

Cookin' Audience Guide



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2023-2024 Season

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At CTC, our mission is to create extraordinary theatre experiences that educate, challenge, and inspire young people and their communities. This Audience Guide is just one of the ways in which we aim to enhance your experience and further your engagement with the shows on stage.

It includes a summary, context, fun facts, and activities plus details that can help you decide what's right for your kids.

If you have any further questions, please contact our friendly Ticket Office Associates at 612.874.0400 during their regular business hours or email them at tickets@childrenstheatre.org.

Summary



What is this show about?

With a crazy deadline looming near, four frenzied chefs turn their kitchen into a dynamic, veggies-flying-everywhere performance as Korean *samulnori* drumming and martial arts take center stage. During this wildly energetic cooking competition, the chefs put on a masterful display of percussive food chopping, knife throwing, pot banging, and fire-blowing wizardry that will make you laugh, scream in delight, and even beg for a chance to sample their food. This is a primarily nonverbal performance that weaves physical comedy and clowning together with virtuostic demonstrations of rhythmic, acrobatic skill.

Go to Page 10 for a full plot synopsis (full of spoilers!)



Content Advisories

Language: 0 out of 5 stars ★★☆☆☆

Very little English is used. The performance features Korean music and is primarily nonverbal.

Themes and Situations: 0 out of 5 stars ★★☆☆☆

One Chef gets stuck in a trash can, one Chef gets yelled at by two Chefs, and two Chefs hit each other with brooms.

Sensory Advisories: 4 out of 5 stars ★★★★★

Music can be loud and audience cheering is often encouraged. Lighting moves quickly from dark to bright and lights are flashed. Some strobe lights are used. Loud music and loud drumming are used throughout. Fire is used onstage to simulate cooking and for fire-breathing. We offer a Sensory Friendly performance of *Cookin'* on Friday, October 13 at 7pm. Visit childrenstheatre.org/sensory to learn more.

Potentially Anxious Moments: 2 out of 5 stars ★★☆☆☆

Professional performers engage in food chopping, knife throwing, and fire blowing. While it might be nerve-racking, they are trained professionals. Performers enter the audience and bring volunteers onstage.



South Korean Flag

Where does this show come from?

Cookin', or *Nanta* as it's known in South Korea, is the longest-running show in South Korean history! There are four exclusive theatres in South Korea and Thailand that are solely dedicated to producing this show. There's even a *Cookin'/Nanta*-themed hotel! *Cookin'* has toured to more than 60 countries around the world and is making its Midwest debut at Children's Theatre Company.

What languages are spoken in the show?

Cookin' is largely nonverbal, meaning the performers rely on physicality and facial expressions to tell the story rather than spoken words.

What is *samulnori*?

Samulnori is a genre of Korean percussion music that was traditionally performed in rice-farming villages to help ensure and celebrate abundant harvests. Translated to English, *samul* means "four objects" and *nori* means "play." The four traditional "objects" or instruments are a small gong struck with a small stick (*kkwaenggwari*), a larger gong used to keep the beat (*jing*), an hourglass-shaped drum (*jangu*), and a barrel drum similar to the bass drum.



What is physical comedy?

Physical comedy is a form of comedy where performers manipulate their bodies for a humorous effect. Physical comedy can include both slapstick and clowning, two comedic forms that are present in *Cookin'*.

Slapstick

An exaggerated form of physical comedy, slapstick involves intentional or accidental physical feats performed with props or the human body alone. Props are objects that are used during a performance. Slapstick comedy can result in apparent violence, awe, pain, confusion, or general trouble, but is presented in a lighthearted context.



Clowning

Clowning is an ancient and international art form. Clowning highlights the absurdity of everyday situations and is often nonverbal, allowing it to transcend language and cultural barriers.

Our Family Cookin' Traditions

The chefs in *Cookin'* are making a Korean feast with traditional Korean dishes. What are some of your family's cookin' traditions? Discuss with your child and write or draw pictures of your traditions in the worksheet below.

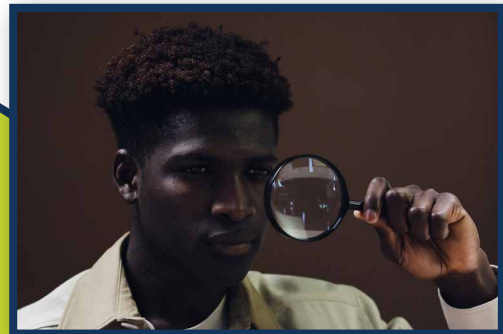
	Everyday Meals	Special Occasions
Who cooks the food?		
What foods do you eat?		
What gets put on the table (silverware, napkins, candles, etc.)?		

3 Things

During the performance:

Look for...

1. Kitchen objects used as percussion.
What objects do you see them using?
2. Real food used on stage. What foods can you recognize?
3. Korean lettering on large drums.



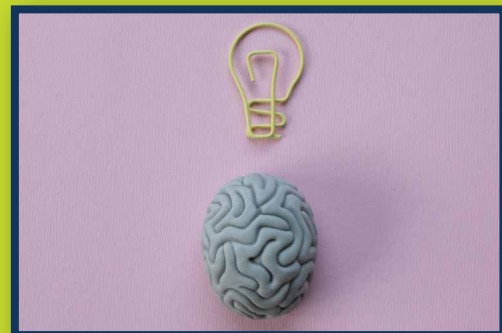
Listen for...

1. Changes in music to set the mood.
2. Traditional Korean musical instruments.
3. Performers using short words or noises to communicate emotions or reactions.

After the performance:

Think about...

1. The performers had to practice a lot to do what they do. What is something that you practice?
2. What were the moments that surprised you?
3. Ask members of your group to retell the story verbally. How are your versions similar or different?



CTC Theatre Etiquette

At CTC, we encourage audiences to engage with the live theatre experience and react freely. It's ok to laugh if something is funny, exclaim if something is surprising, gasp if something is scary, and maybe even dance along in your seats if the music inspires you. We value the real-time, honest reactions of our audiences.

We do, however, thank you for your partnership in making sure that any reactions from your kids are kind and respectful towards the actors onstage and towards all of the people who worked so hard to make the show possible.

Accessibility

Mobility Accessibility

The Target Lobby and UnitedHealth Group Stage are on the 2nd floor. At the building entrance, turn right and head through the Mia (Minneapolis Institute of Art) entrance. Then turn left just inside the entrance and go up the flight of 28 stairs to get to the lobby. Or you can use the elevator to the LEFT of the entrance doors. The balcony is accessed by going up another flight of 18 stairs. There is no elevator access to the balcony level.

An Accessible/All-Gender restroom is located next to the elevator on the 2nd floor in the Target Lobby. Additional restrooms are located down one floor near the entrance to the theatre.

Quiet Room/Sensory Sensitivities

The Quiet Room is located at the rear left side of the main floor of the UnitedHealth Group Stage. There are 3 stairs to get to the seating in the Quiet Room. The Quiet Room is separated from the audience by a glass window, so patrons can verbalize freely. Those utilizing the Quiet Room can still see and hear the performance. The performance is also live streamed in the lobby. Please feel free to come and go from the Quiet Room as you need to throughout the show.

Please let an usher know if someone in your group would benefit from a fidget, ear plugs, noise canceling headphones, or coloring/activity sheets during your visit.

Assistive Listening Devices

Please let an usher know if you would like to use an assistive listening device. These devices come equipped with an over-the-ear earpiece. This earpiece can be unplugged, and other devices, such as cochlear implants, can be plugged into the receiver using the 1/8" jack. If you will be plugging in your own device, please bring the appropriate cord as CTC does not have these on hand.

Sign Interpretation and Audio Description

Each CTC production has a sign interpreted and/or audio described performance for each production. These performances are noted in the [list of performance dates](#).

Prayer/Private Nursing Space

During your visit, please ask a member of our staff to use our private space for nursing, pumping, prayer, or other needs.

Full Plot Synopsis

THIS IS A COMPLETE SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY, SO IT IS FULL OF SPOILERS. CONTENT IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Four Chefs (hereinafter referred to as Green, Red, Blue, and Yellow respectively) enter via the house while drumming rhythmically on pots and pans. They make their way to the stage, continuing to drum and dance to their rhythms. All Chefs set down their pots and pans and move to the four tables upstage to wait for the Waiter to come give them their assignments. Music underscores this section while the Waiter passes out chef hats and inspects the hands of the Chefs before they begin preparing food. The Chefs then start preparing food, Green by whisking in a pot, Red and Blue by chopping, and Yellow by using seasoning shakers. They make rhythms with their utensils and help season the pot Green is at. Yellow tries to take the trash out but accidentally hits Green, who then leaves. Red, Blue and Yellow stop cooking to make rhythmic music together. Green returns and yells at the trio for not working. The Trio entices Green to join them instead.

The four Chefs begin dancing but are interrupted by the Waiter returning to the kitchen, who yells at them. The Waiter asks to taste the soup they have made. All 5 performers dip their fingers into the soup to taste. The Chefs think something is missing while the waiter thinks the soup is perfect. They argue about who is right. To break the argument, Red and Blue bring two people from the audience onstage to eat the soup. The volunteers eat the soup while the Chefs play musical instruments and chase a fly. The Wedding Processional plays, and the volunteers exit the stage.

Flames are visible from their pans as they're cooking and one of the Chefs blows fire.

The Chefs make a show of throwing and catching plates. The waiter re-enters the kitchen and makes the Chefs go back to work by chopping vegetables. They start singing and playing with the vegetables instead of working. The Chefs eventually start working but while chopping, Yellow's cabbage flies all over the other chefs. They all then begin aiming their chopped vegetables at the others before making rhythms with their knives on their cutting boards. The waiter returns to the kitchen where food is flying around and tells the Chefs to clean up.

Blue and Yellow have a food fight while trying to clean the floor with brooms and a trash can. Green comes in, and due to the fight, accidentally falls into the trash can and gets stuck. Blue and Yellow leave Green by himself. Green tries to get himself out of the trash can but can't and asks a person from the audience to help him. Green gets out of the trash can, then plays a rhythm game with the audience.

The Waiter comes back in and addresses the audience, saying there's more fun to come. The Chefs and the Waiter start drumming, first acapella, then with music and a light show.

The performers bow to the audience from behind their drums and start their finale of drumming and audience clapping.

Further Resources

More about South Korea



Watch — *Samdo Nongak Garak* (Farmers' Band Rhythm of the Three Provincial Areas) — performed on all four traditional *samulnori* instruments
<https://www.youtube.com...>



Korean Food
<https://www.korea.net...>

More about *Cookin' Nanta*



Watch — PyeongChang 2018 Opening Ceremony, directed by *Cookin'* director Seung-Whan Song
<https://www.youtube.com/watch...>



Interview with Director Seung-Whan Song
<https://seoullysg.weebly.com...>



All about Nanta
<https://www.nanta.co>

