

## Bonus episode #128 - Sunday funday

### Episode description

In this week's bonus episode, Andrew takes you on a fun Sunday trip through Jegidong, a neighborhood in Seoul. Follow along as he and his wife find a small, hidden Chinese restaurant and visit a lively local market, buying fresh fruit and enjoying the busy, bustling atmosphere. To top it all off, they relax at a café with a fascinating history as an old movie theater.



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Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

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**Andrew:** Hello, and welcome to bonus episode number 128 of the Culips English Podcast. My name's Andrew. I will be your host and your study buddy for today. Thank you for clicking play to join me for today's English study session.

If you're new to the bonus episode series, let me quickly explain what it's all about. In this series, I just tell you some stories from my everyday life. I'm a Canadian guy who lives abroad in Seoul, South Korea. And I hope that by listening to these stories, you will be able to B.I.G.B. What does B.I.G.B mean? It stands for build your English fluency, increase your cultural knowledge, grow your vocabulary, and become a better and clearer communicator. So, if those are some of your goals with your English, then you're in the right place. And I'm going to try my best to help you achieve those goals.

For each and every bonus episode, there is a 100% interactive transcript and vocabulary glossary. Plus, if you're a Culips member, then you'll be able to get a comprehension quiz as well. Just to say thanks to our Culips members, we give them that free comprehension quiz. So, thank you to all the members out there for your support. We couldn't do Culips without you.

And if you're wondering, what do I mean by Culips member? Well, if you are looking to take your English to the next level, to make some big jumps with your fluency, well, we've got you covered. We're here to help you achieve that goal. And by becoming a Culips member, you will get all of our tools that we have made to help you achieve that goal, to help you improve your fluency and become a better English speaker and communicator. So, you will get things like helpful study guides, quizzes, interactive transcripts, and more for all of our regular episodes. Plus, you'll be able to join us for our weekly speaking classes.

We hold about three speaking classes each and every week where we talk about a recent Culips episode. And I host one of the classes. The other two are hosted by our study guide

writers, Alina, and Indiana. And they're awesome. I just love these speaking classes. Each and every week I look forward to hanging out with Culips members and talking about a recent Culips episode. Last week we talked about comedy because we were talking about one of the recent Chatterbox episodes where Anna and I, my co-host Anna and I, we talked about comedy and the kinds of things that make us laugh. And yeah, we talked about that episode last week on Thursday with our Culips community, and it was just a super fun, super awesome conversation. And a lot of the members who joined me for that session said it was really helpful for building and practicing their English-speaking skills as well.

What else will you get if you're a Culips member? You'll get ad-free audio, you'll get access to our Fluency Files series. And I just put the finishing touches on recording a new Fluency Files episode before I hit record on this bonus episode. So yeah, a lot of great things that you can get when you are a Culips member. So why don't you visit our website, Culips.com. You can find out all the details and learn all about it, and you can sign up and become a member today for an affordable price. You can join the thousands of other Culips members from around the world who are improving their English fluency with us. So yeah, check it out, Culips.com, or follow the link in the description for more details and to sign up.

So, the story that I have for y'all this week is just a regular Sunday date day with my wife. And we explored a neighborhood in, I guess it would be Eastern Seoul, a little bit East of downtown, but not too far outside of downtown Seoul, just a little bit to the East of Central Seoul. And this neighborhood is called Jegidong.

And I used to hang out a lot in this neighborhood way back in the day, when I first moved to Seoul, because one of my friends who is also from Canada, he was living in Jegidong. And so sometimes I would go and hang out with him in this neighborhood. It's a really interesting neighborhood. I can't exactly put my finger on why it's interesting. It feels very old-fashioned. Yeah. I mean, it's modernized a lot now. But back in the day, when I did go

and hang out with my friend there, it was like, whoa, this is a really old neighborhood. There were lots of senior citizens living there and there still are to an extent.

Also, there's a lot of old-style housing. And actually, when my wife and I were in the market for a house, we looked at a couple of places in the Jegidong area. And yeah, we looked at a lot of old houses there. There were plenty to see. And it's got this kind of old-fashioned feeling to it. Also, it's a place in Seoul where you could buy medicine and I guess medicinal ingredients. I don't know if you wanted to make a healing tea or something, and maybe you needed some leaf or some tree bark or something to make a kind of natural medicine. Well, you could go to Jegidong and find a kind of place to buy that kind of ingredient.

So, for whatever reason, Jegidong has this kind of old-fashioned feeling. And although Seoul is a very modern city and changes all the time, every week, every month, it's always changing. I think Jegidong still feels like a kind of old-fashioned place in the city, although it is slowly changing, as I mentioned. And so, the reason that my wife and I decided to go there one Sunday, a few weeks ago, is because of Instagram.

I think I told you guys just a couple of weeks ago that I struggle with this app, right? Instagram is very addictive. And yeah, one day I was just scrolling through some Instagram reels, and I saw an Instagram reel introducing a Chinese food restaurant in Jegidong. And the person who made this reel said, "Oh my gosh, hands down, there is the best ever Chinese restaurant in Jegidong. And if you ever get the chance to go there, you should do that." So, I made a note of that restaurant and I searched for it in my map app, and I saved it, and I filed it away in my head. Like next time I visit that neighborhood, definitely I want to go and check out that Chinese restaurant.

It's really interesting, the difference between Chinese restaurants around the world. In a way, Chinese cuisine is very unique because it seems to adapt and is catered to the local population in every place there's a Chinese restaurant. Like a Chinese restaurant in

Canada is extremely different than a Chinese restaurant here in Korea. And I know some of the other countries I've visited around the world have a different style of Chinese food. And probably even in China, it's totally different as well. Of course, China is a huge country with a huge variety of different foods and cuisines. But what we call Chinese food in Canada and what we call Chinese food in Korea is extremely different. But I love them both. I'm a big fan of both styles of cuisine.

So yeah, this was a Korean-style Chinese restaurant, just to be specific. And there are many things on the menu at a Korean-Chinese restaurant, Korean-style Chinese restaurant. But the top three dishes are, I guess number one would be black bean noodle, which is just some noodles with a black bean sauce. Number two is also a noodle dish. It's a kind of spicy seafood noodle soup. And then the third popular dish is a kind of sweet and sour pork. And in Canada, we also like to eat Chinese-style sweet and sour pork at a Chinese restaurant, but it tastes really different. The pork is similar, but the sauce is different. So yeah, interesting how it changes from place to place to place.

So anyways, I **filed this away** in my map app and man, it must have been six months or a year ago. And from time to time, when my wife and I are thinking about a restaurant to visit or a place to go to, that restaurant comes up in my mind. And I've suggested it a few times in the past, like, oh, we should go to this restaurant that I saw on Instagram. It looks so good. And the, I don't want to say vlogger, maybe the influencer really **sold it**, really made it look and sound delicious.

So yeah, I suggested that we visit there a few times in the past, and we tried to go maybe once or twice. One day they were closed because it was their day off. So, the restaurant was just totally closed. And I can't remember what happened the other day. For whatever reason, we didn't get to go there. But it's difficult to go to this restaurant because they're only open in the afternoon, I think for four or five hours around lunch, like maybe 11:30 until 4pm or 5pm. They're really only open, it's weird, in the afternoon from lunchtime until dinnertime, but they're not open for dinnertime. And I do think they're also closed a couple

of days a week. And then on top of that, there's no reservations. And it's extremely small. This restaurant is the definition of **a hole in the wall**. It's just this really tiny restaurant. And inside there are, I think I counted six tables. And they're all just two-seater tables. And there was... no actually there were seven tables because they put this one little table in the back that if you were a solo diner, you could sit at that table and eat by yourself.

So finally, the day arrived last week, last Sunday, my wife and I were thinking, what should we eat for lunch? And I said, "OK, it's time. Let's go to this Jegidong Chinese restaurant." And my wife said, "OK, let's do it." I'm a really big fan, like I said, of Korean-style Chinese food. My wife is like not as big of a fan as me, but she was down, and she was a good **sport**.

So, we went to the restaurant. It's not too far from our place. So, we are actually able to walk there in, I don't know, 45 minutes or an hour. But it was a nice autumn afternoon and we always like exploring new places, even though now my wife and I have lived in our new house for over a year and a half. And I have lived in Seoul for many, many years. And now my wife is not originally from Seoul. She's from Gyeonggi-do, which is the neighboring province. But now she's lived in Seoul for several years since after we got married. But still, the city is so big and there are always so many things to see and explore. And like I said, it's always changing. So, it seems like every time you visit a neighborhood, something is different. There's a new cafe or new restaurant to check out, a new building. Something is always, always new. So, I love just walking around and checking out little side streets and exploring. And that's what we decided to do on our walk to Jegidong.

So finally, after a little while, we arrived at the restaurant, and we had to wait. Of course, there was... maybe two or three parties in front of us. Yeah, it wasn't that long of a wait. But you write your name down and you write your order down at the same time. And so, we decided to order the black bean noodles, which I said were one of the specialties, one of the **staples** of Korean-style Chinese cuisine. But this restaurant does it a little bit differently. There was a lot of minced meat in the black bean sauce. And usually, a black

bean noodle here in Korea will have a little bit of meat. But this one was a lot of meat. It was really meat **centric**. And then also we ordered sweet and sour pork.

So, we wrote our order down and we had to wait outside. And yeah, we probably waited not too long, 15 minutes or so. Usually, I hate waiting at a restaurant. And if it's longer than 15, 20 minutes or so, I'll just give up and I'll be like, we can come back another time. It's all right. There's not very many places where I'm dying to eat there that I would wait for that long. But in this case, you know, I had really wanted to visit this restaurant for a while. And finally, I had the opportunity to, and I was willing to wait. I said to my wife, we can wait for 30 minutes here. Like I really want to go in. I really want to check this place out.

And another thing is that this restaurant is quite old. If you look at it from the outside, it looks a little bit shabby and **dilapidated** and run down. But I've got a tip for you. Usually, the restaurants that are the oldest and maybe from the outside, they look a little shabby or run down or dilapidated. These restaurants usually end up being the most delicious restaurants. And I guess the reason why that is, is because the run down and dilapidated and maybe don't look so appealing from the outside... because they're old and they've been there for a long time. And if the restaurant is old and has been in business for a long time, it must mean that they're doing something right, right? The food is delicious, or the service is amazing, or the staff are kind. But when you think about it, if you're in the restaurant business and you have great service and kind staff and maybe nice prices, but the food sucks, then you're still probably going to go out of business. So, at the end of the day, I think usually a restaurant that's been in business for a long time is worth checking out because there's a reason they're still in business.

So anyways, from the outside, this Chinese food restaurant didn't look so great and didn't look so appealing. But I knew that that was probably a good sign because probably once we got inside and got our seat and got our food, then it would be delicious. And I was right. So finally, we were called, and we went inside and getting inside was a challenge because like I said, there were just a few tables inside, I think six tables, like I mentioned before, but



they were super crammed together. And in fact, all of the little two-seater tables were all pushed together to make like one longer table. And it was just so small on the inside, so cramped. Of course, our table was in the middle, right? So, we had a couple dining on our left and a couple dining on our right, and we had to sit in the middle of these diners. And so, I had to squeeze my way past this other guy that was blocking my way. So, I was like in between trying to squeeze behind him, between the back wall of the restaurant and his chair. And he was a rather big guy that I had to squeeze behind and he had no space to like move his chair up. He was trying to get out of the way for me so I could squeeze behind him to get into my seat. But there was just no space, like it was such a cramped, small little restaurant. And then once I finally did, I sort of had to like jump and squeeze and manipulate my body to get behind him and get into my seat.

But once I was able to sit down, then our food came out right away, which I guess is the nice thing about ordering in advance is that your food comes out right away as soon as you sit down.

So, we sat down and started to eat. It was really interesting the way that the black bean noodles came out. They came out in three bowls. So, there were two bowls just of plain noodles and then one big bowl of the black bean sauce. And then you could take as much of the sauce as you wanted. And then just a moment after that, the sweet and sour pork came out. And yeah, we **chowed down**. We got to eating.

And I don't know how you guys feel, but in a restaurant like this, to me, I always feel a little bit uncomfortable about having a conversation while eating. Because we were sitting right next to strangers, like right squished up beside them. And yeah, I don't know when you're talking, it just feels like somebody else can listen into your conversation. And I feel also just a little bit self-conscious about my Korean in these kinds of situations as well, because like everybody can hear what you're saying. And yeah, also, you don't want to talk too loudly about the food. Usually, it's nice to talk about the food. "Oh, this is good. This is not so bad," or whatever, right? You can give your food review. But in a small place like that where all of the staff and everybody can hear you.



Thankfully, the food was really good, so I had no negative comments to make about it. But yeah, I'd be curious to hear your thoughts. What do you feel like when you're eating in a small, cramped restaurant like that beside strangers? It was actually awkwardly silent in the restaurant, like people were just chowing down and eating, but nobody was having any deep conversations or anything like that. I think one of the reasons was because we were also sitting so close together and we were all strangers. So, yeah, I don't know. From that point of view, slightly awkward atmosphere, I suppose, but didn't matter because we had food to eat and it's rude to talk with your mouth full anyways, right?

So, we just ate our food. And while we were eating our food and enjoying our meal, I was thinking in my head, like, wow, this is such a Korean experience. Like, here I am in this really small restaurant, a hole in the wall, that probably if you were a tourist, you would never be able to find. Like, this is just a really, really local experience. I'm experiencing Seoul the way that locals do right now. And this is the kind of place that you would love to introduce one of your friends to if a friend were to visit the city, for example.

So, I was thinking that thought in my head while I was eating lunch and like, I was like, I bet you like no other foreigners have been here. I felt like this is really, really just a unique local spot. But then as soon as I was saying that, then I heard one of the staff speaking in kind of broken English. And I looked over and there were two foreigners... I think they were from maybe Northern Europe somewhere. I could hear them talking, and I would have to guess probably they were from Sweden or Norway, or they were speaking some kind of Nordic language like this. And they ended up sitting right beside us.

So, just as I was thinking this thought like, oh, this is a really local experience, then I was proven wrong. And these two girls that seemed like university students, they sat down exactly right beside us and started **chomping down** on some Korean-style Chinese food as well. So, I was proven wrong. Actually, I ended up hearing them speak Korean with the server and their Korean was awesome as well. So, I think, hey, maybe they were able to see the same vlogger that I was and they're not tourists. Maybe they live here because if

you were a tourist, you probably wouldn't be able to speak Korean to that level. But anyways, that was just a funny incident that happened while we were eating.

We finished up the food, and my review after we got outside and were walking to the market, because that's the next place we went to. As we were walking to the market, my wife and I were talking about the food, and I loved it. I was like, this was terrific. Five out of five for me, five stars out of five stars. I really had a great lunch. Probably overate, a little bit too much. I really **went to town** on the noodles and the sweet and sour pork, not recommended. But actually, good before going to a market because when we got to the market, I didn't want to eat anything. I was too full already.

And guys, let me tell you about this market experience. It was incredible. There's this huge market in Jegidong and they sell all sorts of stuff, lots of different fruit and vegetables and meat. And there are restaurants there. There are, like I said, some of those medicinal ingredients that you might use to make a medicine or a tea, **everything under the sun** at this market. And we went on a Sunday. I don't think Sunday is like a big market day. Maybe perhaps if we had gone on Saturday or a weekday, it would have been more lively. Which is actually hard to imagine because it was absolutely jam-packed with people. It was hard to even walk through the aisles of the market. It was so, so busy. But my wife was like, yeah, this is nothing. Probably on a weekday, it would be even busier because it did seem like every second stall at the market was closed for the day. It's probably like the stall owner's day off.

But I thought it was absolutely bustling. So, so, so many people. And it's kind of crazy because here in Korea, a huge topic of conversation that I hear on the news all the time, every time I open social media on my phone or look at the news, I see a story about this. And it is Korea's declining birth rate and its low birth rate. And just people here are concerned about the future of the country and how many Korean people will be around in the future because the birth rate is so low. But it makes it hard to think about because at this market was just so jam-packed with many, many, many people. But then when you

look at the ages of the people who are there, they're all like 20 or 30 years older than my wife and me. There weren't too many younger people there.

But anyways, it was really cool still to experience the market. And we walked all the way down these huge aisles. It was especially cool to check out the fruit and vegetable aisles. And you could see just any fruit under the sun that you wanted to buy was sold there. We ended up buying some apples because the apples were for sale for a really good price. And for the last couple of years here, the apple market in Korea has been insane. They've been really, really expensive, so expensive that it's hard to justify buying apples. And I haven't really had too many over the last year and a half to two years or so. But we saw a good deal on apples, so we **snapped them up**, and we've been enjoying some apples.

We also bought some chestnuts. There was a woman who was selling chestnuts, and it was kind of cool. We bought chestnuts, and they were just the raw chestnuts in the shell. But the lady asked us when we were buying them, "Oh, would you like these raw chestnuts or would you like chestnuts that have been deshelled and the casing removed from them?" And so, my wife was like, "Can I have half and half?" I think we bought like a kilogram of chestnuts or something. And the lady at the stall was like, "Yeah, of course." And so, she put just half of the raw, regular chestnuts into a bag, and she took the other half out of the bag and put them into this machine, which was, I guess, a de-sheller. Like, I don't know what we would call it exactly because a chestnut doesn't really have a shell, just has like that hard protective skin. And maybe there's a special word for that in English, but I don't know what it is. We'll call it casing, the chestnut casing, OK? So, this machine just like spun the chestnuts around really quickly, and then they popped out, and they had no casing anymore.

And yeah, really interesting. Chestnuts are a food that we don't really eat in Canada too often. I know back in the day, like when I talked to my parents, they said that they used to eat chestnuts. They would go to a hockey game and eat roasted chestnuts. That would be one of the snacks that they would eat at a hockey game. And I thought that was really cool

because for my generation in Canada, nobody eats chestnuts. This is just not a food that's **on our radar at all**. But I've been introduced to them here because of my wife, and my father-in-law also sometimes picks them and gives them to us. And so, my wife likes to... well, she'll eat them raw, which is a little bit intense for me. I don't like them raw too much, but she'll roast them in the oven, and they taste pretty good roasted, almost like a sweet potato, like a roasted sweet potato, believe it or not. So, I've been enjoying some of the roasted chestnuts. Really, really good.

So, we picked those up at the market, and we just wandered around from place to place to place. What else did we buy? We bought some Korean-style blood sausage called sundae, which—**don't knock it until you try it**. It sounds a little intense, but it's really, really good. I like sundae as well. We picked up some of that, and then we went to a cafe in this market, which was pretty cool.

I had also heard about this cafe on social media before, so I wanted to check it out just to see what it was like. And this cafe was cool because it used to be a movie theater back in the day, but I guess the movie theater had gone out of business, and there was this empty big theater. And so, this cafe—and it's a really famous cafe chain—ended up buying this old theater. They converted it into a new location of theirs. And yeah, we wanted to go inside and check out the cafe. And it's kind of cool. It was like that mix of old and new, right? You had this old historical building, but this brand-new coffee chain had bought it and souped it up and made the interior more to fit their brand and their cafe's brand. But at the end of the day, I thought it's kind of cool. Like, probably this old theater, maybe it would have been knocked down, or maybe it would just sit there empty and not be used. But because this coffee chain was able to buy the building and renovate it and restore it, well, then we still get to enjoy that old historical place in a new way. So that was interesting as well. And as a history lover, personally, I love to see when old buildings are saved instead of knocked down.

So yeah, we enjoyed a cup of coffee there, and then we rented a bicycle and rode back to

our home. Again, it wasn't too far, maybe a 20- or 25-minute ride or so. I'm not sure. I didn't time it, but it didn't seem to take too long. And we got home just as the sun was setting, and it was a great way to put an end to our Sunday date day, eating Chinese food and checking out a traditional market in Jegidong.

Well, everybody, I think this is a good place to wrap things up for this week. Thank you for listening along. And if you made it all the way here, all the way to the end, that is fantastic. You can pat yourself on the back. You did a good job. And yeah, thank you for completing an English study session with me here this week. You're doing what you need to do. You need to put some time and effort into learning English. It doesn't come for free. It's not something that's automatic. And a great way to improve your English fluency is to get a lot of it in your head. So great job on doing some of that here today with me.

Guys, if you have any questions or comments about this episode, the best place to leave them is on our Discord server. We'll be continuing the discussion about this episode over on our Discord server, which is free for everyone to join. Just follow the link in the description for this episode.

And I should also give you a completion code. So, the completion code is a word that you can share just as the word or as a longer example sentence in the comments on the Discord or on our YouTube page or on our Instagram page. And that will just signal to me and to our entire Culips community of listeners from around the world that you finished this episode. You made it all the way to the end, and you completed this study session. So, for this week's completion code, why don't we go with the word: "Chestnut." Chestnut. Yeah, I like that one. Chestnut.

OK, so you've got some homework to do. You have to go ahead and make an example sentence. Or if you're a little bit lazy, you can just leave the word chestnut. That's OK. That's OK as well. In the comments. So go, go, go. And I look forward to seeing those comments.

OK, guys. Well, I'm going to take off, but have a great week up ahead. Happy English learning as always. Take care. And I'll talk to you next time. Bye bye.

## Glossary

1. **File it away:** To save or remember something for later use. In this episode, Andrew says he "filed this away" in his map app, meaning he saved the information about the restaurant so he could visit it later. *Example: I filed it away in my mind to remind my teacher about the extra credit project next week.*
2. **Sold it:** To make something seem convincing or appealing. Andrew says the influencer "really sold it," meaning they made the restaurant sound so good that he wanted to try it. *Example: The commercial sold it as the best video game of the year, so I bought it right away.*
3. **A hole in the wall:** A small, often simple or hidden place, usually a restaurant or shop. Andrew describes the restaurant as "a hole in the wall," meaning it was small, unassuming, and not fancy. *Example: That little hole-in-the-wall cafe serves the best sandwiches in town!*
4. **A good sport:** Someone who is positive and cooperative, even when something isn't their preference. Andrew says his wife was "a good sport" when she agreed to try the restaurant, even though she didn't love Korean-style Chinese food. *Example: Even though she didn't win the game, she was a good sport and congratulated the other team.*
5. **A staple:** A basic, essential, or commonly enjoyed item. Andrew mentions that black bean noodles are "a staple" of Korean-style Chinese food, meaning they are a key dish everyone knows. *Example: Rice is a staple in many cuisines around the world.*

6. **(Something) centric:** Focused on or centered around something. Andrew describes the black bean noodles as "meat-centric," meaning they had a lot of meat in them. *Example: The new museum exhibit is art-centric, showcasing paintings and sculptures from local artists.*
7. **Dilapidated:** In bad condition because of age or neglect. Andrew says the restaurant looked "dilapidated" from the outside, meaning it appeared old and worn out. *Example: The dilapidated house on the corner hasn't been lived in for years.*
8. **Chow down:** To eat something eagerly or with enthusiasm. Andrew says they "chowed down" on the food, meaning they ate it enthusiastically. *Example: After hiking all day, we couldn't wait to chow down on the barbecue.*
9. **Chomp down:** To bite into or eat something with energy. Andrew says the two foreign girls sat beside him and "chomped down" on their food, meaning they ate eagerly. *Example: The horse chomped down on the fresh carrots we gave it.*
10. **To go to town:** To do something with a lot of energy or enthusiasm. Andrew says he "went to town" on the noodles and pork, meaning he ate a lot of it. *Example: When she started decorating the cake, she really went to town with the frosting and sprinkles.*
11. **Everything under the sun:** A way to say "everything you can imagine." Andrew says the market sold "everything under the sun," meaning it had all kinds of goods. *Example: At the store, they sell everything under the sun, from clothes to electronics.*
12. **Snap (something) up:** To buy or grab something quickly before it's gone. Andrew says he "snapped up" some apples at the market because they were on sale. *Example: The concert tickets sold out fast—fans snapped them up in minutes.*



13. **To be on your radar:** To be aware of something or paying attention to it. Andrew says chestnuts weren't "on his radar" in Canada, meaning they weren't something he noticed or thought about. *Example: This book wasn't on my radar until a friend recommended it to me.*

14. **Don't knock it until you try it:** Don't criticize something before you've experienced it yourself. Andrew says this about sundae, encouraging people to give it a chance before judging it. *Example: I didn't think I'd like yoga, but don't knock it until you try it—it's really relaxing!*

## Episode credits

Host and preparation: Andrew Bates

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