

Kimbab

Mi Jin was making kimbap for a picnic with her friends. Kimbab was one of her favorite foods, and there were so many ways to make it. Kimbab literally meant seaweed and rice, but there was more to it than that, even if those were the two main ingredients.

Kimbap started with a sheet of roasted, salted seaweed a little more than half the size of a sheet of writing paper. Fresh rice, not too warm and not too cold, was spread thin across the sheet. Then the toppings were added. Once the toppings were carefully arranged, the whole thing had to be rolled up with a bamboo mat, pressed into a nice cylinder shape, and then sliced into pieces like sushi. It was great fresh, but it also traveled pretty well in lunches or for picnics. In some ways, it was a little like making a burrito, wrapping rice and meats and vegetables in a wrapper.

Toppings usually consisted of thin fried egg, like in an omelet, and a meat or two. This might be canned tuna, sliced ham, hamburger, imitation crab, fried pork cutlet, or just about any meat you really wanted. Vegetables were added as well. That was usually crunchy cucumbers, sautéed shaved carrots, some pickled radish, maybe spinach, and a variety of other healthy roots and vegetables. If tuna was added, usually minty sesame leaves were added, too. Sliced hot peppers were occasionally added to make things interesting. Sauces were used sparingly, but mayonnaise went well with tuna, or some hot pepper paste added a kick to other toppings, too.

There were other shapes of kimbap, too. In American convenience stores, you might find hot dogs and hamburgers in the cooler section next to the drinks. In Korea, you usually found kimbap. Sometimes it was long rolls of kimbap, but sometimes it was triangle-shaped, too. These were a bit like Japanese onigiri, with just a small piece of seaweed covering a packed triangle of rice that had meat and vegetable fillings in the middle.

Kimbap was a great food, with rice, meats, and vegetables in every bite. It was a balanced, whole meal, like a sandwich can be. Even better, people who are scared of sushi and sashimi, because they contain raw or cured meats and fish, don't have to worry. Kimbab as a rule is almost always completely cooked ingredients, other than a few vegetables like cucumbers that don't need to be cooked.

Try it some time! Mi Jin and her friends certainly like it.



Kimbap

Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. Why is Mi Jin making kimbap?
 - A. for a picnic
 - B. for a party
 - C. for her sick grandma
 - D. for breakfast

2. According to the story, kimbap is most similar to which of these?
 - A. hot dogs
 - B. sandwiches
 - C. burritos
 - D. cookies

3. Which of these is not one of the meats that you might find in kimbap?
 - A. pork cutlet
 - B. ham
 - C. hamburger
 - D. steak

4. TRUE OR FALSE: Kimbap is considered junk food.
 - A. TRUE
 - B. FALSE

5. Which of these vegetables is not mentioned in the story as a topping for kimbap?
 - A. carrots
 - B. sesame leaves
 - C. tomato
 - D. spinach

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