



North Korea

Includes »

Pyongyang.....	304
Kaesong.....	315
Panmunjom & the DMZ.....	315
Myohyangsan.....	316
Hamhung.....	317
Nampo.....	318
Paekdusan.....	319
Rajin-Sonbong	321
History.....	322
Food & Drink.....	330
Getting There & Away	334
Getting Around.....	334

Best Places to Stay

- » Koryo Hotel (p311)
- » Yanggakdo Hotel (p311)
- » Minsok Folk Hotel (p315)
- » Emperor Hotel (p321)

Best Places to Eat

- » Pyongyang Number One Duck Barbecue (p312)
- » Pizza Restaurant (p312)
- » Lamb Barbeque Restaurant (p312)
- » Chongryu Hotpot Restaurant (p312)

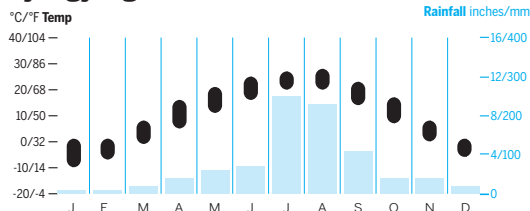
Why Go?

No country in the world provokes a similar reaction to North Korea. Now on its third hereditary ruler, this nominally communist state and by-product of the Cold War has defied all expectation and survived a quarter of a century since perestroika dismantled the rest of the once-vast Soviet empire.

The death of Kim Jong-il in late 2011 has seen the highly repressive police state back in the headlines as nervous governments around the world watch his son Kim Jong-un take over the reins of a nuclear-armed state with an enormous army. Most people don't even know that it's possible to travel here, and indeed the compromises required to do so are significant. You'll be accompanied by two government minders at all times and only hear a one-sided account of history. Those who can't accept this might be better off staying away – but those who can will have a fascinating trip into another, unsettling world.

When to Go

Pyongyang



Feb The country is empty and annual celebrations to mark the birth of Kim Jong-il are impressive.

Apr–May Clear skies, a lack of humidity and few visitors make this a great time to tour North Korea.

Aug–Oct The greatest show on earth, the incredible Mass Games at May Day Stadium.

Tours

All North Korean tours are ultimately arranged by Ryo-haengsa, the national travel agency. However, these tours are best bought via agencies in Beijing specialising in travel to the DPRK; travel agencies offering tours to North Korea include the following:

Koryo Tours (www.koryotours.com)

Lupine Travel (www.lupinettravel.co.uk)

New Korea Tours (www.newkoreatours.com)

North Korea Travel (www.north-korea-travel.com)

Regent Holidays (www.regent-holidays.co.uk)

VNC Travel (www.vnc.nl)

Young Pioneer Tours (www.dprk.youngpioneertraveltours.com)

SET YOUR BUDGET

The cost of a trip to North Korea is considerable. Visitors have to pay the government for their guides and buy all their food and board in advance as part of an all-inclusive tour. The only real way to cut costs is to join a group tour and share the expenses between many travellers. It's difficult to travel to North Korea for less than €1000 for five days. However, if you arrange your own group, it's possible to request the cheapest hotels in the country and save some money.

Itineraries

» **Five Days** The standard tour of North Korea gives you a couple of days visiting the extraordinary monuments of Pyongyang, a day trip to Kaesong and the DMZ, and sometimes a visit to the mountains at Myohyangsan.

» **10 Days** Trips of more than a week can be exhausting, but very rewarding. As well as doing everything in the five-day itinerary, groups will have the opportunity to visit truly remote and little-visited cities such as Nampo, Wonsan or Hamhung, a great chance to see real life in North Korea.

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** Locals use North Korean Won but travellers must use euros, Chinese RMB or US dollars
- » **Language** Korean
- » **Visas** Needed by everyone and normally issued the day before you travel by the North Korean embassy in Beijing

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 120,540 sq km
- » **Population** 25,000,000
- » **Capital** Pyongyang
- » **Telephone** North Korea's country code is 850. It's not permitted for travellers to bring mobile phones into North Korea
- » **Internet** Unavailable anywhere in the country

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	KPW 138
China	RMB1	KPW 21
Euro Zone	€1	KPW 173
Japan	Y100	KPW 172
UK	UK£1	KPW 215
USA	US\$1	KPW 138

Resources

- » Koryo Tours: www.koryogroup.com
- » North Korean Economy Watch: www.nkeconwatch.com
- » North Korean Refugees: www.northkoreanrefugees.com
- » Lonely Planet: www.lonelyplanet.com/north-korea/pyongyang