Soups / South Korea

Korean Anchovy Broth (Myeolchi Yuksu)

The understated backbone of Korean home cooking — dried anchovies and kelp steeped in cold water and brought to a brief boil, yielding a clean, slightly salty, deeply savory broth that supports everything from doenjang jjigae to tteokbokki without ever demanding the spotlight.

Time 25 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 30 g Dried large anchovies (myeolchi), heads and guts removed
- ☐ 15 g Dried kelp (dashima/kombu)
- ☐ 1200 ml Cold water
- ☐ 10 g Dried shiitake mushrooms (optional)
- ☐ 1 stalk Green onion (white part, optional)

Let's make it.

01 Remove the heads and intestinal tracts from the dried anchovies — the head adds bitterness and the gut adds fishiness. Split each anchovy lengthwise and pull out the dark gut strand. In a dry skillet over medium heat, toast the cleaned anchovies for 2–3 minutes until fragrant and slightly more golden. This step removes some fishiness and deepens the flavor. The anchovies are ready when they smell nutty and savory rather than sharply fishy.

02 Place toasted anchovies and kelp (dashima) in cold water in a medium saucepan. If using, add dried shiitake mushrooms and the white part of a green onion for additional depth. Bring to a boil over medium heat, which takes about 10–12 minutes. Remove the kelp as soon as the water comes to a boil — simmering kelp past this point releases bitter compounds. Once boiling, reduce heat and simmer the anchovies for 10 more minutes. Do not boil aggressively.

03 Remove the kelp (already done), then pour the broth through a fine-mesh strainer. Press gently on the anchovies to extract the last of their liquid — this is different from dashi, where the bonito flakes must not be pressed. Anchovy broth is less delicate and benefits from pressing. The strained broth is ready to use as a base for tteokbokki (spicy rice cakes), doenjang jjigae (fermented soybean paste stew), or kongnamul (bean sprout soup). Season with salt only in the final dish.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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