MY KOREAN NEW YEAR

How a family tradition endures

By Min Jin Lee

Clockwise from the top: a bowl of tteok mandu guk; adding garnishes, the final step; Min Jin Lee at a Korean grocery in Tokyo selecting the tofu to use in the dumplings—the mandu in her tteok mandu guk.

Alfie Goodrich for The Wall Street Journal (3); Min Jin Lee (family photos)

My finest hour as a Korean took place on a *Seollal* morning, the first day of Korean New Year's, in January 1976.

I was 7 years old, and my family still lived in Seoul, where my two sisters and I had been born. Seollal, the New Year's Day of the lunar calendar, is one of South Korea's most significant holidays. The busy nation rests for three days for family reunions, New Year's greetings and scrumptious feast dishes.

The holiday is celebrated in similar fashion by many Asian communities that follow the lunar calendar, from the Vietnamese who observe Tet to the Chinese who sometimes refer to it as Spring Festival to the Koreans and their Seollal. This year the Lunar New Year begins on Feb. 14.

I had been given an especially lovely traditional *hanbok* to wear that year. The short jacket was a creamy satin trimmed in blue, closing in the front with a tricky sash that my mother had to tie for me. The front panel of the blue floor-skimming skirt was hand-embroidered with red plum blossoms. My shoes were like rainbow-striped miniature canoes. Of the three girls, I was the shy, middle one with wispy hair and a squint, but in that dress, I felt as bold as an ornamental red-cheeked Korean bride doll.

My sisters Myung Jin and Sang Jin, ages 9 and 5, were equally resplendent in their hanboks, and together we raced to the house of our uncle, Lee Ji Choon, heedless of our mother's instructions that young ladies did not run this way. My mom, Mi Hwa, and my dad, Boo Choon, walked leisurely behind us wearing their woolen coats over their hanboks.

The three of us girls had wound our voluminous skirts against our winter-chapped legs to run the 10 blocks from our house to Uncle's—puffs of frozen white breath trailing behind us.

We opened the front gate, cut through the stone courtyard and burst into the house—its delectable aromas embracing us. The day before, Mom had gone food shopping with my aunt, Jung Soon Duk, and all night, the two sisters-in-law had cooked the Seollal breakfast with all the feast classics: *galbi jjim* (stewed short ribs), *japchae* (sweet-potato-starch noodles with julienne vegetables and beef), *modeum jeon* (assorted meat, fish and vegetables pan fried in a light egg batter), *bindaetteok* (mung-bean-flour pancakes), *namul* (seasoned vegetables), *mandu* (dumplings) and of course, the inviolable New Year's Day dish: *tteokguk* (rice-cake soup). In a way, *tteokguk* is to Seollal what the cake is to the birthday.

According to Seollal tradition, a Korean has to eat a bowl of the bone-white soup filled with coin-shaped slices of chewy rice cake in order to age a year—a ritual far more appreciated early in life. The garnishes vary by household; my family topped our soup with seasoned shredded beef, toasted laver (thin sheets of processed seaweed), minced scallion and ribbons of omelette. Fluffy, homemade dumplings floated in our version, making it *tteok mandu guk*. Aunt's finely lacquered dining table was covered with gorgeous hillocks of food, and from the kitchen came sounds of the stirring of pots and the crispy rounds of mung-bean pancakes coming off the griddle.

But none of us could eat just yet.

At last, our parents, the slowpokes, arrived. Uncle lit up when he saw my father. Uncle was 27 and Dad was 16 when they left their northern hometown of Wonsan to flee the Communists in the winter of 1950. Thinking they'd be away for only a few days, they found themselves unable to return. Uncle had left behind a pregnant wife and never saw her again or met his child. Aunt was his second wife, with whom he had four children. Between the two brothers, they had lost contact with a father, mother, wife, three brothers, two sisters and an unborn baby.

At last it was time. My four cousins, already teenagers, and us little girls gathered in the immaculate living room with the grown-ups. The floor, made of clay and stone covered with traditional yellow oiled paper, was toasty from the old-style Korean *ondol* system that drew its under-floor warmth from the cooking stove in the kitchen. Its surface had been wiped clean by hand, and there wasn't a speck of dirt or a stray black hair to be seen. The walls were lined with black lacquered chests inlaid with mother of pearl. Jade ornaments hung from the chests' gleaming hardware like earrings on a beautiful woman.

As the family elders, Aunt and Uncle sat down on square silk floor cushions on one side of the room like monarchs, while the rest of us huddled standing on the other. The New Year's bowing would begin. The male bow is a kowtow with a head knock to the ground, and the female bow is a royal curtsy requiring some fancy footwork. First, Mom and Dad bowed, saying in unison, "May you receive abundant fortune in the New Year." Next, each of us kids bowed separately, following a strict age hierarchy, and repeated the same greeting.

Besides the awesome food, we kids looked forward to Seollal all year long, because there was no greater opportunity for cash-raising.

Left, Min Jin Lee, in blue, and her sisters celebrate the New Year in Seoul, 1976; below, Ms. Lee's parents, Mi Hwa Lee (left) and Boo Choon Lee, do likewise in New Jersey, 2005.

Upon the completion of a bow, we'd receive an elder's blessing and money. A neighborhood bowing tour to honor the elders could yield a handsome purse.

My cousins and my older sister Myung Jin finished in a jiffy and collected their rewards.

Uncle and Aunt waited for me to bow. Uncle wore a traditional jacket in a dove-gray jacquard silk with indigo silk pants. He smiled at me, hoping that I would do well. His face was like my father's but with a wider chin and deeper grooves on his forehead.

I gathered the sides of my blue skirt with both hands, stepped forward gingerly on my right foot, bent each knee to the appropriate angles, lowered my noggin to the ground, and repeated the New Year's greeting that I had been practicing privately in my head all morning.

"Whaaaaaaaaaaahhh," Uncle gasped with admiration.

It was over, and I had not made a mistake.

"That was so beautiful that you get double the money," Uncle said.

He handed me an envelope that must have been prepared earlier, then withdrew more bills from his pocket.

"Whaaaaaaaaaaahhh," everyone echoed. Double money had never happened before.

Five weeks later, my family and I landed at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport. We were no longer just Koreans, but became the immigrant variety.

That first year, we moved into a two-room rented apartment in Elmhurst in the New York City borough of Queens. In Seoul, Dad had worked as a marketing executive for a cosmetics company, and Mom had taught piano to the neighborhood children, but in America, they joined the lower end of the merchant class and ran a newspaper kiosk on 28th Street and Broadway in Manhattan. A year later, they sold the kiosk to buy a tiny wholesale jewelry business nearby, just south of Manhattan's nascent Koreatown. From Mondays to Saturdays, they sold nickel-silver earrings by the dozens to street peddlers. After being on her feet all day, at home Mom pulled her second shift—cooking, cleaning and watching over us. With the discipline of a trained musician, she managed the daily practice of our new lives. In those years, Mom's glossy chestnut hair began to gray.

Our first American Seollal reflected our immigrant pragmatism. In Korea, Seollal remains largely celebrated according to the lunar calendar. But while the Japanese were occupying the country between 1910 and 1945, Koreans were encouraged to follow the practice of observing Jan. 1 as New Year's Day, when it's called *Shinjeong*. Some Koreans still do. Consequently the country now observes two different national holidays as New Year's—one on Jan. 1 and the other according to the moon. When we moved to the U.S., Jan. 1 became our Seollal.

In our first decade in America, we didn't have extras like birthday parties or vacations. However, our parents' thrift allowed us to go from that two-room apartment to renting one with two bedrooms. Five years later, they made a down payment on a house large enough for three families in the nearby community of Maspeth. We lived on the second floor and rented out the top and bottom floors. We always had good school clothes, sneakers and warm coats, so when there was no money for new hanboks, my sisters and I didn't mention it. In America, we lost visits to Uncle's house, the lunar calendar date and the lovely silk dresses. Nevertheless, the bowing and the breakfast remained. Mom still expressed her culinary flair in our humble kitchen. She could take a discounted bag of soup bones and make a *tteokguk* broth that tasted like a miracle.

In the old days, before Korea's rapid industrialization fueled national prosperity in the 1960s, average folks dined on rice-cake soup only once a year. The dish is now readily available at Korean restaurants at a reasonable price. Historically, though, white rice was for the wealthy, and the soup required a great quantity of white rice to make the tubes of pounded rice cake symbolizing longevity and prosperity.

Mom grew up in a well-off household in Busan, a city on Korea's southeastern coast. As a young girl, the day before New Year's, she would take a heaping basket of white rice to the *tteok*-maker whose machine pounded and extruded the soft white cakes in the shape of a garden hose, called *garetteok*. She'd take the long tubes of still-warm cakes home, letting them dry a bit before the women in the house would slice the doughy cakes into thin ovals to drop into the soup. Traditionally, pheasant broth served as the base, but over the years people began to use less-expensive chicken. Nowadays, most households employ a quick broth made from brisket or flank steak or water flavored with dried anchovies or bonito powder.

Not my mom.

Sa-gol-pyuh (beef shin bone) costs little, and Mom spent hours, and I mean 10 or 12, simmering these knobs in intervals, depending on how long she could stay awake, because she had to continually add more water while skim-

ming away the fat and froth till the soup was paper-white and rich enough to coat a spoon.

In America, Mom bought her sliced ovals of *garetteok*, but she made her own mandu—pastry moons filled to bursting with ground beef, pork, tofu, chives, shredded zucchini, ginger and a smidge of garlic, salt and pepper. However, as a Busan native, she'll tell you that putting dumplings into the New Year's rice-cake soup was a concession she made in her marriage to a man from the opposite end of the country. As she'd pleat another dumpling, she'd say, "People from the North put mandu in everything. Well, your daddy likes it."

In Seoul, we'd eaten our meals off the low, carved jujube table, seated on Uncle and Aunt's pristine floors. In Queens, we sat on plywood chairs with loose spindles, our bounty spread over a chipped-veneer dining table. By 1985, I'd eaten nine bowls of New Year's soup in Queens when my parents bought a house in New Jersey. This time there were no tenants; we had a house to ourselves.

On their hard-won piece of American soil, Mom and Dad plowed up a patch of golf-course-worthy lawn and planted perilla (an herb belonging to the mint family), zucchini and tomatoes. Dad bought a Weber grill. Although they still worked in that dismal jewelry shop on 30th Street with huge rats in the basement bathroom, something happened when they finally crossed the George Washington Bridge from New York City into New Jersey: They began to enjoy life. The three of us finished college, and eventually were betrothed.

I brought home a young man who was half Japanese and half white American. We married in 1993, and Christopher learned how to bow on Seollal like a champ.

Three years later, there was a phone call from Seoul. During dinner, Uncle had slumped over the table. He'd died of a stroke. I had never forgotten his expectant smile on our final Seollal together, the silvery sheen of his traditional jacket, his kind-hearted boost for an awkward niece. This was the first time I saw my father cry.

In 1998, our son Sam was born. On his first Seollal, I dressed him in a scratchy hanbok when he was too young to protest the rainbow colored sleeves and pink puffy pants. Soon, Sam had three cousins. Then another call came from Seoul. Aunt had passed away.

With the onset of four grandchildren, another bit of tradition fell away. The three daughters lived in New York City and Seollal happened in New Jersey, so the breakfast became that most American of meals: brunch. Expected at 10:30 a.m. but appearing about 11, I'd ring the doorbell and stand behind Sam, my human shield against the why-are-you-late-on-Seollal-inquiry.

At my last Seollal in the U.S. in 2007, I knew I would be moving to Tokyo a few months later, so I paid closer attention to what my mother was preparing. Her head bent studiously, she was cutting up the toasted laver into slender uniform strips for the soup. Her hair, I noticed, was a glorious white crown.

At the table, Dad said grace, and the brothers-in-law, my sisters and I—all of us in our 30s and 40s—joked that if we passed up the rice-cake soup, we could avoid getting old—defying the law of time through ancient Korean logic. But how do you resist Mom's rice-cake soup? The Atkins diet and aging be damned; we picked up our spoons.

My first New Year in Tokyo, I decided to brave preparing my own New Year's feast, including the centerpiece, tteok mandu guk. Over the phone, Mom recited her recipes. "So easy," she said, then adding, "There's a lot of chopping."

Her japchae requires each finely slivered vegetable—red and yellow bell peppers, carrots, scallions—to be sautéed separately with olive oil, salt and black pepper. *Dangmyun* (the sweet-potato noodle)—the principal ingredient of japchae—is boiled until tender, rinsed, cut down to size, then separately sautéed in olive oil, salt and pepper. A tender omelette is cut into julienne strips. Skirt steak cut like matchsticks is marinated in soy sauce, sesame oil, brown sugar and a hint of chopped garlic. This is then sautéed separately, and removed from the pan. The slivered shiitake mushrooms are cooked in the remaining pan beef juices. What about the spinach? I asked, noting the oft-listed ingredient in several Korean cookbooks I'd been skimming. I felt her grimace over the international phone connection.

"Not beautiful," she counseled.

After all is done, the sautéed vegetables, beef, mushroom, omelette strips and noodles are tossed lightly like a salad with a splash of fine sesame oil for fragrance. Apart from the meat seasoning, soy sauce never enters the picture, because it would muddy the flavor and color. As for the short-cut version of stir-frying all the ingredients en masse?

"No."

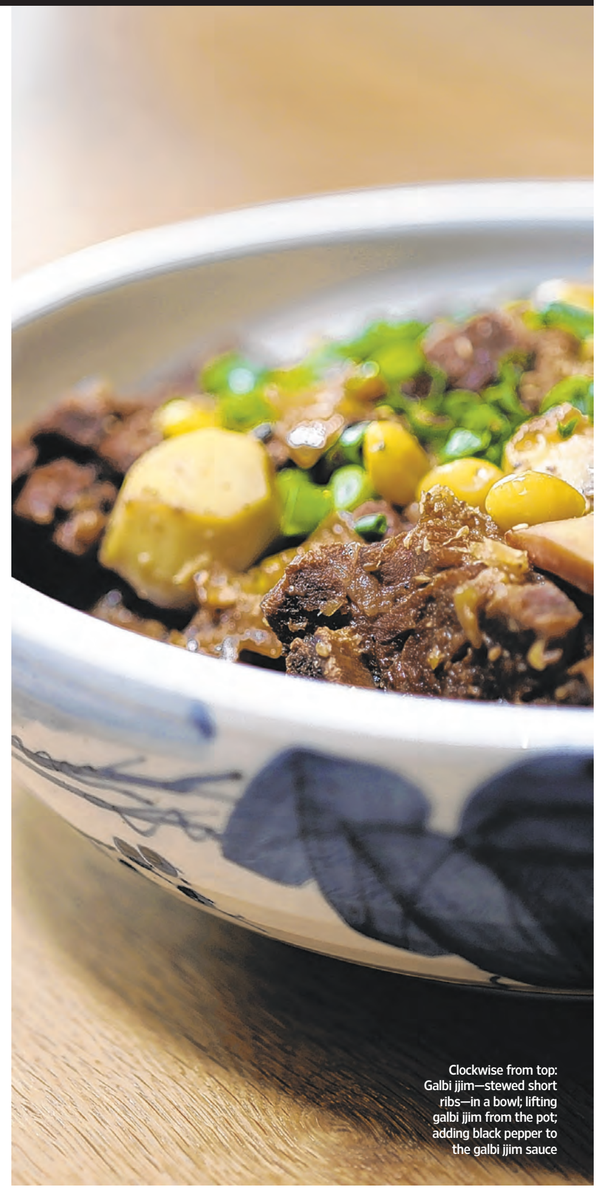
This will take hours, I thought.

As a competent home cook with a streak of bravado, I've cooked dinners for 30, but the notion of making Mom's Seollal menu made me wobbly and sad. Wasn't this too soon to try to do this without her?

Still I managed to pull it off. But when Mom and Dad decided to visit the next October, I was determined to get her to make the dishes so I could take notes. We went to a Korean market to buy the ingredients. Once back at the apartment, Mom and I began prepping for the Seollal meal. In no time, the fragrance of brown sugar and ginger of her galbi jjim, the stewed short ribs, filled my kitchen. A few turns of the wrist and her dumpling filling was ready. She placed a teaspoon of it onto the floury translucent pastry on her left hand and sealed it expertly using a finger dab of egg white. Rows of dumplings soon lined the tray like ivory beads on an abacus.

In places and moments, my Seollal had been lost, but still, we had this.

Min Jin Lee is a writer based in Tokyo.



Clockwise from top: Galbi jjim—stewed short ribs—in a bowl; lifting galbi jjim from the pot; adding black pepper to the galbi jjim sauce

Alfie Goodrich for The Wall Street Journal

Adrian David Cheok

WHAT'S NEXT

ADRIAN DAVID CHEOK

By Steve Mollman

Another in a series of articles pondering the shape of things to come

These days, millions of people tote a camera-equipped phone that packs serious sensor capabilities.

For instance, the latest iPhone—or handset based on Google's Android platform—can pinpoint your location, thanks to assisted GPS. It also knows how the phone is being tilted in your hand and in what direction you're pointing it, among other things.

With the flood of new apps that leverage such features, there's no stopping the layers of information you can receive on your smartphone.

The Sekai Camera app (free on iTunes) lets you share "air tags"—virtual sticky-notes tied to a specific location—around Tokyo with other users of the same app. Say you pass by a cool bookstore that's been tagged because it has a great collection of foreign magazines. View the shop through your phone and the tag pops up on the screen. With the app Nearest Tube ($1.99), arrows on the handset guide you to the nearest underground rail station in London. And apps such as Tweet 360 and TwittARound (both 99 U.S. cents) can tell you—whichever direction you face—who within your Twitter network is up ahead.

Welcome to the new world of augmented reality, where through inventive apps, virtual information tied to real-world locations—when you view them through your smartphone—appears on your handset screen.

Of course, it's nothing new to Adrian David Cheok. With a penchant for tinkering—as a youth in Australia, he loved to disassemble and reassemble everything from electronic toys to his Apple II computer—and a comfort level with different realities (he has Chinese-Malaysian roots on his father's side and Greek on his mother's), Mr. Cheok found himself drawn early on to the field of augmented reality, a once-obscure discipline that is now of-the-moment.

Today, the 38-year-old is director of the National University of Singapore's Mixed Reality Lab, where he strives to inspire his Ph.D. students with his inimitable spirit of tinkering. He also doubles as a professor at Keio University in Tokyo. It's a long-distance juggling act that has him, his Japanese wife and their 3-year-old daughter splitting their time between Singapore and Japan.

Weekend Journal Asia recently caught a few minutes with the busy Mr. Cheok to talk about his life and where augmented reality might take us next.

Where do you like to vacation?

Last year, I traveled nearly 200,000 miles, and that's been pretty constant for the last five or six years. So now I really don't like to travel. I hate airports and airplanes now. If I have any free time, I spend it with my daughter.

Do you prefer Japan or Singapore?

They both have pros and cons. The research support is amazing in Singapore. It's a nice and easy city to live in. Japan is more interesting from a lifestyle perspective. There's so much traditional and modern culture.

How do you view your role in the field?

I would like my Ph.D. students to be the inventors and to make the next stage of invention. And if I can make some benefit to society, especially young people, using AR [augmented reality], that's one of my big goals now. I really think this next generation is totally different. They're the first generation to grow up totally digital. I think that we can make really new kinds of learning, so playing and learning become one. I think that's what I want to do at the next stage.

What's next for augmented reality?

In two years, it'll be almost standard for the smartphone. You point your phone at the bus stop and see when the next bus is coming.

What about further into the future?

In 2015, we may see that we can do AR directly onto our...spectacles or sunglasses. Then you don't need to look at the phone screen anymore. Let's say you're at a party and you know you've met someone before but you can't quite remember. If you've got this tiny display...you can look at someone to see who they are, when was the last time you met them, where you met them last. It's a kind of augmented memory.

After 10 years time we'll be able to have some kind of direct brain interface. Now you use a Web browser to search Google or something, but if you really can project directly onto your eyes [through a contact lens] or direct information into your brain, you maybe can just walk on the street, think of a question, and directly get the answer from Google without any external device. Virtual reality can merge with our brains.

Steve Mollman is a writer based in Asia.

Skipping lunch

The new model for high-end golf clubs: Focus on the game, forget the extras

The earliest golf clubhouses in the U.S., like most of their predecessors in Great Britain, were golf-only affairs. The elegant Shinnecock Hills clubhouse on New York's Long Island, designed by Stanford White in the early 1890s, was the first U.S. structure purpose-built for golf, and it still keeps watch, relatively modest in size, over the great links-style course there.

It didn't take long, however, for most golf clubs to morph into country clubs with stupendous clubhouses that offered fine dining and access to other recreational pursuits. (Country clubs built around hunting, boating and carriage-driving actually predated golf in the U.S. by several

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JOHN PAUL NEWPORT

years.) There have always been a few like Shinnecock, however, that kept strictly to golf, and such pure golf clubs are making something of a comeback these days. For people whose primary interest is golf, they suddenly make a lot more economic sense than do the grand old behemoths (about which more later).

You could see the trend beginning in the early 2000s, just as the golf-course building boom was ending, with the opening of such clubs as Dallas National in Texas, The Dye Preserve in Florida, Friar's Head on Long Island, and the Chechessee Creek Club in South Carolina. All of these have relatively small, understated clubhouses, superb golf courses (those at the last two designed by Ben Crenshaw and Bill Coore), and no swimming pools or tennis courts. It's all about the golf.

Whisper Rock in Arizona, which opened in 2004, is another good example. It's expensive, with initiation fees running now at $130,000, and, as an all-male club, politically incorrect. (Women and children are allowed to play golf there several days a week.) But its casual atmosphere (club motto: "It's all about the hang") and two highly ranked courses have attracted an enviable membership that includes something like 40 current or former PGA Tour players, all of whom pay the full initiation fee and regular dues. During a recent lunch visit there, I spotted Paul Casey, Gary McCord and Peter Kostis.

The low-handicap membership and high expense makes Whisper Rock something of an outlier, but the clubhouse, confidently done in Arizona-desert style, is to the point. To the left of the entrance is an intimate, open locker room. To the right is the grill room with large circular tables. Except for the pro shop, that's about it. Architecturally, everything feeds out to the putting green, the driving range and the courses beyond.

None of these pared-down golf clubs has anything approaching fine dining. "The big formal dining room, where men wear jackets and ties and women get somewhat dressed up, just doesn't work anymore," said Richard Diedrich, a clubhouse architect from Atlanta. Yet most of the big, old-style golf clubs and country clubs are saddled with huge dining facilities. Joe Webster, who developed and manages The Dye Preserve, put it in dollars-and-cents terms: "Most clubs that are open for dinner at night are losing seven figures on their food and beverage operations." There's no way to know this for sure, but it jibes with anecdotal lore.

Those losses are folded into dues. Mr. Webster said that a typical club with 300 members might spend $1.5 million a year on course maintenance, or $5,000 a member. "Everything you pay in dues above that is basically so you can have lunch," he said. Lunch is his shorthand for the cost of supporting a kitchen, other services such as the locker rooms, and clubhouse staff—essentially, all the non-golf amenities that a club offers.

Whisper Rock: Nick Novelli (Medinah)

Above, Whisper Rock in Arizona is a high-end club with a pared-down clubhouse—grill room, locker room, pro shop; left, the traditional, opulent ballroom at Medinah Country Club in Illinois

Dues at Dye Preserve, which has a 15,000-square-foot clubhouse (and is not open for dinner), are $9,000 a year. "So that's $4,000 for lunch," he said. Another Florida club, with a 50,000-square-foot clubhouse plus a pool and tennis, charges $21,000 in dues. "So those members are paying $16,000 to eat and for the other stuff," he said. Yet another club in the area, built in the go-go 1990s as a real-estate play, has an even bigger clubhouse and is operating under bankruptcy protection.

Certainly there will always be some people able and willing to pay for the super-high-end experience, as well as demand for reasonably priced, family-oriented country clubs. But smaller economic models, whether for full-bore country clubs or stand-alone golf clubs, are likely to dominate if and when new private development picks up again.

The grand old heaps remain, though, and many can be explored in Mr. Diedrich's recently-published coffee-table book, "The 19th Hole: Architecture of the Golf Clubhouse." It includes photographs and site-plan sketches of 62 of the most famous and sumptuous U.S. clubhouses, some of them quite recent.

Many of the great early clubhouses were modeled after the English country estates, complete with liveried staff, that the rising upper-middle classes in America aspired to but couldn't afford. Soon, clubhouse architects struck out in new directions. Medinah Country Club west of Chicago, with its colorful Moorish domes and Byzantine structure, is downright imperial. The iconic stone Winged Foot clubhouse in suburban New York, completed in the 1920s, was expressly designed to "inspire spiritual feelings."

As golf spread, regional vernaculars developed. The Mediterranean vision of developer Addison Mizner, with terra-cotta roofs and wrought-iron elements, swept through Florida. Desert Highlands in Arizona, from the 1980s, incorporated ancient pueblo structures into a design that melded almost seamlessly into the surrounding desert rock formations. In the mountain West, timber beams and stacked raw stone became the standard.

It's striking, given the large available budgets and the presumed desire of developers to make a name for themselves, how few U.S. clubs ever risked avant-garde designs. There have been a few recently, notably The Bridge, again on Long Island, and Liberty National on New York Harbor, but most of the interiors look like extensions of the living room. Comfy chairs surrounding a big communal fireplace seem almost to be a requirement for clubhouses, even in the heat of the Deep South.

The most effective overall designs, Mr. Diedrich said, are those that best integrate the clubhouse and the golf course—terraces, for example, that offer sweeping views of the finishing holes. From the golfers' point of view out on the course, the clubhouse, especially when it's all aglow at twilight, is home port. "That relationship between the structure and the course is the essence, that's the constant, and I hope it never changes," Mr. Diedrich said.

THE RECIPES

TTEOK MANDU GUK—Rice-Cake Soup with Dumplings

From Mi Hwa Lee as interpreted by her daughter Min Jin Lee

I. Guk: Mom's Beef Broth

This broth can be made in advance and frozen for up to a month.
Preparation time: 15 to 30 minutes
Cooking time: 10 to 12 hours
Serves: six to eight people

Ingredients
- 1.5 kilograms beef shin bones (sa-gohl-pyuh—available in Korean markets)
- 500 grams beef shank meat
- 500 grams skirt or flank steak

1. Wash shin bones in cold water. Place bones, shank meat and steak in a large stockpot and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil on high heat and let boil for five minutes.

2. Remove and rinse the bones, shank meat and steak. Dump the water, clean the pot and add back the bones, shank meat and steak. Pour in 3.5 liters of cold water, making a note of the water level. This is the level you will want to keep restoring as you add water during the second simmer (step 5).

3. Over high heat, bring the pot to a boil, then lower to a simmer, cover the pot, and cook for two hours.

4. Remove the shank meat and steak.

5. Continue simmering the broth and bones in the covered pot for eight to 10 hours more, skimming the surface occasionally. Add water continually to restore the original level.

6. As the broth simmers, let the skirt steak cool and then shred it. Dress it with seasoning (in a bowl, mix 3 tablespoons soy sauce, 2 tablespoons sesame oil, 1 tablespoon sugar or 2 tablespoons honey, 1 tablespoon chopped garlic and 1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds; adjust proportions to taste) and refrigerate. This will be served as a garnish for the final dish.

7. When the broth looks milky white, remove the bones and any marrow.

8. Let the broth cool, then strain it through a fine sieve. This should yield 3 to 4 liters. It can be refrigerated overnight and reheated for the tteok mandu guk. You will use about 350 milliliters of broth for each bowl.

A bowl of tteok mandu guk, ready to eat

II. Mandu (Dumplings)

You will likely use two to four dumplings a person for the tteok mandu guk. Extras can be frozen, and cooked later straight from the freezer, either pan-fried in olive oil on low heat (cover the pan), steamed or boiled in broth.

Ingredients
- 50 to 75 wonton skins or gyoza skins (the number needed depends on the size—85mm, 95mm or 110mm in diameter)

Filling
- 310 to 340 grams hard tofu (225 grams after water is squeezed out)
- 1 zucchini, grated (114 grams after water is squeezed out)
- 225 grams ground beef (or ground chicken)
- 225 grams ground pork
- 1/2 yellow onion, finely chopped
- 30 grams chopped Chinese chives or scallions
- 2 tablespoons chopped ginger
- 2 tablespoons chopped garlic
- 1 egg yolk
- 2 tablespoons sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 2 egg whites (to seal the dumplings)

1. Place tofu inside a square of cheesecloth and squeeze out as much water as possible.

2. Place grated zucchini inside the cheesecloth and squeeze out as much water as possible.

Mandu ready to cook

3. Combine the tofu, zucchini, ground pork, onion, chives, ginger, garlic, egg yolk, sesame oil, salt and pepper in a large mixing bowl.

4. Place egg whites in a small shallow bowl.

5. Take a wonton skin and dab egg white around the edge.

6. Place about a teaspoon of filling into the center of the skin, fold over and pleat the edges. Take care not to overstuff, or the dumpling will burst when cooking.

7. Place the completed dumpling, spaced one centimeter apart, on a cookie sheet or plate that has been covered with aluminum foil and dusted with flour. Cook immediately (instructions in Part III), cover and refrigerate, or freeze in an airtight container.

III. Tteok Mandu Guk (The Final Combination)

Ingredients
- 1.5 kilograms rice-cake ovals (tteok, available in Korean markets)
- Rolled egg omelet, sliced into half-centimeter-wide ribbons (optional)
- 240 milliliters shredded Korean-style toasted laver (seaweed) (optional)
- Seasoned shredded skirt steak

1. Soak the rice-cake ovals in cold water for 20 to 30 minutes to separate and slightly soften. (If they are fresh, they do not need to be soaked.) After soaking, the ovals will still be hard until cooked.

2. Heat the guk—beef broth—to boiling.

3. Drain the rice-cake ovals and add to the broth.

4. If the mandu (dumplings) are frozen, add right after the rice-cake ovals (two to four dumplings a person). If they're not frozen, wait two to three minutes.

Different kinds of tteok for sale at a Korean grocery in Tokyo

5. When the mandu float to the top, they're done. It takes five to seven minutes (six to eight minutes if frozen). The ovals take seven to nine minutes; they should be soft and chewy.

6. Serve in individual bowls. Garnish each serving with a few tablespoons of the steak, omelet ribbons and laver.

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▶ To see mandu in the making, click on **Asia.WSJ.com**.