



Dorumukgui

Grilled Sailfin Sandfish | 도루묵구이



A prized late-autumn and winter seafood specialty in Korea (particularly along the East Coast of Gangwon Province), featuring sandfish (*dorumuk*). Known for its delicate, soft white flesh and—during peak winter season—bellies bursting with crunchy, pop-in-your-mouth egg sacs (*dok-al*). Pre-salting the fish for 30 minutes before cooking firms up its tender flesh so it won't crumble on the pan while eliminating fishy odors (*birin-mat*), yielding a clean, savory, and delightfully subtle flavor.

 **Prep: 30 mins (pre-salting) | Cook: 15 mins |**  **Easy |**  **Winter Peak Season |**  **Tender Flesh & Roe-Rich**

Ingredients (2 servings)

- **Main Ingredients:** 4–6 fresh sandfish (*dorumuk*, cleaned, with roe/eggs intact if in season), 1 tbsp coarse sea salt (for pre-salting), 1.5 tbsp cooking oil
- **Optional Gochujang Glaze:** 1.5 tbsp gochujang (chili paste), 1 tbsp gochugaru (chili flakes), 1 tbsp soy sauce, 1 tbsp rice syrup (*mulyeot*) or sugar, 1 tsp minced garlic, 1 tsp sesame oil
- **Dipping & Serving:** 1 lemon wedge, 1 tbsp soy sauce with a touch of wasabi or grated daikon radish

Allergy Information

- **Contains:** Fish (Sandfish/Roe) (*Optional glaze contains Soy, Wheat, Sesame*)

Equipment

- Frying Pan or Grill Pan (or Charcoal Grill), Wide Spatula, Paper Towels, Basting Brush

Cooking Instructions

1. **Cleaning & Prepping:** Gently rinse fresh sandfish under cold running water, keeping the belly and internal roe intact. Pat dry with paper towels.
2. **Pre-Salting (Crucial Step):** Sprinkle 1 tbsp coarse sea salt evenly over both sides of the fish and let sit for 30 minutes. This draws out excess surface moisture, firms up the delicate flesh so it won't crumble during flipping, and neutralizes fishy odors (*birin-mat*).
3. **Rinsing & Drying:** Briefly rinse off excess surface salt under cold water and pat completely dry with paper towels.
4. **Grilling / Pan-Frying:** Heat 1.5 tbsp cooking oil in a wide frying pan over medium heat. Place sandfish in the pan and grill for 6–8 minutes per side until

the skin turns golden-crisp and the belly/roe is fully cooked through.

5. **Glazing (Optional) & Serving:** If making glazed *dorumukgui*, reduce heat to low during the last 2 minutes of cooking and brush with gochujang sauce on both sides until caramelized. Serve piping hot with a lemon wedge or soy-wasabi dipping sauce.

Cooking & Pairing Tips

- **Why Pre-Salting for 30 Minutes is Essential:** Sandfish has a high water content and remarkably soft muscle fibers. Salting 30 minutes prior tightens the protein structure, preserving the whole shape of the fish on the grill.
- **The Delightful Texture of Roe (*Dok-a*):** From late November through December, female sandfish carry large clusters of sticky, crunchy roe. Grilling turns the exterior crisp while keeping the eggs popping and rich in umami.
- **Perfect Food & Beverage Pairing:** Complements warm white rice, clear radish-fish soup (*Dorumuk-tang*), and spicy stewed greens. Pairs wonderfully with chilled soju or traditional rice wine (*Makgeolli*).

Storage Instructions

- Best enjoyed piping hot straight off the grill while the skin is crisp and flesh tender. Leftovers can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 1 day and reheated gently in a dry skillet over medium-low heat or in an air fryer at 170°C for 3–4 minutes.

Nutrition Facts (Estimated)

- Total Content : Approx. 350g (2 servings total)
- Calories : 420 kcal total (approx. 120 kcal per 100g / 210 kcal per 1 serving)
 - Sodium : 680mg (34%)
 - Total Carbohydrate : 2g (1%)
 - Sugar : 0g (0%)
 - Total Fat : 22g (41%)
 - Trans Fat : 0g
 - Saturated Fat : 4.5g (30%)
 - Cholesterol : 180mg (60%)
 - Protein : 52g (95%)
 - Calcium : 120mg (12%)

Editor's Review

1. A Sensual Fusion of Popping Roe, Tender Flakes, and Savory Glaze

The moment the salt-cured, glazed sandfish—grilled to golden perfection over an open flame—hits the palate, a delightful explosion of uniquely popping roe combined with tender, delicate flesh floods the senses. The harmonious fusion of smoky char and seasoned glaze delivers an endlessly satisfying and dynamic gastronomic experience.

2. Culinary Mastery Forged by Pre-Salting Osmosis and Controlled Glaze Caramelization

Dorumuk-gui stands as a masterclass in seafood prep, utilizing a precise 30-minute pre-salting stage to harness osmosis, firming up fragile flesh to prevent crumbling while removing unwanted fishy notes. Managing thermal intensity to brush and caramelize savory glazes without scorching while safeguarding the succulent inner roe represents fundamental culinary science that achieves peak textural harmony.

3. Heartwarming Solace Rooted in the Cozy Comfort of Seasonal Tradition

Harvested during the crisp turns of late autumn and winter, a neatly grilled plate of savory sandfish acts as a comforting remedy for daily weariness, filling the spirit with unpretentious warmth. Savoring each bite of this unique seasonal delicacy offers a nostalgic ritual of restoration, granting an authentic sanctuary of peace and emotional recovery.

