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International Palette: Let's Meat NYC Korean BBQ

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- 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?

When preparing to go to the Korean BBQ restaurant one made reservations by calling the restaurant four days in advanced. They have an option of making reservations online but one decided to call to make sure that it was properly taken care of. When one entered the restaurant one was greeted by an African American hostess. She wore denim jeans and an olive-green hoodie. One first had to have their temperature check and sign a form electronically to confirm that Z make it for their reservations. One was seated on the upper level of the restaurant within five minutes of entering.

- b. What are the cultural differences you notice? (*Use class notes*) 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 restaurant 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.

What cultural differences one noticed when Z entered the Korean BBQ restaurant was the different tables filled with people and the smoke filter over every table to filtering the smoke coming from the grill at each table. There were also Asian waiters and waitresses assisting groups of people cook the food. There were a few Mexican servers that served Z rice to each table. There were couples, groups of friends and even parents with their children enjoying the Korean cuisine. As soon as one enters the flow of food and people you hear tons of chatter, laughter, people taking photos and Korean pop music

playing over the speakers. One can even smell the different types of meat aromas filling the air.

Korea is multicultural country that has several cultures when it, it is also a high culture context. Compared to American style restaurants the food is prepared in the kitchen and usually there is popular American music from the past ten to twenty years playing. At Let's Meat NYC near the staircase to the upper level dining there is an open window to the kitchen where you can see the cooks slicing the raw meats to be taken to different tables to be cook in front of the guest. Once Z was seated, one noticed the different cold appetizers and sauces that were presented to us, there was also a spoon and chopsticks as the utensils of choice. Each table had dividers in between for social distancing precautions. There was also a basket of lettuce leaves there that one can use as a lettuce wrap to eat with the different meats. Each party is allowed one hundred minutes maximum per party.





- 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?

The menu at this restaurant was quite extensive. The menu was divided into two parts, signature which was the most expensive and classic which was the cheaper option. The type of food that was offered was spicy squid, marinated shrimp, spicy squid, marinated thin sliced ribeye, marinated hanger steak, spicy arm octopus to name a few. Some unusual food items were the spicy pork belly, spicy squid, pork jowl, small intestines, spicy tofu stew and spicy pork skin. There was a long list of all different meats, some, one would have never thought to consider. The meats and sides that Z decided on was the

spicy pork belly, marinated chicken breast, marinated thin sliced ribeye, thin sliced brisket, and marinated hanger steak. Since the meat were presented raw to each table, the only ingredients were the meat itself despite what it was marinated in. The menu shows pictures of the different meats along with a list of the meats and sides like rice and cold noodles. The menu also has the foods in Korean language along the right side of the menu.

- 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?

Traditionally what was offered were huge lettuce wraps, a tray of sauces to dip the meats and several cold appetizers that are common to Asian cuisine. The flavors of the cold appetizers were very mild, one could tell health is important in the Korean cuisine. At the end of the meal there was a sweet corn, cheese and mayo treat that Z asked was it a dessert. The corn, cheese and mayo was presented an aluminum square dish that was placed on the grill to melt and get hot. It tasted so sweet and cream like the waitress said. One would recommend for sure.

- e. What types of beverages are offered? Do they have an alcohol menu? What is not typically offered in an American chain restaurant?

The type of beverages that were offered were can sodas like Sprite, Crush Orange, Pepsi and Ginger Ale. Wine was also an option of alcohol, both white and red. They also serve their traditional alcohol called Soju. The Soju came in a glass bottle with several flavors.

There was green apple, yogurt, strawberry and green grape. The flavor Z chose was the Yogurt Soju. The shots of Soju were so strong but smooth going down. Soju is a drink that would sneak up on you if you're not careful.

- 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.

In the country of Korea, the most popular foods there are Kimchi, soft Tofu stew and Tteokbokki. These are a few of the food items that one can recall were presented to Z as an appetizer at Let's Meat NYC. Unfortunately, Korea isn't a part of the G8 that makes up the most culturally and economically advanced countries like the United States and Japan. Though Korea is a part of Asia they have a different responsibility compared to their Asian neighbors. Korea is a country full of mineral resources like graphite, iron and coal. This is useful because coal is used when grilling which is important to the Korean traditional cuisine.

- 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.*

The waitress who served Z was named Alice. Her scent was mild, Z couldn't really smell her due to the fragrance of the grill and smokiness throughout the restaurant. "Dress is the

total arrangement of all outwardly detectable modifications of the body and all material objects added to it. Dress is used to define the assemblage of body modifications and body supplements worn by an individual at a specific moment in time” (Eicher-Roacher-Higgins, 1992). Alice wore a navy blue Let’s Meat NYC employee T-shirt, black jeans, a black waitress apron and all black sketchers. She was tall with black hair in a ponytail with bangs. She also had some body modifications, Alice had cute small tattoos going up both arms and stud earrings on both ears. Since she was assisting with grilling the food she wore plastic gloves. Alice also had an ear piece and microphone so she can communicate with the back of the house.

- 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.

I would rate my experience an honest A+. The flavors of the meats were amazing. I’ve tried some red meats that Z were unsure about but it turned out to taste very flavorful. The décor was beautiful and modern. The tables and booths were wood and rustic while the chairs were metal. The service was amazing, Alice was smiling the entire time and she moved really fast to assist Z with grilling the meat. The food was authentic to the Korean culture, they had chopsticks available and the Soju was smooth and amazing. The dining area was spotless clean and for the price you get all you can eat food for \$42.99-\$32.99 per person. Overall my experience was a 10/10. One even got to take a bottle of Soju home since it was a fresh bottle opened shortly before the check came.

- i. What did you learn from this experience that you could contribute to a multi-cultural experience in a class discussion?

Koreans have their own way of cooking verses other Asian cultures. There's something intimate about cooking your own food on a open indoor grill that cannot be competed with. Like other Asian countries, Koreans have mastered the way to indulge in several meats while still having that aspect of healthy eating. The choice of having an alcohol beverage that's smooth and low and calorie is thoughtful on their part. Korea being a country who is rich in minerals makes sense that they would find a resource for it and incorporate it into their foods.



## References

Let's Meat NYC, 2020. Retrieved from. <https://www.letsmeatnyc.com/menu/>