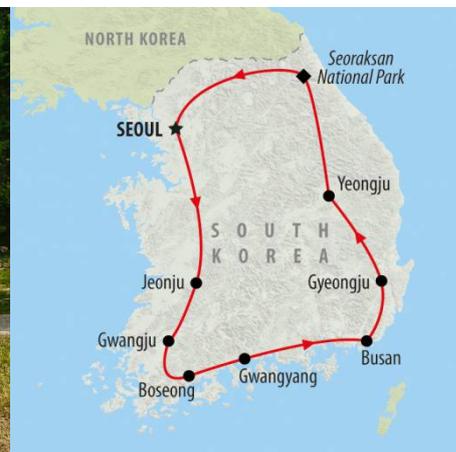


# Spectacular South Korea

12 days | Starts/Ends: Seoul



*South Korea is rich in tradition, culture and natural beauty. Starting in the nation's bustling capital, Seoul, travel south through the rolling tea plantations of Boesong to the 'Treasure Island' of Namhae and bustling port city Busan, before exploring ancient Gyeongju and the spectacular towering granite peaks of Mount Seoraksan. Discover the wonders of South Korea in 12 memorable days!*

## HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

### Trip Highlights

- Seoul - the nation's 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

- Jeonju Hanok Village, home to 700 traditional Korean homes
- Boesong - stunning mountains and rolling green hills of tea plantations
- Suncheonman Bay - 40 kilometres of stunning wetlands
- Jeonju - home to the Gyeonggijeon Shrine
- Namhae - known as the 'treasure island of Korea'
- The Sosuseowon Confucian School, the first private Confucian academy established in Korea
- Mt. Seoraksan National Park - with towering granite peaks and lush green valleys

### What's Included

- 11 nights 3, 4 or 5 star hotels (specific to your chosen itinerary)
- Breakfast daily
- Airport arrival and departure transfer on day 1 and 12
- Services of an English speaking guide/driver for all scheduled sightseeing
- All entrance fees as per the itinerary
- All transfers and transportation in private air conditioned vehicles
- Touring of Seoul, Jeonju, Boseong, Namhae, Busan, Suncheon, Gyeongju, Yeongju

### What's Not Included

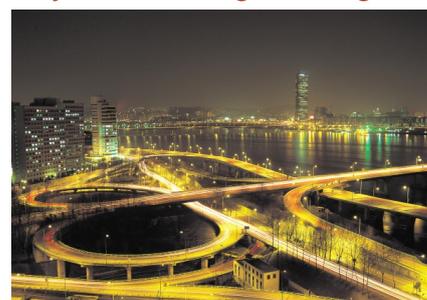
- International flights and visa
- Tipping - an entirely personal gesture

## 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. Day 1 is designed as an arrival day, rest of the day at leisure.

### Day 2 : Seoul Sightseeing



Today is spent visiting Seoul's most famous landmarks, this morning we see 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. We also learn more of Korean culture, tradition and history at the National Folk Museum also situated in the grounds of the palace.

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Afterwards we stop at Insadong, “dong” meaning neighbourhood or district, the picturesque Cheonggycheon stream runs along the main street and divides what were once two villages, “In” and “Sa”, which have now combined as one. 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. Evening at leisure.

**Overnight - Seoul (B)**

## Day 3 : Jeonju

Today travel Southwest towards Jeonju the capital of Jeollabuk-do province situated in the fertile Honam Plain famous for its quality produce, especially its exceptional strawberries, as well as being rich in tradition and culture. In the afternoon explore Jeonju Hanok Village, home to 700 traditional Korean homes built from clay, wood and stone, a rarity in today's South Korea. Many are still residential properties while others have been converted into guesthouses, museums, galleries and teahouses.

Jeonju is also home to the Gyeonggijeon Shrine in honour of King Taejo the founder of the Joseon Dynasty as well as Jeondong Catholic Church built in 1914 in a western-style cathedral design and the largest such western style structure in the province. Later depart for Gwangju where you will spend the night.

**Overnight - Gwangju (B)**

## Day 4 : Boseong and Suncheon



Today tour Boesong with its stunning mountains, the Boseong River flowing through the centre and the rolling green hills of tea plantations famous for its green tea of supreme quality. Before visiting picturesque Seonamsa Temple at the western end of Mount Jogyesan with its beautiful arch bridges then continuing to Suncheonman Bay, the ecological capital of South Korea and part of the United Nations Environment Programme, the UNEP. A 40 kilometre long wetland with its vast fields of reeds makes for a spectacular landscape. Onwards to Gwangyang where you will spend the night.

**Overnight - Gwangyang (B)**

## Day 5 : Namhae

Leaving Gwangyang travel along the coastline to Namhae, known as the ‘treasure island of Korea’. Connected to the mainland by a 660 metre long and 80 metre high suspension bridge giving an impressive view of the surrounding landscape. In Namhae visit Daraengi Village with its 108 terraces of rice patties covering the hillside and the German village. Built in the style of German architecture and even using German materials imported from Germany. The village was built for German - Koreans who had moved to Germany in the 1960's seeking work and since returned. Continue to Busan for the night.

**Overnight - Busan (B)**

## Day 6 : Busan

A morning tour of Busan takes in the Busan Tower in Yongdusan Park and provides perfect views of the entire city. See the vivid life of the Jagalchi Fish Market as locals haggle with the fishermen selling their fresh catch before you depart for Gyeongju. Serving as the capital of the Silla Kingdom from

57BC – 935AD, Gyeongju is a living history museum containing archaeological sites of the Silla Kingdom as well as ancient relics pertaining to Buddhism, the national religion at the time. During the afternoon you will visit the UNESCO listed temples of Bulguska including the Seokguram Grotto, one of Asia's finest Buddhist shrines, resting 750 metres above sea level and looking out over the Sea of Japan, it is considered to contain one of the best Buddhist sculptures in the world.

**Overnight - Gyeongju (B)**

## Day 7 : Gyeongju sightseeing



Located in the North Gyeongsang province and once the capital of the ancient kingdom of Silla, Gyeongju 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 to visit some of the 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, an immense oval shaped man made pond measuring 200 metres from east to west and 180 metres from north to south. 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, with its shady legend, is the largest extant bell in Korea. Later we visit the oldest surviving observatory in East Asia and one of the world's oldest scientific installations still

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in existence, Cheomseongdae Observatory. Evening at leisure.

**Overnight - Gyeongju (B)**

## Day 8 : Yeongju



An early departure for Yeongju where en-route you visit the Sosuseowon Confucian School, the first private Confucian academy established in Korea before touring Seonbichon Village, the home of the Korea's classic Confucian scholars, a good opportunity to learn more about traditional Korean ways. Later tour Buseoska Temple, huge in size it is considered one of the most beautiful in all of Korea. Onward to Cheonpung. **Overnight - Cheonpung (B)**

## Day 9 : Cheongpung Lake



We visit Cheongpung Lake where board a ferry to visit Danyang's Eight Scenic Wonders mostly referring to mountain peaks surrounding the lake - Dodam Sambong, Seokmun, Sainam Rock, Haseonam, Jungseonam, Sangseonam, Gudambong and Oksunbong. Please note the ferry ride is subject to weather conditions, in the unlikely event that it is cancelled it will be substituted with a visit to Dodamsambong Peak and Gosu Cave. Later pay a visit to Chamsori Gramophone Audio Museum, a private museum created by its curator, Seong Mok Son, and is the first of its kind in the world.

Travelling along the beautiful coastline to Mount Seoraksan we stop en-route at Unification Park where you can see the salvaged remains of a North Korean submarine which was wrecked off the coast in 1996 before making our final stop for the day at Daepo Port, one of the finest places to find the freshest fish and seafood restaurants.

**Overnight - Mt.Seoraksan (B)**

## Day 10 : Mount Seoraksan

Today is spent hiking and exploring Mt.Seoraksan National Park, one of the most beautiful national parks in Korea, with towering granite peaks, lush green valleys, Buddhist temples, dense forests and clear streams. You will be able to view the park in the best way possible as you take a cable car to Gweongeumseong Peak before visiting Shinheungsa Temple nestled at the foot of the park. This afternoon depart for Seoul.

**Overnight - Seoul (B)**

## Day 11 : Back to Seoul



Today is free to spend as you please, why not visit some of the well known open air markets such as Namdaemun or Dongdaemun for some last minute shopping. **Overnight - Seoul (B)**

## Day 12 : Seoul

Tour ends after breakfast. Included onward transfer to airport.(B)

### KNOW 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

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onset of winter which is cold and dry with occasional snow.

## Currency

The currency of South Korea is Won (KRW).

USD\$1 - KRW1060 GBP£1 - KRW1780 AUD\$1 - KRW960 Euro1 - KRW1470

Please Note: Exchange rates are subject to change.

Notes are in denominations of 50,000, 10,000, 5,000 and 1,000.

Coins are in denominations of 500, 100, 50 and 10.

Pound Sterling, US Dollars, Euro and other major currencies can be converted into South Korean Won locally, or you can purchase currency in advance. Foreign currency and traveller's cheques can be converted into Korean Won at foreign exchange banks and other authorized money changers.

Most major credit cards are accepted in large restaurants, shops and hotels and there are ATM's in all cities. In remote rural areas and at small businesses, credit card may not be accepted.

## 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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