

KOREAN TRADITIONAL EARTHENWARE JARS FOR STORING FOOD

PROMOTED AT EXPO 2015

The Korea Pavilion at Expo Milan 2015 showcases the culinary practices of Korea founded on its indigenous traditions, highlighting their benefits and sustainable properties. *Hansik, Food for the Future: You are What You Eat* is the motto of the Pavilion.

Under this framework, the earthenware jar *onggi*, an ancient container traditionally used by the Korean people for storing and fermenting food has been promoted as a technology rooted in the past and continues to produce healthy food. Earthenware jars are natural deposits for Korean food. Moreover, it consents to create a fermentation process which increases both taste and nutrition of food, following the rhythms of the nature and using micro-organisms present in the nature.

Onggis, jars for the storing and fermenting food make an essential part of the daily life of the ancient Korean people. The most commonly used seasonings of the traditional Korean cuisine *hansik*, like the soy sauce and the soy paste mixed with chilli are both fermented in *onggi* jars to obtain the best flavour. The same treatment is applied also to the famous Korean *kimchi* and fermented liquors.

One of the most critical characteristics of the *onggi* is that it is a vessel that breathes. The clay, which is the main ingredient of the jar, contains an enormous quantity of sand particles which form air chambers during the mixture act as passages for air. The porosity and the pinholes formed in the structure allow the jar to breathe, which makes it not only an amazing tool for food storage, but also a fermenting container thanks to the air circulation that allow the internal substances to reach maturity.

Like in many other countries, modernity has been gradually substituting traditional culinary tools with other equipment and materials. The production and the use of *onggi*, have been limited to rural areas and in farming cultures.

Anticipating the recent trends of salvaging traditional knowledge which is spreading in many countries, the Korean Government has already recognized the *onggi* as a cultural heritage as early as in 1990. This prestigious recognition has generated numerous projects for the promotion and the salvage of this traditional container and its production technics. It has been founded even an *Onggi* Folk Museum in Seoul. Furthermore, this futuristic national



policy has become an orientation for families who are attentive to what they eat: they tend to choose now food produced and stored in these jars.

The choice of the Government of Korea to promote traditional cuisine and its technologies at Expo 2015 aiming to find new ways for the food for future, is a further demonstration of the value that the country places on its traditions and its availability to influence other countries.

The production of earthenware jars for the food and fresh water storage and for the creation of natural fridges for agricultural products is actually quite typical in many cultures of Latin America, Africa and Mediterranean region. Valuing such technologies that are part of the local culture can contribute to the promotion of quality food and to the salvage of precious traditional crafts for sustainable development that risk disappearing

To know more

<http://www.expo2015.org/en/participants-countries-republic-of-korea>

http://english.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/SI/SI_EN_3_6.jsp?cid=1989506

<http://www.archilovers.com/projects/155224/republic-of-korea-pavilion-at-expo-milano-2015.html>

<http://expo.visitkorea.or.kr/eng/>

http://www.corea.it/giare_tradizionali.htm

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<http://www.ceramicstoday.com/articles/onggi.htm>

<http://www.maangchi.com/kitchenware/earthenware-pot>

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