



The Noodle Diplomacy: Bridging the Divide Between North & South Korea

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The Conflict (Context)

- **The 38th Parallel:** Since 1953, the Korean peninsula has been divided by the DMZ.
- **Ideological Divide:** Communism (North) vs. Democracy/Capitalism (South).
- **Shared Heritage, Divided Tables:** While they share a history, 70 years of separation created distinct culinary identities.
- **The Goal:** The 2018 Summit aimed to discuss denuclearization and peace.



Food as a Diplomatic Tool

- **Gastrodiplomacy:** Using food to foster cultural understanding and improve public relations.
- **Soft Power:** Food acts as a non-threatening medium to discuss hard political issues.
- **The Strategy:** The menu was designed to tell a story of "Unity" and "Personal Connection."



The Menu & Symbolism (Main Course)

- **The Star Dish:** Pyongyang Naengmyeon (Cold Noodles).
- **Why is it important?**
 - It is a signature dish of North Korea.
 - Requested specifically by South Korean President Moon Jae-in.
 - Kim Jong-un brought a chef and a noodle machine from Pyongyang to the DMZ.
- **Meaning:** Bringing the "taste of the North" to the South symbolizes breaking barriers.



The Menu & Symbolism (Dessert)

- **Mango Mousse:** "Spring of the People."
- **Visual Symbolism:** Decorated with a map of the **Unified Korean Peninsula**.
- **The Metaphor:** Breaking the hard outer shell to reveal the sweet mousse inside represents breaking the "Cold War" ice to reach peace.
- **Controversy:** The map included disputed islands, showing that food can also make political statements.



Outcomes & "Noodle Fever"

- **Immediate Impact:** The lunch created a friendly atmosphere for tough negotiations.
- **Cultural Ripple Effect:** On the day of the summit, noodle restaurants in Seoul had massive lines.
- **Humanizing the Enemy:** South Koreans eating "Pyongyang style" food created a moment of cultural empathy.
- **Conclusion:** Food didn't solve the nuclear crisis, but it opened the door for dialogue.



References

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