

PRESS RELEASE

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South Korea Unveils the ‘K-Gastronomy Journey’: A Nationwide Network of Regional Culinary Belts

Sejong, 3 July 2026 — On 29 June, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) revealed its gastronomic tourism and experience roadmap for the second half of the year, entitled the ‘K-Gastronomy Journey.’ As the flagship initiative under this roadmap, the Ministry also announced the launch of the ‘K-Chicken Belt Platform.’ This platform introduces must-visit restaurants for Korean fried chicken and chicken-based cuisine, alongside nearby tourist attractions. The platform can be accessed via the Korea Food Promotion Institute website (www.hansik.or.kr) or directly through a dedicated Naver Map link (<https://naver.me/GLhx6Tmm>).

As K-Food increasingly evolves beyond mere sustenance into prominent

cultural phenomenon, the number of overseas visitors travelling to South Korea specifically for culinary experiences continues to rise. According to the 2025 Survey of International Visitors, culinary tourism ranked as the top activity considered by prospective visitors to Korea (61.7%), followed by shopping (57.3%).

1. The K-Chicken Belt Platform: Discovering Regional Culture Through Culinary Travel

The K-Chicken Belt Platform capitalises on a growing travel trend where experiential and culinary journeys are preferred to simple sightseeing. The platform provides an interactive map featuring local, renowned eateries for fried chicken and regional chicken dishes, alongside nearby tourist attractions, local festivals, traditional markets, and rural experience villages.

In addition to recommending optimised travel itineraries, the platform allows users to create and share their own travel routes. The Ministry will develop the platform into a highly participatory, user-driven tourism hub.

Importantly, the platform showcases 30 curated hotspots for chicken cuisine. These were selected from over 2,700 submissions to the public competition, “My Favourite Hotspots for Fried Chicken & Chicken Dishes” (held from 19 March to 12 April), as well as through recommendations from local governments and rigorous on-site evaluations. Rather than relying solely on supplier-led recommendations, the platform reflects the views of travellers and local residents who know the authentic appeal of each destination.

With Korean-style fried chicken ranking as the most popular Korean dish

among overseas consumers, the K-Chicken Belt Platform is expected to attract both domestic travellers and international visitors to regional destinations, while showcasing the global appeal of Korea's food culture.

- Note: According to the 2025 Overseas Korean Food Consumer Survey, Korean-style fried chicken ranked as the most popular Korean menu item (14%), followed by kimchi (9.5%).

2. K-Gastronomy Calendar: The Three Pillars of TASTE, PLAY, and STAY

Following the launch of the K-Chicken Belt, the Ministry will roll out the 'K-Gastronomy Journey' across the second half of this year—a comprehensive tourism roadmap designed to allow visitors to immerse themselves in the rich flavours and culture of Korean cuisine.

(1) TASTE

July: A nationwide promotional event will offer incentives to visitors who explore K-Chicken Belt destinations or submit travel itineraries.

August: The Ministry will introduce dedicated tour routes focusing on must-visit destinations for Korean alcoholic beverages. These itineraries will allow visitors to discover the history and heritage of traditional Korean alcoholic beverages while brewing, tasting, and experiencing them through all five senses.

September: Gastronomy tours featuring Korea's officially recognised Food Masters will offer hands-on experiences in making and tasting traditional foods,

such as *jang* (fermented soybean products) and kimchi, providing deeper insight into Korea's culinary heritage.

(2) PLAY

23 October–20 November: The K-Food Festa, a month-long global food festival, will bring together consumers, tourists, and trade buyers from both Korea and overseas.

23–25 October: At the Hansik Festa, held at the National Museum of Korea, visitors can enjoy Korean dishes prepared by leading chefs and hear renowned culinary figures sharing stories about Korean cuisine.

4–7 November: Food Week Korea 2026, held at COEX, will showcase the latest trends and innovations across the food industry, ranging from premium domestic and international food products to cutting-edge food technologies.

13–15 November: K-Sool Festival will allow visitors to sample and purchase a wide variety of traditional Korean alcoholic beverages. Interactive programmes will include *makgeolli* brewing workshops and live cocktail-making demonstrations featuring traditional Korean alcoholic beverages. A dedicated zone showcasing K-street food, such as *tteokbokki* and *sundae*, will also be featured.

20 November: The Kimchi Festival will offer visitors the opportunity to experience every stage of kimchi production, from harvesting kimchi cabbage and exploring local markets to hands-on kimchi making and tasting.

(3) STAY

July–December: The Ministry will operate rural wellness stay programmes, enabling visitors to stay in rural communities while experiencing regional agricultural products and local cuisine. Visitors will also be able to enjoy Korea’s beautiful rural landscapes and distinctive regional food culture in specially designated rural experience villages.

Minister Song Miryung stated: “As K-Food and Korean cuisine have evolved from a simple meal into a true cultural phenomenon, the Ministry will continue to identify and nurture content that seamlessly connects regional food culture with local tourism, using the K-Chicken Belt as a key driver of this momentum. The K-Gastronomy Journey for the second half of the year is an extension of these efforts, and we hope that both domestic and international visitors will take every opportunity to enjoy these unique, authentic experiences.”



<Minister Song Miryung (left) is explaining about the 'K-Gastronomy Journey.'>



<Minister Song Miryung (left) is exchanging views with the audience about the 'K-Gastronomy Journey.'>

