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# Jeonju declaration on Korean-food: creating value and sustainability

Youn-Soo Cha<sup>1,2\*</sup>

## Abstract

Jeonju was selected as Korea's only UNESCO City of Gastronomy in 2012. Jeonju food has been attracting attention as 'sincere foods' that is likened to a mother's cooking and bricolage foods since ancient times. Jeonju is a representative of K-food as a city with the recognition of being a 'hometown of taste' and the 'pride of taste' in Jeolla-do. The global interest in K-food is based on a 'healthy image', and it is expected that the international interest in K-food will continue to rise in the future due to its health benefits. K-food contributes to the promotion of human health based on scientific research on its various aspects such as ingredients, recipes, and diet composition. The fact that K-food contains a lot of vegetables and fermented foods can be considered as one of the factors that can respond to the climate crisis. The Jeonju Declaration gather numerous values to lay the foundation for the direction in which K-food should be served. Therefore, this year 2022, to mark the 10th anniversary of the UNESCO City of Gastronomy, Jeonju City specified the K-food hub and declared the following 'Jeonju Declaration on K-Food: Creating Value and Sustainability' on June 16, 2022. Declaring that Jeonju food is K-food, we intend to promote the continuous globalization of K-food by creating various values such as national, historical/culture, commercial/industrial, and health/nutritional values.

**Keywords** Korean food, Jeonju declaration, K-food, UNESCO City of Gastronomy

## Introduction

Jeonju was selected as Korea's only UNESCO City of Gastronomy in 2012. Jeonju food has been attracting attention as 'sincere foods' that is likened to a mother's cooking and bricolage foods since ancient times. Jeonju has a treasure trove of culture with many tangible and intangible historical and cultural assets and has developed culture and creative industries centering on Korean food (K-food, *hansik*), Korean paper (*hanji*), and Korean houses (*hanok*). Jeonju cuisine has developed into various foods based on a market where various materials are

produced and logistics gather. Various delicacies such as alcohol, porridge, rice cake (*tteok*), fermented soybeans (*jangs*), and *kimchi* are also developed, and there are exceptionally many kinds of food served on a table. As the family clan of the Lee in the Joseon Dynasty and the center of Jeolla-do province, it is also an area that consistently transmitted the food culture of the aristocrat's family (*yangban*). Using the same ingredient, a seasonal table was formed by selecting a recipe suitable for the region or solar term. Therefore, Jeonju is a representative of K-food as a city with the recognition of being a 'hometown of taste' and the 'pride of taste' in Jeolla-do.

In 2016, we defined K-food and the health functionalities of K-food through the 'Seoul Declaration' [1, 2]. More than five years later, Korean food continues to receive international attention along with the Korean Wave. The spread of culture through movies, music, social network services, and personalized broadcasting has increased the interest in K-food throughout the world. This is

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evidenced by 55.9% of K-food awareness among foreigners and 67.0% of tourists visiting Korean restaurants. In addition, the proportion of people around the world experiencing Korean culture is increasing day by day [3]. Additionally, due to the influence of the recent pandemic that hit the world, countries increased their interest in health, and health care use in OECD countries soared in 2021 [4]. Therefore, the global interest in K-food is based on a 'healthy image', and it is expected that the international interest in K-food will continue to rise in the future due to its health benefits. K-food contributes to the promotion of human health based on scientific research on its various aspects such as ingredients, recipes, and diet composition. This has already been confirmed in the Seoul Declaration that K-diet intake reduces the incidence of cardiovascular diseases [2]. While the 'Seoul Declaration' focused on the definition, characteristics, and health functionalities of K-diet, the Jeonju Declaration discovered and created the value of K-food and use it to provide direction for people around the world.

Of course, the value of K-food is infinite, and it is absurd to define it in a few words. As a value, the natural science community wants to publicize that K-food is developing based on a long tradition, and to scientifically prove it to create a systematic basis. Even in humanities, the food culture created by Korea's geographical features and values are incorporated into food philosophy. K-food has all kinds of ideologies, such as *Yaksikdongwon* (food is medicine), the theory of yin and yang, the climate of the four seasons, and the topography of mountains, rivers, plains, and the sea. The fact that K-food contains a lot of vegetables and fermented foods can be considered as one of the factors that can respond to the climate crisis. We want to emphasize that various values come together to achieve K-food. The Jeonju Declaration gather numerous values to lay the foundation for the direction in which K-food should be served.

Therefore, this year 2022, to mark the 10th anniversary of the UNESCO City of Gastronomy, Jeonju City specified the K-food hub and declared the following 'Jeonju Declaration on K-Food: Creating Value and Sustainability' on June 16, 2022. Declaring that Jeonju Food is K-food, we intend to promote the continuous globalization of K-food by creating various values such as national, historical/culture, commercial/industrial, and health/nutritional values (Additional files 1 and 2: Supplementary Information).

### Supplementary Information

The online version contains supplementary material available at <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42779-023-00174-7>.

**Additional file 1:** Full text of "Jeonju Declaration on K-Food: Creating Value and Sustainability".

**Additional file 2:** Signatories.

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### Author contributions

YS Cha, Chairman of the organizing committee of the Jeonju Declaration on K-Food. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

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### Availability of data and materials

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### Declarations

#### Ethics approval and consent to participate

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#### Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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