

Authentic Korean Beef Bulgogi: Easy Marinated Recipe

1 1/2 lb beef sirloin, thinly sliced



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30 min

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INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 lb beef sirloin, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons sesame oil
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 small onion, thinly sliced
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)
- 1/2 Asian pear, grated (optional)

Swaps and Notes:

Beef Sirloin: While sirloin is excellent for its tenderness and lean quality, other cuts like ribeye, tenderloin, or even thinly sliced flank steak can be used. The key is to slice the beef very thinly (or ask your butcher to do it) for quick cooking and tenderness. Partially freezing the beef for 30 minutes before slicing can make it much easier to cut thinly.

Soy Sauce: Use low-sodium soy sauce if you are mindful of salt intake.

Sugar: White granulated sugar is typical, but brown sugar can add a deeper molasses note.

Sesame Oil: Toasted sesame oil is essential for that signature nutty, aromatic flavor. Do not use un-toasted sesame oil.

Garlic & Onion: These aromatics are foundational to the marinade's flavor. Don't skimp on them!

Green Onions: Also known as scallions, they add a fresh, pungent bite and vibrant color.

Sesame Seeds: Use toasted sesame seeds for the best flavor. You can quickly toast raw seeds in a dry skillet over medium heat for a few minutes until fragrant.

Red Pepper Flakes: For those who like a little heat, these are a great addition. Adjust to your spice preference.

Asian Pear: This is the "secret ingredient" in many authentic bulgogi recipes. The enzymes in the pear naturally tenderize the meat beautifully and add a subtle sweetness. If you can't find an Asian pear, a small ripe Bosc pear or even a little kiwi fruit (use about 1 teaspoon of grated kiwi for tenderizing, as it's very potent) can be used, but the flavor will be slightly different.

Directions:

Prepare the Marinade: In a large bowl, combine the 1/4 cup soy sauce, 2 tablespoons sugar, 2 tablespoons sesame oil, 4 cloves minced garlic, 1 small thinly sliced onion, 2 chopped green onions, 1 tablespoon sesame seeds, and 1/4 teaspoon black pepper. If you like a little kick, add the 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes.

Add Asian Pear (Optional): If using, grate 1/2 an Asian pear directly into the marinade bowl. Mix all the marinade ingredients together thoroughly until the sugar is dissolved.

Marinate the Beef: Add the 1 1/2 lb thinly sliced beef sirloin to the large bowl with the marinade. Using your hands or tongs, mix until all the beef slices are well coated with the flavorful marinade.

Chill and Infuse: Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and place it in the refrigerator. Marinate for at least 1 hour. For the best flavor and tenderness, I highly recommend marinating overnight (8-12 hours).

Cook the Beef: When you're ready to cook, heat a large skillet, wok, or grill pan over medium-high heat. You want it hot enough to sear the beef quickly. Do not overcrowd the pan; cook the beef in batches if necessary to ensure it sears rather than steams.

Add a single layer of the marinated beef slices to the hot pan. Cook for approximately 2-3 minutes on each side, or until the beef is cooked through, beautifully caramelized, and has slightly charred edges.

Serve & Garnish: Remove the cooked beef from the pan and serve hot. Garnish with additional sesame seeds and chopped green onions for extra freshness and presentation, if desired.

Tips for Success:

Thin Slicing is Key: The thinner the beef slices, the quicker and more tender they will cook. If you can't get your butcher to slice it, partially freeze the beef for 30-45 minutes before attempting to slice it yourself.

Don't Crowd the Pan: Cooking in batches ensures a proper sear and caramelization on the beef. Overcrowding will lower the pan temperature and cause the meat to steam, leading to a less desirable texture.

Marinate for Flavor & Tenderness: While 1 hour is the minimum, the longer you marinate (up to overnight), the more flavor the beef will absorb and the more tender it will become, especially with the Asian pear.

High Heat, Quick Cook: Bulgogi cooks very quickly due to the thin slices. Keep the heat high to get a nice sear and avoid drying out the meat.

Adjust Sweetness/Saltiness: Taste the cooked beef. If you find it too sweet or salty, you can adjust by adding a splash of water or a squeeze of lime juice respectively when serving.

DIRECTIONS

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8. Enjoy your delicious : Korean-Style Marinated Beef Bulgogi!
9. Tips for Success: Thin Slicing is Key: The thinner the beef slices, the quicker and more tender they will cook. If you can't get your butcher to slice it, partially freeze the beef for 30-45 minutes before attempting to slice it yourself.
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13. Adjust : Sweetness/Saltiness: Taste the cooked beef. If you find it too sweet or salty, you can adjust by adding a splash of water or a squeeze of lime juice respectively when serving.
14. Serving Suggestions and Pairings: Korean Beef Bulgogi is typically served with steaming hot white rice, which perfectly soaks up the savory juices. It's often accompanied by banchan (small side dishes) like kimchi, pickled radishes, or seasoned spinach. For a more interactive meal, serve it with large lettuce leaves (like red leaf or romaine) for wrapping, along with gochujang (Korean chili paste) for an extra kick. If you love one-pan meals, consider my [This Mexican Chicken And Rice Casserole Is My Favorite One-Pan Dinner That's Always A Hit](#), or for a fun, customizable meal, set up a [This Walking Taco Bar Is My Favorite No-Fuss Way To Feed A Crowd](#).
15. Storage and Leftover Tips: Leftover cooked Beef Bulgogi can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3-4 days. It reheats well in a skillet or microwave. If reheating in a skillet, add a tiny bit of water or beef broth to prevent drying out. The marinated uncooked beef can also be frozen for up to 2-3 months. Thaw in the refrigerator overnight before cooking.
16. More Recipes You Will Love: If you enjoy flavorful, hearty, and easy-to-make main dishes, here are some other Chefmaniac favorites:
17. For another delicious skillet meal with robust flavors, check out [This Tomato Skillet With Okra And Sausage Is My Favorite Quick Dinner Packed With Southern Flavor](#).
18. If you're a fan of rich, comforting stews that are packed with flavor, my [This Cajun Chicken Sausage Gumbo Is My Favorite Bowl Of Southern Comfort](#) is a must-try.
19. And for a versatile crowd-pleaser that comes together fast, you might like [These Sheet Pan Quesadillas Are My Favorite Way To Feed A Crowd Fast](#).
20. Final Thoughts: This Korean-Style Marinated Beef

Bulgogi is a true testament to the power of a good marinade and quick cooking. It delivers incredible depth of flavor and tenderness, making it a guaranteed hit at your dinner table. It's a delicious way to explore global flavors right in your own kitchen with minimal fuss.

21. What are your favorite international dishes to cook at home? Share your ideas in the comments below, and don't forget to follow [Chefmaniac.com](https://chefmaniac.com) for more delicious recipes!

SWAPS & NOTES

While it tastes incredibly complex, preparing it at home is surprisingly straightforward, making it an ideal choice for a delicious and memorable weeknight dinner.

Why I Love This Recipe I've always been captivated by the vibrant flavors of global cuisine, and Korean Bulgogi is a recipe I return to again and again.

What I particularly love about this dish is the magic of the marinade .

It transforms simple beef into something incredibly tender and bursting with a harmonious blend of soy sauce, sesame, garlic, and a touch of sweetness.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

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