

International Palette:
A Multi-Sensory Experience as a Food Critique

Turntable LP Bar & Karaoke is a Korean restaurant located in midtown New York City, or also known as KoreaTown, starting at West 31st street and ending at West 33rd. Turntable is known for their *amazing* Korean chicken, which come in different flavors. It's a wonderful setting to go with a group of people to have a good time and listen to good music. As one walks inside, one already smells the sweet chicken smell. The lights are dimmed low so give off a chill vibe. They also have rooms for karaoke sessions, which need to be reserved beforehand.

A . How were you addressed when you entered the restaurant? Did you need to make reservations? How long was the wait before you were seated? How was this experience different due to COVID? Did you have to show your vaccination card?

When one first enters *Turntable LP Bar & Karaoke* one will always be greeted with enthusiasm! The manager is always standing in the entrance in front. He asks how many people are to be seated, and he guides one to their seats. When one goes to Turntable, they should call beforehand and make a reservation, just in case of an event taking place. But they also accept walk-ins. There usually is never a wait since they have enough space available for anyone, except for karaoke night, or any other event they are hosting. The experience isn't that much different due to COVID, the only thing is they require one to take one's temperature and show their vaccination card.

B. What are the cultural differences you notice? (Use class notes and cite in APA 8th ed) Using your five senses of taste, touch, sight, smell, & sound describe some of the cultural differences that you are not accustomed to in comparison to All-American restaurants or restaurant chains. For example, one can describe but not limited to the sights in the restaurant décor, odors from unusual foods, and sounds from music. One should use all five-senses in this cultural experience. Be sure to write in third person...one will or would see, smell, etc....

One would notice the cultural difference as they walk in. Or also, the *Cultural Geography* which is how people live their lives in different regions of the world or country (Sternquist, 2018). When one walks in, they'll smell wonderful Korean food (like Korean fried chicken, *kimchi*, *bulgogi*, *rice cakes*, and a lot of different spices). Additionally, it is *ALWAYS* cold there so one will feel that little breeze as they're guided to their table. This restaurant very much plays a lot of old throwback music like Michael Jackson, The Beatles, AC/DC, etc. As mentioned before, the lights are very dimmed which kind of brings an effect on those that are drinking. They always have a sports channel on the television, which is near the tables that have single sofas.

C. Look at the menu. What are the types of foods they offer? What are some unusual items? Do they describe the ingredients in the food? List various food items from the menu. What menu items did you order? Is there more than one language used to describe the foods on the menu? How does this relate to cultural geography? Be sure to use and cite lecture notes appropriately in APA 8th ed.

Turntable serves different types of foods. Starting off with their *appetizers*. They serve corn cheese, twisters, calamari, cheese sticks, hush puppies, fried dumplings, *amazing* house made fries, and edamame. Additionally, they have special entrées like *kimchi fried rice*, *chicken katsu fried rice*, *bulgogi fried rice*, *seafood fried rice*, and *vegetable fried rice*. Can't forget about their chicken! They offer chicken in wings, drums, and boneless chicken. One can get these in three different flavors which are *soy garlic* (their best flavor), *hot and spicy*, or *half and half*. When I go to Turntable, I always end up getting hush puppies, cheese sticks, edamame, and their homemade fries. *Culture* classifies the world around us. It also signifies gender, religion, ethnicity, region, and social class (Sternquist, 2018).

D. Is a traditional salad offered? If not, describe what is offered. What types of breads are offered (flat, pita, tortilla chips)? What type of desserts (cheesecake, fortune cookie, coffee)? What are they like? Describe the ingredients as well.

Unfortunately, they do not offer a traditional salad. Instead, they have traditional *Kimchi fried rice*. *Kimchi* is cabbage fermented with Korean flavors like garlic, ginger, and Korean chilies. It has a spicy flavor to it. The *Kimchi Fried Rice* is a pan-fried rice, with *Kimchi* (of course), mushroom, assorted vegetables, pork belly, and a sunny-side-up egg. Honestly wished they sold desserts, but the closest thing to dessert would be the hush pupped! Hush puppies is a round dough made with cornmeal flour, egg, scallion, and buttermilk. They also serve it with some spicy mustard, which is the best! Another one of their traditional foods, or appetizers are the housemade fries. When one goes to Turntable, they would see that everyone has a plate of fries on their table, which they share with their groups. These housemade fries are fresh hand-cut fries with a splash of truffle oil and parmesan cheese served with spicy mayo and ketchup. Turntables' spices are so strong that the taste of it stays in one's mouth for a while, even if one brushes their teeth very well. That is what I like about their food. They make sure to season what they make very well, so that the consumers have a good experience and would want to go back.

E. What types of beverages are offered? Do they have an alcohol menu? What is not typically offered in an American chain restaurant? Be sure to address what is different in the menu.

Turntable offers different types of beverages. They offer soft drinks, draft beer, bottled beer, Soju, Cocktails, coffee & tea, and wine & champagne. Their most liked item off of the alcohol menu is definitely Soju, a clear colorless distilled alcoholic beverage that comes in different flavors, and their cocktails! Soju's different flavors include regular, apple, peach, strawberry, citron (the best), and yogurt! Usually, Soju is *not* offered in an American chain

restaurant. As for the teas, they offer *Genmaicha*, and *Yuja*, which are traditional Korean teas. They also have *karaoke packages* that range up to 6 guests, 10 guests, and 20 guests.

F. How is the food reflective of the cultural geography and the economic geography (Use class lecture notes)? (i.e., spices are abundant in India which is rich in spices & fish (sushi) is popular in Japan & it is part of the G8). Describe approximately where in the world (continent & location) and from country this culture's food is best known. Be sure to relate the geography with the country's food. Include a map. Be very detailed.

Soju, Korean fried chicken, and Edamame (grilled young soybeans) are very well known mostly in South Korea (of course) and also here in the United States. These foods and beverages are to munch on while one hangs with a group of people. Basically, how our "hang out" foods are chips & dips or pizza. Mostly, Korea's food is based on seafood, meats, rice, and vegetables. They mostly use fermented condiments *like gangjang, doenjang, and gochujang*, and vinegars, along with unfermented condiments such as garlic, onion, scallion, ginger, black pepper, etc.

G. Describe the dress? (Dress is inclusive of all five senses – you smell perfume, hear jewelry, see make-up, etc....) What are the employees, such as hostesses or wait staff wearing? Please use Eicher-Roacher-Higgins (1992) article to define dress and answer appropriately. Be sure to use all five senses in each description.

The dress at Turntable is casual. The manager of the restaurant always wears a black suit, while the wait staff *wear all black with a black waist apron wrapped around their waist and their masks on their face*. The workers at Turntable are Korean with amazing *long and black beautiful hair*. One *smells the perfume and cologne* of the wait staff along with the smell of the food as they pass by when they take other tables' orders. They are all unique and different in their own ways. Some *wear minimalistic jewelry, and some don't wear any at all*. They try to fit the vibe of the restaurant, which is *chill*.

H. Rate your experience as a food critic (as in the LA Times or Houston Chronicle). Ratings should be dependent on taste, service, décor, cleanliness, authenticity, quality and price and should range from A-F ("A" being the best). Explain why you chose this rating. Be thorough and detailed in your explanations.

One's experience, as a food critic, would rate the restaurant an A. One will *never* have an issue at Turntable. The bathrooms are always cleaned. One will *not* find any trash on the floor, and it will always smell clean. The wait staff and manager will always make sure that one is having a good time. On top of that, depending on who one is with are or if they are a regular there, they complement one with free things (like shots or appetizers, even both) that are on the house, which makes the experience 10x better. The quality of the food is amazing, in which they never disappoint. The food is always crispy, never soggy. This is a place that one would

recommend to anyone. It's a great place for dates, friend dates, to go catch up with loved ones, or even a solo date! One will never get into any issues at Turntable because they'll always make sure one's good!

I. What did you learn from this experience that you could contribute to a multicultural experience in a class discussion?

One learned that different regions have different mannerisms and ways of doing things. Additionally, when it comes to food, they obviously have different styles in cooking or even different spices from what we are accustomed to. This learning experience has always taught me that it's okay to explore other cultures, rather than one's own. One gets to try new foods, see the different ways different culture's function, and meet new people, it's all just a wonderful experience.

Figure 1



Image of *House Made Fries*

Figure 2



Image of *Soy Garlic Korean Fried Chicken*

Figure 3



Inside of Turntable

References

Sternquist, B., Goldsmith, E. B. (2018). *International Retailing*. United States: Bloomsbury Academic.