

Dongdaemun & Eastern Seoul

Neighbourhood Top Five

- ❶ Uncover layers of Seoul's history, from its foundation as the capital of the Joseon dynasty to its 21st-century incarnation, at the **Dongdaemun Design Plaza & Park** (p120).
- ❷ Cruise the malls and buzzing streets of **Dongdaemun Market** (p123) into the early hours of the morning.
- ❸ Cycle around **Seoul Forest** (p121), past the wetlands, the riverside and Sika deer.
- ❹ Explore the **Seoul Art Space Sindang** (p121) in the underground arcade beneath Jungang Market.
- ❺ Learn about your yin and yang and the traditional Korean approach to medicine at the **Seoul Yangnyeongsi Herb Medicine Museum** (p121).



For more detail of this area see Map p225 ➔

Explore Dongdaemun & Eastern Seoul

Taking its name from the Great East Gate (Heunginjimun) to the city, Dongdaemun – an area synonymous with shopping for centuries in Seoul – is now famous for the Zaha Hadid-designed Dongdaemun Design Plaza & Park (DDP), an architectural showpiece so complex that it wasn't ready in time for Seoul's stint as World Design Capital in 2010.

With the DDP now fully formed, it's fascinating to explore the ribbon of indoor markets that stretch around it and along either side of Cheong-gye-cheon, spilling out into side streets where you can find anything and everything from succulents and sewing-machine parts to every hue of zipper and variety of *kimchi*. Much of the action is wholesale, with traders haggling over deals until the break of dawn, but there's also plenty of retail, particularly in fashion goods.

Further east there are more interesting markets to discover, including ones devoted to herbal medicines, antiques and secondhand goods. A couple of big green spaces – Seoul Forest Park and the Children's Grand Park – provide natural relief from the commercial activity.

Local Life

➔ **Late-night shopping** Join fashion bargain-hunters as they trawl the high-rise malls such as Doota (p123) into the wee hours.

➔ **Russian delicacies** Head to the backstreets diagonally across from DPP to wander Dongdaemun's Silk Road, home to a Central Asian population, where signage is in Cyrillic and speciality delis sell smoked meats, home-baked breads and Russian vodka.

➔ **Herbal remedies** Natural medicines, such as arrowroot by the cup, are downed at Seoul Yangnyeongsi (p123). They taste pretty bad, but the *maesil* (plum) one is said to improve blood pressure.

Getting There & Away

➔ **Subway** Hop off at either Dongdaemun or Dongdaemun History & Culture Park stations for the Dongdaemun area. The subway is also the best way to access the markets and parks further east.

➔ **Walk** The paths along the Cheong-gye-cheon provide pleasant strolling access between Dongdaemun and Seoul Yangnyeongsi.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Gwangjang Market isn't just a great place for food, its upstairs arcade in the north-western corner is packed with stalls selling second-hand and vintage clothing.

Best Parks

- ➔ Seoul Forest (p121)
- ➔ Children's Grand Park (p121)

For reviews, see p121 ➔

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Gwangjang Market (p122)
- ➔ Samarkand (p122)
- ➔ Woo Rae Oak (p122)

For reviews, see p122 ➔

Best Places to Shop

- ➔ Seoul Folk Flea Market (p123)
- ➔ Dongdaemun Market (p123)
- ➔ Doota (p123)

For reviews, see p123 ➔