

PRESS RELEASE

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First Hansik Day to Be Celebrated with Three-Day Festival at NMK

Sejong, 23 October 2026 — The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) will jointly host the 2026 HANSIK FESTA from Friday, 23 October, through Sunday, 25 October, to celebrate Hansik Day (24 October). The festival will take place in the Grand Auditorium and around Mirror Pond at the National Museum of Korea.

The NMK is a particularly meaningful venue for the festival, following a memorandum of understanding signed with the Korean Food Promotion Institute on 25 February to promote cultural heritage exchange and raise awareness of the value of Korean cuisine.

This year marks the first observance of Hansik Day as an officially designated commemorative day. The date, 24 October, was chosen for its symbolism:

October is the tenth month, with ten representing completeness and harmony, while twenty-four represents the twenty-four solar terms that divide the traditional East Asian solar year into roughly half-month intervals. This choice is intended to reflect the close relationship between Korean cuisine, nature, and the changing seasons.

On this occasion, the MAFRA has organised diverse public programmes for Korean and international visitors. These include a commemorative ceremony highlighting the cultural and industrial value of Korean cuisine, a conference exploring its future, cooking demonstrations by culinary masters and chefs, hands-on food experiences, and pop-up stores.

Day 1 (23 October): Inaugural Hansik Day Ceremony and Conference

The opening ceremony will bring together members of the diplomatic corps in Korea, particularly representatives of major export markets for Korean food products and countries commemorating the establishment of diplomatic relations with Korea, alongside representatives of the food industry, academia, and related organisations. A new vision for Korean cuisine will be unveiled, and individuals who have contributed to its development will be honored. The event is also expected to strengthen public diplomacy by introducing foreign diplomats to the cultural significance of Korean cuisine through firsthand experiences.

The Hansik Conference will follow, featuring lectures and discussions by leading experts in food, industry, and culture. In the first session, Park Hyun-young, Director of the Lifestyle Change Observatory, will discuss “Why Korean Cuisine Aligns with Today’s Culinary Trends”; Chef Ok Dong-sik will examine

“Korean Cuisine’s Position in the Global Culinary Market”; and producer Lee Wook-jung, known for *Food Odyssey*, will explore “How Media and Culture Have Driven the Spread of Korean Cuisine.”

The second session will feature Chef Son Jong-won of Eatanic Garden on “Building a Korean Cuisine Brand in Korea” and Kim Sook-jin, a senior manager at CJ CheilJedang, on “Branding Korean Cuisine in the Global Market.” A subsequent panel discussion, featuring Professor Emerita Jung Hye-kyung of Hoseo University and Professor Jung Ra-na of Kyung Hee University, among others, will explore ways to pass Korea’s culinary heritage on to future generations.

23–25 October: A Festival of Korean Cuisine Engaging All Five Senses

Visitors can enjoy cooking demonstrations featuring three pairs of culinary experts and creators: culinary master Lee Ha-yeon and Chef Han Shin-hee; Venerable Wookwan and food content creator “Magical Boy Chef Kim”; and Chef Park Joo-eun and food content creator “Silver Spoon.” Each pair will showcase different aspects of Korea’s culinary traditions.

Films and other media will also take center stage. “Korean Cuisine on Screen,” a talk show featuring Lee Hye-won, CEO of Food & Culture Korea, and film creator Kim Si-seon, will explore how Korean food is portrayed on screen. Other activities include “Hansik Golden Bell,” an interactive quiz competition, cooking classes, and cultural performances.

A promotional pavilion will showcase products from Korean food companies, while pop-up restaurants will serve contemporary interpretations of traditional

dishes and desserts. A flea market will offer ingredients, sweets, tableware, and other items associated with Korean food culture.