



Steph's Quick Budget Fact Sheet

South Korea - Seoul

Quick Facts

- ✓ **Capital:** Seoul
- ✓ **Language:** Korean
- ✓ **Population:** ± 9.8 mln
- ✓ **Sq km:** ± 605.2
- ✓ **Currency:** Won ₩
- ✓ **Country code:** +82 (2)
- ✓ **Visa:** Probably not (*up to 90 days*), but check [here](#) just in case!
- ✓ **Emergency phone:** 112 (*police*), 119 (*fire / other emergencies*), 129 (*medical*)
- ✓ **Vaccinations:** Hep-A & Typhoid... (*Hep-B, Japanese Encephalitis, Rabies*)



History Recap Over 1 Drink

3000BC: Central Asian settlers. 676: Three Kingdoms unified → Silla Dynasty. 1231-70: Mongol invasions. 1592: Japanese invasion. 1627&36: Manchu invasions. 1866: French invasion after execution Catholic missionaries: burned manuscripts. 1905: Jap annexation. '10-'45: Jap rule: forced to adopt Japanese names/language forbidden/ Shinto religion, Korean culture wiped out → Independent /activist movements/guerilla. '45: WWII → Soviet North, US South (*keeps supporting*). '48: Republic of Korea. '50: Independence South → North invasion: Korean War until '53 (*2mln death*). '61: Military coup: General Park. '65: South to Vietnam (US). '72: Martial law. Unification talks. '80: Student demonstrations → 200 killed by army in Gwangju. '81: End martial law. '86: Direct pres election. '80s: Shift towards high-tech/IT. '88: Seoul Olympics. '91: North&South join UN. '93: Pres San (*first freely elected*). '98: Pres Kim Dae-Jung → unconditional economic & humanitarian aid to North. 2000: Meets Kim Jong-il: end anti-South propaganda in North. South amnesty to 3500 prisoners: Nobel Peace Prize. '02: Naval battle North/South about disputed sea border (*continues until '14*). Typhoon Rusa (*119 death*). '04: 3000 troops to Iraq. Free-trade deal US. '08: Financial crisis. '12: First female pres: Park Geun-hye. '13: Tensions spike. Cyber attacks. '18: Talks North-South re-start.

Travel Seasons

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Spring												
Summer												
Autumn												
Winter												
Budget												

Altitude: 38m. Climate: Continental (Dwa).

Bucket List For Free

- ☺ **Hiking:** [Bukhansan NP](#), [Inwangsan](#), [Suseongdong Valley](#), [Ilisan Lake Park](#), [Namsan](#), [Seoul Forest](#).
- ☺ **Museums:** [War Memorial](#), [National Museum](#), [Seoul Arts Centre](#), [Museum of History](#), [National Folk Museum](#), [National Palace Museum](#), [Seoul Museum of Art](#), BK Plastic Surgery Museum, [Blue House](#) (*reserve [here](#)!*). Last Wed of month: Museums free.
- ☺ **Sights:** [Starfield Library](#), Poop Café, Hongik University Street (*Hongdae*), Gangnam, [Free Seoul City Walking Tour](#), [Hangang Park](#). Full list [here](#).

Worth The Extra \$€¥

- 👍 **Palaces:** [Gyeongbokgung](#), [Changgyeonggung](#) (*cheapest*), [Changdeokgung](#).
- 👍 **Sights:** [Seodaemun Prison](#), [Poopoo Land](#), [Buckchan Hanok Village](#), [N Seoul Tower](#) & 1001 temples.
- 👍 **Museums:** [Leeum Samsung Museum of Art](#), [Museum Kimchi](#), [National Museum of Modern & Contemporary Art](#), [Children's Museum](#) & more.
- 👍 **Daytrips:** [DMZ / JSA Zone](#) (*North Korea*), [Lotte World Amusement Park](#), [Everland](#).

Budget Bites

⌘ **Big supermarkets:** All are expensive. Emart, Lotte and Traders (*the big department stores – not the smaller versions*) are the cheapest ones out there. Daiso for toiletries.

⌘ **Markets:** Namdaemun, Gwangjang, Dongdaemun, Garak, Majang Market & many more.

⌘ **Local food:** Kimchi (*fermented vegetables*), Galbi (*marinated ribs*), Yukgaejang (*beef stew*), Samgyetang (*ginseng chicken soup*), Jjajangmyeon (*noodles*), Gim (*toasted seaweed*), Goghui (*Korean BBQ*), Bibimbap (*mixed rice*), Mandu (*dumplings*), Kimbap (*sushi*), Haemul Pajeon (*fried seafood pancake*), Twigim (*tempura*), Tteokbokki (*red rice cakes*), Kkwong-Toryeom (*pheasant breast*), Mel-Jeot (*salted anchovy*), Tangsuyuk (*horse*), Galbijjim (*horse rib stew*), Bulgogi (*horse BBQ*), Seonggae-Guk (*sea urchin soup*), Naengmyun (*cold noodles*), Godeunggeo, Jeon (*savory pancakes*), (*mackerel*), Sora (*turban shell*), Gingyijuk / Mungejuk / Jogaejuk (*rice porridge with crab / octopus / clams*), Bingddeok (*buckwheat rice cake*), Makkoli (*rice wine*) & way more!

⌘ **Go vegan:** Being vegan quite hard in South Korea, as everything is written in Hangul, both menus and ingredients lists. For vegan restaurants, check [Happy Cow – Seoul](#).

Festivals

⚙ Sinchon Water Gun Festival: July.

⚙ Seoul Lantern Festival: Nov.

⚙ Seoul Kimchi Making & Sharing Festival: Nov.

Mama Said

💀 South Korea is a very safe place. Don't stress.

💀 Tap water is drinkable.

💀 Avoid places like COEX Aquarium and Seoul Grand Park Zoo where animals are held in captivity.

Next?

➔ In South Korea: Incheon, Pocheon, Gangneung.

➔ International destinations close by: Japan.

Sleep Cheap

❖ Tourist accommodation is very expensive in South Korea. Usually the cheapest deals can be found in hostels or via Air BnB. Use [this link](#) for €15 discount at [Booking.com](#). Get €25 travel money for free on Air BnB with [this link](#).

❖ Camping is very affordable but can be terribly hot in summer and freezing cold in winter. Nanji Campground is ridiculously cheap.

❖ Jjimjilbangs are cheap Korean sauna's and include free overnight stays (*sleeping rooms*). Temple stays (Buddhist) are a bit pricier and can be done at Myogaksa, Geumseonsa, Bongeunsa, Jogyesa and Jingwansa. Book it [here](#).

❖ Go [Couchsurfing](#) or Housesitting: get 20% off your yearly Trusted Housesitters membership via [this link](#). Also check [WorkAway](#).

Nights Best Spent

◆ **Nightlife areas:** Hongik University Street (*Hongdae*), Gangnam, Itaewon.

◆ **Theaters:** National Theatre of Korea, Jeongdong Theatre, NANTA Theatre, Jump.

Free-Riding?

■ Seoul is huge. You can walk within parts of districts, but to get around you need alternative transport.

■ Biking is possible and there's an extensive bicycle lane network. Car drivers are however rather inconsiderate in Korea. [Bike Seoul](#) is a cheap bikeshare system.

■ Google Maps and Moovit don't work well here, download the KakaoMap or Naver app for route planning (*mostly in Korean, but recognizes place names in alphabet and has a map-function*). A [T-Money / Cashbee card](#) provides discounts and up to 4 free transfers daily to bus or metro (*within 30 minutes*), it can be bought and charged in all minimarkets and works all over South Korea. Swipe when entering and leaving the bus/metro. There are several bus terminals: Nambu, Express Bus Terminal, Yongsan, Seobu, Dong, Sangbong, Sinseol-Dong, Central City, Jegi-Dong.

■ Trains are operated by [Korail](#) and leave from the central train station. There are both expensive fast-trains as well as slower and very cheap local trains.

■ Airport: Incheon (ICN) & Gimpo (GMP) Airport.

■ Hitchhiking is possible, but rather hard in a big city as you'll mainly catch inner-city traffic.