

Seoul Searching & Jeju

9 days | Starts/Ends: Seoul



PRIVATE TOUR: From vibrant Seoul and Gyeongju the ancient kingdom of Silla, to the bustling port city of Busan, the natural wonders of the volcanic island of Jeju and the fascinating DMZ! See the highlights of South Korea both ancient and modern.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Seoul - the nations captivating capital; Gyeongbokgung Palace, National Folk Museum, Jogyesa Temple, Insadong Antique Alley, Cheonggyecheon Stream and Seoul Tower
- Busan - South Korea's principal port city and the Kukje Fish Market
- Gyeongju - former capital of the Silla Kingdom and historic heart of the nation; Gyeongju National Museum, Tumuli Park and the Silla royal tombs, Anapji Pond, the ancient Cheomseongdae Observatory
- UNESCO Listed Seokguram Grotto - one of Asia's finest Buddhist shrines and Bulguksa Temple
- The DMZ outside of Seoul one of the most heavily militarized borders in the world, Imjingak Park built to

honour the displaced from both the North and the South of Korea, Dora Observatory

What's Included

- 8 nights 4 star hotels (3 & 5 star prices available, please enquire)
- Breakfast daily
- Airport arrival and departure transfer on day 1 and 9
- Transfers and transportation in a private air conditioned vehicles
- Domestic economy flight - Busan-Jeju Island/Jeju Island-Seoul
- All entrance fees as per the itinerary
- Services of an English speaking tour guide/driver from Seoul to Busan and a local guide on Jeju Island
- Private excursion to the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone)
- Touring of Seoul, Gyeongju, Busan, Jeju Island, Mount Hallasan National Park and the DMZ

What's Not Included

- International flights and visa
- Tipping - an entirely personal gesture

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Seoul

Upon arrival in Seoul you will be met by our representative at Incheon

International Airport and transferred to your hotel. Spend the rest of the day at leisure. **Overnight - Seoul**

Day 2 : Exploring Seoul



Today is spent visiting Seoul's most famous landmarks on a guided tour of the city. Sights include Cheong Wa Dae (aka The Blue House), which is South Korea's answer to The White House, where the executive office is housed as well as being the President of South Korea's residence. Then visit the Gyeongbokgung Palace, the largest of the "Five Grand Palaces" built by the last Korean Dynasty, the Joseon Dynasty. Within the Palace grounds visit Jogyesa Temple dedicated to Buddhism and still influential today. You'll also gain an insight into Korean culture, tradition and history at the National Folk Museum which situated in the grounds of the palace.

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After exploring the palace head to Insadong, with its wonderful markets and shops. The area has a traditional atmosphere and represents Korean culture both past and present with a mixture of modern and historical buildings and alleys. This afternoon take the chance to explore the many antique, craft and pottery shops as well as traditional restaurants and teahouses. If time permits you will also have the opportunity to visit an amethyst or ginseng specialist for some home remedies or finery.

Lastly take in the wonderful panoramic views of bustling Seoul from the Seoul Tower, which is located on top of Mount Namsan.

Overnight - Seoul (B)

Day 3 : Gyeongju



Seoul - Gyeongju. Travelling South East from Seoul to Gyeongju located in the North Gyeongsang province. Once the capital of the ancient kingdom of Silla, which ruled most of the Korean Peninsula during the 7th till 9th Centuries, many remnants remain of this period leading to the city being known as "the museum without walls". An afternoon tour of Gyeongju takes you to Tumuli Park where to visit some of the more than 20 large and small tombs from the Silla period including that of King Michu, the 13th King of the dynasty famed for fending off invaders. Legends even tell of soldiers with bamboo leaves stuffed in their ears arising from his tomb to fend off invaders after his death, explaining why his tomb is known as the "Bamboo Soldier Tomb".

Also once part of the ancient Silla complex is Anapji Pond, a picturesque pond where the Silla royal family spent their leisure time. During renovations to the area in the 1970's and 80's many relics were unearthed and are today housed in the Gyeongju National Museum alongside the Emille Bell. Top off today's sightseeing with a visit to Cheomseongdae Observatory - oldest surviving observatory in East Asia and one of the world's oldest scientific installations still in existence.

Overnight - Gyeongju (B)

Day 4 : Busan



Gyeongju - Busan. This morning visit the UNESCO listed temple of Bulguska and Seokguram Grotto, one of Asia's finest Buddhist shrines, dramatically located on the slopes of Toham Mountain, 750 metres above sea level and looking out over the Sea of Japan.

This afternoon travel onwards to Busan, South Korea's principal port city and second largest city, situated on the south eastern tip of the Korean Peninsula. In the afternoon travel to Busan Tower located in Yongdusan Park and offering spectacular views of the old port city. Then to get a taste of how the locals live pay a visit to the Jagalchi Fish Market where fishermen sell their fresh catch and the locals haggle for a good deal. Then it's time to practise some haggling at Kukje Market, the best place in Busan to find silk, clothing, linen, handbags and much more. With its small and overloaded stores, the goods fill the narrow alleyways spilling into the

surrounding streets, making Kukje Market quite a spectacle. **Overnight - Busan (B)**

Day 5 : Jeju Island



Busan - Jeju Island. Morning transfer to Gimhae Airport and onward flight to Jeju Island. About an hour from Busan by air, Jeju Island is a volcanic island brimming with natural beauty, unique cultural traditions and a perfect temperate climate. This afternoon take a tour of Jeju Island to Hallim Park with its exotic botanical gardens, lava caves, folk village and O'Sulloc Tea Museum where guests can learn more about the traditional Korean tea culture. Evening at leisure.

Overnight - Jeju Island (B)

Day 6 : Mount Hallasan National Park



Today explore the scenic landscape of Jeju Island on a hiking tour of Mt.Hallasan National Park visiting the spectacular volcanic rock formations of Jusangeolli Cliff, and the beautiful three tiered Cheonjeyeon Falls. Evening at leisure. **Overnight - Jeju Island (B)**

Day 7 : Seongsan Sunrise Peak

Jeju Island - Seoul. For your final day on Jeju Island visit Manjanggul Cave, the UNESCO listed cave is the

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world's longest lava cave stretching for approximately 8 kilometres; also see Seongsan Sunrise Peak, a magnificent volcano crater rising from the sea with cliffs to the southeast and north sides and the northwest side a verdant grassy hill. Then visit Seongeup Village, a mountain village still living a mountain existence with villagers residing in traditional thatched roof houses with stone and clay walls. Afternoon transfer to Jeju Airport and flight to Seoul, arriving in Gimpo Airport. Upon arrival you will be transferred to your hotel. **Overnight – Seoul (B)**

Day 8 : The DMZ



Seoul – DMZ – Seoul. The Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) is located around 45km north of Seoul and acts as a buffer zone and border between the two nations of North Korea and South Korea splitting the Korean Peninsula in half at the 38th parallel. It runs from east to west, stretches 250 kilometres, is 4 kilometres wide and is the most heavily militarized border in the world. Today take a private tour to visit the DMZ and get a better understanding of the events that resulted in the division of Korea. Today's tour also includes a visit to Imjingak Park, built on the shore of the Imjin River to commemorate all those who lost their homes and were separated from their families when Korea was split in two and the 3rd North Korean Infiltration Tunnel. The tunnel was built with the intention of a surprise invasion by North Korea and discovered by South Korea in 1978 after a tip from a North Korean defector. The tunnel is approximately

1.5 kilometres in length and 150 metres below ground.

You will also have the chance to peek into the reclusive north by visiting Dora Observatory situated on Mount Dora on the South Korean side closest to the North. Here visitors use binoculars and can see as far as Kaesong, a light industrial city of North Korea. Later visit Dorasan Station, once used for freight trains to travel between the South and the North but eventually halted by the North. On the way back to Seoul if time permits there will stop for a spot of last minute shopping!

Overnight – Seoul (B)

Day 9 : Seoul

After breakfast onward departure transfer to the airport. (B)

BEFORE YOU GO

Visas

UK, EU, Australian, New Zealand, Canadian and US passport holders do not require a visa to enter South Korea for touristic purposes for a stay of up to 90 days. South African passport holders can obtain a visa upon arrival enter for a stay of up to 30 days.

A full passport with two full blank pages and at least 6 months validity beyond date of exit from South Korea upon entrance is essential.

Please Note: Visa information is subject to change. Contact your nearest South Korean Embassy for the most up to date information. Visa procurement remains the responsibility of the passenger and not that of On The Go.

Health

It is recommended that you be vaccinated for Tetanus and Polio, if you haven't had a booster in the last ten years. Food and waterborne diseases are more common, so we recommend vaccinations for Typhoid (valid 3 years) and Hepatitis A (validity varies). There

is a malarial risk in some remote areas and from June to October Japanese encephalitis can be transmitted from mosquitoes in rural areas, so do check the current situation and medical requirements before travelling.

Vaccination information can change regularly so please visit your local health care provider for the most up to date information.

Tap water is safe to drink in South Korea although it may be best to avoid this when staying for short periods. It's possible to purchase bottled mineral water at a reasonable price.

Avoid stomach upsets, by only eating freshly prepared, well-cooked meat and fish. Vegetables should be cooked and fruit peeled.

Climate

South Korea's climate is typically temperate with four distinct seasons. Late March or early April signals the start of Spring when mostly sunny days can be expected throughout March and May. Summer can be rather hot and wet and by June the average temperature is 20°C, monsoonal rains can begin around the end of June lasting through to middle or late September. After a typically humid summer continental winds move in bringing dry and clear weather for autumn and making the month of October the most pleasant time to visit. December to February signals the onset of winter which is cold and dry with occasional snow.

What to Pack

In the Winter and autumn months, a very warm jacket and even thermals are recommended – as well as a scarf, gloves and warm hat. Sunscreen and lip balm are recommended to protect your skin against the sun and cold temperatures. Hot packs are the perfect way to keep your hands and feet warm in winter, and you can buy them in any convenience store in Korea

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During Summer, we recommend that you bring an umbrella and insect repellent along with your basic summer wardrobe of light, cool clothing. Sunscreen and lip balm are essential to protect your skin from the sun.

The Spring seasons are pleasant, and a light jacket or sweater should suffice along with your usual summer wardrobe.

Korea is an open minded and developed country so most of the things you wear would be acceptable. Just bear in mind one thing: Showing shoulders and chest is not acceptable. You will see girls with the shortest shorts you can imagine but always with covered shoulders. At the beach Koreans don't wear bikinis and swim shorts. They will be fully covered, especially their upper body. If you will be wearing bikinis, just be prepared for the many stares in your direction.

Time & Voltage

Time: South Korea is 9 hours ahead of GMT. During British Summer Time (end March - October), time is 8 hours ahead.

Voltage: 220v 60Hz. South Korean plugs are of the European variety with two round prongs. If travelling to South Korea with a device that does not accept 220 volts at 60 Hertz a voltage converter will be required.

Food

Largely based on rice, noodles, tofu, vegetables and meat, Korean cuisine is delicious. Traditionally with main meals a quantity of side dishes are served known as banchan, the most popular of these being kimchi. Kimchi is a traditional fermented dish made with vegetables, typically cabbage, radish, onions or cucumbers and flavoured with salt, garlic, ginger, and gochujang – a fermented chilli paste, it can have a very salty and spicy flavour.

One of the best known Korean cuisine exports is the Korean barbecue. This usually involves grilling of beef, pork or chicken. The grilled dishes are typically prepared at the diner's table on a gas or charcoal grill built into the centre of the table or on a portable grill if built in barbecues are not available. One of the most popular dishes served is galbi, beef short ribs, often marinated in spices before grilling. In a specialised restaurant the diner will request from a menu the types of meat they would like, these are brought to the table and the diner cooks them to their liking. For those diners that are new to Korean barbecue the waiter is always on hand to offer help, though typically it is only ever foreigners that need help.

Shopping

Considered a shopper's paradise, great deals can be had in South Korea on shoes, clothes, leather goods, silk, antiques, handbags, suitcases and so much more. Clothes can be tailor-made and range in quality depending on the amount of money you are willing to part with. Many department stores have fixed prices but can still be bargained over within reason.

The major open air markets such as Namdaemun or Dongdaemun in Seoul offer everything imaginable from well known brand names to near perfect rip offs and it is here where the true haggling takes place, just be sure you know whether you are haggling over a fake or a genuine item! Those shopping for arts, crafts, jewellery, antiques or souvenirs, should head to the wonderful markets and shops of Insa Dong.

Shopping tip: You can claim 70-80% of your paid VAT and SET (special excise tax) back at certain retail outlets. For purchases of more than #30,000 at outlets with 'Tax Free Shopping' or 'Tax Refund Shopping' signs, you can collect your refund in cash at the tax refund counters at the airport, have it mailed to you or sometimes refunded to your card. Participating retail shops will

issue you a 'VAT Refund Check' and you should get a certificate stamp on it at the customs desk when you leave Korea.

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