KOREAN CUISINE

Nakjicheolpanbokkeum

Stir-fried Octopus on Hot Iron Plate | 낙지철판볶음



A sizzling, fiery Korean seafood specialty featuring tender small octopus (*nakji*) cut into bite-sized pieces and flash-fried on a scorching cast-iron griddle (*cheolpan*). Coated in a vibrant, intensely savory chili paste (*gochujang*) and red pepper flake (*gochugaru*) glaze packed with minced garlic and aromatics, it is tossed with crisp cabbage, sweet onions, and julienned carrots. As a customary grand finale, warm rice, toasted seaweed flakes, and fragrant sesame oil are tossed directly onto the hot iron plate to create an irresistible, crispy fried rice (*bokkeumbap*) using the remaining concentrated sauce.

⏱️ **Total: 25 mins | Prep: 15 mins (cleaning & prepping) | Cook: 10 mins |**
🍳 **Moderate |** 🐙 **High Taurine & Stamina Booster |** 🔥 **Sizzling & Spicy**

Ingredients (2-3 servings)

- **Main Ingredients:** 400g fresh or frozen small octopus (*nakji*, cleaned and cut into 5–6 cm pieces), 2 tbsp flour and 1 tbsp coarse salt (for scrubbing)
- **Fresh Vegetables:** 1/2 yellow onion (sliced), 1/3 carrot (thinly sliced), 2 cups green cabbage (chopped into bite-sized squares), 1 stalk green onion (cut into 4 cm batons), 1–2 Cheongyang green chili peppers (sliced), 6–8 perilla leaves (*kkaet-nip*, roughly sliced)
- **Spicy Cheolpan Glaze:** 3 tbsp Korean chili flakes (*gochugaru*), 1.5 tbsp gochujang (chili paste), 2.5 tbsp soy sauce, 1.5 tbsp rice syrup (*mulyeot*) or oligosaccharide, 1 tbsp sugar, 2 tbsp minced garlic, 1/2 tbsp finely grated ginger, 2 tbsp cooking wine (*cheongju* / mirin), 1 tbsp toasted sesame oil, 1/4 tsp black pepper
- **Sautéing & Finishing:** 2 tbsp cooking oil, 1 tbsp toasted sesame seeds
- **Finale Iron Plate Fried Rice (*Bokkeumbap*):** 1 bowl warm cooked rice, 1/3 cup finely chopped aged kimchi, 2 tbsp seasoned seaweed strips (*gim-garu*), 1 tbsp toasted sesame oil

Allergy Information

- **Contains:** Molluscan Shellfish (Octopus), Soy (Gochujang, Soy sauce), Wheat (Gochujang, Soy sauce), Sesame

Equipment

- Heavy Cast-Iron Griddle (*Cheolpan*) or Flat Skillet, Metal Spatulas, Kitchen Tongs, Large Mixing Bowls, Paper Towels

Cooking Instructions

1. **Cleaning the Octopus:** Place the octopus in a bowl with coarse salt and flour. Massage and scrub vigorously for 2–3 minutes to strip away surface

slime, impurities, and residual mud from the suction cups. Rinse thoroughly under cold running water until clean and squeaky.

2. **Cutting & Patting Dry:** Cut the octopus into 5–6 cm pieces (they shrink noticeably upon cooking). Pat thoroughly dry with paper towels to prevent excess moisture from pooling on the iron plate.
3. **Mixing the Spicy Glaze:** In a bowl, whisk together *gochugaru*, *gochujang*, soy sauce, rice syrup, sugar, minced garlic, grated ginger, cooking wine, sesame oil, and black pepper. Let rest for 5–10 minutes to allow flavors to meld.
4. **Preheating & Sautéing Vegetables:** Heat 2 tbsp of cooking oil on a cast-iron griddle over medium-high heat. Add the cabbage, sliced onions, and carrots. Stir-fry for 2 minutes until the vegetables begin to soften and become slightly translucent.
5. **Flash-Searing Octopus:** Push the vegetables to the outer edges of the iron plate. Add the octopus and the spicy sauce directly to the sizzling center over maximum heat. Stir-fry rapidly for 2–3 minutes just until the octopus turns plump, opaque, and curled.
6. **Combining & Garnish:** Toss the vegetables and octopus together with sliced green onions and perilla leaves for the final 30–45 seconds. Sprinkle with toasted sesame seeds and serve immediately while bubbling hot.
7. **The Grand Finale (*Bokkeumbap*):** Once most of the octopus is enjoyed, leave 2–3 tablespoons of sauce and vegetable bits on the hot iron plate. Add warm rice, chopped kimchi, seaweed flakes, and sesame oil. Stir-fry and press flat against the plate over medium heat for 2 minutes to form a crisp, golden rice crust (*nurungji*).

💡 Cooking & Pairing Tips / Health Benefits

- **Taurine & Stamina Powerhouse (Health Benefits):** Octopus is renowned in traditional Korean cuisine as an elite restorative food (often dubbed "ginseng of the mudflats"). It is packed with taurine and high-quality protein. Taurine aids bile acid secretion in the liver, assists in cholesterol excretion, supports cardiovascular wellness, and helps the body rapidly recover from physical fatigue.
- **High-Heat Flash Searing:** Octopus becomes tough and rubbery if cooked too long. Searing over intense heat for under 3 minutes locks in natural moisture, ensuring a plump, tender, and succulent bite.
- **The Iron Plate Crunch (*Nurungji*):** The iron griddle retains heat exceptionally well, making it the ideal vessel for creating that crispy, savory charred bottom layer in the finale fried rice.
- **Perfect Food & Beverage Pairing:** Due to the dish's spicy heat, it pairs wonderfully with cooling sides like cold bean sprout soup (*Kongnamul-guk*), fluffy steamed egg (*Gyeran-jjim*), or pickled radish wrappers (*ssam-mu*). It is also a quintessential Korean drinking snack (*anju*) alongside chilled soju or crisp lager beer.

Nutrition Facts (Estimated)

- Total Content : Approx. 250g (1 serving, excluding fried rice)
- Calories : 228 kcal
  – Sodium : 1,074mg
  – Total Carbohydrate : 21.5g
  – Sugar : 14.5g
  – Total Fat : 9.4g
  – Saturated Fat : 1.1g
  – Cholesterol : 112.0mg
  – Protein : 14.4g
  – Calcium : 72.5mg
  – Taurine : High Natural Content (~600
  –800mg)

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

A Symphonic Ode of Senses Forged by Fiery Iron and the Crimson Ocean

This sizzling stir-fried octopus on a cast-iron griddle is a grand culinary epic where the supple vitality of the deep sea meets the passionate fury of scorching cast iron. As thick, plump octopus tentacles—generously coated in a striking crimson paste of red pepper flakes and minced garlic—dance across the searing metal plate, the intoxicating, smoky aroma instantly dominates the senses. The elastic, springy resilience of the octopus delivers an explosion of clean oceanic juices with every bite, unleashing a raw and thrilling gastronomic delight.

Flash-cooking over the immense heat conductivity of a heavy iron griddle is a feat of thermodynamic brilliance at the pinnacle of seafood craft. It seizes the precise moment of optimal tenderness before the delicate cephalopod proteins tighten into rubberiness, allowing the natural crunch and sweetness of onions and carrots to elegantly soften the sharp edge of the spice. The grand crescendo—folding warm rice into the residual spicy glaze and scraping the golden, crispy scorched crust from the base—transforms the entire dining experience into a masterfully orchestrated work of art.

True gastronomy lies in liberating the spirit from the weight of daily routine, awakening every cellular nerve with exhilarating catharsis. Nakji-cheolpan-bokkeum represents the pinnacle of Korean iron-griddle dining, blending blazing heat with the untamed power of the sea to thoroughly rejuvenate the palate. Savoring this sizzling, fiery plate today is a dynamic and restorative ritual, sweeping away modern weariness and replenishing the soul with radiant, unstoppable energy.

Editor's Review

1. A Sensual Explosion of Plump Octopus Chew, Fiery Chili-Garlic Glaze, and Smoky Iron Aromas

The moment the plump octopus tentacles—sizzled in a glistening red glaze atop a scorching griddle—reach the palate, an overwhelming wave of tender yet bouncy ocean meat, pungent garlic warmth, and deep smoky heat floods the senses. The brilliant, harmonious interplay between the sweet natural umami of the seafood, the crisp crunch of sautéed vegetables, and the nutty scorched rice at the end delivers an endlessly satisfying and dynamically transcendent culinary experience.

2. Culinary Mastery Forged by High-Heat Griddle Thermodynamics and Protein-Coagulation Control

Nakji-cheolpan-bokkeum stands as a masterclass in Korean seafood griddle technique, utilizing the instant thermal conductivity of heavy cast iron to flash-sear moist octopus, locking in internal succulence without expelling juices while simultaneously preserving the snap of julienned vegetables. Managing high-heat dynamics to achieve a flawless glaze without scorching the chili paste—and later inducing optimal Maillard reaction crusting in the fried rice—represents fundamental culinary science that achieves absolute textural harmony.

3. Dynamic Solace and Fiery Catharsis Shared Around a Sizzling Griddle

Sizzling vibrantly to banish daily stress and weariness in a cloud of aromatic steam, a generous pan of spicy stir-fried octopus acts as a comforting remedy for modern exhaustion, fueling a tired spirit with raw vitality and fiery warmth. Sharing spoonfuls of the caramelized fried rice straight from the iron plate with good company washes away daily fatigue, granting an authentic sanctuary of peace, emotional release, and renewed vigor.



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