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### Korean Food and American Food

Food is a part of every country's culture. For example, people in both Korea and America cook and serve traditional foods on their national holidays. Koreans eat *ddukguk*, rice cake soup, on New Year's Day to celebrate the beginning of a new year. Americans eat turkey on Thanksgiving Day. Although observing national holidays is a similarity between their food cultures, Korean food culture differs from American food culture in terms of utensils and appliances, ingredients and cooking methods, and serving and dining manners.

The first difference is in utensils and appliances. Koreans' eating utensils are a spoon and chopsticks. Koreans mainly use chopsticks and ladles to cook side dishes and soups; also, scissors are used to cut meats and other vegetables, like *kimchi*. Korean food is based on rice; therefore, a rice cooker is an important appliance. Another important appliance in Korean food culture is a *kimchi* refrigerator. Koreans eat many fermented foods, like *kimchi*, soybean paste, and red chili paste. For this reason, almost every Korean household has a *kimchi* refrigerator, which is designed specifically to meet the storage requirements of *kimchi* and facilitate different fermentation processes.

While Koreans use a spoon and chopsticks, Americans use a fork and a knife as main eating utensils. Americans use various cooking utensils like a spatula, tongs, spoon, whisk, peeler, and measuring cups. In addition, the main appliance for American food is an oven since American food is based on bread. A fryer, toaster, and blender are also important equipment to

prepare American foods.

Besides different utensils and appliances used, some other differences can be found in ingredients and cooking methods. Seafood, like fish, crab, clam, and seaweed, are common ingredients in Korea because Korea is a peninsula, therefore surrounded by seas. Korean dishes tend to smell since many fermented seasonings like *gochujang* (red chili paste), *doenjang* (soybean paste), soy sauce, fish sauce, and garlic are used. Korean foods are usually made by boiling, steaming, and stir-frying.

On the other hand, meats like chicken, pork, and beef are often used for American foods because America is a vast continent, containing many areas where these animals are raised. Americans use salt, pepper, dried herbs, and spices to cook meats. Diverse dipping sauces and dressings are also developed for cooking meats and fresh vegetables. Americans usually cook by grilling, frying, and roasting.

The way to use ingredients and the cooking methods are different between Korean and American food culture; moreover, serving and dining manners are also quite different. A normal Korean meal consists of rice, soup, and many communal side dishes, called *banchan*. Korean food is usually served in a bowl. *Banchan*, side dishes, are located in the middle of the table, and side dishes can be shared with others. In terms of table manners, a spoon is used for eating rice and soup, and chopsticks are used for eating side dishes. Koreans think that picking up food with the hands is rude. Another custom is that only after the eldest eats can others start to eat.

In contrast, regular American meals consist of a main dish, one or two side dishes, and breads. American food is served on a plate. Americans tend to put the food on their own plate before they start eating. Picking bread up with the hand is common in America. Americans hold a knife in the right hand and a fork in the left hand. After a few bite-sized pieces of food are cut,

the knife is placed on the side of the plate with the blade facing the food. Americans don't bring a knife to their lips directly. A knife is used only for cutting.

In conclusion, Korean and American food cultures are different in many ways. Not only are the tools and equipment they use for eating and cooking different, but the cooking styles and main ingredients are also different from each other. Furthermore, the cultures have their own styles of serving and table manners.