

Slow-Simmered Kimchi Stew (Kimchi Jjigae)

Ingredients

- 250g pork belly or any pork cut (or beef brisket, thinly sliced)
- 200g well-fermented kimchi, chopped
- 5 tbsp kimchi juice
- 2 cups water or broth
- 1/2 onion, sliced
- 1/2 block firm tofu, cut into thick slices
- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- 1 green onion, chopped (for garnish)

Optional Pork Marinade (Recommended):

- 1 tbsp gochujang
- 1 tbsp mirin or cooking wine
- 1/2 tbsp soup soy sauce (regular soy sauce works)
- 1 tbsp minced garlic
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of black pepper

Instructions

1. Combine the pork with gochujang, mirin, soup soy sauce, garlic, salt, and pepper and marinate for at least 30 minutes if using the optional marinade.
2. Heat sesame oil in a medium pot over medium heat and sauté the pork and onion for 3–4 minutes until mostly cooked and softened.
3. Stir in the chopped kimchi and cook for another 3–4 minutes.
4. Add the water or broth and the kimchi juice, bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 20–25 minutes.
5. Add the tofu slices and simmer uncovered for 5–7 minutes so the tofu absorbs the broth.
6. Add chopped green onion just before serving or sprinkle on top.
7. Serve hot with steamed rice and optional Korean side dishes.

Note & Storage

- Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.
- The flavor deepens and improves as it sits.
- Reheat gently with a splash of water or broth if needed.
- Not ideal for freezing because tofu texture may change.
- Do not skip the kimchi juice; it adds fermented depth to the stew.
- Pork belly is classic, but shoulder, collar, or ribs work well.
- Marinating the meat adds savory depth, especially with lean cuts.
- For a vegetarian option, omit the pork and use vegetable broth with extra tofu or mushrooms.
- Older, sour kimchi makes the best stew; fresh kimchi tastes lighter.
- Water keeps the stew traditional and clean, while broth adds richness.