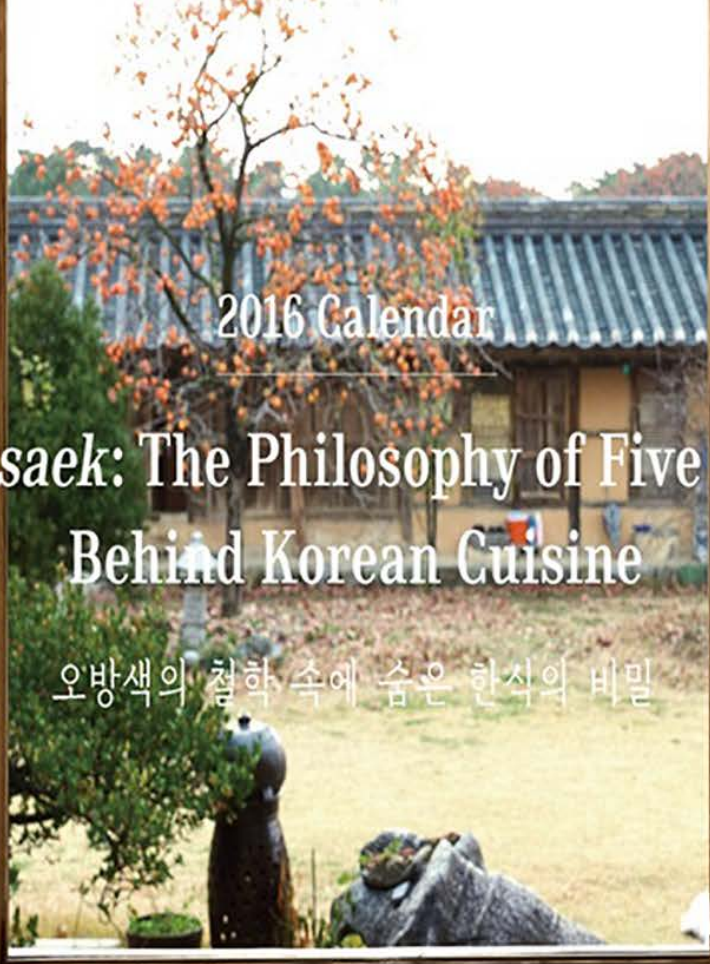


2016 Calendar

Obangsaek: The Philosophy of Five Colors
Behind Korean Cuisine

오방색의 철학 속에 숨은 한식의 비밀



Korean Culture and Information Service
Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism

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Hansik or Korean cuisine emphasizes harmony between humanity and nature, suggesting a way to make life sustainable in the future.

The Calendar of 2016 produced by the Korean Culture and Information Service was made using recycled paper in an effort to contribute to protecting the environment through minimal waste of resources.



Korean Culture and Information Service
Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism





| Baek(白) _ White |

White symbolizes metal, the west and autumn. It also represents purity and justice. This color is related to the function of the lungs; therefore, eating white radish, bellflower root and soybean sprouts is considered effective in preventing colds. Among other white ingredients eaten commonly in Korea are rice (the staple food), onion, garlic, potato and lotus root.



| Heuk(黑) _ Black |

Black is the symbol of water, wisdom, the north and winter. This color soothes one's mental state. Representative black ingredients, which protect the kidney and the bladder, are grains and crops such as black rice, black beans and black sesame as well as manna lichen, wood-ear mushroom, oak mushroom and seaweeds, including sea tangle.



| Cheong(靑) _ Blue/Green |

Green represents wood and the east. It also represents youth and the spring season. Koreans call youth, with its many hopes and dreams, a "green spring" and fresh fruit "green fruit." Green is sometimes considered another shade of blue, so both of the colors are expressed through the same word—*pu-reun* (green or blue). Green vegetables—including cucumber, zucchini, green onion, dropwort and wild sesame leaves—strengthen the liver and intestines.



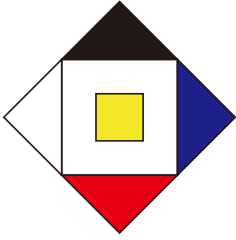
| Jeok(赤) _ Red |

Red signifies fire and the south. It can also represent summer, the expansion of energy and the safeguarding against evil. Koreans used to hang dried red pepper strings around the earthenware sauce jars in the courtyard to protect them from ill fortune. In the same vein, the folk practice of eating red bean porridge on *Dongji*, the winter solstice, for safety or good fortune still remains common among contemporary Koreans. In traditional Korean medicine, red is associated with the heart, and red ingredients, including red pepper, are effective in helping blood circulation.



| Hwang(黃) _ Yellow |

Yellow represents earth and the center among the five cardinal directions. In ancient Korea, yellow was used for the emperor's royal robes to symbolize nobility, authority and trustworthiness. Furthermore, in Korean traditional medicine, yellow ingredients are believed to affect the function of the stomach and the spleen and thus the appetite. These include pumpkin, sweet potato and other foods, including soybeans, the main ingredient of *doen-jang* (soybean paste) and *ganjang* (soy sauce).



Obangsaek (Five Cardinal Colors) and the Philosophy of Korean Food

***Hansik*, A Cuisine for the Future**

At Expo Milano 2015, the Korea Pavilion presented *Hansik*—the food culture and cuisine of Korea—as an alternative solution to the global food crisis, including the problems of starvation and obesity, and as an ideal diet for the future. With a legacy of fermentation and preservation, the nutritionally balanced cuisine of Korea is deeply rooted in Korean philosophy and culture—particularly the philosophy of Yin and Yang and the Five Elements, which tries to understand human beings and the human body in relation to nature and food. As a prevalent Eastern view of the universe, this is the belief that all creation is divided into two opposite but interacting poles—Yin (negative) and Yang (positive)—and the Five Elements of metal, wood, water, fire and earth, which form all cosmic matter and constantly relate to one another in positive or negative cycles, making it important to create a harmonious balance among them.

Food as Medicine – The Pursuit of Harmony with Nature

The philosophy of *Hansik* stems from *Yaksikdongwon*—the traditional belief that food can have the same healing power as Eastern herbal remedies, which is also based on the philosophy of Yin and Yang and the Five Elements. As with *Haneuihak*, or Korean traditional medical practices, each food ingredient and each person's physical constitution is characterized by either Yin or Yang, and health is related to the cycles of the Five Elements. Thus, Koreans traditionally believed that diseases could be prevented and cured by eating specific foods since physical problems were caused by disharmony between the seasons, one's physical constitution and the food one ingested. Therefore, a table set with a harmonious arrangement of ingredients was of top priority in the dietary life of ancient Koreans.

Another foundational concept of *Hansik* is that human beings are interrelated with the great circle of nature. In Korea, the year is divided into twenty-four subdivisions of the seasons, and eating crops and ingredients harvested according to those seasons was believed to maintain the balance of one's body and health; more so, it was considered as a way to participate in the ebb and flow of nature. Thus, as they are rich and harmonious in nutrients and contribute to good health, Korean seasonal dishes are still likened to good medicine.

***Obangsaek* (Five Cardinal Colors) – The Essence of Korean Cuisine**

The philosophy of Yin and Yang and the Five Elements is expressed well in the colors of Korean cuisine. Each of the five cardinal colors—white, black, green, red and yellow—is associated with different elements, cardinal directions and philosophical meanings. Cooking in balance with the five cardinal colors, or *Obangsaek*, is a practice of capturing the energy of the universe and absorbing it through the consumption of each meal.

The Korean Culture and Information Service presents this calendar for 2016 to introduce various Korean dishes that create harmony among *Obangsaek*. These are seasonal dishes, one for each month, which have been enjoyed since ancient times and are just as popular today. We hope that these food narratives and photos explaining the philosophical meaning of the ingredients and recipes will be helpful in understanding Korean food and culture and, even more so, the importance of harmony between nature and mankind.

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Obangsaek: The Philosophy of Five Colors Behind Korean Cuisine

떡국과 만둣국

Tteokguk (Sliced Rice Cake Soup) & *Mandu-guk* (Dumpling Soup)

Tteokguk is a special dish eaten on New Year's Day to restore the strength and spirit. White rice cake is the main ingredient of this beginning-of-the-year dish as white symbolizes purity, the root of all matter and a new start. It's made by simmering oval-shaped slices of rice cake in beef broth and topping it with stir-fried beef, thin slices of fried egg yolk and egg white, red pepper threads and chopped green onion. At times, rice cake made of black rice and mugwort is used to keep the balance of *Obangsaek*. Eating *tteokguk* is believed to grant good luck and, especially, a year of age—one year gained for each bowl eaten. *Mandu-guk* is also a popular dish around the New Year.



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Obangsaek: The Philosophy of Five Colors Behind Korean Cuisine

오곡밥과 구색나물

Ogok-bap (Five-grain Rice) with *Gusaek-namul* (Side Dishes of Nine Different Vegetables)

On the 15th day of the first lunar month, it is a time-honored Korean custom to eat *ogok-bap*—steamed sticky rice mixed with grains including foxtail millet, sorghum, red beans and black beans—in hopes of a fertile year and prosperous harvest. It was served along with *gusaek-namul*, nine side dishes of cooked vegetables often seasoned with sesame oil and sesame seeds, soy sauce and other ingredients. It was believed that eating a variety of foods with different natures and nutrients kept the internal organs in balance. Thus, a meal of five different kinds of grain and sun-dried vegetables was a good source of vitamins that were otherwise lacking in winter.



Ogok-bap (Five-grain Rice)

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Obangsaek: The Philosophy of Five Colors Behind Korean Cuisine

비빔밥

Bibimbap (Rice Mixed with Vegetables and Beef)

Bibimbap—a bowl of steamed rice topped with seasonal vegetables, beef, an egg and other savory ingredients—is one of the most popular dishes in Korea. It is a well-balanced meal with a harmonious blend of flavors, and the crisp, clear colors of the vegetables on the white rice delight the eyes and whet the appetite. Most anything can be added based on one's preference. It is eaten by mixing all the ingredients with a dollop of *gochujang* (hot and spicy red pepper paste) and a drop of sesame oil. The process of mixing it all together has great gastronomical, cultural significance as each bite has a different flavor depending on what ingredients make up each spoonful.



Bibimbap (Rice Mixed with Vegetables and Beef)

3

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Obangsaek: The Philosophy of Five Colors Behind Korean Cuisine

나박김치와 오이 물김치

***Nabak-kimchi* (Water Kimchi) & *Oi-mul-kimchi* (Cucumber Water Kimchi)**

Nabak-kimchi is made with vegetables of five different colors by chopping white radish and napa cabbage into flat squares and adding green and red pepper, green onion and dropwort. It's often served as a cooling side dish to rice cake or sweet potato, as it washes down the thickness and aids digestion. *Oi-mul-kimchi* can be made by using cucumber instead of white radish. These two kinds of kimchi are particularly delicious in the spring when people begin making fresh batches of kimchi; still, their light, crunchy texture and refreshing flavor are enjoyable in any season.



Nabak-kimchi (Water Kimchi)

4

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김밥

Gimbap (Seaweed Rice Roll)

Gimbap is steamed rice, meat and vegetables wrapped into a long roll with dried seaweed, which is often served in bite-size circles. It is one of the most beloved foods for a quick lunch or picnic, or for any occasion that requires a simple, scrumptious and healthy meal. It originated from the custom of eating only rice rolled in seaweed on the 15th day of the first lunar month, but, after a while, red carrots, yellow egg yolk and green spinach were added to make up the five colors and provide balanced nutrition. The ingredients, however, can be replaced with most anything else.



Gimbap (Seaweed Rice Roll)

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탕평채

Tangpyeong-chae (Mung Bean Jelly Salad)

This colorful mung bean jelly salad is mixed with stir-fried beef or mushroom, dropwort, seaweed and garnishes of fried egg yolk and white egg strips. Its name originates in *Tangpyeong-chaek*, or the Joseon Kingdom Policy of Impartiality, which was intended to balance human resource management; *tangpyeong-chaek* was first served at the tables where this policy was first discussed. Beautiful in color, rich in vitamins and protein, this dish was enjoyed around the festive day of *Dano*, which falls on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month.



Tangpyeong-chaе (Mung Bean Jelly Salad)

6

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삼계탕

Samgye-tang (Ginseng Chicken Soup)

Samgye-tang is a popular, healthy food made by stuffing a young chicken with sticky rice, ginseng, ginkgo nuts and dried jujube and boiling it into a soup. Koreans say it is especially good to eat this soup on the three extremely hot dog days of summer, which are called *Sambok*. Flavored by the juices of the colorful, unique ingredients and simmering in the broth, this whole chicken and the sticky rice porridge inside it create a deep and rich taste. Koreans eat this soup as a way of overcoming the oppressive heat, following the idea in Korean traditional medicine that heat beats heat.



Samgye-tang (Ginseng Chicken Soup)

7

July 2016

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불고기 쌈밥

Bulgogi Ssambap (Grilled Beef and Rice Wrapped in Leafy Greens)

This dish is eaten by wrapping *bulgogi* (charcoal-grilled beef seasoned with a sweet soy sauce marinade), steamed rice and other ingredients in broad-leaf vegetables such as leaf lettuce and sesame leaves and adding a dollop of *ssamjang* (seasoned soybean paste) to top it off. Koreans enjoy this sort of wrap, or *ssam*, by making layers with various kinds of leaves—a helpful way to consume a considerable amount of greens. A single wrap contains meat, grains and vegetables and thus provides balanced nutrition—a miraculous microcosm in a morsel.



Bulgogi Ssambap (Grilled Beef and Rice Wrapped in Leafy Greens)

8

August 2016

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해물 파전

Haemul-pajeon (Seafood & Green Onion Pancake)

This is a popular dish great for parties or gatherings, which pairs wonderfully with alcoholic drinks. It is made of a batter mixed with young green onion and various kinds of shellfish such as clam, shrimp and oyster, which is then pan-fried into large or small pancakes. Full of flavorful ingredients, it is most enjoyable when the outside is crispy and the inside is soft and juicy. Especially on a rainy autumn day, nothing beats a hot piece of *pajeon* with a refreshing glass of *makgeolli*, Korea's milky rice wine.



Haemul-pajeon (Seafood & Green Onion Pancake)

9

September 2016

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칭국장찌개와 된장찌개

***Cheongguk-jang-jjigae* (Rich Soybean Paste Stew) & *Doenjang-jjigae* (Soybean Paste Stew)**

Both *cheonggukjang-jjigae* and *doenjang-jjigae* are classic fermented stews made from boiled soybean paste and are considered as Korean soul food. *Cheongguk-jang-jjigae* is made by boiling soybean paste with beef or anchovy broth, kimchi, beef chunks, bean curd, vegetables and other ingredients. *Doenjang-jjigae*, though, can also be made with other seasonal vegetables, like wild chives, or seafood and thus is more varied. While *cheonggukjang-jjigae* has a strong and thick flavor, *doenjang-jjigae* has a milder, lighter and more popular taste.



Cheongguk-jang-jjigae (Rich Soybean Paste Stew)

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October 2016

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백 김치와 배추 김치

Baek-kimchi (White Kimchi) & *Baechu-kimchi* (Kimchi)

In late autumn, there's a seasonal event called *Gimjang*—the making of a large amount of kimchi, which is preserved all winter long. *Baechu-kimchi*—the most popular type of kimchi—is made by stuffing salted napa cabbages with a mixture of shredded white radish, red pepper powder, green onion, garlic and other seasonings. Though this red, spicy kind is the most commonly known kimchi, it actually originates from *baek-kimchi*, which does not have the spicy seasoning but only red pepper threads to balance the color. Its mild, refreshing taste can be enjoyed by anyone.



Baek-kimchi (White Kimchi)

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신선로

Sinseollo (Royal Hot Pot Stew)

Sinseollo, a royal court dish of ancient Korea, is prepared with great care and effort; a wide variety of assorted ingredients such as chicken, beef, fish, vegetables from the fields and mountains, mushrooms and nuts are exquisitely layered in a circular brass brazier and boiled with charcoal at the table. It is a perfect dish that wonderfully presents the color and philosophy of *Obangsaek*, delightful to the eyes and full of nutrients. Today, this gourmet dish is meant for people to gather around and share in harmony on special occasions.



Sinseollo (Royal Hot Pot Stew)

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