



Nakjihorong

Grilled Whole Octopus | 낙지호롱



A famous regional seafood specialty from the coastal Jeolla region (particularly Mokpo and Yeongam), featuring small, long-legged octopuses (*sebal-nakji*) skewered through the head and wrapped tightly around wooden chopsticks or rice straw. Brushed with a sweet and spicy gochujang glaze and pan-grilled or roasted over open flames, this flavorful delicacy offers the unique delight of unrolling the tender, caramelized tentacles stick by stick.

 **Prep: 20 mins** | **Cook: 10 mins** |  **Easy to Moderate** |  **Fun & Unique Skewer** |  **Iconic Jeolla Specialty**

Ingredients (2-3 servings)

- **Main Ingredients:** 4–6 small long-legged octopuses (*sebal-nakji* or small octopus, cleaned), wooden chopsticks or long bamboo skewers
- **Spicy Gochujang Glaze:** 2 tbsp gochujang (chili paste), 1 tbsp gochugaru (chili flakes), 1.5 tbsp soy sauce, 1.5 tbsp rice syrup (*mulyeot*) or sugar, 1 tbsp minced garlic, 1 tbsp mirin (cooking wine), 1 tbsp sesame oil
- **Finishing Touches:** 1 stalk green onion (finely chopped), 1 tbsp toasted sesame seeds

Allergy Information

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

Equipment

- Wooden Chopsticks / Long Bamboo Skewers, Grill Pan or Frying Pan (or Charcoal Grill), Basting Brush, Mixing Bowl, Tongs

Cooking Instructions

1. **Cleaning the Octopus:** Scrub small octopuses with 2 tbsp coarse salt or flour to remove surface slime, then rinse thoroughly under cold running water. Carefully remove the internal organs from the head cavity and remove the beak and eyes.
2. **Skewering & Wrapping (*Horong*):** Insert a wooden chopstick or long bamboo skewer through the top of the octopus head. Gather the long tentacles and wrap them tightly and neatly around the stick from top to bottom, tucking the tips firmly at the base.
3. **Mixing the Spicy Glaze:** In a small bowl, whisk together gochujang, gochugaru, soy sauce, rice syrup, minced garlic, mirin, and sesame oil until smooth.

4. **Grilling & Glazing:** Heat a lightly oiled grill pan or skillet over medium heat. Place the wrapped octopus skewers in the pan and sear for 2 minutes per side until almost cooked through. Reduce heat to medium-low, brush the spicy glaze generously over all sides, and cook for another 2–3 minutes until the sauce caramelizes slightly without burning.
5. **Garnishing & Serving:** Transfer skewers to a platter, top with finely chopped green onions and toasted sesame seeds, and serve piping hot.

Cooking & Pairing Tips

- **The Joy of Unrolling (*Horong*):** The term *horong* comes from the traditional method of wrapping and unwinding. Diners hold the stick and pull/unroll the tender, spicy tentacles bite by bite for a fun and engaging dining experience.
- **Brief Cooking Keeps It Tender:** Small octopus cooks very quickly. Flash-grilling over medium heat ensures the meat remains succulent and tender rather than tough or rubbery.
- **Perfect Food & Beverage Pairing:** A famous regional star at Jeolla coastal night markets and seafood festivals. Pairs exceptionally well with chilled soju, traditional rice wine (*Makgeolli*), or a crisp lager.

Storage Instructions

- Best enjoyed piping hot straight off the grill while the octopus is tender. Leftovers can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 1 day and reheated briefly in a hot skillet over medium heat.

Nutrition Facts (Estimated)

- Total Content : Approx. 350g (2-3 servings total)
 - Calories : 390 kcal total (approx. 111 kcal per 100g / 130 kcal per 1 serving)
 - Sodium : 880mg (44%)
 - Total Carbohydrate : 24g (7%)
 - Sugar : 12g (12%)
 - Total Fat : 10g (19%)
 - Trans Fat : 0g
 - Saturated Fat : 1.5g (10%)
 - Cholesterol : 160mg (53%)
 - Protein : 52g (95%)
 - Calcium : 60mg (6%)
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Editor's Review

1. A Sensual Fusion of Unwinding Bouncy Octopus and Spicy-Sweet Glaze

The moment the springy, tender strands of webfoot octopus—coiled tightly around wooden skewers or straw bundles and grilled to golden perfection—hit the palate, a delightful wave of spicy-sweet seasoning and snappy, bouncy texture delivers an exquisite sensory thrill. The playful experience of unwinding each coiled piece bite by bite, paired with a smoky char, creates an endlessly satisfying and dynamic gastronomic experience.

2. Culinary Mastery Forged by Coiled Skewering and High-Heat Searing Science

Nakji-horong stands as a masterclass in coastal seafood skewering, utilizing precise coiling of whole baby octopus around bamboo or straw to secure structure while employing controlled high heat to caramelize spicy glazes without toughening the delicate meat. Managing thermal intensity to lock in internal succulence and achieve a clean, glossy finish represents fundamental culinary science that achieves peak textural harmony.

3. Heartwarming Solace and Playful Joy Rooted in Southern Tradition

Echoing the joyful, communal spirit of southern coastal dining where guests playfully unwrap each skewered morsel by hand, a plate of smoky nakji-horong acts as a comforting remedy for daily weariness, filling the spirit with unpretentious warmth. Savoring this playful, flavor-packed delicacy washes away exhaustion, granting an authentic sanctuary of peace and renewed vitality.

