



Gomjangeogui

Grilled Sea Eel | 곶장어구이



A legendary regional specialty of Gijang, Busan, featuring whole inshore hagfish (*meokjangeo*—famously known by its Gyeongsang dialect name, *gomjangeo*) grilled whole over an intense rice-straw fire (*jipbul*) on a wire grate. After high-heat charring, the outer skin and viscera are peeled away, leaving firm, springy, and smokey flesh bursting with natural savory richness.

 **Prep: 15 mins** | **Cook: 10 mins** |  **Moderate** |  **Smoky Straw-Fired**
|  **Busan Regional Specialty**

Ingredients (2-3 servings)

- **Main Ingredients:** 500g fresh inshore hagfish (*gomjangeo* / *meokjangeo*, whole)
- **Straw-Firing / Grilling:** Clean rice straw (*jipbul*, for traditional straw fire) or hardwood charcoal
- **Dipping Sauces & Accompaniments:** Sesame oil salt dip (*gireum-jang*: 2 tbsp toasted sesame oil, 1/2 tsp fine sea salt, black pepper), spicy red chili dipping sauce (*chogochujang*), sliced raw garlic, green chili peppers, fresh perilla leaves (*kkaet-nip*)

Allergy Information

- **Contains:** Fish (Hagfish), Sesame (*Dipping sauces may contain Soy, Wheat*)

Equipment

- Grill Grate, Straw Fire Pit / Outdoor Grill (or Heavy Cast-Iron Pan), Tongs, Heat-Resistant Gloves, Kitchen Shears, Cutting Board

Cooking Instructions

1. **Prepping the Straw Fire & Hagfish:** Rinse fresh hagfish under cold water and pat dry. Prepare a high-heat fire using dry rice straw (*jipbul*) or hardwood charcoal for direct flame and maximum smoke.
2. **Direct Straw-Grilling:** Place whole hagfish on a wire grill grate directly over the roaring straw fire. Grill for 3–5 minutes, turning frequently as the high flames rapidly char the outer skin and infuse a deep woodsmoke aroma.
3. **Removing Skin & Organs:** Transfer the charred hagfish to a board. While hot, strip off the blackened outer skin, head, and internal organs, leaving the plump, pale, tube-like muscle flesh.
4. **Secondary Searing & Slicing:** Return the peeled hagfish flesh to the grill for another 2–3 minutes until plump, opaque, and golden-brown. Snip into 4–5 cm bite-sized pieces with kitchen shears.

5. **Serving:** Transfer the hot, smoky hagfish pieces to a platter and serve immediately alongside sesame oil salt dip, fresh perilla leaves, and sliced garlic.

💡 Cooking & Pairing Tips

- **The Magic of Straw Fire (*Jipbu*):** Traditional rice straw burns at extremely high temperatures, searing the exterior instantly while imparting a distinct, clean smoke that neutralizes fishy odors.
- **Distinct Springy Texture:** As hagfish cooks, its dense protein fibers coil up tightly, creating an irresistibly springy, chewy (*jjolgŭt*) texture unlike any other seafood.
- **Perfect Food & Beverage Pairing:** An iconic Busan coastal delicacy. Wrap a piece of grilled hagfish in a fresh perilla leaf with sliced garlic, raw chili, and a drop of sesame oil. Pairs famously with cold Busan soju or a crisp lager.

Storage Instructions

- Best enjoyed piping hot straight off the straw fire. Leftovers can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 1 day and reheated quickly in a hot pan over high heat with a tiny splash of oil.

Nutrition Facts (Estimated)

- Total Content : Approx. 450g (2-3 servings total)
- Calories : 620 kcal total (approx. 138 kcal per 100g / 207 kcal per 1 serving)
 - Sodium : 540mg (27%)
 - Total Carbohydrate : 2g (1%)
 - Sugar : 0g (0%)
 - Total Fat : 28g (52%)
 - Trans Fat : 0g
 - Saturated Fat : 5g (33%)
 - Cholesterol : 190mg (63%)
 - Protein : 88g (160%)
 - Calcium : 130mg (13%)

Editor's Review

1. A Sensual Fusion of Straw-Smoke Aroma and Snappy Hagfish Elasticity

The moment the rustic, smoky aroma of burning straw merges with the uniquely snappy and chewy texture of whole-grilled hagfish, an intensely savory and

peerless flavor profile floods the senses. Forged by the bracing coastal winds and deep culinary heritage of Gijang, Busan, this delightfully bouncy texture delivers an endlessly engaging and thrilling gastronomic experience.

2. Regional Culinary Mastery Forged by Straw-Fire Searing and Instant Moisture Control

Straw-grilled hagfish stands as a masterclass in regional Korean seafood craft, utilizing intense straw-fire radiant heat to instantly sear whole hagfish before stripping away the charred skin and innards to concentrate pure umami. Managing flash-high temperatures to lock in internal moisture while infusing a deep, clean smoke flavor represents fundamental culinary science that preserves the wild elasticity of the catch.

3. Coastal Solace Warming the Spirit Beneath Bracing Ocean Breezes

Framed by the salty ocean breeze and sweeping horizons of Gijang, a plate of smoky straw-grilled hagfish acts as a powerful, comforting remedy for daily weariness, filling the spirit with unpretentious warmth. Savoring this robust regional delicacy reconnects us with the enduring vitality of the coast and a deep sense of inner peace.

