








*An entrance to Gwanghwamun Palace, Seoul*

## Quick Facts

Country	South Korea	
Currency	Won (KRW)	
Language	Korean	
Population	9.6 million	
Time Zone	GMT + 9 hours	

## Climate

Summer Av Max	28°c	
Autumn Av Max	13°	
Winter Av Max	-5°c	
Spring Av Max	12°c	

## Introducing Seoul

[Seoul](#) is the capital city of South Korea and is situated in the northwest corner of the country, 25 miles away from the North Korean border. The central area of Seoul is the commercial and cultural center of South Korea, a city with a high profile following its hosting of the 1988 Olympic Games and the 2002 World Cup.

Seoul is also one of the ten largest cities in the world. Its name is well-chosen, meaning 'the centre of everything'- and the city lives up to its description. About twenty-five percent of the nation's people live there; nearly half of all the students in the country study there; the arts, both ancient and modern, are amply represented. A visitor with time to spare might visit the Kyongbokkung Palace, relic of Korea's vanished monarchy, or the Sejong Cultural Center, and all visitors should visit the modern city, a thriving, industrial metropolis.

Seoul is a city of ancient treasures; however, that doesn't mean there is not an incredible assortment of trendy entertainment choices. Amid the magnificent historical monuments, museums, temples and shrines there are always a myriad of vibrant festivals and a glittering nightlife that rivals any of the world's most colorful capitals.

## What to See in Seoul

**Theatres and Arts** To experience the Korean traditional performing arts one must visit the [Chongdong Theatre](#), which focuses on the re-discovery and development of these arts. The performers and the productions will take one to the essence of Korean culture.

**Palaces and Culture** [Kyongbokkung Palace](#) is the most massive, magnificent palace in Seoul and was once the home of the first royal family of the Choson Dynasty. The [Korean Folk Village](#), set in the environment of nature and occupying approximately 243 acres, is an open-air folk museum for the public to learn and enjoy traditional Korean culture.

**Museums** The [National Museum of Korea](#) of international standard contains more than 1,000,000 significant, historic items portraying the struggles, triumphs, traditions, and spirituality of Korean history. In the heart of Seoul one can enjoy the fine arts on an international level by visiting the [Sejong Cultural Center](#), one of the top 10 performing arts centers in the world. The [Moga Buddhist Museum](#) displays art depicting the fascinating Buddhist culture in Korea. A variety of mediums are exhibited including woodwork, calligraphy and paintings.

## Getting into Seoul

### From Seoul - Incheon International Airport (ICN)

There are many **public bus** lines which begin at Seoul Incheon International Airport, and travel into the city centre.

The Airport Railroad Express operates an **express rail** service between Seoul Incheon International Airport and Gimpo Airport, where passengers can change to line 5 of the Seoul subway system (Incheon Rapid Transit).

The **taxi** stand is located on the arrivals level, and provides standard cabs, large vehicles for groups as well as taxis for disabled travellers. A fare from the airport to Seoul City Hall would cost from Won44,000 for standard taxi, and take about an hour. Passengers are liable to pay any tolls roads themselves, and standard size taxis charged a late night premium between midnight and 4am (about 20% extra).

## Shopping in Seoul

[Apgujeong](#) is the hottest district for fashion trendsetters. For more practical shoppers who still have highbrow tastes, there are many shops specializing in secondhand luxury items.

The neighbouring district of [Cheongdam-dong](#) offers a variety of more luxurious venue and streets lined with premium brand stores.

Anyone shopping for fashion in Seoul will eventually wind up in [Myeong-dong](#), since this area is well known for offering great selection and amazing prices, especially down the many side alleys that are lined with unique shops selling clothes, shoes and accessories. If you want to purchase traditional Korean souvenirs, head to [Insa-dong](#). The streets and alleys are rich with galleries, antique shops, traditional craftwork and many small unique shops.

## Getting Around Seoul

**Subway** Seoul has twelve subway lines, each recognisable by its colour and number. Most lines have stops in the city centre as well as major transit hubs including the Seoul Train Station, the Express Bus Station and Gimpo Airport. An adult ticket costs 1,000 won with another 100won payable for every 5km travelled after the first 10km (included in the initial ticket cost).

**Public Buses** Seoul has a developed public bus system, which users different coloured buses to mark the various routes. A blue bus travels between the inner city and outer suburbs. A green bus connects subway stations and residential areas. A yellow bus travels in a circular route within central Seoul, and is most likely the one a tourist would use.

**Water taxi** There are about 17 water taxi stations along the Hangang river and can offer a direct drop-off or else a tour of Seoul from the waterside.

## Seoul's Nightlife

Popular places to begin your evening are the night markets in [Dongdaemun](#) that see plenty of bar hopping action, while [Myeongdong](#) is a great spot for dinner or a few early beers at one of the many cafés and bars. The exclusive wine bars, night clubs and upscale bars in the [Apgujeong-dong](#) or [Sinsadong](#) districts attract a trendy, jet-setting crowd.

A more laid-back crowd tends to gather in [Gangnam](#) where Western-style clubs and bars abound. Hongdae is the best area for live music and great dance floors, and also the most popular nightlife hotspot for Koreans and Westerners alike.

In Hongdae, you can listen and dance to any type of music: there is a lot of underground music, but also find electronic music, jazz music, Latin American music, hip-hop and rock. Bars, cafés, pubs and nightclubs surround Hongkik University.

## Our Seoul Favourites...

### Hotels

\$\$\$ [Grand Hilton Seoul](#)  
201-1 Hongeun-dong



\$\$\$ [JW Marriott Seoul](#)  
747-7 Hannam 2-Dong  
Yongsan-Gu



\$\$ [Holiday Inn Seoul](#)  
169-1 Dowha-dong,  
Mapo-ku SEOUL 121-040



\$\$ [Best Western Niagara](#)  
259-2 Yeomchang-Dong,  
Ganseong-Gu



\$ [Hotel Ibis Seoul](#)  
893-1 Daechi Dong



### Restaurants

\$\$\$ [Kayarang](#)  
239-4 Itaewon 2-dong  
Yongsan-gu - traditional  
Korean dining,  
highly recommended



\$\$ [Sanchon](#)  
14 Gwanhun-dong, Jongno-  
gu - Temple dining,  
performance with meal,  
vegetarian cuisine.



\$ [Tosokchon](#)  
Seoul-si Jongno-gu Chebu-  
dong 85-1 - cheap  
meals, Korean style  
soups, canteen-style dining



## Don't miss...

### Gyeongbokgung Palace

**Why?** Built over 600 years ago, the Gyeongbokgung Palace is a centre of ancient tradition and regal architecture amidst the modern bustle of Seoul.



## One-day Itinerary

**Morning** Head straight to Gyeongbokgung Palace to enjoy this immense palace before the crowds arrive.

**Lunch** Next head to Insa-dong Street for a variety of traditional and modern art stores as well as a plethora of restaurants and street food stalls.

**Afternoon** Enjoy Korean culture, at the Namsangol Hanok Village.

**Evening** End off the day in Hongdae, an area around the Hongkik University of Arts boasting plenty of shops, art galleries, restaurants, cafes and bars.