



Korean Ladder Study Note

찜질방 / 목욕탕

Inside a Korean Bathhouse

Level	Topic	Focus
B1 · Intermediate TOPIK 3	Culture Etiquette	찜질방 / 목욕탕 Inside a Korean Bathhouse

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-CULTURE-ETQ-001>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gtd6peh9U00>

Visit [koreanladder.com](https://www.koreanladder.com) for all free lessons

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

So my Korean friend texted '찜질방 가자' — let's hit the bathhouse. My very first panic question was: do I... bring a swimsuit?

No swimsuit. 수영복은 없어요. In the actual 목욕탕, the wet bath, everyone washes 맨몸으로 — bare-skinned. It sounds wild, but here it's completely ordinary.

Two words, two spaces. 목욕탕 is the wet bath — separated into 남탕 for men and 여탕 for women. 찜질방 is the big clothed common area with sauna rooms and snacks.

For the common floor you change into 찜질복 — matching cotton shorts and a tee they hand you at the counter. In English, think 'sauna pajamas' that everyone wears.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	찜질방 처음이에요? —	First time at the sauna?



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	네, 뭐부터 해요? —	Yes, what do I do first?
Hana	먼저 씻고, 찜질복으로 갈아입으세요. —	Wash first, then change into the sauna clothes.
Junho	식혜는 어디서 사요? —	Where do I buy the sikhye?
Hana	매점이에요. 계란도 있어요. —	At the snack shop. They have eggs too.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
찜질복 jjimjilbok	the sauna outfit (loose shirt + shorts)	For the common floor you change into 찜질복 — matching cotton shorts and a tee they hand you at the counter. In English, think 'sauna pajamas' that everyone wears.
사물함 / 옷장 samulham / otjang	the locker for your clothes	Inside, you get a 사물함 — a locker for your clothes and valuables. 옷장 works too; it literally means 'clothes cabinet.' Your key becomes a little wrist band.
온탕 · 냉탕 · 열탕 ontang · naengtang · yeoltang	warm pool · cold pool · hot pool	Then you choose your pool. 온탕 is the warm one, 냉탕 is the cold plunge, and 열탕 is the really hot one. Notice the pattern — one word 탕 for 'pool,' and the front syllable tells you the temperature.
한증막 hanjeungmak	a hot sauna / kiln room	Now change into your 찜질복 and head to the common floor for the 한증막 — the sauna rooms. Some are toasty, some are like sitting inside a warm clay kiln.
식혜 sikhye	sweet cold rice-punch drink	After you sweat, the reward: 식혜. It's a sweet, cold rice punch — the unofficial national drink of the 찜질방. Ice cold, a little grainy, absolutely perfect.
맥반석 계란 maekbanseok gyeran	stone-baked eggs	Pair it with 맥반석 계란 — eggs slow-baked on hot 맥반석 stone until they're brown and smoky. Crack two, sip your 식혜, and you're officially doing it right.
양머리 yangmeori	the 'sheep-head' towel wrap	That's the 양머리 — literally 'sheep head.' 양 is sheep, 머리 is head. You roll the towel edges in twice and it puffs into two little ears. It keeps your hair back and it's basically the 찜질방 uniform.



Grammar / Structure Notes

수영복은 없어요.

수영복은 없어요. — No swimsuit.

In the wet bath, everyone bathes bare-skinned — it's normal.

목욕탕 vs. 찜질방

목욕탕 vs. 찜질방 — the wet bath vs. the sauna complex

목욕탕 = nude wet bath, gender-separated. 찜질방 = clothed common floor with saunas.

찜질복

찜질복 — the sauna outfit (loose shirt + shorts)

Given to you at the counter. Everyone wears the same one.

신발장에 신발을 넣으세요.

신발장 + 에 + 신발 + 을 + 넣으세요 — Put your shoes in the shoe locker.

Step one, right at the entrance: 신발장에 신발을 넣으세요 — put your shoes in the shoe locker. 신발장 is the shoe locker, 에 marks 'into,' and 넣으세요 means 'please put in.'

사물함 / 옷장

사물함 / 옷장 — the locker for your clothes

Your shoe-locker key often unlocks your clothes locker too.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
양머리	yangmeori
시케	sikhye
식혜 주세요.	sikhye juseyo.
시케 주세요	sikhye juseyo.
한증막	hanjeungmak

Self-Check

- 1 Say 찜질방 / 목욕탕 three times: slow, natural, then inside a short sentence.
- 2 Write one original sentence that was not in the video.
- 3 Rewatch the YouTube lesson and pause when the same pattern appears.



Related / Subsequent Studies

Lesson	Why study it next	Link
경조사 예절 결혼식·장례식 봉투와 조의금	B2 Culture: compare 경조사 예절 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-CULTURE-ETQ-001
고개 숙여 인사 How Koreans Bow and Greet Elders	A1 Culture: compare 고개 숙여 인사 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-CULTURE-ETQ-003
나이 / 띠 / 빠른 년생 Why Koreans Ask Your Age First	A2 Culture: compare 나이 / 띠 / 빠른 년생 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-CULTURE-ETQ-002
눈치 / 정 / 체면 The Social Concepts Behind Korean Behavior	C1 Culture: compare 눈치 / 정 / 체면 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-CULTURE-ETQ-001

My Notes

Your ladder to fluent Korean. This PDF, the website, and the video lessons are free for personal study.