

### The Restaurant Rover: ARISU, a new Korean Gem in Leominster

I had been hearing that there was a new Korean restaurant that had just recently opened in Leominster. I must admit, my knowledge of Korean food was limited to Korean BBQ and Kim chi, but I wanted to give it a try. So, I asked a friend to try it with me and she was up for it. I did a bit of research on ordering Korean food and sent my friend the article I found.

The location of Arisu is a little difficult as it could easily be missed on busy North Main Street in Leominster (704), but once you do find it and enter you quickly forget it is off the busy street. Arisu is well appointed with Asian design, warm colors and a friendly staff to greet you.

The menu is extensive, but they explain each and every dish very clearly, which makes ordering fairly easy. Although, I was glad that my friend printed out the article I had sent her and brought it along! We started with Mul-Mandu which are steamed dumplings filled with minced pork and vegetables, they were very fresh and tasty and light, a bit like an elegant cousin to 'pot stickers' and they were served with a ginger soy dipping sauce for \$8.95.

They also give you Miso Soup with your meal, and it was so yummy, not a hint of that over-salty type of miso I have had in the past. This Miso Soup used the right combination of Miso Paste and Dashi. I drank mine down happily!

My friend ordered the Bulgogi, which is thinly sliced prime cuts of beef marinated in Korean bulgogi sauce. And I ordered the LA Galbi, which is beef short ribs cut across the bone marinated in Korean BBQ sauce. We loved our own dishes as well as each other's, the marinade on our beef was so good, tangy and sweet but it didn't over power the beef. The portions were quite generous and we both took half home. My friend joked that usually she shares her leftovers with her husband, but this time she was saving them for herself! Also, a note about the service, something that has been lost in recent years at many restaurants is when the server actually packs your leftovers for you. Too many times I am just thrown a Styrofoam box at my table to do the packing myself. Not at Arisu, they really insist on serving you from start to finish, so sit back and let them! Our orders were packed to go so artfully that it made eating them the next day (or later that night) a pleasure.

When our orders came they were accompanied by an array of small sides called, Pan Chan. These were so fun to try! There was kim chi, as well as noodle, fish and other vegetable-based sides, and we liked them all.

We had ordered a side dish of Bibim-bab, which is steamed rice topped with seasoned vegetables and served with spicy red chili paste on the side. They prepared this dish tableside, which was fun to watch.

They do a wonderful job at Arisu at making you feel special, yet at home. They are very attentive and we were offered and served a few special dishes on the house by the owner. One of those dishes was a steamed egg and shrimp dish served on a hot stone, tableside, it was

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simply divine! It was so light and flavorful and stayed hot for the rest of our meal because of the stone. It may have been my favorite thing I ate there. And it is not on the menu; it is just a special dish they whipped up for us to try.

At the end of our meal we were brought SuJeongGwa, a traditional Korean beverage made with mainly cinnamon sticks, ginger, and sugar. Koreans usually drink this beverage as a dessert and it is popular during the holidays. My friend described it as liquid apple pie, and I have to agree! It tastes good both hot or cold, we were served the beverage cold with ice cubes. The owner told us it is the drink of royalty, and that is just how we felt we were treated at Arisu.

A Rover Recommend!