KR

KOREAN LESSON

Basic Conversation 3 · Chapter 11 · Festivals & Customs

Korean Basic Conversation 3

Chapter 11 · Customs, Festivals & Traditions

🎎 Festivals & Customs — 명절과 전통

*Korean dramas stop for **설날** and **추석**: the whole family gathers, food is prepared, and everyone bows. To explain a custom you need two tools. **-잖아요** reminds the listener of something they already know ("...as you know"), and **noun clauses** (-는 것, -기) turn a verb into "the act of doing": "eating tteokguk is a tradition". Dialogs have a **Hard words** note, and a short **reading text** closes the chapter.*

eo = ㅓ (short, open "uh") **eu** = ㅡ (unrounded "oo")

kk, tt, pp, ss, jj = tense (tight, unaspirated) consonants

① Seollal — 설날에는 뭘 해요?

A:

설날에는 보통 뭘 해요?

What do you usually do at Seollal?

B:

온 가족이 모여서 떡국을 먹어요. 그리고 어른들께 세배를 해요.

The whole family gathers and we eat tteokguk. And we do sebae to the elders.

A:

세배가 뭐예요?

What is sebae?

B:

절을 하면서 "새해 복 많이 받으세요"라고 인사하는 거예요.

It's bowing while greeting them with "Happy New Year".

A:

② Chuseok — 추석 준비

A:

추석에는 고향에 내려가세요?

Do you go down to your hometown at Chuseok?

B:

네, 해마다 가요. 고속도로가 막혀서 시간이 오래 걸리지만요.

Yes, every year. Though the motorway is jammed, so it takes a long time.

A:

가면 뭘 하세요?

What do you do when you get there?

B:

다 같이 송편을 빚어요. 송편 빚기는 생각보다 어려워요.

We all shape songpyeon together. Shaping songpyeon is harder than you'd think.

A:

세배를 하면 용돈도 받잖아요. 어렸을 때 그게 제일 좋았어요.

When you do sebae you get pocket money too, as you know. When I was little that was the best part.

Hard words: 설날 seol-lal · 떡국 tteok-kkuk · 세배 se-bae · 절 jeol · 복 bok · 용돈 yong-ttol · 받잖아요 bat-jja-na-yo

저도 해 보고 싶어요. 만드는 것을 구경해도 돼요?

I'd like to try it too. May I watch the making?

Hard words: 추석 chu-seok · 고향에 내려가세요 go-hyang-e nae-ryeo-ga-se-yo · 해마다 hae-ma-da · 고속도로 go-sok-do-ro · 송편 song-pyeon · 빚어요 bi-jeo-yo · 구경해도 gu-gyeong-hae-do

③ Hanbok — 한복을 입어 봤어요

A:

한복을 입어 본 적이 있어요?

Have you ever worn a hanbok?

B:

네, 경복궁에서 빌려 입어 봤어요. 예쁘지만 걷기가 좀 불편했어요.

Yes, I rented one and wore it at Gyeongbokgung. It was pretty but a bit awkward to walk in.

A:

설날이나 결혼식에는 한복을 입는 사람이 많잖아요.

Lots of people wear hanbok at Seollal or at weddings, as you know.

B:

맞아요. 요즘은 평소에도 입는 사람이 있다고 해요.

True. They say there are people who even wear it in everyday life these days.

A:

한복을 입고 사진 찍는 것도 인기가 많아요.

Taking photos in hanbok is also very popular.

④ A Wedding Invitation — 결혼식에 초대받았어요

A:

동료가 결혼식에 초대해 줬어요. 뭘 준비해야 해요?

A colleague invited me to the wedding. What should I prepare?

B:

보통 축의금을 봉투에 넣어서 가요. 깨끗한 돈을 넣는 게 좋아요.

Usually you put gift money in an envelope and take it. It's best to put in clean notes.

A:

얼마를 내는 게 좋을까요?

How much would be good to give?

B:

친한 정도에 따라 달라요. 동료한테 직접 물어보기는 어려우니까 다른 사람한테 물어보세요.

It depends on how close you are. It's awkward to ask the colleague directly, so ask someone else.

A:

그럼 옷은 어떻게 입어야 해요?

And how should I dress?

Hard words: 한복 han-bok · 경복궁 gyeong-bok-gung · 빌려 bil-lyeo · 걷기 geot-kki · 불편했어요 bul-pyeon-hae-sseo-yo · 결혼식 gyeol-hon-sik · 평소 pyeong-so

B:

깔끔한 옷이면 돼요. 너무 흰색은 피하는 게 좋겠어요.

Neat clothes will do. It's better to avoid all-white.

Hard words: 초대해 cho-dae-hae · 축의금 chu-gui-geum · 봉투 bong-tu · 깨끗한 kkae-kkeu-tan · 정도에 따라 jeong-do-e tta-ra · 깔끔한 kkal-kkeum-han · 피하는 pi-ha-neun

⑤ Family Traditions — 제사와 차례

A:

할아버지 제사에는 온 가족이 모이잖아요?

The whole family gathers for Grandfather's memorial rite, doesn't it?

B:

네, 음식을 차리고 절을 해요. 준비하는 것이 힘들지만 중요한 일이에요.

Yes, we lay out food and bow. Preparing it is hard but it's an important thing.

A:

요즘은 간단하게 하는 집도 많다고 들었어요.

I've heard that many families do it simply these days.

B:

맞아요. 집마다 달라요. 우리 집은 전통을 지키는 것을 중요하게 생각해요.

True. It differs from house to house. Our family thinks keeping tradition is important.

A:

저는 다른 나라의 전통을 배우는 것이 정말 재미있어요.

⑥ Two Friends (casual) — 이번 명절 어때?

A:

이번 추석에 고향 가? 차 막히잖아.

Are you going home for Chuseok? The traffic's terrible, you know.

B:

응, 가야 해. 엄마가 해 주는 음식 먹는 게 제일 좋거든.

Yeah, I have to go. Eating what Mum cooks is the best, you see.

A:

부럽다. 나는 일해야 돼서 못 가.

I'm jealous. I have to work, so I can't go.

B:

그럼 송편 좀 갖다 줄게. 우리 엄마 송편 진짜 맛있잖아.

Then I'll bring you some songpyeon. My mum's songpyeon is really delicious, you know.

A:

정말? 고마워! 기다릴게.

Really? Thanks! I'll be waiting.

Hard words: 명절 myeong-jeol · 막히잖아 ma-ki-ja-na · 가야 해 ga-ya hae · 먹는 게 meong-

I find learning about other countries' traditions really interesting.

Hard words: 제사 je-sa · 차리고 cha-ri-go · 간단하게 gan-dan-ha-ge · 집마다 jim-ma-da · 지키는 ji-ki-neun · 전통 jeon-tong · 들었어요 deu-reo-sseo-yo

neun ge · 갖다 줄게 gat-tta jul-ge · 맛있잖아 ma-sit-jja-na

🔑 Key Phrases — 중요한 표현

SITUATION	POLITE	CASUAL
Happy New Year!	새해 복 많이 받으세요!	새해 복 많이 받아!
Happy Chuseok!	즐거운 추석 보내세요!	즐거운 추석 보내!
Congratulations (on the wedding).	결혼 축하드립니다.	결혼 축하해.
What do people usually do?	보통 어떻게 해요?	보통 어떻게 해?
It differs from family to family.	집마다 달라요.	집마다 달라.
It's a tradition.	전통이에요.	전통이야.

🔤 Three Verbs for Customs — 동사

VERB	EVERYDAY POLITE (-요)	FORMAL (-ㅂ니다)	CASUAL
to gather (모이다)	모여요	모입니다	모여
to make (만들다)	만들어요	만듭니다	만들어
to keep; to protect (지키다)	지켜요	지킵니다	지켜

🧱 Two Tools for Explaining Customs

1. "...as you know" — -잖아요

Add **-잖아요** to a stem (verb or adjective) to remind the listener of something they already know or can see: 설날에는 떡국을 먹잖아요 ("at Seollal we eat tteokguk, as you know"). For the past, use **-았/었잖아요** (어제 말했잖아요, "I told you yesterday"), and after a noun, **(이)잖아요** (오늘 명절이잖아요). It comes from **-지 않아요?** ("isn't it?"). The casual form is **-잖아**. Two cautions: it can sound like "don't you know?" when you are annoyed, so be careful with elders, and if the listener does not know the fact, use -거든요 (Chapter 7) instead.

2. Verbs as nouns — -는 것 and -기

A **noun clause** turns a whole action into a noun. The common way is **-는 것** (present), **-(으)ㄴ 것** (past) and **-(으)ㄹ 것** (future): 전통을 지키는 것은 중요해요 ("keeping tradition is important"), 송편을 만드는 것을 구경해요 ("I watch the making of songpyeon"). In speech 것이 becomes **게** and 것을 becomes **걸**, which you met in Chapters 9 and 1: 먹는 게, 먹는 걸. The shorter **-기** makes a noun too, and goes with a fixed set of expressions: 걷기가 불편해요 ("walking is uncomfortable"), 보기 좋아요 ("it looks nice"), 말하기 어려워요 ("it's hard to say"), 송편 빚기 ("shaping songpyeon").

FORM	USE	EXAMPLE
-는 것	"doing" (an action in general)	한복을 입는 것을 좋아해요. I like wearing hanbok.
-(으)ㄴ 것	"what was done"	어제 본 것이 재미있었어요. What I saw yesterday was fun.
-기	with 좋다 / 쉽다 / 어렵다 / 불편하다	이 신발은 걷기 편해요. These shoes are comfortable to walk in.
-잖아요	"as you know"	명절에는 길이 막히잖아요. The roads jam at festivals, you know.

📖 Reading — 읽기: 한국의 두 큰 명절

한국의 두 큰 명절

한국에는 두 개의 큰 명절이 있습니다. 하나는 설날이고 다른 하나는 추석입니다. 설날에는 가족이 모여서 떡국을 먹고 어른들께 세배를 합니다. 아이들은 세배를 하고 용돈을 받습니다. 추석에는 가족이 함께 송편을 만들고 조상께 감사하는 인사를 합니다. 두 명절 모두 가족이 모이는 것이 가장 중요합니다. 그래서 명절에는 많은 사람이 고향에 내려가고, 고속도로가 많이 막힙니다. 요즘은 간단하게 보내는 집도 많지만, 전통을 지키는 것을 중요하게 생각하는 가족도 있습니다.

Word list: 조상 (ancestors) · 모두 (all; both) · 가장 (most) · 보내다 (to spend (time))

True or false? (맞으면 O, 틀리면 X)

1. 한국에는 큰 명절이 두 개 있습니다.
2. 설날에는 송편을 만듭니다.
3. 아이들은 세배를 하고 용돈을 받습니다.
4. 요즘은 모든 가족이 전통을 똑같이 지킵니다.

▼ Show answers

1. O · 2. X (at Seollal families eat tteokguk; songpyeon is made at Chuseok) · 3. O · 4. X (many families keep it simple, others keep tradition closely)

📖 Vocabulary — 어휘

#	KOREAN	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
1	명절	*myeong-jeol*	traditional holiday	noun
2	설날	*seol-lal*	Lunar New Year's Day	noun
3	추석	*chu-seok*	Harvest festival	noun
4	떡국	*tteok-kkuk*	rice-cake soup	noun
5	송편	*song-pyeon*	half-moon rice cake	noun
6	한복	*han-bok*	traditional Korean dress	noun

#	KOREAN	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
7	세배	*se-bae*	New Year bow to elders	noun
8	용돈	*yong-ttol*	pocket money	noun
9	전통	*jeon-tong*	tradition	noun
10	제사	*je-sa*	ancestral memorial rite	noun
11	결혼식	*gyeol-hon-sik*	wedding ceremony	noun
12	축의금	*chu-gui-geum*	wedding gift money	noun
13	모이다	*mo-i-da*	to gather	verb
14	지키다	*ji-ki-da*	to keep; to protect	verb
15	차리다	*cha-ri-da*	to lay out (food)	verb
16	초대하다	*cho-dae-ha-da*	to invite	verb
17	빚다	*bit-tta*	to shape (dumplings, rice cakes)	verb
18	막히다	*ma-ki-da*	to be blocked; jammed	verb
19	불편하다	*bul-pyeon-ha-da*	to be uncomfortable; inconvenient	adj
20	해마다	*hae-ma-da*	every year	adverb

Seollal and Chuseok (from the sources)

Guides describe **Seollal** as the Lunar New Year holiday, with ancestral rites on the first morning (**차례**), the formal kneeling bow **세배** to elders, who give **세뱃돈** (gift money, traditionally in a small silk pouch), and **떡국**, which is said to add a year to your age. **Hanbok** is traditionally worn for the sebae. **Chuseok** is the harvest festival, with a morning **차례** and fresh harvest offerings, and **송편** as its defining food: half-moon rice cakes filled with sesame, chestnut, red bean or honey, steamed on pine needles and often shaped by the whole family the night before. Customs vary widely between families, and many now keep them simple.

Weddings and Memorial Rites (general knowledge, unverified here)

The search did not cover wedding gift money, so treat these as general knowledge. Guests commonly bring **축의금** in an envelope, and the amount depends on closeness, so ask a friend rather than guess; there is no single correct figure. Guests usually dress neatly and avoid wearing all white. **제사** is a family memorial rite for an ancestor, with food laid out and bows, and some families have stopped or simplified it. The children's first-birthday party **돌잔치** is also a major family event, but its customs were not covered by the search, so ask a Korean friend before you attend one.

As Heard in Dramas — 드라마에서

Holiday episodes show the family kitchen: 전 부치는 거 도와줘 ("help me fry the pancakes"), arguments about 명절 스트레스 (holiday stress), and a grandparent saying 올해도 건강하게 지내자 ("let's stay healthy this year too"). Younger relatives dread 언제 결혼해? ("when will you get married?"), a famous holiday question.

Grammar Pointer

The explaining ending -거든요 (Chapter 7) gives *new* information, while -잖아요 reminds the listener of something they *already know*. The short noun forms 게 and 걸 appeared in Chapter 9 (-는 게 좋겠어요) and Chapter 1; here you see the full noun clause behind them. Reported speech -다고 해요 (Chapter 8) is used in dialog 3 and 5 (입는 사람이 있다고 해요, 많다고 들었어요).

✍️ Try It Yourself — 연습

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Say "At Seollal we eat tteokguk, as you know."

▼ Show answer

설날에는 떡국을 먹잖아요.

2. Say "Keeping tradition is important."

▼ Show answer

전통을 지키는 것은 중요해요.

3. Say "Walking in hanbok is uncomfortable."

▼ Show answer

한복을 입고 걷기가 불편해요.

4. Say "The roads are jammed at Chuseok, you know."

▼ Show answer

추석에는 길이 막히잖아요.

5. Say "It differs from family to family."

▼ Show answer

집마다 달라요.

6. Tell a friend casually "Eating what Mum makes is the best, you see."

▼ Show answer

엄마가 해 주는 음식 먹는 게 제일 좋거든.