

Proposal for Emoji: SOJU

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Date: April 15th, 2022

1. Identification.

- CLDR short name : “soju”
- Other keywords : “beverage”, “alcohol”, “bottle”, “drink”, “shot glass”, “soju”

2. Images.



- License: SOJU icon is Zia Oh’s own original work. Free to use in the context of this proposal.
- A zip file is provided with images of size 72x72 and 18x18 in color and black & white.

3. Category.

- Category : drink
- The Soju emoji should appear after SAKE



4. Background

Soju is a clear colorless distilled alcoholic beverage of Korean origin. The alcohol content varies from 12.9% to 53%. In Korean the word soju, is the combination of the character ‘소’ and the character ‘주’. The literal translation means “burned liquor” rooted from the process of heated distilling. Soju is traditionally made from rice, until the South Korean government passed a law forbidding rice as an ingredient due to shortages in 1965. Soju makers substituted rice with barley,

sweet potato, wheat and tapioca¹. In 1999, the rice soju ban was lifted, but alternative soju became widely popularized within South Korea. Another change was the beginning of diluting soju, a trend that continues to this day, as well as adding sweeteners and other flavors. Soju is the world's most sold spirit². Jinro, a brand of soju, had a total sales volume of 78.0 mil in 2018 and 86.3 mil in 2019. Consistent growth also showed in 2020, with a volume of 95.3 million³. Soju is mostly drunk as a shot, in a single gulp. Before drinking, instead of 'cheers', everyone say 'geonbae' (건배).

Selection Factors — Inclusion

A. Compatibility

There are many requests for a SOJU emoji, as discussed further in this document. However, there is no existing Unicode for this emoji and no widely-compatible emoji in production. There are the similar RED WINE, CAMPAGNE, SAKE, and WHISKEY, but there is a unique opportunity to create a SOJU that represents the culture and drinking occasions that cannot simply be represented with other alcoholic beverage emojis.

B. Usage Level

We expect the usage of the soju emoji to be medium to high, and more importantly, to increase over time. Looking at the list of Web Searches for 'soju' below, we can see the consistent upward trend over the years. This is also supplemented with the increase in sales volume.

B.1.a Google Search	28.3M
B.1.b Bing Search	1.74M
B.1.c Google Video Search	1.18M
B.1.d Google Trends: Web Search	comparable to <i>elephant</i>
B.1.e Google Trends: Image Search	comparable to <i>elephant</i>

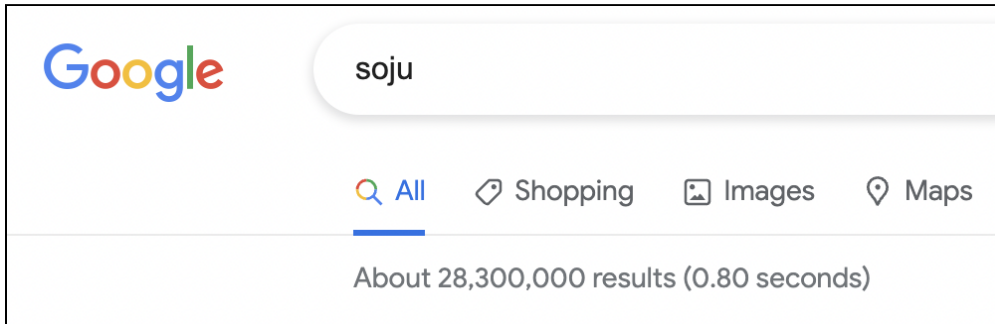
¹ <https://www.eatingwell.com/article/7897595/what-is-soju/>

² https://www.insidehook.com/daily_brief/booze/world-best-selling-spirits-2021

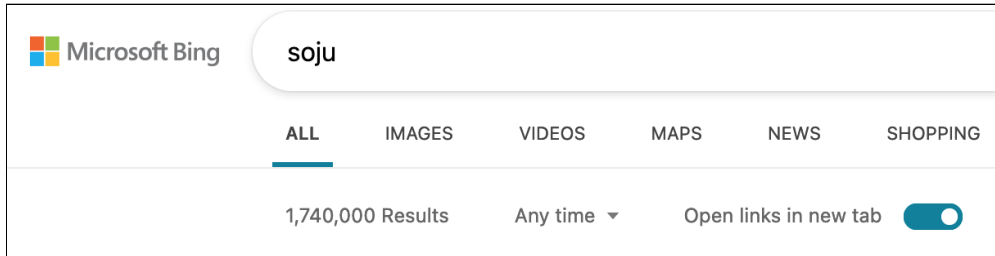
³ https://drinksint.com/news/fullstory.php/aid/9572/Jinro_tops_The_Millionaires_Club_for_20th_consecutive_year.html

1 Frequency

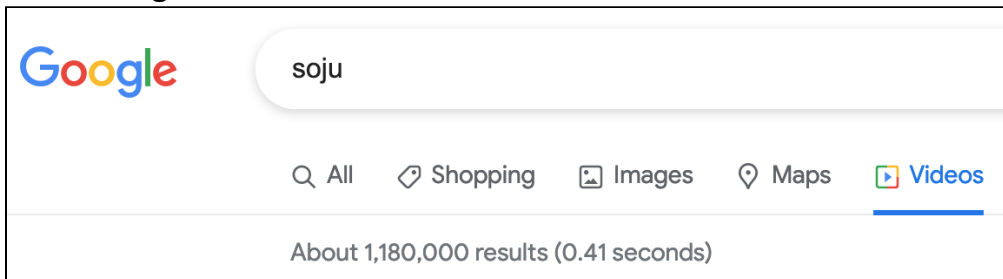
B.1.a Google Search



B.1.b Bing Search

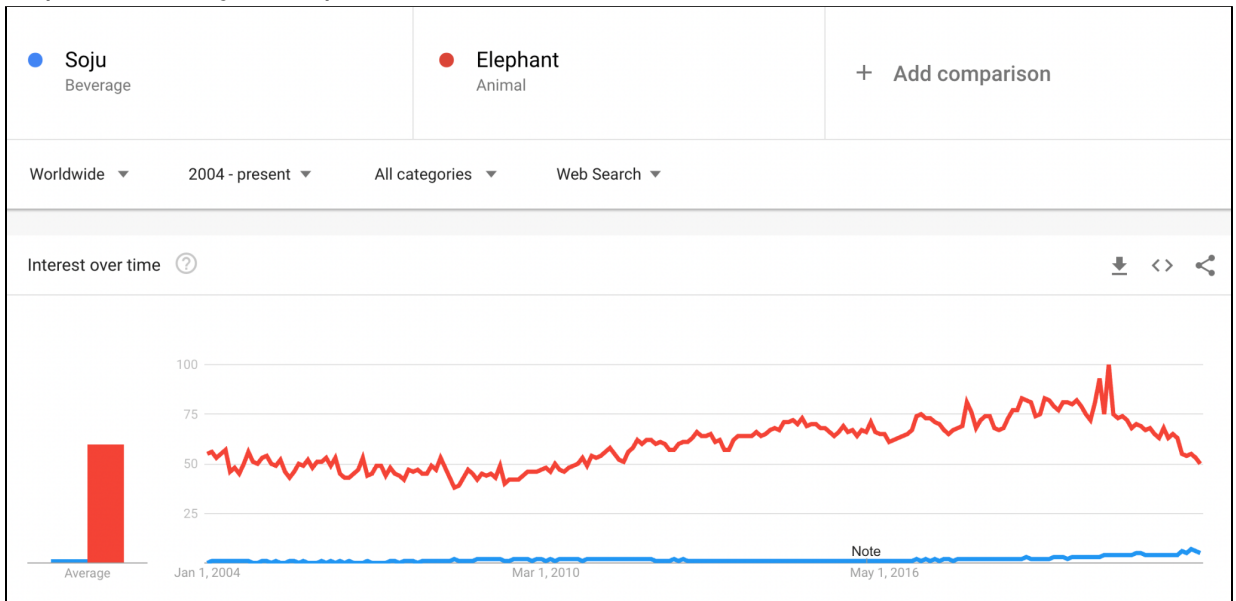


B.1.c Google Video Search



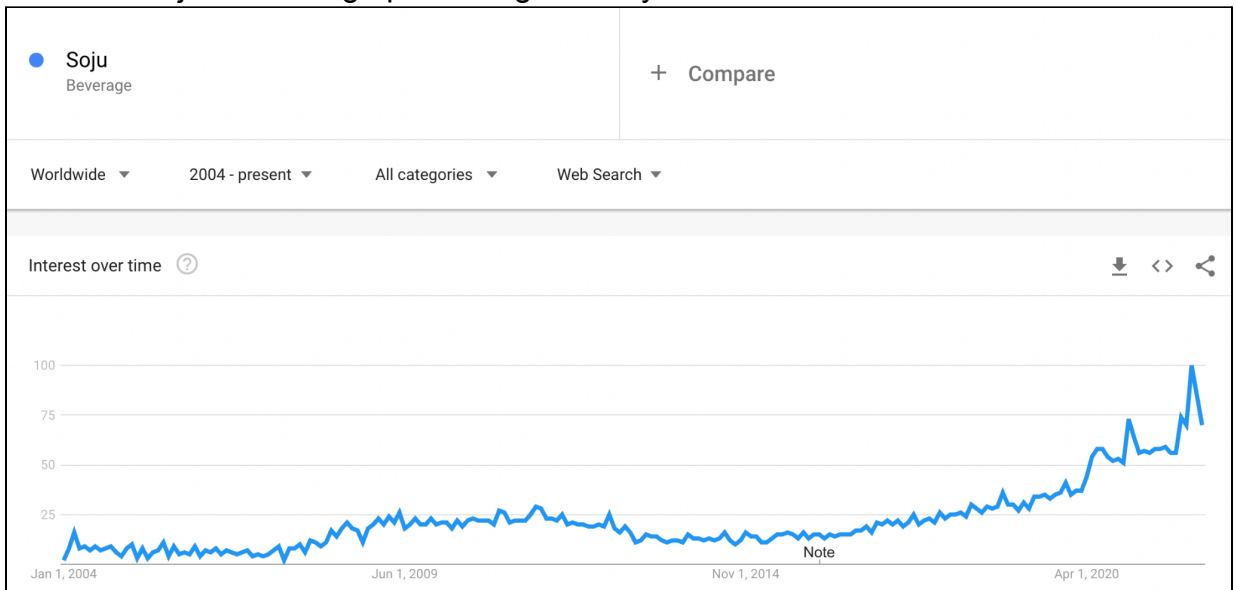
B.1.d Google Trends: Web Search

Elephant vs. Soju Comparison

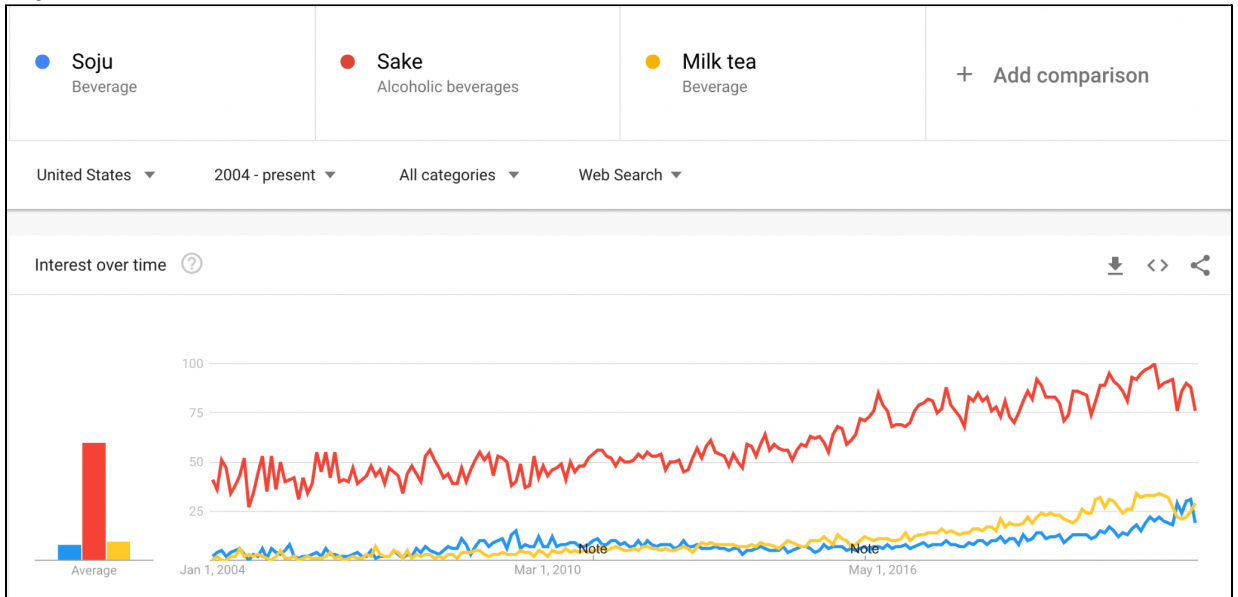


Soju

Note that Soju is trending up most significantly in the last decade



Soju vs. Sake vs. Milk tea

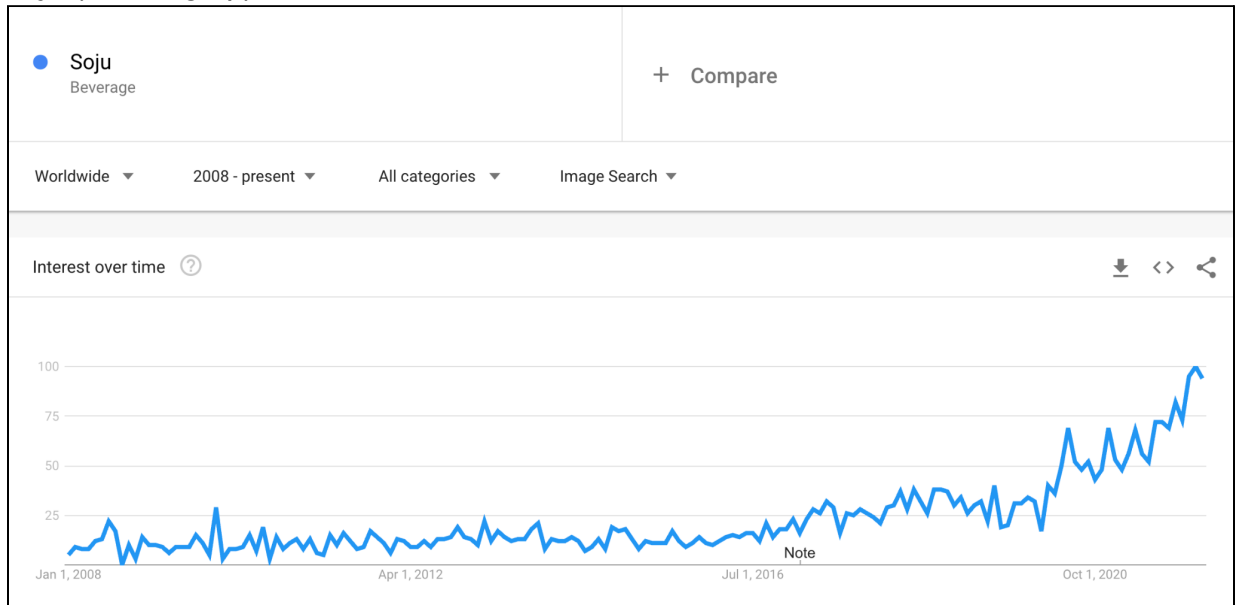


B.1.e Google Trends: Image Search

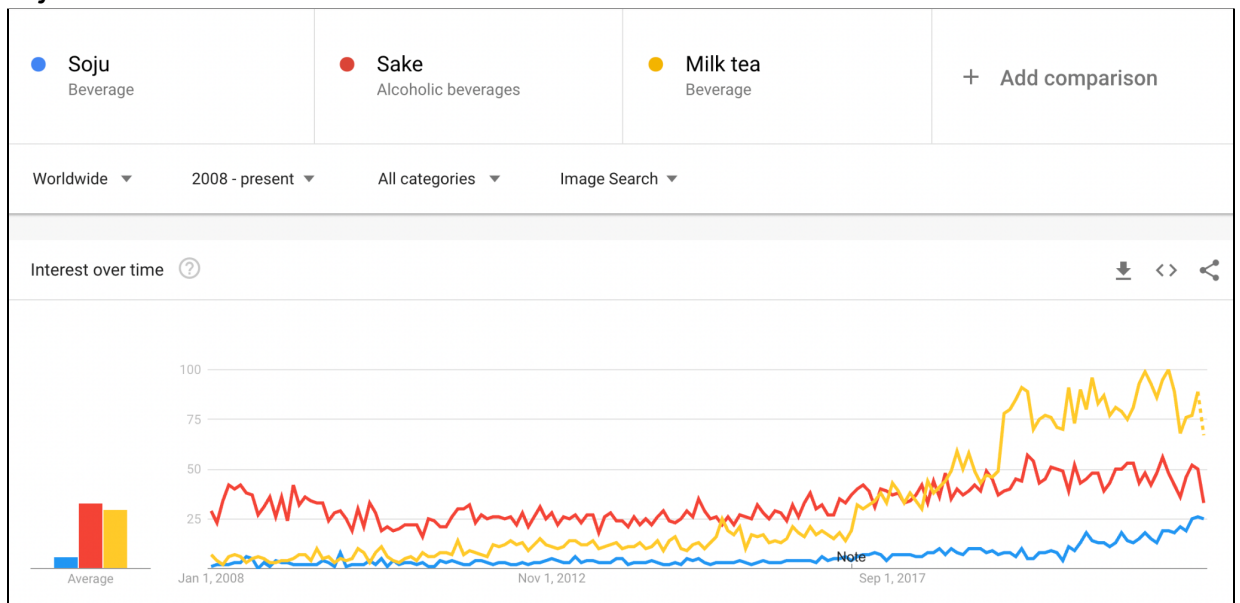
Elephant vs. Soju Comparison



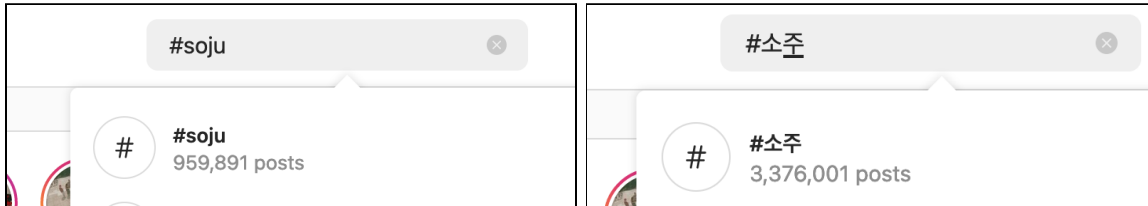
Soju (trending up)



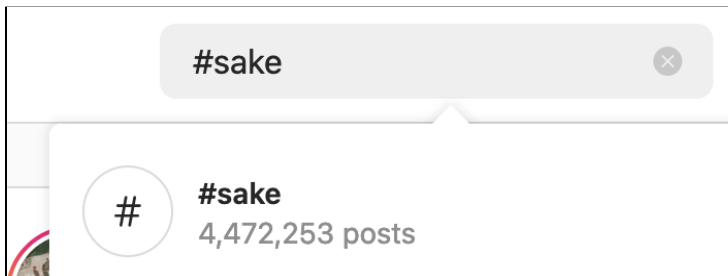
Soju vs. Sake vs. Milk tea



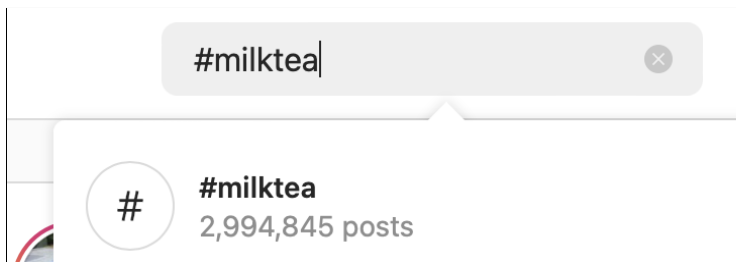
Instagram Hashtag Count Soju + 소주 (Soju in Korean)



Sake



Milk Tea



2. Multiple usages

A soju emoji may be used for purposes in social gatherings and drinking nights besides the drink itself.

3. Use in sequences

1. This emoji can be used with other food ingredients to note different flavored soju. Sequencing with FRUITS would communicate the flavor of a soju:
 - a. SOJU + BEER → SOMAEK COCKTAIL⁴

⁴ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somaek>

- b. STRAWBERRY + SOJU → STRAWBERRY SOJU
 - c. PEACH + SOJU → PEACH SOJU
- 2. This emoji can be used to represent a drinking event. Sequencing with FOOD item would communicate a dinner night:
 - a. PIG FACE + SOJU → Korean BBQ
- 3. Other actions emoji can be combined to represent more behavior
 - a. RAISED HAND + SOJU → STOP DRINKING
 - b. PINCHING HAND + SOJU → MINIMAL DRINKING
 - c. SOJU + FACE WITH SPIRAL EYES → DRUNK

4. Breaking new ground

SOJU is a new emoji of its category. It expands on the number of Asian beverage emoji such as SAKE and BUBBLE TEA.

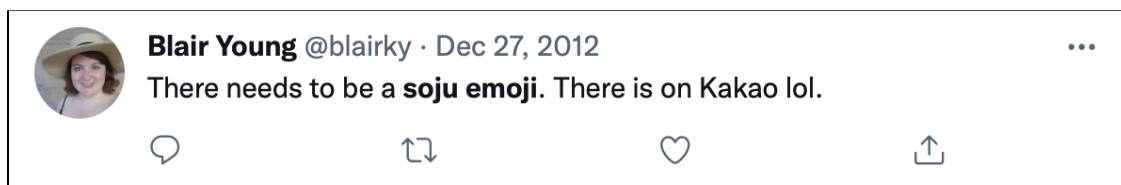
C. Distinctiveness

Compared to other drinks in the emoji lexicon, Soju's iconic green bottle paired with the short shot glass does not exist. The green bottle with the soju shot glass would be visually distinct from any current emoji.

D. Completeness

The SOJU emoji could complete the alcoholic beverage section along with the CHAMPAGNE, RED WINE, SAKE, WHISKEY, and more.

E. Frequently Requested



There are frequent requests for the SOJU emoji over social media. The tweet is to emphasize that requests for the SOJU emoji started to appear a decade ago.

Selection factors — Exclusion

F. Overly specific

SOJU is a widely known type of alcohol and while it is often consumed as is in its 'flavorless' flavor, it has a variety of flavors and is used to create different mixed drinks. The flavors such as grapefruit, peach, strawberry, etc. and different brands are often distinguished by the graphic label on the bottle and the bottle cap color.

G. Open-ended

This emoji's most recognized green glass bottle is what allows it to be utilized in many open-ended ways. There are no previous soju emojis that are similar to the image in this proposal. The image we propose as a green bottle with an empty label is generic.

H. Already representable

The current emoji set does not allow for this popular type of alcohol. Other emojis such as SAKE describe a different type of alcohol that is not representative of the drink. The closest a user can communicate 'Soju' would be an assortment of alcoholic beverages such as 'Red Wine,' 'Whiskey,' 'Beer Mug,' and more, but not being able to directly infer 'Soju.'

I. Logos, brands, other third-party IP rights, UI icons, signage, specific people, specific buildings and landmarks, deities

Soju is not confined by logos, branding, UI icons, signage, specific people or deities. While restaurants or bars may use the soju emoji to represent the product, this particular image of soju is not tied to a particular brand.

J. Transient

With the worldwide boom of Korean culture, i.e. Korean Pop Music (K-Pop) and Korean Drama (K-Drama), the iconic drink of Korea, Soju, has steadily grown

around the world as well. According to The Spirits Business⁵, Jinro Soju sold 86.3 million cases in 2019 – more than any other liquor brand in the world.⁶

K. Faulty comparison

There are no emoji similar to the SOJU as proposed.

L. Exact images

An exact image is not required.

M. Lack of required rights or license for images

n/a

N. Variations on direction

n/a

O. Includes text

n/a

P. Other information

The color of the soju bottle cap has commonly been dark green. However, with the recent introduction of flavored soju, the bottle cap colors can vary depending on the flavor (ex, citrus, green grape, peach).

⁵ <https://www.thespiritsbusiness.com/2020/07/top-10-best-selling-spirits-brands-2/11/>

⁶ <https://www.liquor.com/articles/korean-soju/>

Author Bios

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