

Soo Young CHO

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KIWA, 2235 Frankfort ave, #104, Louisville, KY

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Professional Summary

Entrepreneur and culinary innovator with nearly two years of experience as founder and head operator of **KIWA**, a Korean-inspired café in Louisville, KY. Skilled in menu development, customer engagement, and cultural programming, with a strong background in architecture and design. Passionate about creating warm, community-driven dining experiences that celebrate Korean food culture while remaining accessible to diverse audiences. Currently preparing for relocation to Chicago to launch a new restaurant concept built on lessons learned from first venture and strengthened by mentorship and collaboration.

Culinary & Hospitality Experience

Founder & Head Operator

KIWA Café, Louisville, KY | Dec 2023 – Present

- Launched and managed a specialty café introducing Korean teas, light meals, and seasonal menus.
- Designed and tested unique menu items inspired by Korean flavors and contemporary café culture.
- Oversaw daily operations including purchasing, cost management, staffing, and customer service.
- Built partnerships with the City of Louisville, universities, and multicultural organizations to host workshops, language cafés, and cultural events.
- Cultivated a non-Korean customer base (99% of clientele), bridging cultural heritage and local community engagement.
- Adapted space as a multipurpose venue for gatherings, meetings, and collaborative events.

Culinary Workshops & Menu Development | 2023 – Present

- Conducted food and tea workshops highlighting Korean ingredients, techniques, and traditions.
- Developed menu concepts (e.g., corn cream latte, rice bowl variations, Korean dessert pairings).
- Collaborated with local farmers and artists to incorporate sustainable ingredients and tableware.

Other Professional Experience

Project Manager, Real Estate & Infrastructure Advisory

KPMG, Seoul, Korea | 2020 – 2021

- Conducted feasibility studies, business optimization, and large-scale project analysis.
- Strengthened financial planning, analytical, and stakeholder communication skills.

Architectural Design & Project Coordination

Hanwha E&C, Seoul, Korea | 2017 – 2020

- Managed project planning, design reviews, and construction documentation.
- Developed keen attention to spatial design and detail, later applied to hospitality and café design.

Education

M.Arch, Master of Architecture – **Korea University, Seoul, Korea** (2015 – 2017)

- Research focus: spatial needs of single households; crime prevention through environmental design.

B.Arch, Bachelor of Architecture – **Korea University, Seoul, Korea** (2010 – 2015) •

Thesis: spatial solutions for aging-in-place with dementia.

Skills

- Culinary Development & Food Styling
- Cafe & Restaurant Operations
- Financial & Business Planning
- Community Engagement & Event Programming
- Cross-cultural Communication (Korean/English)
- Design: Photoshop, Illustrator, Microsoft Office

Languages

- Korean (Native)
- English (Upper-Intermediate)