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PLAN YOUR TRIP

YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT
 Photos, itineraries, lists and suggestions
 to help you put together your perfect trip

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UNDERSTAND KOREA

GET MORE FROM YOUR TRIP
 Learn about the big picture, so you
 can make sense of what you see

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Simon Richmond,
Timothy N Hornyak, Shawn Low

➤ Every listing is recommended by our authors, and their favourite places are listed first

➤ Look out for these icons:



Our author's top recommendation



A green or sustainable option



No payment required

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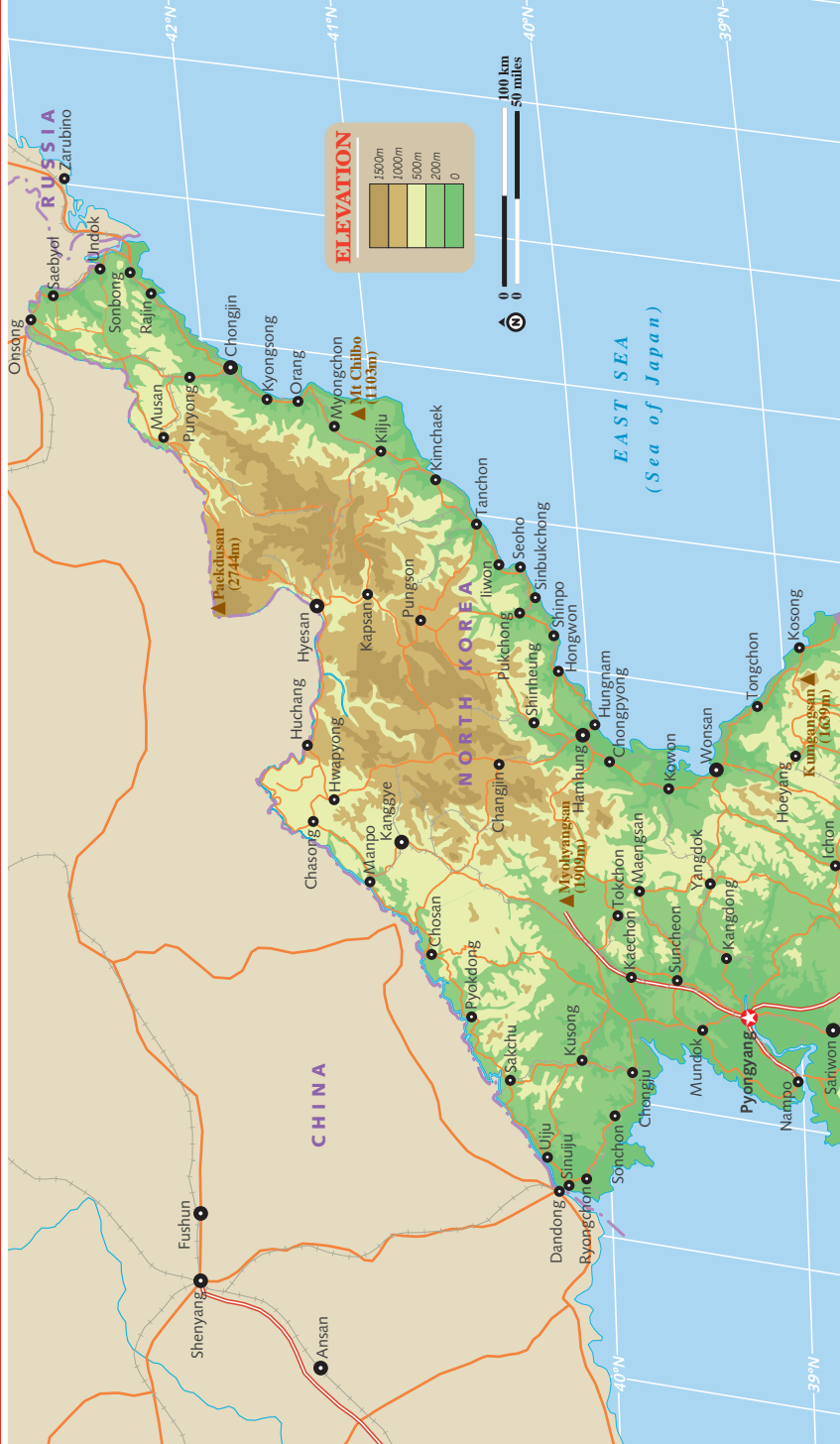
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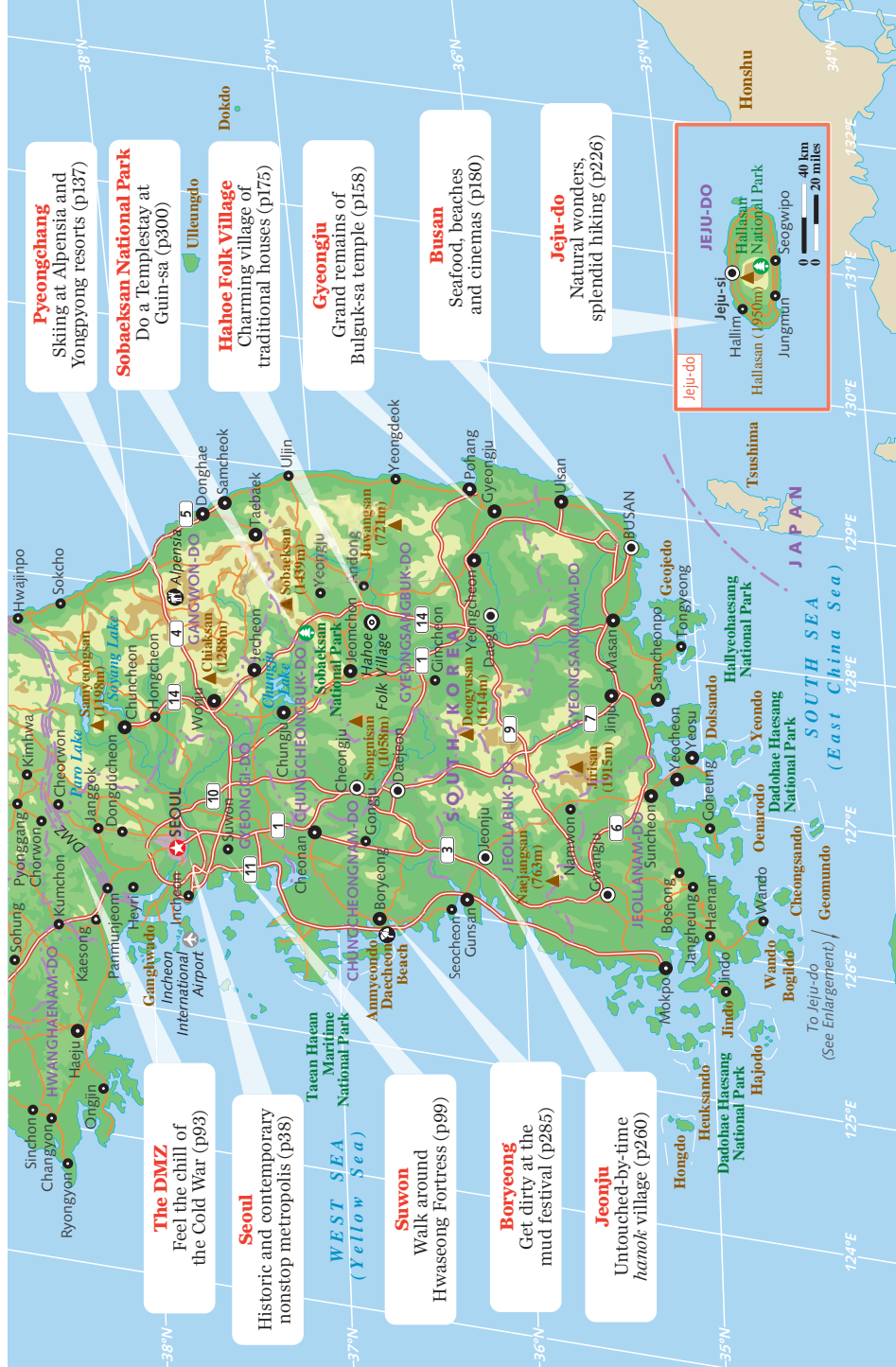
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Sobaeksan National Park

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Hahoe Folk Village

Charming village of
traditional houses (p175)



Dokdo

Gyeongju

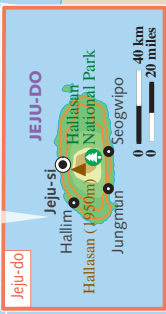
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Seafood, beaches
and cinemas (p180)

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Historic and contemporary
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Honshu

Tsushima

Hallyeohaesang
National Park

Dolsando

Yeondo

Dadohae Haesang
National Park

Chongsando

Geomundo

Wando

Bogildo

Hajodo

Jindo

Jeonju-do

To Jeju-do
(See Enlargement)

Honshu

Tsushima

Hallyeohaesang
National Park

Dolsando

Yeondo

Dadohae Haesang
National Park

Chongsando

Geomundo

Wando

Bogildo

Hajodo

Jindo

Jeonju-do

To Jeju-do
(See Enlargement)



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London, Oakland and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



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Coordinating Author; Seoul, Gyeonggi-do & Incheon, Jeju-do Long before he became a travel writer and photographer, Simon spent several years living in Japan. It was from here that he first visited Seoul in 2004. He next returned in 2009 to coordinate Lonely Planet's *Korea*, spending six weeks exploring Seoul and the surrounding areas. For this edition he spent two months living in Seoul before heading to Jeju-do and loved pretty much every minute. Simon has written scores of other titles for Lonely Planet and other publishers, and has contributed features to many travel magazines and newspapers around the world.

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Jeollanam-do, Jeollabuk-do, Chungcheongnam-do, Chungcheongbuk-do Shawn grew up in hot, humid, food-crazy Singapore but later made his way to less hot, less humid, food-crazy Melbourne (Australia, not Florida). He's spent the last six years working for Lonely Planet: as an editor, commissioning editor, author, TV host and travel editor. Exploring more than half of Korea via car, bus and ferry is a hard job, but someone's gotta do it. So he did. Post-trip hunger pangs have already struck though... Find Shawn on Twitter @shawnlw.

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itineraries

Whether you've got a week or a month, these itineraries provide a starting point for the trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to lonelyplanet.com/thorntree to chat with other travellers.



Two weeks South Korea's Highlights

Set aside four or five days for **Seoul**, including a day trip north to the **DMZ**. Next head east to **Chuncheon**, where you can cycle around the lake and sample the town's famous chicken dish, *dakgalbi*.

Dine on fresh seafood in **Sokcho**, then hike around the stunning peaks and waterfalls of **Seoraksan National Park**. Follow the coast south to **Gangneung** to view well-preserved Joseon-era buildings, quirky museums and a tiny North Korean spy submarine at Unification Park in **Jeongdongjin**. From **Samcheok** explore the huge caves **Hwanseongul** and **Daegeumgul**, as well as **Haesindang Park**, packed with phallic sculptures.

Travel back to feudal times at **Hahoe Folk Village**. Continue delving into Korea's past at **Gyeongju**, ancient capital of the Shilla kingdom, where you can spend a couple of days exploring royal tombs, the excellent museum and the World Heritage-listed grotto at **Seokguram**.

The dramatically located port of **Busan** with its beaches, fish market and urban buzz is worth a few days. From here you can fly to **Jeju-do**, a beautiful island with amazing volcanic scenery best enjoyed on leisurely hikes.



Two weeks West To East Sea

From **Incheon International Airport** it's a quick hop to the small, idyllic island of **Muuido**, from where you can walk to **So-Muuido** or relax on lovely beaches. Enjoy Chinese food in the historic Chinatown of **Incheon**, then stroll around the Open Port area. Direct buses from here mean there's no need to head into Seoul to reach **Suwon**, where you can stride around the ramparts of the meticulously reconstructed fortress wall, explore the palace and tuck into the town's famous *galbi* (beef ribs).

Gongju and **Buyeo**, the ancient capitals of the Baekje kingdom, are your next stops; hillside tombs, a fortress and museum will give you an insight into Korea's oldest dynasty. After enjoying the sand, seafood and mud skincare spa of **Daecheon Beach**, sail to the serene island of **Sapsido**, where you can spend the night before ferry-hopping through a few of the 130 islands and islets of the **Tae'an Haean National Marine Park**; the largest island is **Anmyeondo**, where you can continue working on your tan at either **Khotji Beach** or **Mallipo Beach**.

Travel inland to **Daejeon**, where you can soak at **Yuseong Hot Springs**. From here make your way to **Cheongju**, learn about the world's oldest printed book, then move on to **Songnisan National Park**, covering central Korea's finest scenic area and home to a 33m-tall gold-plated Buddha statue.

Chungju, home of the World Martial Arts Festival, is the gateway to the lovely **Woraksan National Park** and for a two-hour scenic ferry trip across Chungju Lake to sleepy **Danyang**, small-town Korea at its most charming. From here explore nearby **limestone caves** and the stately temple complex of **Guin-sa** within Sobaeksan National Park.

Use **Andong** as a base for exploring the surrounding area packed with attractive river and lakeside villages; it's also famous for its *soju* (Korean-style vodka). It's only a couple of hours by bus from here to **Pohang**, where you should ignore the steelworks and focus instead on the temple **Bogyeong-sa** in a gorgeous valley with 12 waterfalls. Afterwards board the ferry to **Ulleungdo** – a sparsely inhabited, ruggedly beautiful volcanic island that is a truly off-the-beaten-track experience.



Two weeks The Deep South Trail

It's less than three hours from Seoul to Jeonju, the start of this 850km route around Korea's greenest and least-developed region, which offers the opportunity to visit hundreds of unspoilt islands, dine in countless seafood restaurants and dig deep into artistic traditions.

Jeonju, provincial capital of Jeollabuk-do, has a fascinating *hanok* village crammed with traditional houses and buildings; it's also the birthplace of the classic rice dish *bibimbap*. Use it as a base for visiting the sixth-century temple Geumsan-sa in **Moaksan Provincial Park**. Don't miss **Maisan Provincial Park**, where you can climb a pair of 'horse ear' mountains and see a sculptural garden of stone pinnacles piled up by a Buddhist mystic at the temple **Tap-sa**. Alternatively, go hiking or skiing in beautiful **Deogyusan National Park**.

The industrial port city of **Gunsan** boasts Korea's largest collection of Japanese colonial period buildings and a well-curated modern history museum; from here hop on a ferry to the relaxing tropical island of **Seonyudo**, situated amid 60 mostly uninhabited small islands. When the tide is in and the sun is out, the views from here are unbelievably beautiful.

Bronze and Iron Age tombs registered with Unesco dot the lush green hills around the small village of **Gochang**, where you can also explore the 15th-century, ivy-covered **Moyang Fortress**.

Further south, **Gwangju** is home to several interesting historical sites, museums and a major arts complex. Shop for bamboo products in **Damyang**, then take the train to **Mokpo** port for boats to the remote havens of **Heuksando** and **Hongdo** in the **Dadohae Haesang National Park**.

Admire Korea's centuries-old tradition of pottery at the **Gangjin Celadon Museum**, and taste food and drinks made from healthy green tea at the beautiful **Boseong Daehan Dawon Tea Plantation**.

Go birdspotting in the Ramsar-listed wetlands of **Suncheon Bay**, then continue to **Yeosu**, site of Expo 2012 and access point for **Dolsando**, where you can hike up to **Hyangiram**, a Buddhist temple perched on a cliff.

For a final island experience, take in terraced rice paddies and misty temples on picturesque **Namhaedo**. The trail finishes at the bustling port of **Busan**.



Two weeks Karma Korea

Temples feature on this itinerary. In **Seoul** learn about Buddhism during a Templelife program at Seoul's Jogye-sa or Bongeun-sa temples.

Danyang is the transit point for **Sobaeksan National Park**, where you'll find highly modern Guin-sa, headquarters of the Cheontae sect. From **Gongju**, one-time capital of Korea's Baekje dynasty, visit Magok-sa, a remote and ancient temple with a hall of 1000 pint-sized disciples that are all slightly different.

Daegu is the base for trips to stunning Haein-sa, housing a World Heritage-listed library of over 80,000 14th-century wood-blocks, and Jikji-sa, a magnificent temple dating to the 5th century.

Jinan is the access town for Tap-sa, a tiny temple surrounded by two 'horse ear' mountains and an extraordinary sculptural garden of 80 stone pinnacles (or towers) that were piled up by a Buddhist mystic. From Gwangju, visit Unju-sa, with its fine collection of stone pagodas and unusual twin and reclining Buddhas.

Finish in **Busan**, home to Tongdo-sa, said to be Korea's largest and most important Buddhist temple; it has an excellent Buddhist art museum containing 30,000 artefacts.

Two weeks Kids Korea

This two-centre itinerary is ideal for parents looking to balance their own travelling needs with those of their toddlers and teens. **Seoul** has an abundant number of kid-friendly attractions, including parks, aquariums and, in summer, outdoor swimming pools. Older kids will most likely be happy cruising the capital's vast shopping malls and department stores looking for souvenirs of Korea's pervasive pop culture.

Day trips include the beaches of the **West Sea islands**, Korea's biggest amusement park **Everland Resort** and the **Korean Folk Village**. These last two can just as easily be visited from **Suwon**, where everyone will have fun hiking around the walls of an 18th-century fortress. North of Seoul, the modern village of **Heyri** is an opportunity to relax and distract small children with some inventive sculptures and art exhibits.

Hop on a flight to **Jeju-do**, an island blessed with a fascinating volcanic landscape and dozens of sandy beaches. Amusement and water parks, cycle and skate hire, and a whole raft of adventure activities from quad biking to scuba diving are possible on this fun-packed island with plenty of world-class resorts.

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