



Korean Ladder Study Note

식감 / 감칠맛 / 비린내

Describing Taste and Texture Like a Native

Level	Topic	Focus
C1 · Advanced TOPIK 5	Vocabulary Food & Dining	식감 / 감칠맛 / 비린내 Describing Taste and Texture Like a Native

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-VOCAB-FOO-001>

Watch the full video on YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g2fiP6se_DM

Visit koreanladder.com for all free lessons

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Okay, real talk. I ate this amazing rice cake in Seoul and all I could say was... 'it's chewy?' There has to be a better word, right?

그 느낌을 한국어로는 쫄깃하다 라고 해요. In English it's that springy, bouncy chew — 쫄깃.

한국어에는 식감 단어가 아주 많아요. 식감 means the texture — literally how food feels in your mouth.

So 식감 is the whole category, and 쫄깃 is one flavor of it. What are the other big texture words?

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	이 튀김 진짜 바삭하고 안 느끼해요. —	This fried food is really crispy and not greasy at all.
Hana	그렇죠? 겉은 바삭한데 속은 촉촉해요. —	Right? Crispy outside but moist inside.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	국물도 감칠맛이 깊어요. 비린내도 하나도 없어요. —	The broth has deep umami too. And no fishy smell at all.
Hana	맞아요. 담백하면서 깊은 맛이 나요. —	Exactly. It's clean yet has a deep flavor.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
쫄깃하다 jjolgjit-hada	to be chewy and springy (in a good way)	그 느낌을 한국어로는 쫄깃하다 라고 해요. In English it's that springy, bouncy chew — 쫄깃.
식감 sikgam	mouthfeel; texture of food	한국어에는 식감 단어가 아주 많아요. 식감 means the texture — literally how food feels in your mouth.
바삭하다 basak-hada	to be crispy / crunchy	바삭하다 는 crispy예요. 튀김이나 과자처럼 — like fried chicken skin or a fresh cracker.
꾸덕하다 kkudeok-hada	to be thick, dense, fudgy	그리고 꾸덕하다 가 있어요. 꾸덕 is thick and dense — a fudgy brownie, a rich yogurt that clings to the spoon.
감칠맛 gamchil-mat	savory depth; umami	이제 맛으로 가볼게요. 감칠맛 — this is the famous one. It's savory depth, umami.
감칠맛이 있다 gamchil-mat-i itda	to have savory depth	감칠맛 이 있으면 계속 먹고 싶어져요. When a dish has 감칠맛, one bite pulls you to the next.
국물에서 감칠맛이 나요 gungmul-eseo gamchil-mat-i nayo	The broth gives off a savory depth.	둘 다 괜찮아요. 감칠맛이 난다 emphasizes the taste rising up; 있다 just states it's there. Both are natural.
비린내 birin-nae	fishy smell / odor	그런데 좋은 맛만 있는 게 아니예요. 비린내 는 the fishy smell — that off, raw-seafood odor.



Grammar / Structure Notes

쫄깃하다

쫄깃하다 — to be chewy and springy (in a good way)

the bouncy pull of tteok, noodles, octopus

식감

식감 — mouthfeel; texture of food

the umbrella word for how it feels to eat

바삭하다

바삭하다 — to be crispy / crunchy

fried, toasted, light and shattering

꾸덕하다

꾸덕하다 — to be thick, dense, fudgy

clingy and rich, not runny

감칠맛

감칠맛 — savory depth; umami

the moreish, can't-stop taste of broth, soy, aged sauces

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
이 떡은 정말 쫄깃해요	i tteok-eun jeongmal jjolgit-haeyo
쫄깃	jjolgit

Self-Check

- 1 Say 식감 / 감칠맛 / 비린내 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
맵다 / 짜다 / 달다 / 시다 Describing How Food Tastes	A2 Vocabulary: compare 맵다 / 짜다 / 달다 / 시다 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-VOCAB-FOO-001
물 / 커피 / 밥 Essential Food Words	A1 Vocabulary: compare 물 / 커피 / 밥 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-VOCAB-FOO-001
조리법 볶다 / 끓이다 / 굽다 / 삶다	B1 Vocabulary: compare 조리법 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-VOCAB-FOO-001
기후 변화 / 생태계 / 지속 가능성 Talking About the Environment	C1 Vocabulary: compare 기후 변화 / 생태계 / 지속 가능성 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-VOCAB-NAT-001

My Notes

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