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YOUR GUIDE TO SOUTH KOREA

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KOREA
TOURISM
ORGANIZATION

VISIT
KOREA
YEAR
2023-2024



SOUTH KOREA

This destination offers a seamless blend of tradition and innovation. Enjoy delicious street food, discover stunning mountains and national parks, explore vibrant neon-lit cities, and delve into 5,000 years of history - all in one trip!

NORTHERN REGIONS

Gyeonggi-do province in the west includes the buzzing metropolis of Seoul with its intoxicating mix of ultra-modern cityscapes and pre-historic sites, and the fascinating DMZ (demilitarized zone). Escape to nature in the cooler eastern province of Gangwon-do, its mountainous landscapes offering hiking and skiing.

CENTRAL REGIONS

Chungcheongnam-do province in the west is all about history and tradition, being home of the ancient Baekje Kingdom, with its fortresses and centuries-old burial tombs. To the east in Gyeongsangbuk-do province immerse yourself in authentic experiences and a visit to Andong Hahoe Folk Village. The UNESCO World Heritage sites of Gyeongju are a delight!

SOUTHERN REGIONS

Gyeongsangnam-do province is home to the vibrant port-city of Busan, where skyscrapers meet the beach. Jeollanam-do province in the south is famed for its cuisine and traditional hanok housing, particularly in the cities of Jinhae and Suncheon. Jeju-do province consists of the volcanic island of Jeju with its national park, the freshest of seafood and the centuries-old tradition of female Haenyeo divers who can dive up to 10 meters to collect shellfish.





WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

There are many ways to experience South Korea, from self-drive journeys, to hiking, small ship cruising and incredible food tours – all of which can be included on a tailor-made itinerary.

WHAT WE LOVE ABOUT IT

The country's blend of ancient heritage and modern innovation makes it a fascinating destination. Discover a land where centuries-old traditions like hanbok (traditional dress) and tea ceremonies coexist with futuristic skyscrapers and electrifying nightlife. From the majestic Gyeongbokgung Palace in Seoul to the infectious beats of Korean pop culture (K-pop), museums and festivals, there's something for every traveller.

Koreans are known for their hospitality and friendliness towards visitors – also known as "Jeong mentality". You're likely to encounter warm welcomes and genuine interest in sharing their culture.



LOCAL CUISINE

South Korea is a foodie heaven, from the tangy, spicy flavours of kimchi (fermented vegetables) to the impressive dishes of Royal Court cuisine, world-famous Korean barbecue and renowned fried chicken! Visit local night markets and don't forget to try soju and makgeolli (rice wine), popular alcoholic drinks.



HANOK VILLAGES & SAUNAS

You don't have to go far from the big cities to immerse yourself in Korean heritage. Try a stay in one of Seoul's hanoks, beautifully crafted traditional wooden houses. These historic homes offer an authentic and serene atmosphere.

Unwind in mineral-rich saunas to rejuvenate a travel weary body. Many offer indoor and outdoor bathing areas in tranquil settings. Remember to wear appropriate attire and shower before entering.



TRANSPORT

It is easy to get around the country as all the major cities and regions are connected by modern transport systems including flights, great roads, and an extensive railway system including super high-speed trains, similar to bullet trains.



WHEN TO VISIT



Spring (Mar - May)

Cherry blossoms typically bloom from late March to early April, although the exact timing can vary depending on the weather conditions each year. Stroll Gyeongju's main area for the most beautiful cherry blossom-lined streets. Further south, Jinhae is famous for its cherry blossom festival, held annually in early April.



Summer (Jun - Aug)

As temperatures rise the summer months can be hot and humid. It is also busy as it is festival season! Most visitors escape the heat by heading to the beaches, the mountains and the great outdoors. From the end of June through to August is peak monsoon season.



Autumn (Sep - Nov)

Clear blue skies and comfortable temperatures are the backdrops to the transformation of foliage from lush green to hues of red and gold in the north. Enjoy the various festivals throughout the country, including the colourful fireworks festivals in Seoul, Busan, and other cities across the country.



Winter (Dec - Feb)

With temperatures dropping to below zero in most parts of South Korea, the winter season is the perfect time to partake in winter activities such as skiing, snowboarding and ice-fishing, followed by a long soak in a relaxing sauna (*jjimjilbang*) as you admire the views. Spicy and warm dishes are perfect for this time of year.



NORTHERN REGIONS

Gyeonggi-do & Gangwon-do Provinces

SEOUL

Immerse yourself in the grandeur of South Korea's capital. Explore the vibrant 24/7 energy of bustling local markets, experience world-class shopping and indulge in exquisite street food. The city also offers easy access to beautiful coastal towns, temples, national parks and other sights including the following:

Incheon

You will more than likely arrive in to Incheon International Airport. This thriving transport hub also offers diverse entertainment districts.

Royal Palace

Gyeongbokgung Palace is a UNESCO World Heritage site at the heart of the Joseon dynasty. See the changing of the royal guards ceremony and explore its beautiful interior.

Seochon Hanok Village

Visit shops, beautiful cafes and one of the oldest and most well-preserved hanok villages in the country (Joseon era 1392 -1910).

Suwon Nammun Market

Handmade items, ceramics, clothing and must-visit if you want to enjoy a variety of mouth-watering food like a local!

Hwaseong Fortress

This fortress surrounds the centre of Suwon, built around 1790s by King Jeongjo of the Joseon dynasty to house and honour the remains of his father, Prince Sado.

Seoraksan National Park

Located east of Seoul, this national park is famous for its views, clear mountain streams and Buddhist temples. Hikes and outdoor activities are best enjoyed during the autumn season (late Sep – Nov).

DMZ

The Demilitarized Zone is a heavily guarded strip of land dividing North Korea from South Korea, offering a fascinating glimpse into Korea's complex history and current politics.

The small town of Taesung sits in the heart of the DMZ and existed before the barrier was created in 1953. The population of just 138 people, now in their 80s and 90s, live under some unique and restrictive rules.





CENTRAL REGIONS

Gyeongsanbuk-do, Jeollabuk-do & Chungcheong-do Provinces

Andong

Korea's most famous village is the Andong Hahoe Village, another UNESCO World Heritage site, founded around the 14th to 15th century, and preserving the architectural styles of that era. Remarkably, people still live here!

Gyeongju

Once the capital of the Silla Kingdom, Gyeongju is a treasure trove of historical and cultural sites. Visit Bulguksa Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage site, and the ancient Cheomseongdae Observatory.

Daegu

Visit the popular Seomun market for a glimpse of local culture. You will find locals selling clothing, souvenirs, handmade items and delicious food at various stalls. Include a visit at Biseulsan Mountain to admire its picturesque scenery.

Woraksan National Park

Renowned for its rugged mountain peaks, cascading waterfalls, and serene valleys. Visit Buddhist temples or enjoy one of the many hikes in the park.

Baekje Cultural Complex

A fascinating fortress, offering a glimpse into the ancient kingdom of Baekje, with its intricate architecture, rich history and burial grounds.

Seosan

This city boasts unique topography with its vast mudflats and diverse marine life. Visit temples and the Haemieupseong walled city to learn about its cultural heritage and history.

Jeonju

Known for its traditional hanok village where you can spend the night like a local. Enjoy shopping in craft shops and eat at various food stalls. Discover how rice wine is made at the traditional Wine Museum.





SOUTHERN REGIONS

Jeollanam-do, Gyeongsangnam-do & Jeju-do Provinces

Yeosu

A vibrant port city, Yeosu boasts breathtaking coastal scenery and a rich maritime heritage.

Suncheon

Nature lovers will enjoy the Suncheon Bay Wetland Reserve with its lush reeds and endangered bird species, or the vast Suncheon Bay National Garden. On the outskirts of town you'll find the UNESCO listed Seonam Temple, the most treasured in Korean Buddhism.

Jinhae

Famous for its cherry blossom festival, the town comes to life with performances and events (Mar – May). A 2-hour drive from Suncheon during spring is also worth it as sakura blossoms ornament the highway to Jinhae.

Gwangju

The city has played a pivotal role in the country's democratic movement. Gwangju now has a vibrant cultural and artistic scene with various museums and art galleries.

Damyang

This serene countryside retreat enchants visitors with its vast bamboo forests and picturesque natural landscapes.

Busan

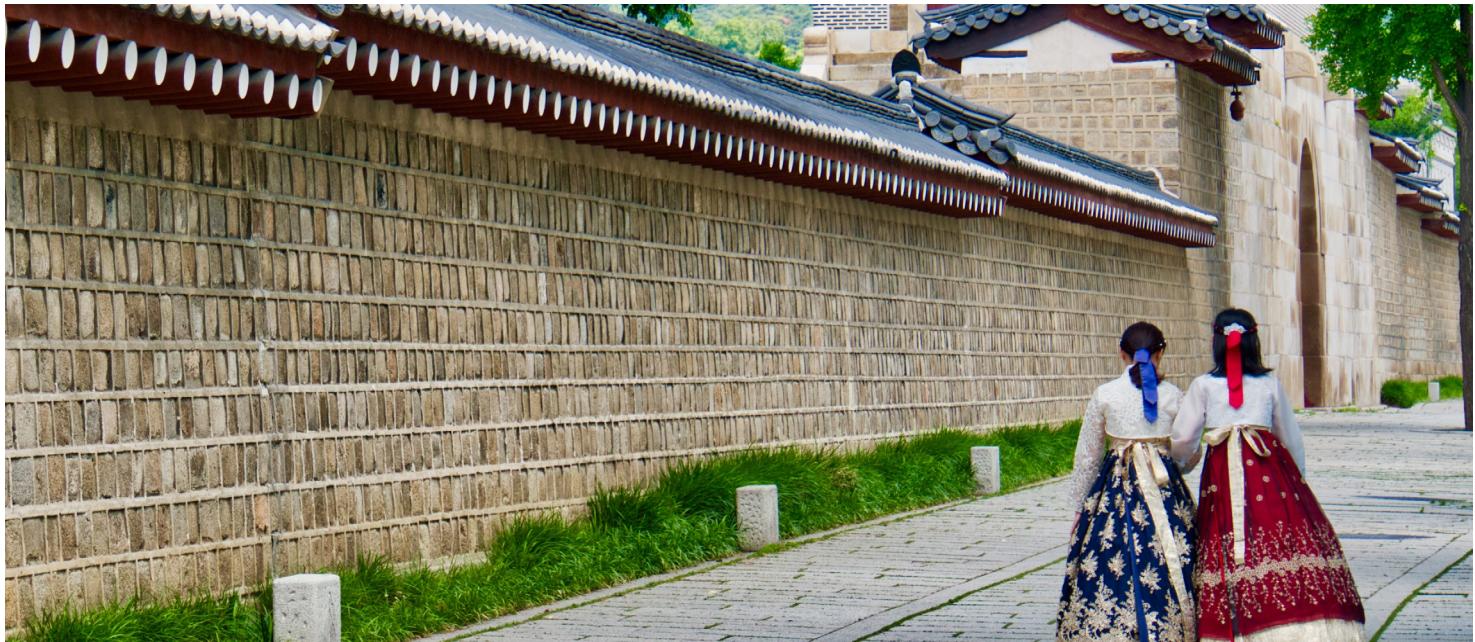
South Korea's second largest city combines natural beauty with industrial dynamism. A stop at a popular night market is a must if you want to try local flavours. Visit the colourful hillside community of Gamcheon Culture Village for stunning views.

JEJU ISLAND

Jeju Island, a volcanic gem, captivates with its pristine beaches, cascading waterfalls, and enchanting natural wonders. Hike to the summit of Hallasan Mountain, the island's iconic peak, or explore the scenic Jeju Olle Trail, offering breathtaking coastal vistas and glimpses of the island's volcanic cliffs.

Immerse yourself in Jeju's unique culture and traditions, including the legendary Haenyeo – skilled women divers who have harvested the sea for generations. Visit the Haenyeo Museum to learn more about local fishing culture.





PLANNING YOUR *South Korean Journey*

Tailor-made itineraries are designed to suit your interests, budget and time available, often including bespoke experiences, places and attractions. Whether travelling alone (solo travellers), as a couple, a family, or as a group of friends, the itinerary is custom-made for you and your preferences.

Images courtesy of: Korea Tourism Organization (KTO); Visit Korea; Photo Korea.

PLEASE CONTACT YOUR TRAVEL PROFESSIONAL