



South Korea Explorer

SOUTH KOREA - TRIP CODE SKO

DISCOVERY

Why book this trip?

From the cosmopolitan city of Seoul to the ancient Silla capital of Gyeongju, South Korea has a lot to offer. Experience the tension at the Demilitarised Zone between North and South Korea, witness morning rituals at the Buddhist monastery of Samhwasa and journey through the beautiful Korean countryside.

- **Seoul and surrounds** - Explore South Korea's dynamic capital and travel further north to see the stark contrast with the renown Demilitarized border with North Korea- the DMZ
- **Unique overnight stays** - Spend a night in a Buddhist monastery learning about a monks traditional lifestyle and in a traditional homestay in peaceful surroundings
- **UNESCO World Heritage Sites** - Visit the Hahoe Folk Village, Seokguram Grotto and the Bulguksa

					
INCLUDED MEALS Breakfast: 8 Lunch: 1 Dinner: 2	TRIP STAFF Explore Tour Leader Driver(s) Local Guide(s)	TRANSPORT Bus Flight	ACCOMMODATION 1 nights comfortable homestay 6 nights comfortable hotel 1 nights simple monastery	TRIP PACE: Moderate	GROUP SIZE: 12 - 18

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip in Seoul

Arrive in Seoul, South Korea's dynamic capital and one of the world's fastest growing cities. The economic, political and cultural centre of the country, Seoul is a fascinating mix of glass towers, historic temples, parks and museums, spanning the banks of the Han River.

For those arriving on time our Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 5pm for the welcome meeting and for those that wish, there is the chance to go out for dinner. There are no other activities planned today, so you are free to arrive in Seoul at any time. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive into Incheon International Airport (ICN), which is on and a half hours' from our hotel. Should you miss the welcome meeting, your Leader will inform you of any essential information as soon as you catch up the next morning.

If your flight arrives earlier in the day, perhaps you might choose to visit the 600-year-old Bukchon Hanok Village. Comprising of little alley ways and artisan displays, this is a beautiful place to get lost in for an afternoon.



ACCOMMODATION:
The Splaisir Seoul Myeongdong (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Morning orientation tour of Seoul. Afternoon free

This morning we take an orientation tour around the centre of Seoul, walking through the Myeongdong shopping district and down to the market at Namdaemun, before heading past the City Hall to the Gyeongbokgung Palace. The largest of five great palaces built by the Joseon Dynasty, Gyeongbokgung still remains the grandest and we pay a visit before moving on to the National Folk Museum. Later we walk down into the area of Insadong, famed for its antiques and handicrafts. We stop for lunch here, after which the rest of the day is free to enjoy as we wish.



ACCOMMODATION:

The Splaisir Seoul Myeongdong (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Drive to Samhwas Temple via Gangneung and the Ojukheon House

A different experience today as we make our way to the Samhwas Temple where we spend the night. Our journey takes us via Gangneung where we visit Ojukheon House, built during the early Joseon Dynasty and still one of the oldest wooden residential buildings in Korea.

This afternoon we have an opportunity to partake in a traditional tea ceremony and learn a little more about temple life. Please note that the sleeping arrangements at the monastery will be on a Korean style thin mattress on the floor with up to four people sharing in a same sex room and you will be asked to pack an individual overnight bag.



ACCOMMODATION:
Samhwasa Temple (or similar)



Grade: Simple Monastery



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & DINNER

DAY 4 - Discover the Buseoksa Temple and drive to the Homestay in Andong

For early risers there is a chance to watch the monks perform their morning rituals before we leave our temple home and head for one of Korea's most beautiful temples. Hidden amongst the wooded slopes of Bonghwangsan, Buseoksa Temple dates back to the latter years of the 7th century and differs from many other temples in Korea because of its huge size. From here we continue to the spiritual capital of South Korea, Andong, via the stone Buddha at Jebiwon, an impressive 11th century carving that sits on top of a rocky outcrop overlooking the Sobaek Mountains. Arriving at our homestay later this afternoon, we enjoy a local specialty meal of marinated steamed chicken along with Soju, the local liquor of the region.

Please note that the sleeping arrangements at the homestay will be on a Korean style thin mattress on the floor and the group may be split between two or three nearby homes.



ACCOMMODATION:
Andong Hanok Guesthouses (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Homestay



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & DINNER

DAY 5 - Visit the Hahoe Folk Village and Mask Museum. Drive to Gyeongju

After a relaxing morning we check out and drive on to the Buyeongdae Viewpoint. From here we continue to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Hahoe, where we find the Hahoe Folk Village and its fascinating Mask Museum. We visit the site with a local guide, spending time wandering through the traditional houses of this early Joseon Dynasty village, exploring the museum and the 500 year old Byeongsan Seowon Confucian School. We then continue on our journey to the city Gyeongju, a journey of around two and a half hours.



ACCOMMODATION:
The Swiss Rosen (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Explore Gyeongju, the Seokguram Grotto and Bulguksa Temple

We enjoy a full day tour of South Korea's second largest city today. Once the capital of the ancient kingdom of Silla, Gyeongju ruled over much of the Korean Peninsula between the 7th and 9th centuries. Our first visits this morning are to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Seokguram Grotto and the Bulguksa Temple. We also visit the Silla Kiln and the city's National Museum, a rich repository for the relics and artifacts of the Silla kingdom, one of the longest dynasties in Asian history.



ACCOMMODATION:
The Swiss Rosen (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 7 - Visit Namsan Mountain and Tongdosa Temple. Take the high speed train to Seoul

There is the option to make an early morning visit to Namsan Mountain which provides a beautiful natural setting for hundreds of temples and Buddha statues. There are hiking trails to enjoy, a boating like

and cycles to hire to help you make the most of the area.

In the late morning we'll drive to Tongdosa temple, the largest in Korea and considered one of the country's 'three jewels'. It is said that its Beopdeung, or temple candle, has been burning continuously for 1,300 years.

Later, we head for Busan where there'll be time to visit the Fish market and International market before taking the high speed train to Seoul.



ACCOMMODATION:

The Splaisir Seoul Myeongdong (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Visit the Demilitarised Zone

Today we experience one of the last frontiers of the Cold War - the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) that separates North and South Korea - an area where over a million soldiers remain on high alert on either side. Formally the Korean war technically has never ended - and this geo-political fault line is still raw for the people of Korea. We are escorted by the Military right into the DMZ and stand right at the very edge - both sides literally staring at each other just metres apart. Whilst in the Joint Security Area (JSA) you must be respectfully dressed, no jeans or sandals are allowed nor can you make any arm or hand gestures as visitors are closely monitored (and photographed) by the North Koreans for propaganda purposes. Our next stop is underground to explore a tunnel built by the North into South Korea with the aim to breach the border. This was found by accident - the tunnel is wide enough for 2000 troops an hour to pass through and is just 1 of 4 that were subsequently discovered. Military clearance is obtained for all visitors and you will be in a larger group, please be aware that due to the nature of the area visited this excursion may be cancelled at short notice depending on the security situation.



ACCOMMODATION:

The Splaisir Seoul Myeongdong (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & LUNCH

DAY 9 - Trip ends in Seoul

The trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Seoul.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Seoul at any time. If your flight is departing later in the day luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you need to depart from Incheon International Airport (ICN), which is on and a half hours' from our hotel.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Country information

South Korea

Climate

South Korea has four distinct seasons: long, cold winters; short summers which tend to be hot and humid; autumn and spring offer pleasant weather but tend to pass quickly. Jeju Island tends to have a warmer climate due to its southern location, temperatures usually reach up to 25 degrees during the summer months.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+9	2 Pin Round	Buddhist, Christian	Korean

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities

are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Seoul - Changdeok Palace \$3. Changgyeon Palace \$1. Bukchon Hanoe Village - no entrance fee.

Gyeongju - Outdoor Theater- No fee for admission (opening dates variable depending on the seasons)

Mt Namsan- No fee for admission.

Pedal boat ride- US\$ 10 for 2 passengers

Clothing

Lightweight raingear is required all year round. For winter departures warm sweaters, gloves, scarf, hat, warm coat, thermal underwear will be required.

Footwear

Please bring comfortable shoes and sandals.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

Please bring a suitcase or soft holdall and rucksack for the day trips.

Tipping

Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. You may however, want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend between £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow £25 for tipping.

In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

South Korea

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£10	£15	£4	£1

Foreign Exchange

Local currency	Recommended Currency For Exchange
Won	Either EUR, USD or GBP.

Where To Exchange	ATM Availability
In all towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.	All major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance
Most major restaurants and stores.

Travellers Cheques

We do not recommend to take travellers cheques as these can be difficult to exchange.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Flight

Essential Information

Government Travel Safety Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information.[Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

South Korea: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens for a stay of less than 90 days. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply through Explore's

recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

Find out more about [Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions](#) before you book.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will

exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them [here](#).

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport. On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

South Korea

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, infectious hepatitis, typhoid, tetanus and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Travellers may wish to take immunisation against Japanese Encephalitis. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Additional Information



Reviews



**AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT
TRANSFERS**