



# Mareunsaebokkeum

Stir-fried Dried Shrimp | 마른새우볶음



<https://koreancuisine.net>

A classic, sweet, and savory Korean dry side dish (*mitbanchan*) made by quickly stir-frying small dried shrimp (*mareun-saeu* or *geon-saeu*) in a hot pan with soy sauce, sugar, and toasted sesame oil. Often paired with garlic scapes or shishito peppers to add a vibrant green color, herbal crunch, and mild heat. It is a calcium-rich, highly addictive staple that keeps exceptionally well in the fridge, making it a favorite for traditional lunchboxes (*dosirak*).

 **Total: 15 mins** | **Prep: 5 mins** | **Cook: 10 mins** |  **Easy** |  **Sweet, Savory & Crunchy** |  **Classic Mitbanchan**

### Ingredients (3-4 servings)

- **Main Ingredients:** 2 cups small dried shrimp (about 60g, *geon-saeu*), 10–15 shishito peppers (*kkwari-gochu*) or 100g garlic scapes (*maneuljong*, cut into 4 cm lengths), 1.5 tbsp cooking oil
- **Sweet & Savory Glaze:** 1.5 tbsp soy sauce, 1 tbsp sugar, 1.5 tbsp rice syrup (*mulyeot*) or corn syrup, 1/2 tbsp cooking wine (*cheongju* / mirin)
- **Finishing Touches:** 1 tbsp toasted sesame oil, 1 tsp toasted sesame seeds

### Substitutes:

- **Small dried shrimp** → Dried anchovies (*myeolchi*), though the flavor profile will change. If unavailable, use small dried sakura shrimp found in most Asian markets.
- **Shishito peppers** → Padrón peppers or any mild, thin-skinned green chili.
- **Garlic scapes** → Green beans or asparagus (they offer a very similar snappy, crunchy texture).
- **Rice syrup (*mulyeot*)** → Honey, agave nectar, or light corn syrup.
- **Cooking wine (*cheongju*)** → Dry sherry or dry white wine.

### Allergy Information

- **Contains:** Crustacean Shellfish (Shrimp), Soy (Soy sauce), Wheat (Soy sauce), Sesame

### Equipment

- Frying Pan or Wok, Fine-mesh Strainer, Spatula, Fork (if using peppers)

### Cooking Instructions

1. **Prepping the Shrimp:** Place the dried shrimp in a fine-mesh strainer and gently shake to sift out any sharp dust, broken legs, or debris.

2. **Prepping the Vegetables:** If using shishito peppers, wash them, trim the stems, and poke 2–3 small holes in each pepper with a fork (this prevents them from bursting and allows the sauce to penetrate). If using garlic scapes, cut them into 4 cm batons.
3. **Dry Toasting:** Heat a dry frying pan over medium heat (no oil). Add the sifted dried shrimp and toast for 1–2 minutes, tossing constantly, until they turn fragrant and extra crispy. Remove from the pan and set aside.
4. **Sautéing the Greens:** Wipe the pan clean and heat the cooking oil over medium heat. Add the prepared peppers or garlic scapes. Stir-fry for 2–3 minutes until the peppers blister slightly or the scapes turn bright green and tender-crisp.
5. **Making the Glaze:** Lower the heat. Push the vegetables to one side and add the soy sauce, sugar, cooking wine, and rice syrup to the empty side of the pan. Let the sauce bubble and thicken slightly for about 30 seconds.
6. **Combining:** Return the toasted dried shrimp to the pan. Toss everything quickly over medium-low heat for 1 minute so the sticky glaze coats the shrimp and vegetables evenly without burning.
7. **Finishing & Cooling:** Turn off the heat. Drizzle with toasted sesame oil and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Spread the mixture out on a large plate or let it cool completely in the pan before storing.

#### **Cooking & Pairing Tips / Health Benefits**

- **Calcium Powerhouse (Health Benefits):** Because dried shrimp are eaten entirely with their shells on, they are an incredible, dense source of highly bioavailable calcium and chitin, essential for bone health.
- **The Dry-Toast Technique:** Toasting the shrimp in a dry pan before adding any oil or sauce is a crucial step. It eliminates any lingering fishy odors, evaporates residual moisture, and ensures the shrimp stay incredibly crunchy even after being glazed.
- **Cooling for the Perfect Crunch:** As a *mitbanchan* (long-lasting side dish), it is designed to be stored in the fridge. Letting the dish cool completely *before* placing it in an airtight container prevents steam condensation, keeping the shrimp crispy for over a week.
- **Perfect Food & Beverage Pairing:** Excellent with a warm bowl of freshly steamed rice or a comforting bowl of scorched rice soup (*Nurungji*). The sweet and savory crunch beautifully contrasts soft, mild textures.

#### **Nutrition Facts (Estimated)**

- Total Content : Approx. 50g (1 serving)
- Calories : 145 kcal
  - Sodium : 350mg
  - Total Carbohydrate : 12.0g

- Sugar : 6.5g
- Total Fat : 5.8g
- Saturated Fat : 0.8g
- Cholesterol : 85.0mg
- Protein : 11.5g
- Calcium : 320.0mg

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

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## **The Concentrated Essence of the Ocean and the Alchemy of the Crimson Flame**

Stir-fried Dried Shrimp (*Mareunsaesubokkeum*) is a brilliant culinary alchemy of Korean home cooking, capturing the raw energy of the sea—condensed by the harsh sun and ocean winds—and detonating it once more over a blistering pan. Through the dehydration process, these tiny crustaceans lose their volume, leaving behind only a brittle texture. Yet, the moment they plunge into an oiled skillet, their dormant vitality is magnificently resurrected into an intense, profound umami. As the depth of soy sauce, the subtle sweetness of sugar, and the nutty sheen of toasted sesame oil meld in the intense heat, a simple dried ingredient is reborn into a multi-dimensional gastronomic masterpiece.

When the oceanic aroma of the crisped, ruby-red shrimp intertwines with the pungent crunch of garlic scapes or the mild, earthy bite of shishito peppers, this unassuming side dish demonstrates a meticulous balance that bridges the earth and the sea. The way the inherent nuttiness of the crustacean bursts forth with every chew, seamlessly wrapping around each grain of rice, works like magic to anchor the dining table without the need for an overpowering main course.

True gastronomy does not rely on a parade of rare luxuries; it exists in the moment an ingredient—having endured the test of time and preservation—meets the mastery of fire to unleash 100% of its hidden charm. Taking a glistening, crisp bite of stir-fried dried shrimp today is an affectionate, comforting ritual, swallowing the highest density of nutrition and savoriness the ocean has to offer to refuel the mundane day with a sprightly energy.

## **Editor's Review**

### **1. A Dynamic Contrast of Shattering Crustacean Crunch and a Sweet-and-Salty Glaze**

The moment the flash-fried dried shrimp is chewed, the delicate, brittle shells shatter with a crisp, delightful cadence that awakens both hearing and touch. Closely following this crunch is the perfect sweet-and-salty balance of the sticky

soy and sugar glaze melting across the tongue. The occasional bite of vibrant shishito pepper or garlic scape releases fresh vegetative juices that elegantly neutralize the heavy, toasted flavors of the crustacean, orchestrating an endlessly engaging and dynamically layered sensory thrill.

## **2. Moisture-Controlled Calcium Concentration and High-Heat Flavor Maximization**

*Mareunsaebokkeum* represents an exacting application of food science, utilizing dehydration to drop moisture levels to a minimum, thereby concentrating proteins and packing an immense density of calcium (often ranging from 1,500mg to over 4,000mg per 100g). When introduced to hot oil in a smoking pan, the amino acids and the red astaxanthin pigment in the shrimp shells interact with the added sugars to trigger rapid Maillard browning. A final coat of lipid-rich sesame oil creates a moisture-resistant barrier, perfectly binding the glaze while preserving the ultimate crispy texture even during storage.

## **3. The Crimson Nostalgia of the Lunchbox and the Grounding Solace of a Home Meal**

A steadfast presence tucked into the corner of a lovingly packed childhood lunchbox or a daily home-cooked spread, this glossy, crimson *banchan* transcends mere sustenance to evoke deep nostalgia. Placing a few sweet, crispy shrimp atop a bowl of freshly steamed white rice delivers an incredibly warm, honest sense of fulfillment—washing away the complexities of modern dining and granting an authentic sanctuary of maternal care and simple contentment.



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