

Dessert & Coffee

No Korean food tour is complete without *bingsu* (a shaved ice dessert). It comes in a multitude of flavors and toppings, such as red beans, condensed milk, and various fruits, and is a typical end to a Korean meal. It's light and fluffy and acts as a palate cleanser.

White Windmill and **Paris Baguette** both offer their own versions.

Other Korean bakery go-to items include savory breads and Insta-worthy cakes. **Cafe Rothem** offers a funky environment to enjoy—and photograph—pastries and coffee.



PRO TIP

Nearly all Korean drinks are available both hot and cold. You can even order citron tea as a shake.

As with most Korean bakeries, a wide variety of coffee beverages are available, from lattes to cappuccinos to espresso.

“Koreans spend a lot of money on espresso machines and use really fine coffee beans from top brands like Stumptown and Intelligentsia, so the drinks are good,” Park says.

If you don't drink coffee, or are in the mood for something unique, order a citron tea. Made from the yuzu fruit, it's a citrus drink laden with honey, often used as a natural remedy for colds due to its high vitamin C content. A different option is *misugaru*, a multigrain powder drink similar in flavor to cereal milk—but healthier. The grains are grounded with water, honey, or milk, and depending on the size, the drink can be used as a meal substitute.

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Feed Your Seoul

BY CARLY COOPER • ILLUSTRATIONS BY AMBER DAY

DIY Seoul of the South Korean Food Guide

To the untrained eye, Korean food may seem intimidating. Unfamiliar ingredients combined with challenging pronunciations can make for hesitant diners. Gwinnett offers a plethora of Korean restaurants serving traditional cuisine, barbecue, comfort food, and bakery fare. But where to go? What to order? Resident expert Sarah Park, the tour guide for Gwinnett's Seoul of the South Korean restaurant tour, provides some insight.

“I was born and raised in South Korea and have a high standard when it comes to food,” she says. “It's very dear to my heart.”

She explains that traditional Korean cuisine doesn't differ based on the time of day—each meal includes protein, rice, soup, and sides—and although restaurants tend to fill up, reservations are not required. Koreans traditionally eat with a spoon and chopsticks; however, Park says it's not a problem to request a fork. Another notable fact is that many Korean restaurants feature a bell on each table. Diners are encouraged to ring it for service.



Traditional

When beginning a Korean food tour, Park recommends first-timers head to **Jang Su Jang** for a traditional meal complete with six or seven side dishes, including rice, steamed or stir-fried vegetables, and kimchi (fermented veggies, often cabbage). Her favorite is braised short rib cooked in a soy-based sauce for so long “the meat melts in your mouth.” She compares it to pulled pork or coq au vin. She also likes **E.M. Bop** in Duluth for *haemul pajeon* (a seafood scallion pancake

dipped in soy sauce) and *sundubu jjigae* (silken tofu stew). In Korea, the spicy soup is primarily made and eaten at home as comfort food.

“Seasoning is key in Korean cooking,” Park says. “Fruits and vegetables work as a natural seasoning instead of sugars or salt. We use a lot of kiwi and Asian pear to bring sweetness to a dish.” She explains that many of the sauces go through a fermentation process, which aids in digestion as well as flavor.

Embark on a DIY food tour of Gwinnett's best Korean restaurants with the help of these handy tips

KBBQ

Another Korean favorite is barbecue, as it offers an interactive dining experience. Gas or charcoal grills are built into the tables, and diners cook their own food (with assistance from the server as needed). Places like **K Factory**, **Honey Pig**, and **9292** offer a la carte, combination platters, and all-you-can-eat options. Park says novices often opt for all-you-can-eat so they can try everything and see what they like. Be aware: It can run up to \$40 per person, but lunch often comes at a discounted rate.

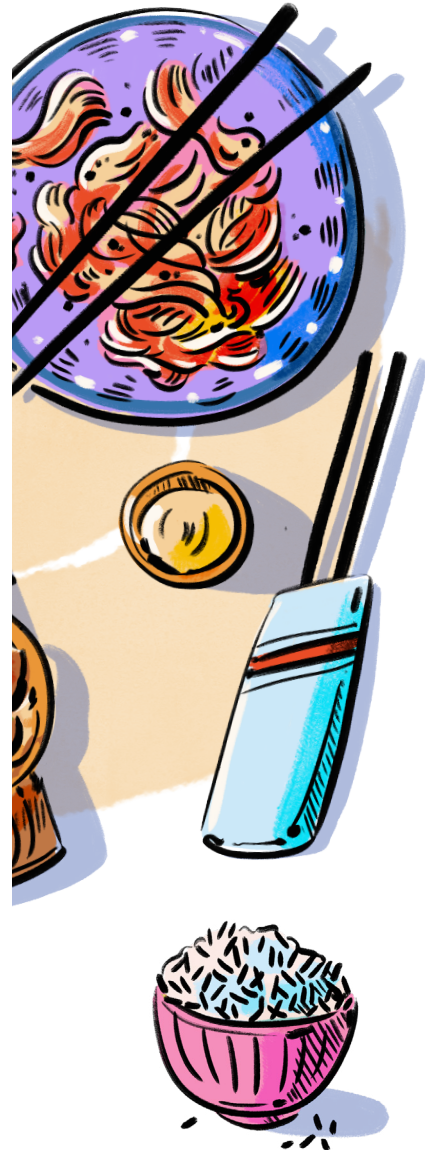
For the highest-quality meat, she recommends a la carte or combo styles. Your best bet? Go with a group so you can sample even more. Highlights include beef, pork belly, or marinated boneless short

ribs, which soak in the flavors for days. Combo platters can include stew, rice, barbecue kimchi, vegetables, noodles, and *gyeranjjim* (steamed egg souffle) intended to help balance the grease and spice.

Don't be afraid to go all in on the sauce—most KBBQ spots offer two or three sauces, such as the sesame oil-based *sogum jang* and the sweet and spicy *ssamjang*. Aim to try them all!

PRO TIP

Ask for a barbecue wrap, such as Asian lettuce. Koreans use it like a tortilla to stuff with meat and vegetables.



PRO TIP

Don't skimp on the rice—it balances the multitude of flavors and spices.



Street Food

As you continue your Korean food tour, be sure to sample some street food. This affordable and comforting fare is often billed as a “snack,” but it's quite filling. Restaurants like **Pelicana Chicken** are best for Korean fried chicken, which comes twice battered and fried, and cut into small pieces for a moist inside and crunchy outside. Though it's a chain, Pelicana originated in Daejeon, South Korea, and Park vouches for the sweet and spicy *yangnyeom* chicken. “Korean food doesn't involve much battered and fried food, except when it comes to comfort food,” Park says. “People like it because it's so different.”

At **Cafe Mixx**, choose the Korean-style pork cutlet called *donkatsu*, prepared with a sweet sauce. At **BB Myun**, try *ddukbokki* (a spicy stir-fried rice cake) topped with your choice of boiled egg, cheese, dumplings, and more. There's also a seaweed rice roll called *kimbap*, stuffed with fried squid, egg, and vegetables, reminiscent of an inside-out Japanese sushi roll. Kimbap is often eaten at picnics and school lunches, due to its portable nature.

“Even at snack places, items come with a couple of side dishes (like pickled radish or cabbage),” Park says. “You will not go hungry when you order Korean.”



PRO TIP

When purchasing Korean fried chicken—which Park jokes is the new KFC—order half plain and half with your choice of sauce to be able to sample more flavors.