

SOUTH KOREA

What's cooking

THE LAUNCH OF A NEW MICHELIN GUIDE TO BUSAN IS DRAWING FRESH ATTENTION TO SOUTH KOREA'S SECOND CITY



Haedong Yonggungsa Temple is a popular attraction in Busan

Located on the southeastern tip of the Korean Peninsula and home to several wide, sandy beaches, Busan has long been where South Koreans come to unwind. But the country's second city is now coming into its own as a culinary destination, with its boat-fresh seafood and time-honoured recipes beginning to attract international attention. Its place on the world culinary map will be established in February, when the city is set to be included in the Michelin Guide — the only South Korean destination other than the capital to be featured.

The ocean's bounty is the name of the game in this coastal hub, but local gastronomy isn't limited to *hoe* (sashimi), *nakji bokkeum* (stir-fried octopus) and *jogae gui* (grilled clams). The place is packed with diverse dining choices, from sleek restaurants serving up European-inspired food to old-school tents known as *pojangmacha*, which still thrive here despite having largely died out in the rest of the country. Step inside these traditional street-food spots to join lively locals tucking into home-style side dishes such as *dakgalbi* (spicy stir-fried chicken) or *duruchigi* (fried pork in pepper paste), served alongside local beer and shots of *soju* (a Korean spirit traditionally made using rice).

CHRIS THARP

TOP BUSAN CULINARY EXPERIENCES

THE FOOD MARKET

The Jagalchi fish market is this port city's beating heart. Its stalls offer up shells, fillets and tentacles, and while you can have your seafood grilled at one of its many restaurants, a meal in the Raw Fish Center is one you won't forget. Just point to your lunch, which is then plucked from the tank, dispatched and expertly sliced on the spot.

THE FINE-DINING SPOT

Haute cuisine is somewhat of a rarity in Busan, so Lab XXIV by Kumuda, celebrity chef Edward Kwon's latest venture, is a welcome addition. Locally sourced, French-style food, like pan-seared Hanwoo beef and sea bream in a coconut bisque sauce, is served in a room with views of the sea. [instagram.com/lab24_by_kumuda](https://www.instagram.com/lab24_by_kumuda)

THE LOCAL HAUNT

Despite Busan's coastal location, its signature dish is a rich pork soup known as *dwaeji gukbap*. You'll find soup joints on most blocks, but Ssangdoongi ('twins') delivers on its promise to give twice the portions — and flavour. The broth is soul-soothing, and the pork slices so stacked-up they nearly fall out of the bowl. [twinsporksoup.modoo.at](https://www.twinsporksoup.modoo.at)

THE VEGAN OPTION

While not a strictly vegan restaurant, Tae Tae Tae is one of the few places in Busan to offer a full plant-based menu. Owner Kim Mintae backs up the flashy decor with fun takes on Southeast Asian and Chinese dishes, including signature aubergine chips and a fried tofu *bao* (bread roll). [instagram.com/taetaetae_46](https://www.instagram.com/taetaetae_46)

THE COOKING CLASS

Bapsang Cooking Class will teach you how to put together classic Korean dishes such as *bibimbap* (a rice bowl with various toppings), *pajeon* (green onion pancake) and *miyeokguk* (seaweed soup). At the end of the experience, enjoy a meal featuring the freshly-prepared specialities. [kcookingclass.com](https://www.kcookingclass.com)