
GEEO ITINERARY

South Korea 11/8/2024

Day 1: Seoul Arrive in Seoul at any time. Meet your group for a welcome meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m.

You may arrive in Seoul at any time today. The nearest airport is **Incheon International Airport (ICN)**. The city's secondary airport is Gimpo International Airport (GMP). Due to the potential for flight delays or cancellations, we recommend that you consider arriving in Asia at least a day in advance. This will also give you time to adjust to the time difference and overcome any jet lag. We can book extra hotel nights for you in Seoul before and/or after the trip. **Hotel Check-in and Welcome Meeting** Please note that check-in at the hotel is usually around 2:00-3:00 p.m. There are no planned activities until an intro meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m., usually in the hotel lobby. Check for a sign or ask at the reception desk about the exact time and location of the group meeting. Please make every effort to arrive in time for this meeting. If you are delayed and will arrive late, please inform us. Your tour leader will then leave you a message at the front desk informing you of where and when to meet up tomorrow. After the welcome meeting, join your tour leader for an orientation walk down Cheonggyecheon Stream, a 6.8-mile waterway and public space running through the heart of downtown Seoul. Learn about Seoul while walking past small waterfalls and nearly two dozen overhead bridges. Then explore the dense grid of streets in the bustling neighborhood of Myeongdong, which is packed with people at all hours of the day looking to enjoy some of the best shopping, street food, and nightlife in all of Korea. Opt for a group dinner to get to know your tour leader and travel companions. **Joining Instructions** By taxi from Incheon International Airport (about 70 mins) Visit the Seoul Taxi stands located outside the arrivals area. All taxis use a meter machine for the fare. - Regular taxis (all colors except black): approximately \$50-60 USD (₩65,000-75,000 KRW) – suitable for up to 2 passengers - Premium taxis (black): approximately \$85-105 USD (₩95,000-11,000 KRW) – suitable for up to 3 passengers - International taxis : drivers speak English and there is a flat rate of approximately \$90 USD (₩120,000 KRW) to your hotel's district - If a group has more than 3 passengers, a jumbo taxi is the best option, at a price comparable to a premium taxi - Please note that there is a night surcharge (120% of the regular fare) between midnight and 04:00 am. By AREX Express Train from Incheon International Airport to Seoul Station (about 1 hour) The non-stop AREX Express Train to Seoul Station is comfortable, clean, and affordable, and the signage and ticket machines will include English. the train runs approximately every 30 minutes from 05:15 until 22:40: - The train to Seoul Station takes 43 mins from Terminal 1 or 51 mins from Terminal 2. - From Seoul Station, you can take a taxi outside the main entrance to your hotel (<10 min). The total price for the train and taxi is about \$12-13 USD. - An additional ₩500 KRW deposit is required when purchasing a single-journey transportation card. This deposit can be refunded at the arrival station. By bus from Incheon International Airport The 6001 Airport Limousine Bus (06:55-22:50 every 30 mins) - The journey takes about 90 mins (9 stops) from the airport to the hotel or 10 stops from the hotel to the airport. - The bus fare is approximately \$13 USD (₩17,000 KRW). You can purchase tickets at the ticket booth on the arrivals level. - The bus stop near the hotel is at Myeongdong-dong Station near the station entrance - 100 meters (2 mins on foot) from the hotel. **Accommodation:** Hotel Prince (or similar) * *For the actual hotel your specific departure will be using, please check your voucher.*

Day 2: Seoul Enjoy a bus tour of the bustling metropolis, where modern skyscrapers, high-tech subways, and pop culture meet Buddhist temples and street markets. Visit Gyeongbokgung Palace, the National Folklore Museum, Bukchon Hanok Village, and Insadong Alley.

During a private bus tour of Seoul, you will visit Gyeongbokgung Palace, the main royal palace of the Joseon Dynasty built in 1395. The palace has been destroyed many times, but more than half of the original buildings are still standing or are restored. The complex is also home to the National Palace Museum and the National Folk Museum, where you can learn about the history and traditions of the Korean people during the Joseon era. Continue on to Bukchon Hanok Village, where you will be transported back 600 years into Seoul's past. The village boasts the largest cluster of privately owned traditional Korean wooden homes (*hanok*) in Seoul. Keep an eye out for the half-dozen alleys with

beautifully restored architectural features like small courtyards, decorative outer walls, and dark tiled roofs. Explore the narrow and hidden alleys of one of the most memorable places in Seoul, Insadong Alley. Now filled with antique shops, galleries, tea houses, and traditional restaurants, this area once housed the royal studio for painters during the Joseon Dynasty.

After exploring the city, opt to see a show, explore a local museum, or hit the pavement and eat your way through street markets trying local fares such as bibimbap, soondae, and kimchi.

Accommodation: Hotel Prince (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 3: Seoul/Gyeongju-si Travel by train to Gyeongju, the capital of the ancient kingdom of Silla for nearly 1,000 years. Experience an overnight stay in a local temple.

After breakfast, board a high-speed bullet train for a relaxing morning ride through the countryside to Gyeongju. Please be sure to pack lightly for your trip, as you will be walking with your luggage in busy public train stations to catch connecting trains. You must be careful to travel light and use luggage that you can handle easily. You will need to be capable of walking up and down stairs with your luggage without assistance. A large bag will be an inconvenience to you and will slow you down. Gyeongju was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Silla, which ruled about two-thirds of the Korean Peninsula at its height, for close to one thousand years. Several of Gyeongju's historical buildings are designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. You will experience an overnight stay in a local temple, which starts with a steep climb uphill. The group will learn about temple etiquette, watch a monk's martial arts performance (sunmudo), experience the daily prayer ritual (108 prostrations), and enjoy a temple-style dinner (sitting on the floor). Stay in rooms called ondol, which are traditional yet heated to be cozy and comfortable, with beds made up directly on the floor. The rooms are multi-share, divided up between males and females. Please be aware that you will spend a fair amount of time sitting cross-legged on floor mats at the temple. **Approximate travel time:** 2 hrs by bullet train **Accommodation:** Gulgulsa Templestay (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Dinner

Day 4: Gyeongju-si Enjoy a peaceful morning meditation, martial arts practice, and drum and bell ritual before exploring in Gyeongju.

Enjoy a peaceful morning at Gulgulsa Temple, located amid the natural beauty of Hamwolsan Mountain. Take an easy hike up to the only stove cave temple in Korea for a morning meditation. During a tour of Gyeongju, visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bulguksa Temple, a head temple of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism located on the slopes of Mount Toham. Admire the temple's six national treasures: the Dabotap and Seokgatap stone pagodas, Yeonhwagyo and Chilbogyo bridges, Cheongungyo and Baegungyo bridges, and two gilt-bronze statues of Buddha. Also visit the oldest surviving astronomical observatory in Asia, Cheomseongdae Observatory. Cheomseongdae may not appear to be a monumental landmark, but the observatory tower dates back to the seventh century and is actually the oldest existing astronomical observatory in all of East Asia. Cheomseongdae was used for observing the stars in order to forecast the weather in the ancient scientific hub of Gyeongju. Later in the tour, visit the Daereungwon Tomb complex, another UNESCO World Heritage Site that contains 23 tombs located inside large mounds. The complex is beautiful with its rolling mounds and gardens, and you can pay a visit inside the tombs, the most famous of which are Cheonmachong and Hwangnam Daechong. Each tomb holds thousands of relics that provide a window into the Silla Dynasty and its royal family. The contents of the tombs are over 1,500 years old and a testament to the rich history and cultural heritage of Korea. **Accommodation:** Swiss Rosen Hotel - Gyeongju (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 5: Gyeongju-si/Busan Visit Yangdong Folk Village in Gyeongju National Park and then continue on to Busan by private bus. Visit Haedong Yonggungsa, a picturesque 14th-century seaside temple, and then get your bearings with an orientation walk on Haeundae Beach and Dongbaek Island.

Today, you will travel by private bus to colorful Busan. Along the way, enjoy a visit to Yangdong Folk Village, a 500-year-old UNESCO World Heritage Site located in Gyeongju National Park, where you can get a feel for life during the early Joseon Dynasty. Founded in the early 1400s, the village boasts well-

preserved buildings and has more than 160 homes displaying traditional Joseon architecture within a gorgeous natural setting. Continue on to the picturesque 14th-century seaside temple, Haedong Yonggungsa, originally known as Bomun Temple. Originally built in 1376, this picturesque, cliffside Buddhist temple overlooks the East China Sea. After exploring the temple, check in to your hotel and get your bearings with an orientation walk on Haeundae Beach and Dongbaekseom. Opt to spend the evening treating yourself at a Jjimjilbang spa, or sing your heart out at a popular karaoke bar.

Approximate travel time: 2 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** Felix Hotel by STX (or similar)

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 6: Busan/Seoul In the seaside city, visit the bustling Jagalchi fish market, Gukjesijang market, Yongdusan Park, and the colorful Gamcheon Culture Village before traveling back to Seoul by train. Once you are back in Seoul, check out Korea's oldest traditional market, Namdaemun Market, and then make your way by cable car to N Seoul Tower to see this beautiful landmark. Opt to make the trip up to the observation deck, see Banpo Bridge, visit the floating islands, or hang out in the Gangnam district.

Tour Busan and visit Jagalchi Fish Market, a major attraction at Nampo Port. Wander through the rows of stalls selling everything you can dream of from the sea. Watch as locals haggle for the best price and fishmongers hawk their wares. Then check out Gukjesijang, or Gukje Market, near Biff Square, a well-known modern movie district. The market was once a place for refugees to earn a living during the Korean War. It is now a bustling international market full of food, home goods, clothes, souvenirs, and more. The city tour will also take you to Yongdusan Park, home to more than 70 different types of trees and the 387-ft-high Busan Tower. Then explore the pastel-colored village of Gamcheon, nestled in the side of a mountain, with uniquely painted houses, murals, cafes, and shops. After touring Busan, travel by bullet train back to Seoul. Please be sure to pack lightly for your trip, as you will be walking with your luggage in busy public train stations to catch connecting trains. You must be careful to travel light and use luggage that you can handle easily. You will need to be capable of walking up and down stairs with your luggage without assistance. A large bag will be an inconvenience to you and will slow you down. Once you are back in Seoul, you will visit Namdaemun Market, Korea's oldest traditional market, dating back to 1414. It is also the country's largest market, with over 10,000 vendors spanning several city blocks. Get ready to shop! Then take a cable car up to the most iconic landmark in Seoul, N Seoul Tower, located at the top of Mt Namsan. The tower used to be a broadcasting station and is now a beautiful observatory open to the public. Opt to pay an additional fee to go up the tower to the observatory. During the evening, spend some free time visiting Banpo Bridge, home to the Moonlight Rainbow Fountain Show, and three artificial islands (Sebitseom) located near one end of the bridge. Or hang out in the Gangnam district, an historically rich, fast-developing neighborhood with plenty to do and see. Gangnam Station is the busiest subway station in Seoul and has a huge underground shopping center, or you could visit Bongeunsa, a Buddhist temple in the center of Gangnam. **Approximate travel time:** 2.5 hrs by bullet train **Accommodation:** Hotel Prince (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 7: Seoul Visit the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), in place since 1953 to separate North and South Korea. After 3-4 hours at the DMZ, head to The War Memorial of Korea. Later, return back to Seoul for one last night in the city.

Visit the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), in place since 1953 to separate North and South Korea. It is the most heavily militarized border in the world, with over a million soldiers standing guard every day at one of the last remnants of the Cold War era. The 160-mile long and 2.5-mile wide buffer zone has had very little development, and nature and wildlife have taken over the area. After spending about 3-4 hours visiting the DMZ, the group will visit The War Memorial of Korea, with indoor and outdoor exhibits containing about 9,000 artifacts. The memorial building serves to exhibit and memorialize the military history of Korea and preserve materials related to the Korean War. Later, return back to Seoul for another night in the city. Opt to visit the Samsung Leeum Contemporary Gallery, explore the Itaewon neighborhood, or pre-book a kimchi making and hanbok experience. **Approximate travel time:** 2-3 hrs by private vehicle (Seoul to DMZ round trip) **Accommodation:** Hotel Prince (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast

Day 8: Seoul Depart Seoul at any time.

There are no planned activities today, so you may depart Seoul at any time. If you wish to extend your stay in Seoul, consider booking post-tour accommodation with us. Please note that check-out time from the hotel is usually mid-morning, but luggage storage services are available at the reception desk. Want more adventure? Book two or more GEEO programs in the same school year and receive a discount! GEEO will give you 10% off of the lesser value program(s) (up to 3 programs per year). If you would like to extend your time abroad but don't see another GEEO program that interests you, let us know. We can work with you to find a trip from our tour operator's much larger catalog. Their tours are open to the general public and not designed specifically for educators, but we can still offer you and your travel companions a discounted educator price on any additional tours that you book. **Meals included:**
Breakfast

**Itinerary Disclaimer: While it is our intention to adhere to the routes described on our website, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable, to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The information on our website is a general guide to the tour and region, and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.*