

One Dear Leader double cheese, freedom fries and a Juche veggie set please!

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“Would you like deep fried strips of potato with your minced beef and bread?” Doesn’t sound nearly as appetizing as ‘A hamburger and fries’ does it?

Residents of Pyongyang in North Korea, however, the seat of one of the most ardent anti-American nations in the world, may well be answering that question as you read this very article. Our perpetual sabre-rattling neighbors to the North announced earlier this year that they have decided that their people should not be denied a global culinary delight just because it is one of the most recognizable emblems of ‘US Imperialism’ and so opened its first fast food restaurant, called Samtaesong.

It is the appearance of hamburgers that seems to have the world’s media salivating over the irony of a communist state serving up a symbol of capitalism to the faithful proletariat, but minced beef and bread isn’t the only delight on the menu. Customers will also be able to choose minced fish and minced vegetables, as well as waffles and fried chicken. The place has been such a huge success that plans are not only afoot to open more branches around the capital, but to also add other international taste sensations to the menu. Croissants and hot dogs are among the planned additions. A hamburger comprised of minced beef, fish or vegetables with bread, can be enjoyed for less than 2,000 won, which puts it out of the price range for the vast majority of the country’s estimated 24 million people, as that equates to about half of their daily wage.

This is not the first foreign eatery to appear in North Korea, however. In December last year, the

country’s first Italian restaurant opened after a decade long search for pizza perfection. Teams of Italian chefs were summoned to Pyongyang to teach army officers (on a ship anchored offshore, no less) how to toss the dough like an Italian. Ever the perfectionist, The Supreme Leader was not satisfied with these inauthentic re-creations of traditional Neapolitan pizza and ordered his chefs to go to Naples and Rome to hone their military pizza-making skills further. Then, and only then, was he satisfied enough to authorize that restaurant. Comrade Kim is said to be a connoisseur

of, amongst other things, cognac, French wine, sushi, shark fin soup and caviar, and expects nothing but the best, which helps explain why he has wheat flour, butter and cheese flown in from Italy to make the finest and most authentic pizzas. It does beg the question, however, of where he sources his ingredients for the minced beef and bread, especially as there can be few cows up North that are healthy enough to meet his incredibly high standards.

In August of this year, beer commercials first appeared on state-run TV in the North, advertising their very own beer, Taedonggang, which is produced on the outskirts of Pyongyang in a brewery that, in a former life, brewed some of the finest ales available in the Western

countryside of England. The brewery was bought by North Korea for a cool 2.8 billion won and shipped piece by piece to NK where it “relieves stress and improves health and longevity.”

Beer and fried chicken? Real Italian pizza? And now hamburgers and fries? Maybe it is time for a trip up North. Then again, even the best tasting pizza might be hard to swallow, as crowds of emaciated onlookers watched your every bite.



sabre-rattling-위협적인
salivating over - 군침을 흘리다, 관심을 갖다
faithful proletariat - 충직한 프롤레타리안 계급
afoot - 진행중이다

out of the price range - 감당할 수 없을만큼 비싸다
toss the dough - 피자 도우를 반죽 할 때 도우를 던졌다가 받는 동작



김 위원장님'햄버거 세트 주세요

“가늘게 썰어 튀긴 감자와 저민고기가 들어있는 빵으로 드시겠습니까?” 라는말은 ‘햄버거와 감자튀김’이라는 말 만큼 그다지 구미가 당기는 말은 아니다.

하지만 이 세상에서 가장 반미주의적인 북한의 평양에 거주하는 사람들은 저 물음에 대한 대답을 당연히 아무렇지도 않게 할 것이다.

영원히 무력을 행사할 것 같은 북한은 올해 초, 단지 가장 눈에 띄는 ‘미국 제국주의’의 상징이라는 이유만으로 국민들의 세계요리의 즐거움을 거절당해서는 안된다고 결정했고, ‘삼태송’이라는 패스트푸드 음식점도 처음으로 열었다.

이 공산주의 국가가 자본주의의 상징물을 충실한 프롤레타리아 계급인들에게 소개하는 아이러니한 것에 대해 전 세계의 미디어가 흥분하는것은 햄버거(패스트푸드 음식점)의 출현 때문이다.

하지만 이것은 북한에 있는 최초의 외국식당은 아니다.

작년 12월, 10년간의 피자에 관한 연구조사 끝에 이탈리아 레스토랑을 열었다. 몇몇의 이탈리아 요리사들은 어떻게 그들이 반죽을 던지는지 북한의 군인들에게 가르쳐주기 위해 평양으로 호출되었다. 하지만 고품질의 음식을 만들기 위해 고품질의 소고기를 생산하기 위한 소가 거의 없는 북한에서 식재료인 저민고기와 빵을 어디서 가지고 오는지는 의문이다.

올해 8월, 북한 평양 변두리의 맥주공장에서 생산되는 ‘대동강’이라는 북한 고유의 맥주를 국영TV로 광고를 내보냈다. 맥주제조 기계는 28억원에 여러 조각으로 분리되어 북한으로 들어왔다.

맥주와 치킨? 이탈리아 피자? 그리고 햄버거와 감자튀김? 북한에 방문해보라. 아무리 최고의 피자라 해도 먹기가 쉽진 않을것이다. 한입한입 먹을때 마다 굶주린 북한 구경꾼들이 당신을 쳐다보고 있을 것이기 때문이다.



ever the perfectionist - 완벽주의자였기때문에
hone their military pizza-making skills - 완벽하게 피자만드는 기술을 연마하다

nothing but the best- 오직 최고만을 추구하다
beg the question - 질문을 하지 않고는 못베기다
in a former life - 예전에, 전생에