

Korean Grain Bowl is built on healthy, filling ingredients

By Sara Moulton
The Associated Press

Every year, lots of us resolve to lose weight. And every year, many fail. The problem? We go from eating too much food, much of it unhealthy, to eating very little of anything. But after starving ourselves for a while, we return to old habits and regain the weight.

This Korean Grain Bowl recipe is built on healthy, filling ingredients — whole grains and vegetable protein — and some good fat. It’s a middle ground between empty calories and self-starvation. In Korea, this traditional rice dish is called *bibimbap*. Usually it consists of white rice topped with meat, vegetables, a raw or cooked egg, a soy-based sauce, and some chili paste — all of it tossed together right before eating. My version swaps in a few healthier ingredients and increases the amount of veggies.

Instead of white rice, use your favorite whole grain, such as brown rice, wheat berries, or quinoa. Instead of meat, use tofu, a protein-rich bean curd that can be prepared to feature a satisfyingly “meaty” texture. Start with firm tofu, cut it into planks 1/3-inch thick, and weigh it down between paper towels for 20 minutes to remove excess moisture.

Miso sesame sauce, an all-purpose sauce for many items such as sautéed fish and raw vegetables, makes this dish even more substantial. I encourage you to prepare your own, but if you don’t have time, just drizzle your bowl with low-sodium soy sauce.



Sara Moulton via AP

The vegetables specified here — carrots, shiitakes, and spinach — could be replaced with vegetables of your choice. Just be sure to pick from different-colored vegetable groups, which will deliver both nutritional and visual benefits.

But whatever else you might swap out or lose, don’t abandon the lightly fried egg. Breaking the yolk and tossing it with the other ingredients adds a creamy coating to the grains. It’s the perfect finishing touch.

Editor’s note: Sara Moulton is host of public television’s “Sara’s Weeknight Meals.” She was executive chef at Gourmet magazine for nearly 25 years and spent a decade hosting several Food Network shows, including “Cooking Live.” Her latest cookbook is Home Cooking 101.

Korean Grain Bowl

Servings: 4
Start to finish: 80 minutes (45 active)

For the miso sesame sauce:

- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 2 tablespoons white or red miso
- 2 tablespoons grated fresh ginger
- 1 1/2 tablespoons well-stirred tahini
- 1 teaspoon sugar

For the grain bowl:

- 1 cup brown rice, wheat berries, or whole grain of your choice (you’ll need 3 cups cooked)
- 8 ounces firm tofu
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil

- 2 cups coarsely grated carrots
- Kosher salt
- Black pepper
- 4 ounces shiitake mushrooms, stems discarded and caps cut into 1-inch pieces
- 5 ounces baby spinach
- 4 large eggs
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced scallions
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds
- Korean chili sauce (Gochujang), Sriracha, or the hot sauce of your choice
- Kimchi for garnish (optional)

Make the sauce: In a blender combine all of the ingredients with one tablespoon water and blend until smooth. Set aside.

Prepare the grain bowl: Cook the rice, wheat berries, or whole grain of your choice such as quinoa following the package directions (you should have about three cups); keep warm. Slice the tofu into planks 1/3-inch thick. Place the planks between paper towels on a plate, top the plate with another plate and a weight, such as several cans of tomatoes, and set aside for 20 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 300° Fahrenheit. In a large nonstick skillet, heat one tablespoon of the oil over medium heat. Add the carrots, season them with salt and pepper to taste, and cook, stirring, until they are crisp-tender, about two minutes. Transfer them to a rimmed baking sheet.

Add another one-and-a-half tablespoons oil to the skillet. Add the mushrooms and a pinch of salt and cook, stirring occasionally, just until tender, about four minutes. Add the spinach and another pinch of salt to the mushrooms and cook, stirring, just until wilted, about three minutes. Transfer the mixture to the baking sheet with the carrots.

Cut the tofu planks in half and pat the pieces dry. Heat another 1/2 tablespoon of oil in the skillet over medium-high heat. Add the tofu. Cook until golden brown, about three minutes per side. Transfer the tofu to the baking sheet and put the baking sheet of ingredients in the oven to keep warm while frying the eggs.

Heat the remaining tablespoon of oil in the skillet over medium heat, add the eggs, and fry until cooked to the desired degree of doneness.

To serve, mound 3/4 cup of hot grain into the center of each of four shallow bowls. Arrange one-fourth of the tofu on top along with one egg and one-fourth of the carrots and the spinach mixture. Sprinkle the scallions and sesame seeds over the top and drizzle with the miso sesame sauce and hot sauce. Serve with the kimchi on the side.

Nutrition information per serving: 617 calories (333 calories from fat); 38 g fat (5 g saturated, 0 g trans fats); 215 mg cholesterol; 508 mg sodium; 50 g carbohydrate; 6 g fiber; 4 g sugar; 20 g protein.

50 years ago, the My Lai massacre shamed the U.S. military

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very sorry.” He said his mistake was following orders, which had been his defense when he was tried.

Fifty years after the massacre, and almost 43 years after the communist victory reunified Vietnam, most of the rancor is gone, at least publicly, between the nations. They normalized diplomatic relations in 1995, and the United States is now one of Vietnam’s top trading partners and investors. Cooperation on security and military matters has grown to the point where this month a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier made the first visit to a Vietnamese port since the war.

The province dedicated a shrine to the victims, including the members of 24 entire families.

“Son My has become an ultimate pain for the people of Quang Ngai province and the whole country,” provincial

official Nguyen Minh Tri said at a dedication ceremony. “Fifty years have passed, and no one forgets Son My. For the next 100 years and probably 1,000 years, the events of Son My may not fade away in the memories of mankind.”

Cong, the young massacre survivor, went on to study and work in local government, and from 1992 until his retirement last year, headed the My Lai museum, which sits in part of the area where the massacre occurred.

He said he cannot forget the atrocities but he’s willing to forgive the soldiers to build better relations between the two countries.

“We have had enough losses and suffering from war, and we just wish our children and grandchildren would not have to go through those experiences. We desire peace, we want eternal peace,” he said.

Peck reported from Bangkok.

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