Sauces / South Korea

Galbi Marinade

A sweet, fruity, and deeply savory bath for Korean short ribs — built on the natural meat-tenderizing enzymes of Asian pear, amplified with soy, sesame, and a whisper of ginger. After even a few hours in this marinade, flanken-cut short ribs caramelize to a dark, lacquered finish on the grill with edges that smell of sweet char.

Time 240 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 120 ml Soy sauce
- ☐ 40 g Brown sugar
- ☐ 10 g Fresh ginger, grated
- ☐ 40 g Scallions, thinly sliced
- ☐ 30 ml Mirin or sake
- ☐ 120 g Asian pear, grated (with juice)
- ☐ 20 g Garlic, grated
- ☐ 30 ml Sesame oil
- ☐ 3 g Black pepper, coarsely ground

Let's make it.

01 Grate the Asian pear on the coarse side of a box grater, capturing all the juice — those enzymes are the whole point. Grate the garlic and ginger on the fine side. Combine everything in a bowl and whisk until the sugar is fully dissolved. Do not blend this in a machine unless you want a very smooth marinade; the small pear and scallion fragments contribute texture that adheres to the meat and caramelizes on the grill. Taste the raw marinade: it should be strongly sweet, deeply salty, and faintly boozy from the mirin, with the pear's floral fruitiness clearly distinguishable beneath the soy. The sesame oil will sit on top; a quick whisk before pouring over the meat is all it needs. The marinade is intentionally bold — it must penetrate and season flanken-cut ribs that are over a centimeter thick.

02 Score the flanken-cut short ribs through to the bone at 2 cm intervals to allow the marinade deeper penetration. Place the ribs in a zip-lock bag or a deep tray and pour the marinade over, turning to coat every surface including between the bones. Press out the air and seal. Refrigerate for a minimum of 4 hours; overnight (12–14 hours) produces the most tender, deeply flavored result. Do not exceed 24 hours — the pear's proteolytic enzymes will eventually break down the muscle fibers to a mushy, paste-like texture. If time is short, the enzymes in Asian pear are efficient enough that even 1 hour produces a meaningfully tenderized and flavored rib. Before grilling, remove the ribs from the refrigerator 30 minutes early to take the chill off; cold ribs contract when they hit heat.

03 Prepare a charcoal grill with a hot zone (you should be able to hold your hand 5 cm above the grate for no more than 2 seconds) or heat a cast-iron grill pan over maximum heat until it just begins to smoke. Shake excess marinade from the ribs — too much surface liquid will cause steaming and prevent caramelization. Lay the ribs across the grates in a single layer and do not move them for 2 minutes. The sugar in the marinade will caramelize quickly and create the characteristic dark, lacquered crust. Flip once and cook another 2 minutes. Flanken-cut galbi is thin and cooks through in 4–5 minutes total. Cut into individual rib pieces at the table with scissors — the traditional way to serve. Watch carefully during the last minute; the sugar makes these ribs prone to scorching.

Recipe & provenance ForkRecipe Kitchen / ForkRecipe / FoodML and contributors / CC BY-SA 4.0.
Original recipe and attribution CC BY-SA 4.0
Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
recipes.dvs-services.be / galbi-marinade