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W Market

Released: 3/11/2025

In this article, Diane checks out W Market, a Commercial Center grocery store focusing on Korean foods:

- *How long has W Market been serving the Korean community at this location?*
- *What is the parent company for W Market, and how many other retail locations do they have in the U.S.? (The answer may surprise you!)*
- *What is the most popular selling food item that is sold there?*



W Market Exterior



W Market Employees Grace Won and Mike Lee (Store Manager)



W Market Interior



The Refrigerated Kimchi Section

W Market: The Store for Korean Ingredients

Grace Won takes pride in her role as a Customer Service Associate at W Market (also known as W Mart), a specialty grocery store located in Commercial Center.

Grace often recalls a friend's remark about how the aroma of Korean-style vegetables cooking makes her mouth water – an appreciation that enforces her commitment to providing customers with the finest Korean and Asian ingredients.

W Market is a retail extension of Wang Globalnet, a South Korean company with over 50 years of experience in the food industry. With its U.S. Headquarters in Vernon, CA, Wang Globalnet supplies more than 2000 wholesale products to restaurants and specialty stores that cater to Korean and Asian cuisines.

W Market is the company's sole retail location in the United States, continuing to serve the local community for more than 11 years.

Grace works with Store Manager Mike Lee and two other people known simply as Mrs. Kim and LoLo. W Market remains a source for both home cooks and culinary professionals, and Grace notes that demand for authentic Korean and Asian ingredients continues to rise. Mike adds that customers can find a diverse selection

of high-quality products from fresh produce and essential sauces to specialty items that bring flavors to life.

Korean-style cooking is mostly vegetarian. Yes, sweets are still part of the diet, but not as sweet as most Americans know. “We have Americans learning about Korean ingredients on the cooking channels,” says Grace, “and other Americans are drawn to Korean cooking because they are trying to have a healthier diet.”

According to reports on the Internet, Korea is ranked third in the world in terms of life expectancy; the US, 49th.

When I visited the store, I asked to purchase a few of the popular Korean foods. Of course, kimchi – vegetables and seasoning – is the most popular selling food. I bought a small jar with some very light seaweed squares. The combination, to me, was very flavorful and delicious.

I also bought some “Sweet Potato Sticks” (made in China) which were all sweet potato...good, but sticky. And for dessert, I bought a box of “Three Colored Rice Cakes” – with just a slight sweet taste – also very good.

I could have shopped in the store for hours - if I understood Korean cooking styles. I did recognize American brand names on some products, but I was told that though the names were familiar, the products inside had been made for Korean tastes.

W Market is a large store with many goods in huge bags and many smaller packages with information in two languages. The store does not sell everyday items like eggs and milk (not big sellers there), but kimchi and red chili paste are on almost every shopping list. The Wang Globalnet web site even has recipes online.

Should the new US Health Secretary recommend more diets focused on vegetables, and should more Americans come to W Market looking for new healthier foods, do what I did and ask Grace or one of the other employees for help