The swap: 2 tablespoons sesame oil → 1 tablespoon sesame oil

Korean Ground Turkey & Cabbage Skillet

By Angie Hayman

Sweet, savory ground turkey with tender cabbage, carrots, and onions in a Korean-inspired garlic-ginger sauce. Makes approximately 12 one-cup servings, with jasmine rice optional.



PREP	COOK	TOTAL	SERVINGS	DIFFICULTY	CALORIES
20 min	35-45	~1 hr 5 min	12	Easy	~346 est. per serving

This version saves ~204 calories per serving vs the classic (37% lighter)

Dinner · Korean-inspired · Dairy-Free · Calorie-Conscious

Approximate Nutrition

Estimated

Per serving (1 cup (without rice))

~346	~24g	~21g	~20g	~4g	~13g	~1,070mg
CALORIES	PROTEIN	CARBS	FAT	FIBER	SUGAR	SODIUM

Nutrition information is an approximation and may vary depending on the brands and products used, exact ingredient quantities, and portion sizes.

Ingredients

Makes 12 · 1 cup (without rice)

TURKEY & VEGETABLES

- [ ] **3 lb** ground turkey (85/15)
- [ ] **3 lb** trimmed green cabbage, sliced
- [ ] **2 medium** onions, diced
- [ ] **2 large** carrots, shredded
- [ ] **5 cloves** garlic, minced
- [ ] **1 tbsp** fresh ginger, grated
- [ ] **6** green onions, sliced, white and green portions separated
- [ ] **1 tbsp** olive oil

SAUCE - FINAL TOTALS

- [ ] **1 cup** reduced-sodium soy sauce
- [ ] **6 tbsp** light brown sugar
- [ ] **4 tbsp** seasoned rice vinegar
- [ ] **1 tbsp** sesame oil
- [ ] **1½ tbsp** cornstarch
- [ ] **1 cup** water
- [ ] **½ tsp** crushed red pepper flakes
- [ ] **⅓ tsp** black pepper
- [ ] **½ tsp** garlic powder
- [ ] **¼ tsp** ground ginger

OPTIONAL

- [ ] Cooked jasmine rice, served separately
- [ ] Sesame seeds, for garnish

Ingredient note: Sauce amounts are the final totals from both additions during testing. Follow the divided amounts in the steps; do not add another full batch of sauce. Use seasoned rice vinegar, as tested. The turkey fat was drained. Rice and optional sesame seeds are excluded from the base calorie estimate.

Instructions

1 Mix the first sauce

Whisk together 3/4 cup soy sauce, 4 tbsp brown sugar, 3 tbsp seasoned rice vinegar, 1 tbsp sesame oil, 1 1/2 tbsp cornstarch, 3/4 cup water, 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes, and 1/3 tsp black pepper. Set aside.

2 Brown and drain the turkey

Brown the turkey in batches over medium-high heat, breaking it into crumbles. Cook to 165°F as measured with a food thermometer. Drain the rendered fat and set the turkey aside.

3 Cook the vegetables and aromatics

Heat 1 tbsp olive oil in a very large cooking vessel over medium heat. Cook the onions and carrots for about 4–5 minutes, stirring. Add the fresh garlic, fresh ginger, and white/light green portions of the green onions. Cook for about 1 minute.

4 Add turkey and cabbage

Return the turkey to the pan. Add the cabbage in thirds, stirring and letting each addition soften

enough to make room for the next. Cook, stirring frequently, until tender with a little bite, about 8–12 minutes.

5 Add the first sauce

Whisk the first sauce again to lift any settled cornstarch. Stir it into the turkey and vegetables and simmer until distributed and beginning to thicken.

6 Add the final flavor boost

Mix the remaining 1/4 cup soy sauce, 2 tbsp brown sugar, 1 tbsp seasoned rice vinegar, and 1/4 cup water with 1/2 tsp garlic powder and 1/4 tsp ground ginger. Stir into the pan and simmer for another 3–5 minutes. Do not add more cornstarch or sesame oil.

> **Calorie Hacker Tip:** Leave a little sauce in the pan rather than cooking it dry. That extra juice is delicious spooned over optional rice.

7 Garnish and serve

Top with the reserved green onion tops and optional sesame seeds. Serve in one-cup portions, with jasmine rice if desired. The finished batch yields approximately 12 cups.

Our Turkey-and-Cabbage Take on Korean Beef Bowls

The Calorie Hack

The classic version is mainly ground beef and sweet-savory sauce served over rice. Our version uses ground turkey and adds plenty of cabbage, carrots, and onions to stretch the batch into satisfying portions. Enjoy it on its own or add a measured serving of rice. Comparison based on My Korean Kitchen's Korean Ground Beef and Rice Bowls: approximately 551 calories per serving, including rice and bibimbap sauce. Our turkey-and-cabbage skillet is approximately 346 calories per cup without rice, or 449 calories with ½ cup cooked jasmine rice. These are different recipes and serving sizes; all figures are estimates.

Traditional approach	Our Calorie Hack
~~Ground beef and sauce over rice~~	✓ **Ground turkey with cabbage, carrots, and onions; rice optional**

Why it works

- **Sesame oil:** A small measured amount brings its nutty flavor to the whole batch.
- **Cabbage:** Three pounds cook down into the turkey and sauce.
- **Portions:** One-cup servings make the finished dish easy to measure.

Make It a Meal

One serving: ~346 cal

Enjoy a one-cup portion on its own or spoon it over optional jasmine rice. Keep some of the sauce for the rice.

- **Cooked jasmine rice +~103 cal**
  1/2 cup cooked; adds approximately 103 calories, for about 449 calories with a one-cup portion of the skillet.

Illustrative estimates. Actual calories depend on portions, ingredients, and dressing.

Angie's Kitchen Notes

What we learned making it

1. **Sauce totals**
   The ingredient list includes both additions. The second addition used garlic powder and ground ginger because the fresh aromatics were already cooked.
2. **Keep it juicy**
   A little sauce remaining in the pan is intentional, especially with rice.
3. **Spice level**
   The tested batch used 1/2 tsp crushed red pepper flakes; adjust to your preference.
4. **Nutrition estimate**
   Approximately 346 kcal per cup is provisional, based on an estimated 4,152 kcal for the batch before accounting for drained turkey fat. The amount of fat removed was not measured. Rice and optional sesame seeds are extra.
5. **Yield**
   Approximately 12 one-cup servings from the October 16, 2026 test.

Storage & Reheating

- **Refrigerator:** Refrigerate promptly in shallow covered containers at 40°F or below and use within 3–4 days.
- **Reheating:** Reheat to 165°F, stirring for even heating. Add a small splash of water if needed.
- **Food safety:** Refrigerate within 2 hours, or within 1 hour when the temperature is above 90°F.

Leftover safety, the USDA way: Refrigerate within 2 hours · Enjoy within 3–4 days · Freeze for up to 3–4 months · Reheat to 165°F. USDA: Leftovers and Food Safety: fsis.usda.gov

Hack It Again

Cook once, eat twice

Turn the leftovers into tomorrow's lunch. Less waste, less money, less thinking.

- **Lunch bowl**
  Reheat a portion and serve with separately measured rice.
- **Lettuce cups**
  Spoon reheated turkey and cabbage into crisp lettuce leaves.

Real Food. Simple Swaps. Healthier Plates.

Rate this recipe and find more simple swaps at thecaloriehacker.com