste  
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste  
Crushed toasted sesame seeds, for serving

## METHOD

- Prepare the All-Purpose Kimchi Paste according to the instructions on page 26. Set it aside.
- Add the pear and/or watermelon to a large mixing bowl. Toss it with the kimchi paste, tasting and adding

more as needed. Season the fruit with salt and pepper. Garnish it with a sprinkle of crushed toasted sesame seeds before serving. This kimchi is best eaten right away.



With their vibrant, glowing colors, these dishes look as good as they taste.

# Blanched Vegetables (Namul)

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→ Roy knows it might seem hard to get excited about boiled broccoli, but trust him on this one. Namul usually refers to a style of panchan that involves greens or other vegetables that are blanched—briefly submerged in boiling water—and then seasoned. The blanching step is key: By boiling the veggies (in this case, broccoli) for a few minutes and then dunking them in ice water, you'll ensure that they maintain their crisp texture and bright color.

Toss the blanched broccoli florets with salt and pepper, sesame, vinegar, and a pinch of chili flakes. Now you have a light and healthful side dish that delivers big flavor and pairs with everything.

Don't stop at broccoli: Use the same blanching technique to make traditional-style namul with bean sprouts or spinach, or play around with your favorite vegetables—anything from carrots to zucchini to potatoes.

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## INGREDIENTS

Ice water (for blanching)  
4 quarts water  
2 big pinches of kosher salt or coarse sea salt, plus more to taste  
1 lb broccoli florets (about 2 cups)  
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste  
1 tbsp toasted sesame oil  
1 tsp rice vinegar  
1 tbsp crushed toasted sesame seeds  
Pinch of gochugaru (Korean chili flakes, available at Asian markets or online)

## METHOD

- Fill a large bowl with ice and cold water. There should be enough room to fit the broccoli easily. Set the bowl aside.
- In a large pot set over high heat, bring 4 quarts of water to a boil, and season the water with 2 big pinches of salt. Add the broccoli, and cook it for about 2 minutes, just until it turns vibrant green and the water begins to boil again.
- Working quickly, remove the broccoli with a spider or slotted spoon, and place it in the ice water. After the broccoli has cooled for about 1 minute, remove it, drain it well, and transfer it to a mixing bowl. Season it generously with salt and pepper, then stir in the remaining ingredients. Taste and add more seasonings as needed. Serve the broccoli immediately, or keep it in the refrigerator until you're ready to eat.



#### **BEAN SPROUT OR SPINACH NAMUL**

Substitute the broccoli with 2 cups of bean sprouts or 4 cups of fresh spinach. Shock the vegetables in the ice bath for 1 minute at most; if you're opting for spinach, squeeze out the excess water after it's cooked and before it's seasoned.

**BONUS**

# Quick-Pickled Cucumbers

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➔ If you're serious about channeling your inner Kogi cook, these low-effort, high-reward pickles deserve a central spot in your kitchen—not just because they're delicious on their own or on a bowl of rice, but because they'll serve as a stealthy shortcut whenever you're creating innovative and inspired on-the-fly meals. Flip ahead to the section on Next-Day Rice Bowls (see page 57) and you'll start to get the idea.

There are a million ways to make pickles, but for a quick and easy option, Roy suggests this shortcut method: Toss sliced cucumbers in a hot pan with vinegar and spices, cook them for a few minutes to kick-start the pickling process, then transfer them to a jar and let them absorb all the flavors. By the time they cool off in the refrigerator, you'll have a zesty, crunchy pickle that can do triple duty as a snack, side dish, or topping.

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## INGREDIENTS

2 dried star anise pods (optional)  
1 tbsp sesame oil  
4 Persian cucumbers, sliced into  
½-inch-thick rounds  
1 tbsp crushed toasted sesame seeds  
2 tsp gochugaru (Korean chili flakes,  
available at Asian markets or online)  
2 tsp sugar  
1 tsp freshly ground black pepper  
2 tsp kosher salt  
2 tbsp rice vinegar  
¼ cup water

## METHOD

- In a sauté pan or frying pan set over medium heat, add the star anise (if using) and toast it for a few minutes, just until the fragrance is released.
- Add the sesame oil to the pan. Once it's shimmering, add the cucumbers. Stir in the crushed toasted sesame seeds, gochugaru, sugar, pepper, salt, rice vinegar, and water. Bring the mixture to a boil, and continue cooking it for 1 to 2 minutes more, until the cucumbers just start to soften and absorb the sauce.
- Remove the mixture from the heat, and transfer it to a jar or other heatproof container. Chill it in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes before serving; it will only get better the longer it sits. Keep it in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.





SERVES 1 TO 100

## TRY THESE!

### THE PINEAPPLE PIZZA BOWL

Spicy rice cakes (duk boki)  
Spam Teriyaki  
Canned lychees  
Canned pineapple  
Kogi Vinaigrette (see page 18)  
Sesame seeds  
Cotija cheese  
Chives  
Salt and pepper

### THE K-DRAMA BOWL\*

Rice  
Pork and beans  
Bacon  
BBQ Kalbi (see page 20)  
Grilled vegetables  
Scallion Dipping Sauce (see page 18)  
Salsa Verde (see page 16)  
Sesame seeds  
Furikake  
Chives

*\* K-dramas are dramatic television series produced in Korea. Roy suggests that you enjoy this bowl "in pajama pants and sweats and watching K-dramas."*

## Next-Day Rice Bowls

→ For many of us, using leftovers can feel like a chore. For Roy, it's part of the thrill of the kitchen.

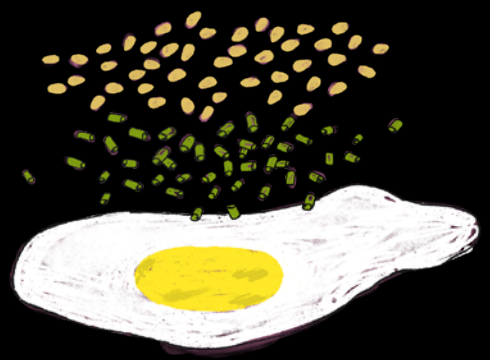
"Cooking is not always just about, like, you have to cook. Cooking is also a little bit of an assembly and a little bit of painting—mixing things together and having fun," he says. "It takes the fundamentals of cooking to think about how you want to place things."

The goal is to dig deep into your refrigerator and bring together different elements to create your own take on bibimbap—the Korean mixed rice bowl. There's no set recipe, but on these pages you'll find plenty of suggestions for each layer, plus two complete bowl concepts.

The first step is to identify which of your leftovers will taste better heated up. This usually includes starches, proteins, and vegetables, but there's no right or wrong answer. Proteins or vegetables can be reheated in a grill pan or skillet on low heat while you're assembling the rest of your bowl; leftover rice can be reheated in the microwave or on the stove.

Roy recommends using an oversize bowl. This will allow you more room to arrange your toppings without crowding them. Plus, it's just way more fun to dig into a giant bowl with a big spoon.

05



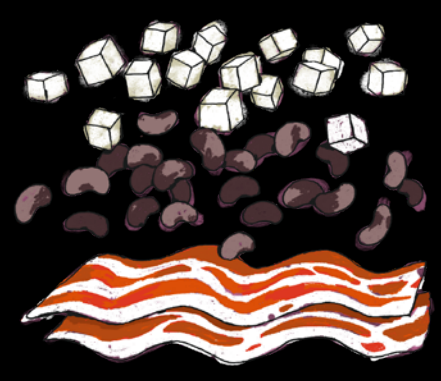
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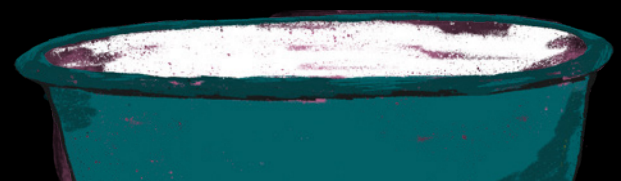
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02



01



# LEVEL UP!

## LEVEL 5: FINISHERS

Sprinkle on sesame seeds, furikake, chopped scallions or chives, chopped herbs, crumbled cotija cheese, fried garlic—these items add crunch, color, or extra flavor and give the rice bowl a professional finish. Don't forget to season it with salt and pepper. And it never hurts to slide a fried egg on top.

## LEVEL 4: SAUCES

Put those Mother Sauces (see page 15) to use. In addition to seasoning your rice bowl, you'll be adding lively and earthy colors. If you use more than one sauce (a good idea), try to pair contrasting flavors, like acidic plus creamy or salty plus sweet.

## LEVEL 3: VEGGIES

Use grilled and roasted vegetables to add contrasting textures and flavors. Pickles and kimchis can provide acidity and punch. Or you can prepare a quick relish in a separate bowl: Toss canned fruits with salty and savory dressings, sesame seeds, and chopped scallions. As with the protein, make sure to break down each addition into bite-size pieces.

## LEVEL 2: PROTEIN

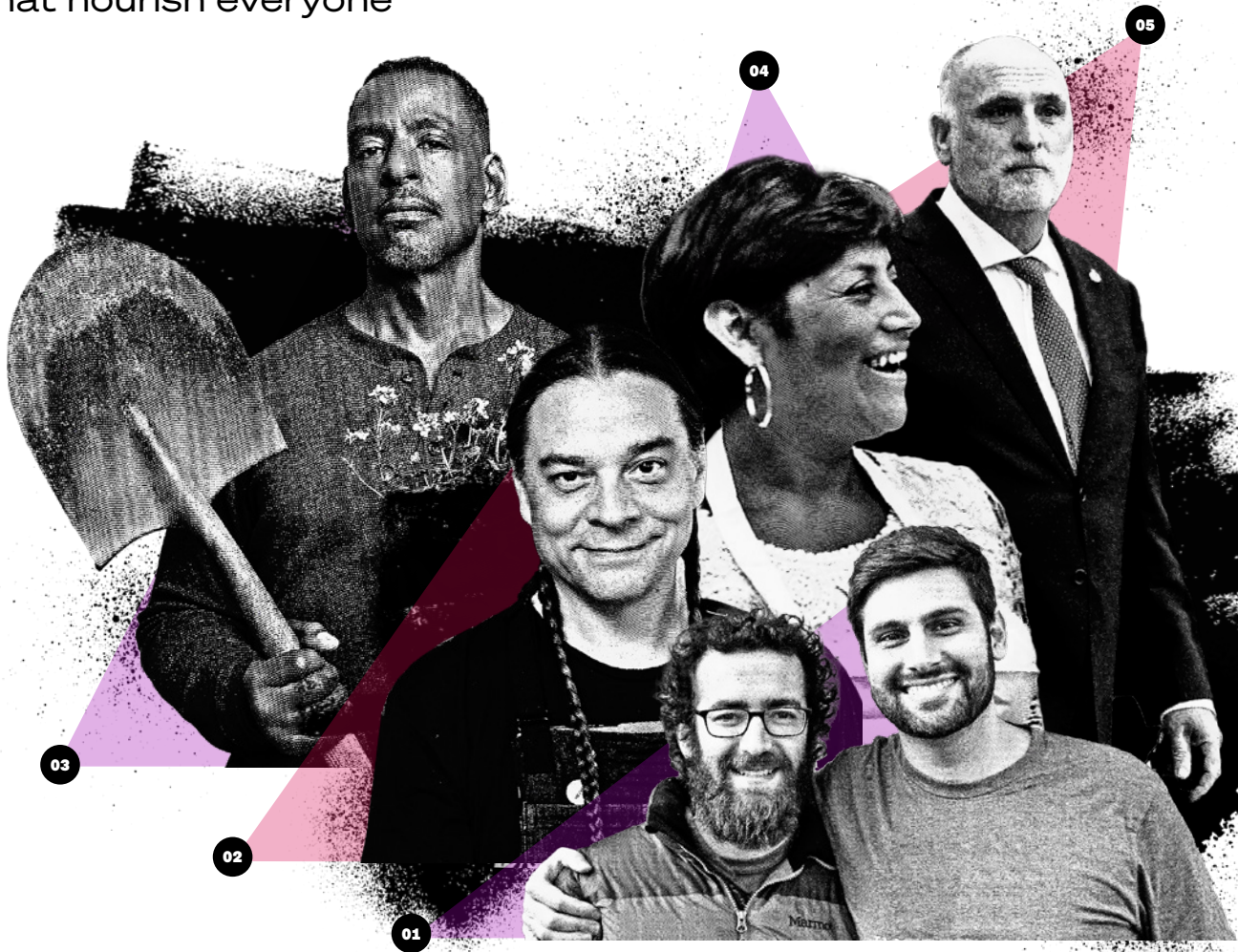
Spam Teriyaki. Grilled kalbi. Bacon. Baked beans. Grilled tofu. Carnitas. Hot dogs. Fried chicken. Dumplings. The possibilities are endless. Once your protein is warm, chop it into bite-size chunks as needed, and arrange the chunks evenly over the rice.

## LEVEL 1: STARCH

Start with an even base of warm cooked rice, which will provide a blank canvas for the flavors on top. You can also use cooked noodles or rice cakes (called duk boki in Korean), available at Asian markets or online.

# Faces of the Food Justice Movement

These chefs, entrepreneurs, and educators are pushing for food systems that nourish everyone



**R**oy may have scaled the heights of the fine-dining world, but he's never lost sight of his passion for what you might call democratic food. In 2016, Roy and Daniel Patterson, a chef from California's Bay Area, launched Locol, a groundbreaking fast-food chain with flagship locations in underserved parts of Los Angeles and Oakland. Locol offered healthy takes on fast-food staples like the hamburger for just a few bucks, and it staffed directly from the community. Although the restaurants

went dark in 2018 (Locol relaunched as a catering service), its spirit lives on with other chefs and activists who are fighting for food justice—the right of every community, regardless of its economic status, to grow, sell, and eat nutritious food; the right of every worker, regardless of immigration status, to receive fair wages and work under equitable conditions; and the right of future generations to inherit a stable climate. The six people featured here represent several facets of this wide-ranging fight.

## 01.

**BEN SIMON AND  
BEN CHESLER**

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The cofounders of Imperfect Foods sought to address a unique problem in the food industry: Twenty percent of all produce grown in the U.S. never reaches a plate. Their solution? A crowdfunded grocery-delivery startup, launched in 2015, that purchases “ugly” produce (as in fruits and vegetables with surface imperfections) from farms and sells it directly to consumers for a fraction of supermarket prices. So far, the company has prevented more than 145 million pounds of produce from going to waste.

## 02.

**SEAN SHERMAN**

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This cookbook author, educator, and Oglala Lakota Sioux chef is one of America’s most well-known promoters of Indigenous cuisine. Sherman founded the Sioux Chef, an Indigenous food education operation and catering company, as well as the nonprofit North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems. The latter seeks to alleviate the economic and health threats facing Native communities—one in four Native Americans experiences food insecurity, compared with one in nine Americans overall—by ensuring access to Indigenous foods and ingredients.

## 03.

**RON FINLEY**

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The self-described Gangster Gardener of South-Central Los Angeles began his journey into food activism in 2010, when he planted a lush edible garden on an empty city parkway outside his home. Since then, Ron (who also happens to be a MasterClass instructor) has emerged as a nationwide advocate for urban gardens, teaching underserved communities how to transform food deserts—areas where healthy food is either unavailable or overpriced—into food sanctuaries through his nonprofit, the Ron Finley Project.

## 04.

**CRISTINA  
MARTINEZ**

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The chef and owner behind South Philly Barbacoa, a beloved Mexican restaurant in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Martinez is a vocal defender of the industry’s undocumented immigrants, who make up an estimated 10 percent of all restaurant workers in the U.S. and as much as 40 percent in large cities, according to recent studies. A native of Capulhuac, Mexico, she launched her mobile barbacoa operation (barbacoa is a marinated lamb dish) after being fired from a previous kitchen job due to her undocumented status. Flash forward to 2016: South Philly Barbacoa was named one of the top ten best new restaurants in America by the influential American food magazine *Bon Appétit*.

## 05.

**JOSÉ ANDRES**

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The acclaimed Spanish American chef rose to prominence thanks to his modernist approach to fine dining at Jaleo in Washington, D.C., but his largest impact on the food world has come via World Central Kitchen, a nonprofit dedicated to providing free meals in the wake of natural disasters and humanitarian crises. Since 2010, the organization has served more than 50 million meals in more than 400 cities, from Del Rio, Texas, to Beirut, Lebanon.



# Food Justice Resources

These institutions and organizations are designed to tackle food insecurity from a number of angles

## 01. COMMUNITY GARDENS

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Providing gardening resources to communities with high poverty rates can help community members grow and take care of their own food supply at a much lower cost.

## 02. CO-OPS

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Community food co-ops are grocery stores owned and managed by the people who shop there. Like farmers' markets, food co-ops promote community engagement and sustainability, leading to long-term improvements in food quality and accessibility.

## 03. HEALTHY FOOD FINANCING INITIATIVES

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Food-assistance programs like America's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) help areas in need gain access to the right foods via prepaid debit cards.

## 04. MOBILE FOOD BANKS

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Vehicular pantries containing whole foods can aid those living in remote areas, supplying them with healthier options like whole-grain breads and fresh produce.

## 05. RATING SYSTEMS

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Food justice activists work to ensure that farmworkers and other agricultural laborers, who earn lower-than-average wages, are compensated fairly and have access to nutritious food. Nonprofit organizations like the Florida-based Agriculture Justice Project (AJP) rate food workers' conditions, wages, and contracts. This system lets consumers know how their food was made and whether the food was grown using fair-market practices.



9th Street  
Community  
Garden and Park in  
Manhattan's East  
Village, New York



“You should reach across  
the table. Make grunting  
sounds. Slurp your noodles.  
Wipe your sweat off your  
forehead. The whole idea of  
leaving one piece on the  
plate because everyone’s  
afraid to eat the last  
piece? Fuck that. Eat the  
last piece. And order  
another one.”

**—ROY**

# Credits

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Courtesy CNN

**ADDITIONAL IMAGES**

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MasterClass