

Welcome to Seoul

Fashion- and technology-forward but also deeply traditional, this dynamic city mashes up temples, palaces, cutting-edge design and mountain trails, all to a nonstop K-Pop beat.

Historical Fragments

Gaze down on this sprawling metropolis of around 10 million people from atop any of Seoul's four guardian mountains and you'll sense the powerful *pungsu-jiri* (feng shui) that has long nurtured and protected the city. History clings tenaciously to the 'Miracle on the Han', a phoenix arisen from the ashes of the Korean War just over 60 years ago. So while Seoul has its eye clearly on the future, you'll also encounter fascinating fragments of the past in World Heritage-listed sites such as Jongnyo shrine, the alleys between the graceful *hanok* (traditional wooden homes) that cluster in Bukchon, and striding along the magnificent city walls.

Beyond the Walls

Public transport is brilliant, so there's no excuse for not stretching your travel horizons beyond the city limits. The fearsome Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), splitting South from North Korea, exerts a powerful attraction and is well worth visiting. Nearby is the charming arts and culture village of Heyri. To the west, Incheon is a fascinating port where the modern world came flooding into Korea at the end of the 19th century, while to the south is Suwon, home to impressive World Heritage-listed fortifications.

Twenty-Four-Hour City

Whatever you want, at any time of day or night, Seoul can provide. An early morning temple visit can lead to a palace tour followed by tea sipping in Bukchon and gallery-hopping in Samcheong-dong. *Saju* (a vodka-like drink) and snacks in a street tent bar will fuel you for shopping at the buzzing Dongdaemun or Namdaemun night markets, partying in Hongdae or Itaewon, or playing online games at a *PC bang* (internet gaming room). Follow this with steaming, soaking and snoozing in a *jjimjil-bang* (sauna and spa). By the time you look at your watch, it will be dawn again.

Design Matters

Over the last decade Seoul has worked hard to soften its industrial hard edges into an appealing urban ideal of parks, culture and design. Glass, concrete and steel are crafted into natural forms at the spectacular Dongdaemun Design Plaza & Park and the new City Hall. The popularity of the beautifully landscaped parks alongside the central Cheong-gye stream and the Han River has spurred on the creation of more green spaces and cycle routes. Join Seoulites enjoying time out shopping in stylish boutiques and drinking at cool cafes and convivial bars.