

Excerpted from MAANGCHI'S REAL KOREAN COOKING, © 2015 by Maangchi. Reproduced by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. All rights reserved.

Napa Cabbage Kimchi (Baechu-kimchi)
Makes about 8 pounds

There are hundreds of different kinds of kimchi, but the baechu-kimchi is king of them all. Sometimes my readers and friends ask me, "How many servings does it make?" My answer: "Please don't torture me with that question!"

Koreans don't think of kimchi in terms of servings: We make a lot of it and use it for all kinds of things. If you keep this kimchi in your refrigerator, you can easily make soup, stew, dumplings, pancakes, or fried rice. Then, when it runs out, make more. It's an easy habit to get into if you make Korean food often. Many of my non-Korean readers have told me that they make 8 pounds at a time on a regular basis. To make the job easier, you can use your food processor to grind the garlic, ginger, and onions.

The glutinous rice flour acts like a glue, helping the seasonings to cling to the cabbage. Without it, the hot pepper flakes would fall off the cabbage. If you've never used Korean hot pepper flakes and don't know if they will irritate your skin, you might want to mix your first batch wearing rubber gloves.

6 pounds Napa cabbage (about 2 large or 3 or 4 small)
3/4 cup kosher salt
3 tablespoons glutinous rice flour (chapssal-garu)
2 1/2 cups water
2 tablespoons granulated or turbinado sugar
20 garlic cloves, minced (1/2 cup)
2 teaspoons minced peeled ginger
1 small onion, minced (1/2 cup)
1/2 cup fish sauce
1 1/2 cups Korean hot pepper flakes (gochu-garu)
12 ounces Korean radish (mu) or daikon, peeled and cut into matchsticks (1 1/2 cups)
1 medium carrot, peeled and cut into matchsticks (1 cup)
10 scallions, chopped
3 ounces Asian chives or additional scallions, chopped (1 cup)

1. Cut each cabbage in half through the core, then cut a slit through the core 2 inches above the stem so that the leaves are loosened but still attached. Dunk the halves in a large bowl of water to moisten all the leaves. Place on a work surface. Sprinkle the salt between the leaves and put the cabbage in a large bowl. Let stand for 1 1/2 hours, turning the cabbage over every 30 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, combine the rice flour and water in a saucepan and cook over medium heat, stirring, until it bubbles, about 10 minutes. Add the sugar and cook, stirring, until the porridge is a little translucent and thinner, a few more minutes. Remove from the heat and let cool to room temperature.
3. Rinse the cabbage halves under cold running water, ruffling the leaves to remove any dirt and the excess salt. Split each half lengthwise into 2 pieces. Drain well.
4. Put the cooled porridge, garlic, ginger, onion, fish sauce, hot pepper flakes, radish, carrot, scallions, and chives in a large bowl. Mix well. (This is the kimchi paste.)
5. Leaving the cabbage quarters intact, spread some kimchi paste over each leaf. Pack the cabbage quarters into glass jars or other airtight containers and cover. Let stand at cool room temperature until the surface bubbles and the kimchi smells and tastes sour, 1 to 2 days, depending on how warm your kitchen is.

Once the kimchi is fermented, store in the refrigerator to use as needed.