



Gomchitguk (Clear Broth Style)

Moray Eel Soup | 곰치국 (남해안식 맑은 탕)



Unlike the aggressively fermented, kimchi-heavy version from the East Coast, the Southern coastal style of Gomchi-guk (often referred to as Mulmegi-tang) is a masterclass in delicate biochemical balance. It relies on a pristine, clear broth (jiri) to highlight the exceptionally tender, loose collagen matrix of the deep-sea snailfish. The soup utilizes the enzymatic sweetness of Korean radish and the volatile compounds of garlic and water dropwort (minari) to chemically mask any faint oceanic odors without overpowering the fish's natural, subtle umami. The resulting broth is brilliantly clear, deeply restorative, and features flesh that melts effortlessly on the tongue.

🕒 **Total:** 30 mins | **Prep:** 10 mins | **Cook:** 20 mins | 🔍 **Difficulty:** Easy (Requires strict thermal timing and skimming) | 🌶️ **Profile:** Clean, Refreshing, and Silky | 🍲 **Focus:** Clear Broth (Jiri), Collagen Gelatinization, & Delicate Masking

Ingredients (3–4 servings)

- **Main Ingredient:** 1 fresh, cleaned snailfish (gomchi or mulmegi) (approx. 800g, handle with extreme care)
- **Clear Broth Base:** 6 cups water (or mild kelp stock), 150g Korean radish (cut into thick bite-sized squares)
- **Aromatics (Chemical Masking):** 50g water dropwort (minari, cut into 5cm lengths), 1 scallion (sliced diagonally), 1–2 Cheongyang chilies (optional, for a clean, sharp heat)
- **Seasoning:** 1 tbsp minced garlic, 1 tbsp soup soy sauce (guk-ganjang), coarse sea salt (to taste)

Allergy Information Contains: Fish (Snailfish), Soy, Wheat (from soy sauce)

Equipment Cutting Board, Knife, Wide Deep Pot, Fine Mesh Skimmer, Ladle

Cooking Instructions

1. **Physical Prep & Moisture Awareness:** Snailfish flesh is extremely fragile, resembling silken tofu. Rinse it very gently under cold running water to remove impurities. Cut it into large, 4–5cm chunks to maintain structural integrity during the boil.
2. **Enzymatic Extraction (Radish Broth):** In a wide, deep pot, combine the 6 cups of cold water (or kelp stock) and the squared radish. Bring to a vigorous boil over high heat. Cook for about 10 minutes until the radish turns translucent. This releases the radish's natural sweetness and digestive enzymes (diastase) into the broth.

3. **Thermal Control & Scum Removal:** Once the broth is boiling fiercely, gently add the snailfish chunks, minced garlic, and soup soy sauce. *Do not stir aggressively.* Boil for 5–7 minutes. As the fish cooks, greyish foam (coagulated myoglobin and proteins) will rise to the surface. Continuously skim this foam off with a fine mesh skimmer. Failure to do so will result in a cloudy, fishy-tasting broth.
4. **Aromatic Infusion & Serving:** As soon as the fish turns opaque white and the collagenous skin begins to melt into a gelatinous state, add the sliced scallion and chilies. One minute before turning off the heat, lay the minari on top. Adjust the final seasoning with coarse salt, turn off the heat immediately, and serve.

💡 Professional Culinary Tips

- **Precision Masking (Radish & Garlic):** Without the heavy shield of fermented kimchi, this clear soup requires precise chemical masking. The sulfur compounds released from the boiling radish and the allicin from the garlic work synergistically to bind and vaporize the subtle deep-sea odors of the snailfish, maintaining the broth's pristine clarity and flavor.
- **The Thermodynamics of Skimming:** The scum that floats to the top of a boiling clear broth consists of denatured, water-soluble proteins and trace amounts of blood. If left in the turbulent boiling water, these particles will break apart and re-dissolve, irreversibly clouding the soup and imparting an oxidized, muddy flavor. Meticulous physical skimming is non-negotiable for a perfect *jiri*.
- **Volatile Aromatics of Minari:** Water dropwort (minari) is packed with aromatic terpenes. Because these compounds are highly volatile and destroy easily under prolonged heat, the minari must be added at the very last second. The residual heat of the broth gently wilts the stems, releasing a burst of herbal fragrance that acts as a perfect palate cleanser against the rich, gelatinous fish skin.

Nutrition Facts (Estimated)

Total Content : Approx. 400g (1 serving, including broth)

Calories : 110 kcal

– Sodium : 850mg

– Total Carbohydrate : 6.0g

– Sugar : 1.0g

– Total Fat : 1.0g

– Saturated Fat : 0.2g

– Cholesterol : 45.0mg

– Protein : 19.0g

– Calcium : 55.0mg

*Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet and standard Korean nutritional reference values

**Nutritional values are calculated based on original ingredients; substitutions may alter specific macronutrients.

The Pristine Clarity of the Southern Seas and the Velvet Dissolution of Pure Protein: A Lyrical Masterpiece of Clear Gomchi-guk and Gentle Hangover Solace

Southern and Southeastern Coastal Style Clear Gomchi-guk (also known as Mulmegi-tang or Snailfish Jiri) stands as the pure, immaculate, and deeply soothing pinnacle of Korean coastal soup gastronomy, where fresh snailfish—plucked from the deep marine abyss—is simmered into a crystal-clear, delicate elixir without relying on the assertive fermented acidity of aged kimchi. Characterized by exacting thermal control to preserve the fragile, tofu-soft myofibrillar proteins of the fish and relying on the natural enzymatic sweetness of radish and the aromatic lift of water dropwort, this clear soup strips away heavy seasonings to showcase the unadulterated sweetness of the sea, gently revitalizing every cell in the body from the very first spoonful.

The moment a steaming spoonful of the crystalline broth touches the palate, an immediate wave of pure vegetable umami from the simmered radish and the crisp, herbal aroma of water dropwort (*minari*) awakens the senses with effortless elegance. The cloud-like, snow-white fish flesh requires virtually no chewing, dissolving smoothly across the tongue like a delicate mist, while the gelatinous skin delivers a rich, silky contrast. By pairing pure ocean depth with aromatic botanicals, this steaming bowl envelops the weary stomach in a blanket of warm, restorative solace.

True gastronomy does not depend on overpowering the palate with heavy spices; it flourishes in the ancestral wisdom of respecting an ingredient's delicate raw physics, skimming away imperfections, and letting elemental marine purity shine through. Savoring an aromatic bowl of steaming, clear Southern-style snailfish soup today is an elegant and sacred ritual—clearing away modern exhaustion through a wave of pristine maritime warmth and filling the spirit with unpretentious clarity, coastal heritage, and timeless solace.

Editor's Review

1. An Exhilarating Cadence of Velvet Melt-in-the-Mouth Fish Tenderness, Crystalline Broth Clarity, and Herbal Dropwort Lift

The moment a piping-hot spoonful of clear Gomchi-guk coats the palate, an immediate wave of gentle, savory broth depth seasoned cleanly with sea salt and

light soy sauce awakens the taste buds. This gossamer clarity gives way to the miraculous, custard-like surrender of the delicate snailfish flesh and the velvety slide of dissolved skin collagen, beautifully elevated by the fresh, palate-cleansing aroma of lightly wilted water dropwort, orchestrating an endlessly soothing, multi-layered sensory thrill.

2. Radish Diastase Enzymatic Extraction, Allicin-Terpene Odor Masking, and Controlled Collagen Gelatinization Kinetics

Clear Gomchi-guk represents an exacting study in deep-sea seafood thermodynamics and botanical biochemistry. Pre-simmering radish releases natural sugars and the digestive enzyme diastase to construct a clean, sweet broth matrix. Upon introducing the fish, garlic allicin and dropwort terpenes chemically trap and vaporize volatile fish amines without clouding the liquid. Furthermore, limiting cooking time to 5–7 minutes while actively skimming coagulated protein foam (scum) prevents turbidity and allows dense epidermal collagen to denature rapidly into soothing, bioavailable gelatin, establishing an optimal biochemical equilibrium.

3. The Tranquil Southern Portside Hearth and the Grounding Sanctuary of Gentle Restorative Solace

Found welcoming weary fishermen at dawn along the southern and southeastern coastlines as the quintessential emblem of pure morning restoration, a modest bowl of clear snailfish soup serves as an enduring emotional haven against daily exhaustion. Revered for generations as an essential comfort staple that calms the core and clears the mind through unadorned, easily digestible nourishment, enjoying this honest, nutrient-dense delicacy washes away modern stress, granting a timeless sanctuary of stillness, coastal heritage, and grounded culinary happiness.

