



Doribaengbaeng

Spicy Braised Freshwater Sprats | 도리뱅뱅



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A signature regional delicacy from Okcheon and the Daechyeong Lake basin in Chungcheongbuk-do, *doribaengbaeng* features small freshwater minnows (*pirami* or pond smelt) tightly arranged in a radial, circular pattern around a round skillet. Shallow-fried until crackling crisp—bones, heads, and all—and gently braised in a sweet, fiery gochujang glaze, it delivers an intensely savory crunch and rich umami flavor.

 **Prep: 15 mins** | **Cook: 15 mins** |  **Easy to Moderate** |  **Okcheon Regional Specialty** |  **Crispy & Calcium-Rich**

Ingredients (2-3 servings)

- **Main Ingredients:** 200–250g fresh small freshwater fish (pale chub / *pirami*, pond smelt / *bing-eo*, or sweetfish), 1/2 cup cooking oil (for frying)
- **Spicy Gochujang Glaze:** 2 tbsp gochujang (chili paste), 1 tbsp gochugaru (chili flakes), 1 tbsp soy sauce, 1.5 tbsp rice syrup (*mulyeot*) or oligosaccharide, 1 tbsp sugar, 1 tbsp minced garlic, 1/2 tbsp ginger juice or minced ginger, 1 tbsp cooking wine (*cheongju* / mirin), 1 tbsp water
- **Garnish & Accompaniments:** 1 stalk green onion (finely chopped), 1 Cheongyang green chili & 1 red chili (finely diced), 50g garlic chives or perilla leaves (finely shredded), 1 tbsp toasted sesame seeds

Allergy Information

- **Contains:** Fish (Freshwater Minnow), Soy (Gochujang, Soy sauce), Wheat (Gochujang, Soy sauce), Sesame

Equipment

- Round Frying Pan or Cast-Iron Skillet, Small Mixing Bowl, Basting Brush or Spoon, Paper Towels

Cooking Instructions

1. **Cleaning & Prepping the Fish:** Gently press near the belly fins of the minnows to remove internal viscera. Rinse clean under cold running water and pat thoroughly dry with paper towels to prevent oil spattering.
2. **Arranging in a Circle (*Dori-baengbaeng*):** Pour 2 tablespoons of oil into a round skillet. Arrange the fish tightly side-by-side in concentric circles around the pan, with heads facing outward in a neat pinwheel pattern.
3. **Frying to Golden Crispness:** Pour remaining oil over the fish until partially submerged. Heat over medium heat and shallow-fry undisturbed for 6–8 minutes until the minnows turn golden-brown, rigid, and completely crisp from head to tail. Carefully tilt the pan to drain out excess frying oil.

4. **Glazing & Simmering:** Spoon or brush the spicy gochujang glaze evenly over the fried fish. Lower the heat to low and simmer for 2–3 minutes until the sauce caramelizes and glazes each fish without scorching.
5. **Garnishing & Serving:** Scatter chopped green onions, diced chilies, shredded garlic chives, and toasted sesame seeds over the top. Serve piping hot directly in the skillet.

Cooking & Pairing Tips

- **The Etymology of "Doribaengbaeng":** The name originates from the Korean words *dorreureu* (turning around) and *baengbaeng* (in circles), describing how the fish are arranged circularly around the pan.
- **Eaten Whole from Head to Tail:** Because the fish are fried until brittle and crunchy, the bones, fins, and heads soften entirely, making it an excellent source of natural dietary calcium.
- **Perfect Food & Beverage Pairing:** An iconic lakeside drinking snack (*anju*) paired with chilled soju or local rice wine (*Makgeolli*). Frequently enjoyed alongside spicy freshwater fish porridge (*Eojuk*) or fish stew (*Maeuntang*).

Storage Instructions

- Best enjoyed immediately while sizzling hot to experience peak crunchiness. Leftovers can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 1–2 days and gently reheated in a dry skillet over low heat.

Nutrition Facts (Estimated)

- Total Content : Approx. 300g (2-3 servings total)
- Calories : 460 kcal total (approx. 153 kcal per 100g / 153 kcal per 1 serving)
 - Sodium : 840mg (42%)
 - Total Carbohydrate : 22g (7%)
 - Sugar : 14g (14%)
 - Total Fat : 24g (44%)
 - Trans Fat : 0g
 - Saturated Fat : 3.5g (23%)
 - Cholesterol : 140mg (47%)
 - Protein : 42g (76%)
 - Calcium : 260mg (26%)

Editor's Review

1. A Sensual Fusion of Crispy Circular Crunch and Spicy-Sweet Glaze

The moment the ring-arranged minnows—crisped to golden perfection in oil and simmered in a vibrant, spicy-sweet glaze—touch the palate, an intensely savory crunch and a rich, nutty flavor flood the senses. The harmonious fusion of bold seasoning and the crispy, edible bones of the delicate fish delivers an endlessly satisfying and dynamic gastronomic experience.

2. Culinary Mastery Forged by Circular Thermal Conduction and Frying-Simmering Dynamics

Doribangbang stands as a masterclass in regional Korean pan-cooking, utilizing a circular, pan-wide arrangement of small fish to maximize thermal conduction, frying them crisp before simmering them gently in a rich glaze. Managing thermal intensity to lock in a crackling exterior while caramelizing the spicy sauce without burning represents fundamental culinary science that achieves peak textural harmony.

3. Heartwarming Solace Rooted in the Pristine Waters of Okcheon

Originating from the clear river currents of Okcheon in North Chungcheong Province, a circular plate of golden doribangbang acts as a comforting remedy for daily weariness, filling the spirit with unpretentious regional warmth. Gathered in a circle to share this uniquely crafted delicacy, we find an authentic sanctuary of peace and emotional recovery.

