



KAREN SOLOMON

ASIAN PICKLES
Korea

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Recipes for Sweet,
Sour, Salty, Cured, and
Fermented Kimchi
and Banchan

KAREN SOLOMON

Photography by Jennifer Martiné



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Introduction

The explosion of Korean food is no surprise for those enchanted with its fire, its assertive personality, and its surprising ability to give a bold boost to old standards (kimchi taco/hot dog/pancake/snack cake, anyone?). One premise must be declared before you and I can move forward: Korean pickles are the bomb.

My love story with kimchi has a familiar backdrop: the dingy, barbecue smoke-filled, no-frills dining rooms of the San Francisco Bay Area's best Korean eateries. Sure, I initially came in for the well-marinated, flame-grilled bulgogi; hot, steaming bowls of kimchi jigae; and the sizzling and addictive stir-it-yourself dolsot bibimbap. But it was the variety of banchan—the copious small side dishes, including kimchi, that complement a Korean meal—that kept me coming back. As a longtime lover of condiments and pickles, I dived headfirst into cabbage kimchi and daikon radish kimchi, and went cuckoo for bits of savory dried daikon, sesame spinach, sweet shredded radish and carrots, and various salted greens. My chopsticks would linger over each offering like fingers twirling above a box of chocolates—hmmm ... what should I taste next? To my joy, almost every one I tried was a flavor explosion.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves.

When it comes to Korean pickles, napa cabbage kimchi is the avatar of all things Korean and vegetable (for this, jump right ahead to the recipe for [Whole Leaf Kimchi](#)). Unlike the bread and butter pickle slice that may or may not be next to your sandwich, kimchi is unquestionably a part of a Korean meal—it's nonnegotiable. This single foodstuff has completely infiltrated Korean culture: there is kimjang, the annual communal kimchi-making ritual that happens each November all over the country; there is a kimchi museum in Seoul and a kimchi institute of culture; and one of the most requested wedding gifts of modern-day Koreans is a specialized kimchi refrigerator—for many, the fridge, with its precise temperature controls and wide storage capabilities, beats the ancient practice of burying earthenware crocks underground. Kimchi—its flavor, health-enhancing properties, and other virtues—is a frequent subject of conversation in Korea and, increasingly, beyond. For me, it just makes rice come alive, and eating some other foods without it—such as fried rice, noodles, or beef tacos—feels like some sort of undue punishment.

Like the term *pickle* itself, *kimchi* is nearly impossible to define succinctly. (That said, there was a famous legal battle against Japanese kimchi producers in which the U.S. Food and Agriculture Organization's Codex Alimentarius—the same folks who label regionally-specific food products like Champagne and Parmesan cheese—proclaimed that only Korean-made kimchi products were authentic.) There are countless varieties of kimchi. Often it is hot; sometimes not—some kimchi are cooling, with only a mild hint of garlic and ginger, while others pack a pungent wallop. Often it is all vegetable

but dried fish, anchovies, oysters, shrimp, [squid](#), and beef broth are frequently invited to the party. ~~It tends to be fermented, but some kimchi are meant to be eaten fresh.~~ Like art, kimchi may elude definition, but we kimchi addicts know it when we see it.

And kimchi styles are quite literally all over the (Korean) map. Generally, northern kimchi styles have less salt and seasoning and more water, and as the kimchi travels south, the pickles become hotter, thicker, and packed with more strong flavor. Much of what Americans have come to think of as kimchi seems to reflect the most potent and prevalent southern styles.

When and How to Serve Kimchi and Banchan

Meals in Korea could be modeled on my dreams: pickles and tasty, salty side dishes morning, noon, and night. Banchan are the array of tiny dishes traditionally served at the Korean table; they almost invariably include kimchi. A typical Korean meal consists of a rice bowl and a soup bowl for each person, and communal dishes such as noodles or stew. Dishes of banchan to be shared are placed in the center of the table, with diners serving themselves bites as they eat. Banchan are meant to refresh and cleanse the palate—hence the tendency toward big, bold flavors—and they also add a healthy dose of vegetables and meat to the meal.

The sheer variety of banchan can blow your mind. They make eating a Korean meal into a limitless Choose Your Own Adventure story—different every time. Quickly cooked seasoned vegetables—[namul](#)—bring a hit of sweetness or savoriness to the table; see [Spinach with Sesame](#) and [Marinated Bean Sprouts](#). Various nonfermented pickles ([jangajji](#)), such as [Mushrooms in Soy Sauce](#), also bring in the familiar Asian pickling flavors of vinegar and soy sauce. A proper Korean banchan array may also offer stir-fried, steamed, or boiled food. I have included here recipes that sample a range of banchan because, even when they are not pickled, fermented, or brined, banchan all play the role of pickles in Korean cuisine—small bites eaten alongside the main meal to recharge the taste buds.

One of the best things about banchan is their capacity to surprise. Offerings vary from eatery to eatery and from home to home. But they can vary also from day to day and from season to season. A diner is never sure how many there are going to be—traditionally, there will be three, five, seven, or nine, or, for very formal meals, twelve. The colors, the textures, the temperatures—in the hands of a masterful chef—all are meant to work together.

For the home cook, enjoying a variety of banchan means stocking the fridge with a few jars of long-lasting pickles and kimchi, and sometimes preparing a few fresh banchan to breathe new life into a simple meal. But don't sweat the numbers—any one of these recipes puts bite and soul into a humble plate of rice or noodles, meat or soup, tofu or vegetables. So pick one or two or go overboard with more—when you have banchan, you

have all of the components to make a simple meal more complex and satisfying.

Introducing banchan into your eating is a ticket to ride for both flavor and texture. It's a journey I gleefully embark upon every chance I get. Join me, won't you? Let's start with the basics.

Basics of Korean Pickling

Which flavors are the biggest, baddest, and boldest? You'll find them in a Korean pickle. Salt? Lots of it—don't even try to get low sodium here. Garlic? By the bulbful. Ginger? Blinding you with its bite. Green onions, fish sauce, soy sauce, sesame oil, and, of course, ground dried chile pepper till the cows come home. In varying amounts, these are the iconic flavors of kimchi and many banchan. But what else sets Korean pickles apart?

1. **Lacto-fermentation.** Korean pickles get their sparkle and tang because many of them are fermented before being eaten. Even if you have tried at sauerkraut and failed, know that kimchi is quite possibly the easiest fermentation to pull off. Salt, hot peppers, garlic, and ginger are all antimicrobial—they help protect the food from spoilage as it ferments, giving it the best chance to avoid mold and harmful bacteria. Jump-starting a pickle with some fish sauce, a compound that is already fermented, puts your fermentation more assuredly into high gear.

What happens during fermentation (apart from the work of magical elves)? Naturally occurring bacteria in the air convert the sugars in raw vegetables into lactic acid, acetic acid, and carbon dioxide. The rise in acidity lowers the pH of the whole pickle to levels that prevent spoilage for several months. There. If you want more science than that, you're going to have to go read Harold McGee.

2. **Cannot Be Canned.** Canning? No. Not for the pickle recipes of Korea. Fermented foods should never be canned, as they are living foods, and the high temperature just kills their flavor, texture, and health benefits. (One taste of grocery store canned sauerkraut and you'll see what I'm talking about. Blech!) For the pickles here that aren't fermented, they're just not acidic enough to can, nor do these recipes make large enough quantities to merit bringing a canning pot to a boil. And most of the banchan aren't even close to having the salt, sugar, and acidity necessary to make them safe cupboard foods. In fact, for many recipes in this book, canning jars aren't even the best vessels for storage, as they're too tall, and the precious liquid that keeps a pickle wet and fresh all falls to the bottom. As much as you may love to wave your canning tongs around the kitchen, you may shelve them for another day.

3. **Strong Smells and Flavors.** Do you enjoy lifting a wad of well-aged cheese

to your nostrils? Does its foot-like perfume make you salivate in anticipation or cringe in disgust? ~~Before getting into the Korean pickling business, particularly~~ before fermenting kimchi, you must come to terms with the aromas that these pickles are going to bring to your home—and we're not talking Island Apple Gooseberry Potpourri. To put it crassly, kimchi stinks. All that garlic, left sitting around for days ... it's absolutely delicious, but smelly the way that great cheese is. Additionally, there will be some fishy flavors and odors—not too much (there is only so much the Western palate can take)—but they will be present. Your senses may need to come to terms with the fact that you'll have squid (for example) sitting on your countertop for three days. If you really despise the odor, note that you can pack your pickles tightly and contain their fermenting aroma in the refrigerator, but it will take a lot longer before they're ready to eat—say two weeks or more as opposed to three days.

4. **Plenty of Salt.** Salt is absolutely critical in Korean pickles. Many pickling vegetables, particularly in kimchi, are first tossed with salt to pull out some of their moisture, but the salt also permeates the vegetables, opening their cell walls and giving them flavor. Don't be alarmed by the quantity of salt called for in these recipes—much of it will either be rinsed away or heavily diluted by the natural moisture of the vegetables. And furthermore, many Korean pickles (though certainly not all) are meant to be assertively salty, as salt not only preserves the pickles but adds flavor to a meal.

USING A DROP LID

Like other Asian pickles, kimchi and other banchan are sometimes covered with a weighted drop lid that sits directly on top of the food and does not touch the edges of the container. The drop lid helps the vegetables slowly and gently compress as they release their liquid and the lid lowers along with them, giving them a crunchier texture. (The resulting liquid is usually discarded, but some like to use it as a flavored, salty component in marinades.)

You can buy wooden drop lids (as well as pickling vessels) made especially for pickling, but this is not necessary. For a pickling bowl or bucket, try the ceramic insert of your slow cooker, or a clean large glass jar (even a scrubbed clean fish bowl with a wide mouth) will work. The drop lid just needs to fit inside the container—you could try a plate, the lid to a food storage container, a saucer for a flowerpot (clean and wrapped in plastic wrap), or a saucepan lid. Weights placed atop a drop lid allow you, the pickle maker, a lot of control over the rate of the pickle's compression. Again, special weights can be purchased, but why bother? Cans or bottles from your pantry, or even rocks, can be

used: weigh them on a kitchen scale to find the object or combination of objects that will give you the weight designated in the recipe.

Key Ingredients

Black Sesame Oil This is the same as toasted sesame oil; it is dark brown in color and is available at Japanese, Chinese, and Korean markets. Light-colored sesame oil is derived from raw seeds, resulting in a very different flavor. In this book, black sesame oil is used unheated and in small quantities, its rich, nutty flavor serving to finish a dish. A little goes a long way, and it has an extremely inviting aroma.

Dried Shrimp Salted dried shrimp come in a variety of sizes. Often served sautéed as part of a side dish or tossed into a stew, they also add a nice briny flavor to pickling seasoning. Dried shrimp come from all over Asia, but I prefer to look for brands whose only ingredients are shrimp and salt. Note that even though they're dried, these are sometimes found in the refrigerated section of Asian markets. If you wish, you can also salt and dry your own in an oven set to the lowest heat or in a food dehydrator.

Fish Sauce In Korea, fish sauce—the popular East Asian condiment made from fermenting seafood in salt—is known as aek jeot. Though we'll stick with the term *fish sauce*, it can be made from anchovies, shrimp, oysters, fish intestines—the sea's the limit! When seafood is salted, pressed, and left to ferment and extract its juices, the liquid that results is fish sauce. (And just for the record, I've made my own, and it's not nearly as nasty smelling as you may think.) Fish sauce adds nice saltiness to kimchi and other foods, as well as plenty of umami flavor. It's like salt in that you may not necessarily want to taste the ingredient in the finished dish, but you can certainly taste the difference if it's missing. Fish sauce is very popular in Southeast Asian cooking, so often it comes from Vietnam and Thailand. There are Korean brands of anchovy sauce, but they can be hard to find. Look for brands without chemicals and a very simple list of ingredients: just seafood, salt, and water.

Gochugaru See [Korean Chile Flakes](#).

Gochujang This spicy fermented paste is traditionally made from barley malt powder, soybean malt, a ton of red chile pepper, garlic, salt, and sugar. It slowly ferments, taking on an earthy flavor after many months, which is balanced by heat and a little sweetness. Think of this as a spicier, sweeter, more garlicky version of Japanese miso. In Korean cooking, it is used as a base for soups and stews, in stir-fries, as a condiment with cooked meat, and, you guessed it, in pickling. If you're buying gochujang, look for refrigerated tubs with quality ingredients—far too many have high fructose corn syrup and yucky chemicals. Also, find one with a heat ranking that suits you. The hot versions can be very hot indeed.

Koji Rice Miso, rice vinegar, soy sauce, and Chinese fermented black beans all have something in common. These workhorses of Asian cuisine all make use of the mold *Aspergillus oryzae*, better known as koji. Koji is the name of both the mold (also called “seed koji”) and of an ingredient, which is rice coated with the active mold spores. In this book, we’ll use koji to make [gochujang](#). Look for koji (the rice) in Asian markets, online, or in health food stores.

Korean Chile Flakes We tend to think of chile powder as something measured by the teaspoon, sold in tiny spice bottles. In Korean cuisine, chile pepper is often measured by the cupful; gochugaru (flakes of sun-dried red chile) is sold in giant sacks. Don’t confuse this with gochujangyong gochugaru (Korean chile powder), which is essentially the same stuff, but ground much finer. (You can use the finer powder, but since it’s denser, it will make your food that much hotter.) I always hate to send home cooks out seeking very specific ingredients unless it’s entirely necessary, but trust me there is no substitute. Cayenne and crushed dried red chile just aren’t the same. Gochugaru is sold in different levels of heat from mild to very hot. I used a midrange heat for the recipes in this book (though I much prefer it sizzling!). Korean markets have a wide selection of this vital ingredient, with a wide range of prices, and you often get what you pay for. Look for a nice red color, and a product from Korea (not China).

Soy Sauce Two types of Korean soy sauce exist—jin ganjang, which is an average medium-bodied soy sauce, and guk ganjang, which is lighter and often used to flavor soups. That said, Korean soy sauce is relatively difficult to find outside of Korea, so I tend to use the more prevalent, standard bottle of Kikkoman Japanese soy sauce for making pickles in its place. If you do find Korean soy sauce near you, go for the jin ganjang for all of your pickle-making needs.

Sea Salt Salt is absolutely critical in Korean pickling; it’s as important as the vegetables themselves. I advocate using sea salt because of its clean flavor, but also because of its ability to keep vegetables crunchy when they come into contact with an abundance of liquid over time. In my experience, other salts don’t accomplish this task as well as sea salt. Many of these recipes call for fine sea salt for two reasons: (1) sea salt yields a nice crunchy vegetable and a good flavor (and it’s quite traditional); and (2) fine sea salt (as opposed to flaky sea salt, which is actually the most popular salt in Korean pickling), will yield the same measurement in your kitchen as it does in mine. All flaky salts, though I love them dearly, will yield a different measure based on the brand, and each brand is a little bit different in crystal size and overall saltiness. For that reason, though sacks of flaky sea salt can be had cheaply in Korean markets, I’ve called for Maldon in the few recipes that I felt really needed flaky sea salt—it’s uniform and widely available, and its flavor is lovely. It’s an expensive choice, but the results you get in your kitchen will be the same as those I got in mine. Please note that in these recipes, kosher salt (of which I am usually a big fan) and table salt (shudder) are not one-to-one substitutes.

Sesame Seeds These minuscule white (hulled) and black (unhulled) seeds are used

extensively in Middle Eastern and African cooking as well as in East Asian cooking, and they are extremely versatile. For our purposes, sesame seeds add a nice bit of visual interest, crunch, and texture to a pickle bowl. White sesame and black sesame are somewhat interchangeable as a garnish, though in addition to their color difference, the white seeds tend to be softer and a bit sweeter (which is why they're the ones you'd want for sesame butter or sesame desserts like halvah). Both, however, benefit tremendously from being freshly toasted before serving; toast in a dry frying pan over medium-high heat for about 2 to 3 minutes, until fragrant. If you go much longer than that, some of them will dance right out of the pan!

Sweet Rice Flour Also known as glutinous rice flour, sweet rice flour is a very popular thickening agent; it's great for adding body to soups, stews, and sauces (and you can use it to make mochi at home! Yum!). For those of you who care, it's gluten free (the word *glutinous* can be confusing that way). It's simply the short-grained sticky rice that's a staple in many Asian cuisines, ground up into a velvety powder—so it's not the same thing as plain rice flour. The most popular brand is Mochiko, which is sold in a small white box with a blue star.

TWO TIPS FOR WORKING WITH GARLIC

Trust me, no vampires will bother you once you start bringing bulb upon bulb of garlic into your home to make many of these recipes. Since you and garlic are going to get so well acquainted, let me give you a few tips on getting the best results from this voracious beast.

Peeling garlic: Many cooks have already learned that the best way to get the tough husk off of a clove of garlic is to give it a quick whack with the side of a knife on a cutting board. But if you have a lot of garlic to peel, there's a faster method that I learned from a video by Saveur [www.saveur.com/article/Video/video-How-to-Peel-a-Head-of-Garlic-in-Less-Than-10-Seconds] and use in my kitchen regularly. Place the garlic cloves in the bottom of a very large metal mixing bowl. (Glass will work too, but be careful that it doesn't fly out of your hand! I've found that this technique does not work as well with soft plastic bowls, or with bowls that are too small.) Place another metal mixing bowl of equal size on top to form a dome, hold the two bowls together tightly, and then vigorously shake the garlic up and down in the bowls for 10 to 15 seconds. Magic! The skins just slough off.

Removing garlic smell from your hands: Some people love the lingering stink of the Italian rose on their hands, and that's fine. However, I'm more of a Chanel girl myself. To remove the heavy garlic smell from your skin, simply touch your hands to a piece of

metal—I usually just wrap my hands around the nozzle of my kitchen faucet. Works like a charm, and it's much more effective than several scrubbing with soap and water.

KIMCHI



Whole Leaf Kimchi (Baechu Kimchi)

This is the de facto national pickle of Korea, and a quintessential kimchi. For me, it is a purgatory to eat fried rice or any kind of stir-fry without it. A couple of notes here: it is easy to make a double batch of the red sauce and save half in the fridge for the next time you make kimchi; it will last for months. Kitchen shears, and not a knife and cutting board, are the best way to trim your pickled cabbage quarters down to a manageable size without letting that intoxicating liquor from the cabbage that gives it juice and flavor ooze out. And if the extra step of cooking and blending the sauce is too much work, I have a quick kimchi recipe in my book *Jam It, Pickle It, Cure It* (but this is a much richer kimchi experience). **Makes about 2 quarts**

TIME: 4 TO 6 DAYS

5 pounds napa cabbage heads

½ cup Maldon sea salt

1½ cups water

3 tablespoons sweet rice flour or all-purpose flour

¼ cup gochujang, [homemade](#) or store-bought

2 tablespoons sugar

¾ cup Korean chile flakes

9 to 12 garlic cloves, peeled

1 (2-inch) piece unpeeled fresh ginger

2 tablespoons fish sauce

Discard the tough outer leaves of the cabbage(s); we're going to quarter the cabbage lengthwise. Cut the cabbage in half lengthwise just through the base, then pull apart the upper portion of two halves with your hands. Cut the halves in half again at the base, pulling the quarters apart with your hands. You should have 4 to 8 long quarters of cabbage, depending on how many heads you started with.

Measure the salt into a small dish and, working with one section of cabbage at a time, lightly sprinkle salt between the leaves, beginning with the bottom, outermost leaves. Concentrate more salt on the stem end than on the green leaves. As you finish salting the cabbage chunks, line them up "head to toe," cut side up, in a 9 by 13-inch baking dish. Pack them snugly; if they don't all fit, you can, for now, let a couple of the quarters rest on top of the others. Cover the cabbage with a board or large [drop lid](#) and weight with 5 pounds. After 30 minutes, flip all the pieces over so they are cut side down, replace the board and the weight, and let them sit another 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the sauce. In a small saucepan over high heat, bring the water to boil. ~~Whisk in the flour and lower the heat to a simmer, stirring constantly for 1 to~~ minutes to smooth out and thicken the mixture. Turn off the heat completely, and while the slurry is still warm, add the gochujang, sugar, and chile flakes, whisking to combine.

In the work bowl of a food processor fitted with a metal blade, mince the garlic and the ginger until they are as finely chopped as your machine can get them—the vegetable will stop whirling around the bowl. Add the cooked flour mixture to the work bowl along with the fish sauce and process until fully smooth, about 1 minute.

Uncover the salted cabbage and hold each quarter up by its root end over the dish. Squeeze out excess moisture with your hands and lay the drained cabbage quarters on a plate. Pour out whatever liquid has puddled in the bottom of the dish—don't be concerned if there's not a ton of liquid.

Then, working with one cabbage section at a time, spoon about 1 to 1½ teaspoons of the sauce between each cabbage leaf, starting with the bottom outside leaves and working your way in toward the smaller, inside leaves. Don't worry if the sauce does not fully coat the leafy tops yet. Return the cabbage to the baking dish, packing the quarters in "head to toe" once again, this time stuffing all of the cabbage (now much more flexible) into the dish.

Once all of the inside leaves have been covered, scrape the remaining sauce over the top of the cabbage. Use your hands to work the sauce into the top of the leaves of the cabbage, and roll the cabbage around to fully coat it on all sides.

Place a layer of plastic wrap directly, but loosely, on top of the kimchi, leaving room for air to come in along the sides. Place the board back in place on top, and weight again with 5 pounds. Cover the whole assemblage loosely with a clean kitchen towel to keep out insects and debris but let air flow in. Let the cabbage rest, weighted, in a cool, dark place for 4 to 6 days, until it takes on a pleasantly fermented odor. Don't worry if you see liquid pooling in the bottom; this is part of the transformation.

Once it's fermented to your liking, your kimchi is ready to eat. You can cut up one cabbage section at a time to serve it in smaller pieces, or simply trim off and discard the root ends for longer pieces. Pack the kimchi tightly into an airtight container and refrigerate. It can be eaten raw for at least 6 weeks, and then used for cooking for at least another 6 weeks.

Cubed Radish Kimchi (Kkakdugi)

This is a classic hot and fermented pickle, though some people really prefer to eat fresh. The daikon remains really crispy and juicy no matter when you eat it. It's brilliant on rice or stir-fried with beef or tofu. And while I don't make this one as hot as it could be, it will certainly make its presence known on the table. You should feel free to pump up the chile flakes as you see fit. **Makes 3 cups**

TIME: 1 TO 3 DAYS

2 pounds daikon radish

1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons fine sea salt

2 tablespoons sugar

2 large garlic cloves, minced

1 (3/4-inch) piece unpeeled fresh ginger, minced

1/4 cup Korean chile flakes

2 tablespoons fish sauce

Peel the radish and chop into bite-sized cubes. In a large mixing bowl, toss the radish cubes with the salt and sugar. Let sit for 30 minutes, stirring once halfway through.

Drain the radish, discarding the liquid. Return the radish to the bowl and toss it with the garlic, ginger, chile flakes, and fish sauce, and pack it down firmly into the bowl.

Place a layer of plastic wrap directly, but loosely, on top of the radish, leaving room for air to come in along the sides. Cover the bowl loosely with a clean kitchen towel to keep out insects and debris but let air flow in. Let it sit in a cool, dark place for 1 to 3 days, stirring once each day, until it has a pleasingly fermented aroma.

To store, pack into a shallow square or rectangular container, ideally glass or ceramic, which won't retain odors. This pickle will keep in the refrigerator for at least 2 weeks.

Squid Kimchi (Ojingeo Jeot)

Yupsie, you read right: fermented squid. While many Korean pickles are based on vegetable matter, many also possess the taste of the sea—especially those from Korea's coastal regions. Fish sauce, oysters, pollack, shrimp, and a variety of dried seafood are common ingredients in kimchi, namul, and other banchan, but for the most part I have gone lightly on them here because I'm just not used to super strong fishy flavors. But you had to have at least one, and this is a winner as both a stand-alone banchan and an ingredient for cooking. I think you'll be surprised how pleasantly mild and meaty the fish becomes, but note that this pickle is both pretty fiery and pretty fishy. While it can be eaten straight up, I often use it as I would cured anchovies—to flavor stir-fried green beans, cauliflower, or noodles. **Makes 1½ cups**

TIME: 3 TO 5 DAYS

1½ pounds fresh, whole squid, or 11 ounces cleaned frozen squid

3 tablespoons fish sauce

2 tablespoons gochujang, [homemade](#) or store-bought

2 tablespoons Korean chile flakes

2 cloves garlic, minced very fine or mashed to a paste

1 jalapeño pepper, stemmed and sliced as thinly as possible, with seeds (if you like it hot) or without

1 teaspoon sugar

1 (¾-inch) piece unpeeled fresh ginger

If you're using fresh squid, know that you are punk rock. Take pride and pleasure in ripping off their heads and squeezing out their guts. Rinse to make sure they are completely clean, and pat dry. If you're using frozen squid, you're still a good person. Let them thaw completely, drain of any excess moisture, and pat dry.

Chop the squid bodies (save the heads for another use) into ½-inch pieces; rings if your squid are small, squares if they're not. Transfer to a small mixing bowl and pour over the fish sauce, stirring to coat. Let the squid sit for 2 hours.

Drain the squid, discarding the fish sauce. Rinse under running water and drain again, patting it dry with paper towels. Put it back in the bowl and add the gochujang, chile flakes, garlic, jalapeño, and sugar. Thinly slice the ginger and press it through a garlic press or mince it very finely, and add it to the bowl.

Mix all the ingredients so the squid is well coated. Spoon the squid into a glass or ceramic jar and just place the lid on top, without screwing it shut. Allow to ferment in

cool, dark place for 3 to 5 days. The finished pickle will have a pleasantly fermented aroma.

Once fermented, the pickle is ready to eat. Kept refrigerated in an airtight container, they will keep for at least 2 months.

Rolled Mustard Green Kimchi (Kat Kimchi)

Fermented mustard greens pop up more in China and Southeast Asia (and in the American South, for that matter) than they do in Korea. This is a riff on bossam kimchi, a stuffed kimchi that traditionally uses a cabbage wrapper. Mustard greens (picture [here](#)) offer a little more variety to your pickle pantry, and they are a little sturdier for rolling. This is a very pretty pickle, all tied up in a green onion bow, and it is as delicious fresh as it is fermented. That said, I also include a slacker option that just involves chopping the greens and mixing them with the flavoring paste. **Makes 3 cups**

TIME: ABOUT 2 HOURS

1½ pounds curly mustard greens

2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons fine sea salt

½ cup Korean chile flakes

1 (2½-inch) piece peeled fresh ginger, coarsely chopped

3 tablespoons water

9 cloves garlic

2 tablespoons fish sauce

1 bunch green onions

Using a paring knife on the backside of each mustard green leaf, shave down the length of the rib to the stem, working carefully not to cut into the leaf itself; this helps to flatten the leaf and make it pliable. Then trim off the stems at the base of the leaves so that there's nothing sticking out. You want to end up with whole mustard leaves, minus the tail of the stem, that are pliable enough to bend.

Wash the greens well, shake to dry, but don't dry them completely, and stack them in a shallow dish. Sprinkle the salt evenly between the leaves, particularly around the tougher stem area. Lay a flat board or [drop lid](#) over the leaves and weight with a 1-pound weight for 1 hour.

Meanwhile, in the work bowl of a food processor, combine the chile flakes, ginger, water, garlic, and fish sauce and process until the ingredients form a thick paste. You will likely need to scrape down the sides of the work bowl at least once.

If you plan to roll your pickles, count your leaves. (If you'd rather not roll, see the notes below.) Pull the same number of fronds off the green onions (plus a few more for good measure). Bring a small saucepan of water to a boil. Once it's boiling, blanch the fronds for 30 seconds, then run them under cold running water until completely cool. Let them drain, then lay them out to dry on a clean kitchen towel.

Remove the weight and board from the greens; they should be soft and pliant. Rinse the greens, then squeeze them hard to get out all the excess liquid, being careful not to tear them. Lay them flat between two kitchen towels and pat them dry.

Now it's time to roll 'em up. Lay down a single leaf with its bottom closest to you. Place a rounded teaspoon of the paste in the center of the leaf about a third of the way up. Fold the left third of the leaf over the filling and then the right. Then, rolling up from the bottom, roll the leaf around the filling into a small bundle—like stuffed cabbage.

Secure each little bundle with one of the green onion fronds; I promise this sounds more fussy than it is. Take one blanched onion frond and lay it down. Place the stuffed leaf roll in the center. Using the green onion as a ribbon, tie a flat double-knot by first tying the left over right, then the right over left, to make a knot. Follow suit with the remainder of the mustard green rolls.

Nestle the rolls into a shallow dish and place a layer of plastic wrap directly, but loosely, on top of the rolls, leaving room for air to come in along the sides. Cover with a board or [drop lid](#) and place a 1-pound weight on top. Cover the whole assemblage loosely with a clean kitchen towel to keep out insects and debris but let air flow in. Let the pickle sit in a cool, dark place for 2 to 4 days, until it emits a pleasantly fermented odor.

Pack the pickle into a glass or ceramic container (plastic will retain its strong aroma) with a tight lid. Refrigerate until cold. Your pickle is ready to eat, and it will keep in the refrigerator for at least a month.

Note

If the rolling business isn't for you, simply chop the wilted greens with the green parts from 4 whole green onions and mix them with the red pepper paste before proceeding.

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