

My Rice Bowl: Korean Cooking Outside the Lines

Rachel Yang

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Along with being an outstanding example of taking on the American dream, My Rice Bowl presents a menu of delicious contrasts.

Chef Rachel Yang's culinary journey began—appropriately—at a kitchen table. In the mid-1990s, she was a recent Korean immigrant to the United States and wanted to seem a bit more “American.” She reinvented herself as “Rachel,” and from that point on, fate and flavor would change the newly-reborn Rachel Yang's destiny.

Knowing Yang's backstory is integral to understanding the savory, spicy, and enticingly creative recipes that make up *My Rice Bowl: Korean Cooking Outside the Lines*. Though she emigrated at age fifteen, Yang continued to live within a framework of Korean tradition and high parental expectations. Following graduation from Brown University, however, Yang found herself increasingly fascinated by the universal yet multicultural language of food, and she enrolled in New York's Institute of Culinary Education.

After proving herself as a skilled line cook in Manhattan, Yang began to fuse her knowledge of Korean cooking with the French and upscale cuisine influences she had learned on the job. She also met Seif Chirchi, a coworker who would become her husband and business partner. The couple shared an intense work ethic and enjoyed experimenting with diverse culinary elements, traits that would lead to their future success.

Now the co-owner of the Seattle restaurants Joule, Trove, and Revel, as well as Portland's Revelry, Yang uses this cookbook to offer a taste of Korea melded with an intriguing variation of alternate ingredients. Asian flavors blend with other rich ethnic notes, including sumac, paprika, pesto, and chilies. Familiar inclusions of ginger and lemongrass are complemented by olives, taro, mint, currants, and yucca.

Among the book's eighty recipes are Korean Taco Pickles, Shrimp and Bacon Dumplings, Spicy Fried Chicken, Pork Kimchi Ragout, Brisket Buns with Horseradish Pickled Cucumber, Miso Caramel Chocolate Torte, and an Apple Chutney enlivened by rice vinegar and sake. Photos are both appealingly colorful and instructive.

Along with being an outstanding example of taking on the American dream, *My Rice Bowl* presents a menu of delicious contrasts. Add resourceful perseverance and a passion for food, and make the flavors your own.

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