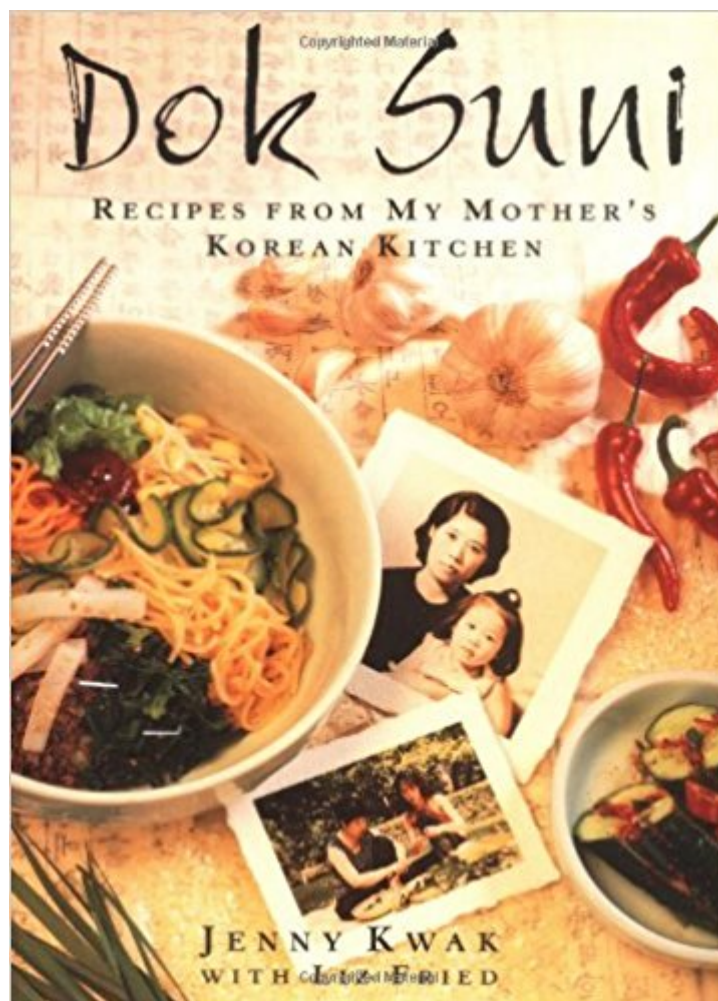


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Dok Suni



Synopsis

In *Dok Suni*, Jenny Kwak offers a loving and delicious introduction to the most exciting cuisine in the food world today-- Korean cooking. Whether you are one of the millions of Americans who are already devotees of the spicy, healthful, home-style world of Korean food or you're trying it for the first time, *Dok Suni* will delight with flavorful, authentic, easy-to-prepare specialties and a taste of the family traditions that come to life in every dish. Ranging from hearty and spicy soups (said to heal whatever ails you), barbecued beef favorites, and rice and noodle dishes to seafood and chicken specialties and the irresistible appetizers and side dishes that make every Korean meal complete, the recipes include: sautéed Korean vermicelli with vegetables * ginseng chicken in broth * spicy stewed crab * beef barbecue with sesame-salt dipping sauce * Korean dumplings * seafood pancake * stuffed zucchini * hearty kimchi soup * among many others. More than a recipe collection, *Dok Suni* (the name means "strong woman") opens the door to an entire cuisine. Sprinkled with handed-down fables, secrets for easy preparation, and loving salutes to an immigrant mom who worked hard to make it in America and shows her love through her out-of-this-world kitchen creations, the book is a truly passionate celebration of Korean cooking and eating.

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Customer Reviews

Dok Suni is an enchanting combination of personal narrative and appealing recipes in which Jenny Kwak shares stories and food from her mother's Korean kitchen. Since few cooks are familiar with Korean food, it is helpful that Kwak's descriptions of each dish tell what results to expect: Spinach and Clam Soup, you discover, "is good boiling hot (yet) there is a cool sensation about the flavor ...

from the clams." The 70 recipes in this volume include important classic Korean dishes. There are six versions of Kim Chi, the incendiary pickle made from cabbage or other vegetables, garlic, and mounds of red pepper. Bibimbop, a dish of sautéed chopped vegetables served over rice--often in a heated clay dish--is topped with a raw egg that cooks as you mix it in. Proving how much Koreans love beef, Kwok gives her mother's recipes for Bulgogi and Kalbi. Bulgogi is thinly sliced beef marinated in soy sauce, sesame oil, and rice wine, then grilled. The short ribs used for Kalbi are similarly marinated before they are barbecued. A caveat is necessary. Though Dok Suni is coauthored by a native English speaker, select recipes contain some questionable or incomplete directions. For the Pumpkin Porridge, the black beans are cooked for only five minutes, and no presoaking is called for, which seems an inadequate cooking time. Where brown rice is called for, there is no indication whether to use short or long grain. This being said, the book is still an inspirational introduction to Korean cooking that's also filled with Korean folklore and charming family narratives. --Dana Jacobi

The second book on Korean food in a matter of months is proof that interest in this cuisine is indeed growing. Kwak and her mother own a popular Korean restaurant in New York City (Dok Suni, its name, means "strong woman"). Kwak's book is a more personal one than Deborah Coultrip-Davis and Young Sook Ramsay's *Flavors of Korea* (LJ 9/15/98) and, unlike their book, is not vegetarian. However, Coultrip-Davis and Ramsay include far more recipes than Kwak's 75, with more information about the cuisine as well. Still, given the paucity of books on the subject, Dok Suni is recommended for most larger collections (despite its inflated price). Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

No cookbook is going to be 100% comprehensive, but should be able to get you started on your cooking adventure in that particular field. This book really hit the nail on the head. Jenny Kwak goes through ingredients, places to shop, and tools necessary to make good Korean food. The recipes cover all my favorite dishes and most of the major Korean dishes that anyone would ask for, although there are rarer dishes you'd have to search online for. Armed with the knowledge in this book, I think you'd be in better shape to tackle any Korean dish, even a rarer one you'd have to search elsewhere for. My ABSOLUTE favorite part of this book is Jenny Kwak's comments. She talks at length about how she feels smelling roasting sesame seeds, growing up in a household where cooking these meals had such a special meaning, and even gives background stories of each dish. Some dishes are made in the winter time to warm you up, some to revitalize your health,

some dishes people believe help you grow. If you listen to stories from Korean households her book really accurately keeps with Korean tradition on these meals. I HIGHLY recommend this book. The only criticism I think someone could come up with is it's not a huge volume on every single Korean dish you could think of, but I've personally have only had to look up 2 dishes elsewhere in the 12 years since I first picked up this book, and the lessons I learned from this book helped me make them anyway.

I am a vegetarian, so I can't answer to the criticism of the beef recipes, but I've had the duk bok gee, jap chae, kim chee soup, tofu side dish, and several others (probably spelling these incorrectly) - and they all turned out GREAT, better than my mother's cooking. There were no problems in the amount/proportions of the ingredients like previous reviewers indicated and I refer to this cookbook, pages spattered with food, often when I feel like eating Korean. This is the first Korean cookbook I own (I'm Korean), and I never felt the need to purchase another one.

"Dok Suni" is a wonderful compendium of Korean home cooking techniques. I especially enjoyed the marinating techniques using pureed kiwi to tenderize Bulgogi and Kalbi. For years, I have been searching for good recipes to duplicate these Korean dishes. Jenny Kwak's versions were sublime.

I am not Korean, but my dear friend is. She doesn't have any written recipes, so I bought this to try to learn some of the great things she made while we were roommates. Well, the seaweed soup recipe calls for so much seaweed that it's ludicrous and possibly physically impossible to get that much dried seaweed in that amount of water. Luckily I was able to call my friend for help. The second recipe I tried, for bulgogi, had nowhere near the amount of seasoning one would typically use... based on my friend & on many Korean restaurants I've been to. Did she just not pay attention when writing these recipes? The ingredients are correct, and the stories are nice, but the directions and quantities are way off.

Just great and super service !

lovely book - I bought it for my daughter's birthday. she loves Korean food and likes to cook. i like the personal touch.

This book has wonderful glossary under the title "moms shopping list" which explains all the

ingredients and how they are usually prepared. Also, this book has all the family style dishes that are not in many of the other Korean cook books. For someone who grew up eating Korean food and is now living in a place where it's not available at all, this is a life saver.

I am a Korean who has grown up eating Korean food for at least one meal of the day, for my entire life. In addition, I've eaten at countless Korean restaurants... So I can, at least, say that I know what Korean food 'should' taste like.

PROS: I've tried about 10 of Kwak's recipes so far, and they have all come out very authentic and tasty. She includes a good mix of very common dishes and more advanced dishes, with a good number of pan-cha recipes. Her ingredient lists aren't excessively long like some other cookbooks, but some of the ingredients might require a trip to the Korean store (beef dashida powder). Her memoir type style and her personal touches add a lot to the enjoyment of the food. Sometimes it sounds like she's reminiscing about the recipes with tears in her eyes. Some could consider these digressions unnecessary, but I found it adds 'soul' to the recipes. And the family pictures are a real nice touch.

CONS: There are pictures of food, but only in the context of telling her family story. They mostly show up in the glossy insert sections in the middle of the book. There are no individual pictures that accompany each recipe. For Koreans this might not be a problem, but if you're new to Korean food, you might need to see what the finished dish 'should' look like. Secondly, I just wish there were more recipes. Don't get me wrong there are a lot (about 77), but I wanted more soup and meat recipes and less rice porridge dishes and sweet, snack-type foods. Well I guess my second point isn't really a 'con' because all the 'major' recipes are here. Now that I trust her cooking, I just want more of it, that's all. Lastly I wish she included a table of contents that includes the name of each recipe in a single list. The table of contents breaks down by category, then you have to flip through the entire category to find the recipe that you're looking for. (My copy has about 20 post-it notes on it now). Although I think this may have been deliberate, because the book reads like a memoir, so there are personal stories associated with many of the recipes.

Jenny and her mom own Dok Suni, which is a Korean restaurant down on the lower east side of Manhattan. Naturally, the food is excellent and it has a good reputation for 'cool' or 'hip' Korean food. Although the decor is a bit...hmmm, eclectic? The recipe for the jalapeno fried chicken served at the restaurant (probably the most popular dish) is included in the book. For Dok Suni fans, this should justify the cost of the book itself.

Given the reasonable price of the book and the personal stories that add 'soul' to the recipes, I would highly recommend this book. I just wish there were more pictures. I can't wait for the follow up book.

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Dok Suni

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