

Thanksgiving Kimchi Bokkeumbap

BY SUNGCHUL SHIM | @SUNG.SHIM

Kimchi fried rice has always been one of the foods I enjoy most. Thanksgiving is also one of the holidays when I cook generously, which inevitably leaves the refrigerator filled with cooked rice, vegetables, and small portions of different meats. This recipe brings those two things together. Instead of letting those ingredients go to waste, I sauté everything in one large pan and bring it back to life with kimchi, gochujang, gochugaru, soy sauce, and sesame oil. As a Korean chef cooking in America, I see this dish as a natural meeting point between Korean home cooking and the American Thanksgiving tradition of transforming leftovers into something new. The recipe is purposefully flexible... turkey, chicken, beef, pork, or whatever vegetables remain from the holiday meal can all be used! Finished with sunny-side-up eggs and fresh chives, it becomes a spicy, comforting family style side dish meant to be shared at the table. It is practical, generous, and representative of the way I cook – respecting every ingredient while connecting Korean flavors with an American holiday tradition.

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SERVES: 12-16 side portions

INGREDIENTS

2 quarts (8 cups) cold cooked rice; day-old rice of any variety works well
Up to 1 cup neutral cooking oil, divided, as needed
3 tbsp gochugaru (Korean red pepper flakes), or to taste
10 garlic cloves, finely minced
1 bunch scallions, green and white parts thinly sliced
2 leeks, white parts only, thinly sliced and thoroughly washed
2 medium onions, diced
2 cups ground meat or finely chopped leftover cooked meat (turkey, chicken, beef, pork)
3 cups slightly fermented kimchi, roughly chopped
1 cup gochujang, adjusted to taste
3-5 tbsp soy sauce, adjusted to taste
1-2 tbsp oyster sauce, optional
Sesame oil, to taste
3 sunny-side-up fried eggs, for serving
Finely chopped chives, for garnish

Special Equipment

One very large skillet, wok, or rondeau

INSTRUCTIONS

01 Break up any clumps in the cold rice before cooking. Have all the vegetables, kimchi, and optional meat prepared before heating the pan.

02 Heat a large skillet, wok, or rondeau over medium heat. Add enough neutral oil to generously coat the bottom of the pan. Add the gochugaru and minced garlic and cook briefly, stirring constantly, until fragrant. Be careful not to burn the garlic or pepper flakes.

03 Add the scallions, leeks, and onions. Sauté until the vegetables soften and become aromatic.

04 Add your choice of meat. If using raw ground meat, cook it completely, breaking it into small pieces. There is no need to develop a deep brown color. If using leftover cooked meat, sauté only until it is heated through.

05 Add the chopped kimchi and cook for a few minutes, allowing it to soften slightly and combine with the meat and vegetables.

06 Stir in the gochujang and 3 tablespoons of soy sauce. Add the optional oyster sauce, if desired. Mix well so the vegetables and meat are evenly coated.

07 Add the cold rice and stir-fry until every grain is coated with the kimchi and gochujang mixture. Add more oil as needed to keep the rice moving freely in the pan. Taste and add the remaining soy sauce if additional seasoning is needed. If the pan becomes overcrowded, divide the mixture and finish it in two batches.

08 Remove from the heat and finish with sesame oil to taste. Transfer the fried rice to a large family style serving platter. Top with sunny-side-up fried eggs and finish with finely chopped chives.