



## Korean Ladder Study Note

# 혼밥 / 혼술

## Korea's Rise of Eating and Drinking Alone

| Level                        | Topic                   | Focus                                                |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| B1 · Intermediate<br>TOPIK 3 | Culture<br>Food Culture | 혼밥 / 혼술<br>Korea's Rise of Eating and Drinking Alone |

## Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-CULTURE-FCL-002>

Watch the full video on YouTube

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAv\\_almKIoA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAv_almKIoA)

Visit koreanladder.com for all free lessons

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

## Core Idea

Okay, real question. In the US, eating alone is totally normal. But I heard that in Korea, sitting alone in a restaurant used to feel... kind of embarrassing? Is that true?

네, 예전에는 조금 그랬어요. In the past, eating alone in public felt a little lonely, even embarrassing. But now, it's completely normal. 요즘은 아주 자연스러워요.

그래서 새로운 단어들이 생겼어요. Koreans made new words for it. The first one is 혼밥.

그리고 혼영도 있어요. 혼자 plus 영화, a movie — going to the cinema alone. 이 '혼-' 패턴은 계속 늘어나요.

## Conversation Snapshot

| Speaker | Korean                      | Meaning                                    |
|---------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Hana    | 여기 김치찌개 1인분 돼요?<br>—        | Can I get one portion of kimchi stew here? |
| Junho   | 네, 혼자 오셨어요? 이쪽으로 앉으세요.<br>— | Yes, are you alone? Please sit over here.  |



| Speaker | Korean             | Meaning                      |
|---------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Hana    | 네, 혼밥 하러 왔어요.<br>— | Yes, I came to eat alone.    |
| Junho   | 편하게 드세요.<br>—      | Enjoy your meal comfortably. |

## Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

| Word                               | Meaning                             | Example                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 혼밥<br>honbap                       | eating a meal alone                 | 그래서 새로운 단어들도 생겼어요. Koreans made new words for it. The first one is 혼밥.                                                                       |
| 혼술<br>honsul                       | drinking alcohol alone              | 다음은 혼술이에요. Same pattern: 혼자 plus 술, meaning alcohol. So 혼술 is drinking alone — a quiet glass at home or at a bar.                            |
| 혼영<br>honyeong                     | watching a movie alone              | 그리고 혼영도 있어요. 혼자 plus 영화, a movie — going to the cinema alone. 이 '혼-' 패턴은 계속 늘어나요.                                                            |
| 혼- + 활동<br>hon- + hwaldong         | hon- + an activity = doing it alone | Oh, I see the trick! So 혼 is basically a little shortcut for 혼자 — alone — and you just stick it in front of the activity?                    |
| 혼공<br>hongong                      | studying alone                      | 맞아요. 정확해요. You've got it. 혼 comes from 혼자, and it attaches to the activity. 혼공 is even studying alone — 혼자 공부.                               |
| 혼밥/혼술 + 하다<br>honbap/honsul + hada | to eat / drink alone                | So the noun does the heavy lifting, and 하다 just turns it into 'I did it.' 혼밥 하다, 혼술 하다. That's so clean.                                     |
| 1인 가구<br>il-in gagu                | single-person household             | 그런데 왜 문화가 바뀌었을까요? Why did this change? 1인 가구가 많아졌어요. More people live alone now — single-person households. So eating alone became ordinary. |
| 눈치<br>nunchi                       | reading the room; social awareness  | 그래서 '눈치'라는 말이 중요했어요. 눈치 is reading the room — worrying what others think. Eating alone once meant feeling that pressure. 요즘은 눈치를 덜 봐요.       |



## Grammar / Structure Notes

### 혼밥

혼밥 — eating a meal alone

혼자 (alone) + 밥 (rice / meal)

### 혼밥

혼 + 밥 — a meal eaten alone

혼밥은 두 단어를 합친 거예요. It's a blend: 혼자, meaning alone, and 밥, meaning rice or a meal. Together — a meal you eat by yourself.

### 혼술

혼 + 술 — drinking alcohol alone

다음은 혼술이에요. Same pattern: 혼자 plus 술, meaning alcohol. So 혼술 is drinking alone — a quiet glass at home or at a bar.

### 혼영

혼영 — watching a movie alone

혼자 + 영화 (movie)

### 혼- + 활동

혼- + 활동 — hon- + an activity = doing it alone

혼밥 · 혼술 · 혼영 · 혼공 (studying alone)

## Pronunciation Loop

| Phrase       | How to practice               |
|--------------|-------------------------------|
| 혼밥 하기 조아요    | honbap hagi joayo             |
| 혼밥 하기 좋아요.   | honbap hagi joayo             |
| 조아요          | joayo                         |
| 이런분          | il-in-bun                     |
| 김치찌개 1인분 돼요? | gimchijjigae il-in-bun dwaeyo |

## Self-Check

- 1 Say 혼밥 / 혼술 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                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 찌개 / 국물 /<br>Sharing Food and Soup<br>Culture                 | B1 Culture: compare 찌개 / 국물 / with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.     | Open lesson<br><a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-CULTURE-FCL-001">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-CULTURE-FCL-001</a> |
| 김치 / 반찬 / 밥<br>Korean Table Basics                            | A1 Culture: compare 김치 / 반찬 / 밥 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.   | Open lesson<br><a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-CULTURE-FCL-001">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-CULTURE-FCL-001</a> |
| 떡볶이 / 김밥 / 라면<br>Inside a Korean 분식 Snack<br>Bar              | A2 Culture: compare 떡볶이 / 김밥 / 라면 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer. | Open lesson<br><a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-CULTURE-FCL-001">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-CULTURE-FCL-001</a> |
| 배달 음식 / 치맥<br>Korea's Delivery and<br>Late-Night Food Culture | B2 Culture: compare 배달 음식 / 치맥 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.    | Open lesson<br><a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-CULTURE-FCL-001">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-CULTURE-FCL-001</a> |

## My Notes

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