

South Korea

Country Facts

The People

Nationality

Korean(s)

Ethnic Composition

Homogeneous (except for about 20,000 Chinese)

Religious Composition

Christian	26.3%
- Protestant	- 19.7%
- Roman Catholic	- 6.6%
Buddhist	23.2%
Other or unknown	1.3%
None	49.3%

Note: Not all figures equal exactly 100 percent as percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth.

Languages Spoken

Korean, English widely taught in junior high and high school.

Education and Literacy

Definition: age 15 and over can read and write

Total population: 97.9%

Male: 99.2%

Female: 96.6%

Labor Force

Total: 23.77 million

By occupation:

Services	67.2%
Industry	26.4%
Agriculture	6.4%

Land Mass Total

98,480 sq km (38,023 sq mi)

Land

98,190 sq km (37,911 sq mi)

Water

290 sq km (111 sq mi)

Land Boundaries

Total: 238 km (147 mi)

Border countries: North Korea 238 km (147 mi)

Coastline

2,413 km (1,499 mi)

Maritime claim

Territorial sea: 12 nm; between 3 nm and 12 nm in the Korea Strait

Contiguous zone: 24 nm

Exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

Continental shelf: not specified

Climate/Weather

Temperate, with rainfall heavier in summer than winter.

Terrain

Mostly hills and mountains; wide coastal plains in west and south.

Elevation extremes

Lowest point: Sea of Japan 0 m

Highest point: Halla San 1,950 m (6,397 ft)

Natural Resources

Coal, tungsten, graphite, molybdenum, lead, hydropower potential.

Land use

Arable land	16.58%
Permanent crops	2.01%
Other	81.41%

Natural hazards

Occasional typhoons bring high winds and floods; low-level seismic activity common in southwest.

Environment - current issues

Air pollution in large cities; water pollution from the discharge of sewage and industrial effluents; drift net fishing.

Geography Note

Strategic location on Korea Strait.

Population

49,044,790 (July 2007 est.)

Age structure

<i>0-14 years:</i>	18.3%	Male: 4,714,103	Female: 4,262,873
<i>15-64 years:</i>	72.1%	Male: 18,004,719	Female: 17,346,594
<i>65 years and over:</i>	9.6%	Male: 1,921,803	Female: 2,794,698

Growth Rate

0.394%

Life Expectancy

Total population: 77.23 years

Male: 73.81 years

Female: 80.93 years

GDP Per Capita

Purchasing power parity

US\$24,200

Infant Mortality

Total: 6.05 deaths/1,000 live births

Male: 6.43 deaths/1,000 live births

Female: 5.64 deaths/1,000 live births

Sex ratio

<i>At birth:</i>	1.08 male(s)/female
<i>Under 15 years:</i>	1.11 male(s)/female
<i>15-64 years:</i>	1.04 male(s)/female
<i>65 years and over:</i>	0.69 male(s)/female
<i>Total population:</i>	1.01 male(s)/female

Net migration rate

0 migrant(s)/1,000 population

Capital and Major Cities

Capital with population : Seoul: 10,451,281

Other important cities with population: Pusan: 3,663,421; Incheon: 2,657,698; Taegu: 2,591,996; Taejeon 1,515,270; Kwangju 1,442,492; Suwon 1,368,767; Koyang: 1,413,116; Songnam: 1,072,017; Ulsan: 1,002,898.

Birth Rate

9.93 births/1,000 population

Death Rate

5.99 deaths/1,000 population

Economy & Trade

Since the 1960s, South Korea has achieved an incredible record of growth and integration into the high-tech modern world economy. Four decades ago, GDP per capita was comparable with levels in the poorer countries of Africa and Asia. In 2004, South Korea joined the trillion dollar club of world economies. Today its GDP per capita is equal to the lesser economies of the EU. This success was achieved by a system of close government/business ties, including directed credit, import restrictions, sponsorship of specific industries, and a strong labor effort. The government promoted the import of raw materials and technology at the expense of consumer goods and encouraged savings and investment over consumption. The Asian financial crisis of 1997-99 exposed longstanding weaknesses in South Korea's development model, including high debt/equity ratios, massive foreign borrowing, and an undisciplined financial sector. GDP plunged by 6.9% in 1998, then recovered by 9.5% in 1999 and 8.5% in 2000. Growth fell back to 3.3% in 2001 because of the slowing global economy, falling exports, and the perception that much-needed corporate and financial reforms had stalled. Led by consumer spending and exports, growth in 2002 was an impressive seven percent, despite anemic global growth. Between 2003 and 2006, growth moderated to about four to five percent. A downturn in consumer spending was offset by rapid export growth. Moderate inflation, low unemployment, an export surplus, and fairly equal distribution of income characterize this solid economy.

Unemployment

3.3%

Inflation Rate

2.2%

Exports

US\$326 billion f.o.b.

Imports

US\$309.3 billion f.o.b.

Total Trade

Purchasing power parity

US\$1.18 trillion

Top Export Partners

China 21.8%, U.S. 14.6%, Japan 8.5%, Hong Kong 5.5%

Top Import Partners

Japan 18.5%, China 14.8%, U.S. 11.8%, Saudi Arabia 6.2%

Top Exports

Semiconductors, wireless telecommunications equipment, motor vehicles, computers, steel, ships, petrochemicals.

Top Imports

Machinery, electronics and electronic equipment, oil, steel, transport equipment, organic chemicals, plastics.

Industries

Electronics, telecommunications, automobile production, chemicals, shipbuilding, steel.

Debt - external

US\$249.4 billion

Economic aid

ODA, \$744 million

Fiscal Year:

Calendar year

Business Workweek

	Monday - Friday	Saturday - Sunday
Offices	9a.m. to 6p.m.	Saturday 9a.m. to 1p.m.
Retail	10a.m. to 7p.m.	Saturday 10a.m. to 7p.m. Many stores also are open on Sundays.
Banks	9:30a.m. to 4:30p.m.	Closed
Government	9a.m. to 6p.m.	Saturday 9a.m. to 1p.m.

Official Holidays

Holidays	2005	2006	2007
New Year's Day	January 1	January 1	January 1
Seollal Day ¹	January 8 to 10	January 28 to 30	January 17 to 19
Independence Day	March 1	March 1	March 1
Labor Day	March 10	March 10	March 10
Arbor Day	April 5	April 5	April 5
Children's Day	May 5	May 5	May 5
Buddha's Anniversary ²	May 15	May 5	May 24
Memorial Day	June 6	June 6	June 6
Constitution Day	July 17	July 17	July 17
Liberation Day	August 15	August 15	August 15
Mid-Autumn Festival (Ch'usok) ³	September 17, 18		
National Foundation Day	October 3	October 3	October 3
Christmas Day ^{*1}	December 25	December 25	December 25

¹ The first day of the first moon is Seollal (lunar new year; January/February).

² Buddhist celebration commemorating the birth, enlightenment, and entry into Nirvana of Gautama Buddha.

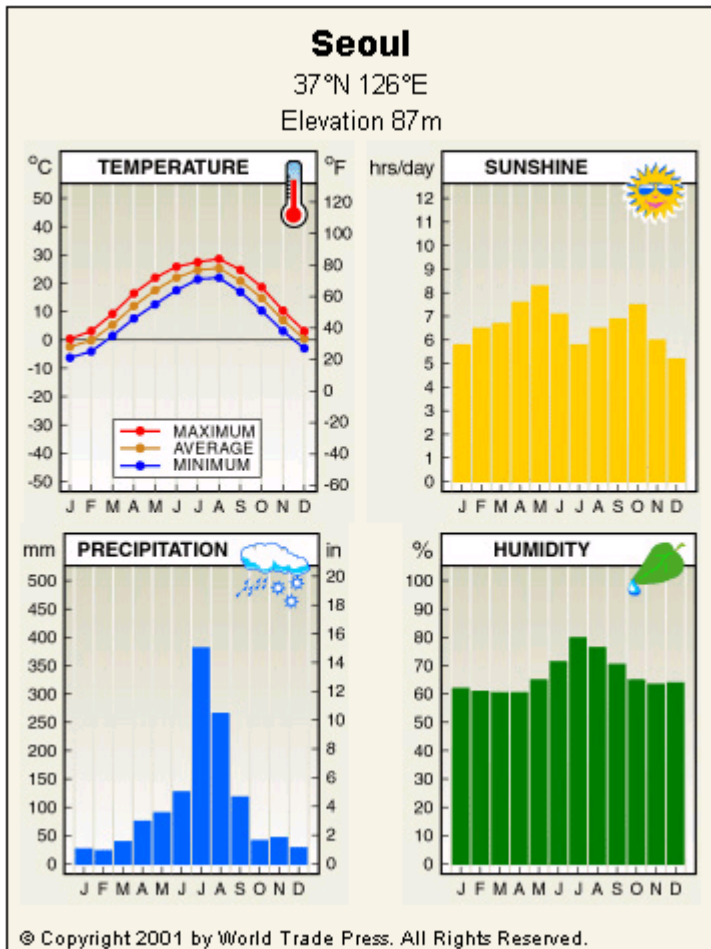
³ Known as the Harvest Moon Festival, and marked by family reunions, celebrations take place on the 15th day of the 8th month of the Chinese calendar. Korean Thanksgiving.

*1 Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. In A.D.320, Pope Julius I fixed the date at December 25 based on the Gregorian calendar. The Orthodox church calculates Christmas using the Julian calendar and celebrates 13 days later on January 7.

National Holiday

Liberation Day, 15 August (1945)

Climate



Seasons

South Korea has a temperate climate with four distinct seasons. Summers are humid, rainy, and warm throughout the country. The typical July high temperature hits 31°C (88°F) and can reach 35°C (95°F). Spring and fall are justifiably celebrated for beautiful weather--warm days, cool nights, and fresh breezes.

Regions

South Korea's climate is generally temperate, but there are slight regional variations. The further south you go the warmer each season is.

Money and Banking

Currency

Currency Name: **South Korean Won**

Sub Currency: **Jeon**

Division: **1 Won = 100 Jeon**

Symbol: **₩**

Currency Codes (ISO 4217)

Alpha: **KRW**

Numeric: **410**

Denominations

Banknotes: **1000, 5000, 10000 (Won)**

Coinage: **1, 5, 10, 50, 100, 500 (Won)**

Banknotes

Denominations: **1000, 5000, 10000 (Won)**

Click on an image to enlarge

1000 Won

Front (Obverse)



Issue Date: January 2007

Size: 68 x 136 mm

Color: Blue

(F) Detail: A portrait of scholar Toegye (Lee Hwang).

(B) Detail: Gaesangjunggeodo

Security: See-through register, braille recognition introduced for the blind. Watermark of the main portrait image. Color shifting ink on the "1000" from green to blue. A widowed security thread with holographic lettering. Microlettering with "1000" or "Bank of Korea".



Back (Reverse)

1000 Won (old)

Front (Obverse)



Issue Date: June 1983

Size: 76 x 151 mm

Color: Purple

(F) Detail: A portrait of scholar Toegye (Lee Hwang).

(B) Detail: A panoramic view of Dosanseowon Academy.

Security: See-through register, braille recognition introduced for the blind. Watermark of the main portrait image.



Back (Reverse)

5000 Won

Front (Obverse)



Issue Date: January 2006

Size: 68 x 142 mm

Color: Pale Red

(F) Detail: A portrait of Scholar Yulgok (Lee I).

(B) Detail: "Insect and Plants" paintings by Sin Saimdang (Mother of Yulgok).

Security: See-through register. Braille dots for the blind. Three kinds of colored threads. A widowed security thread with hologram letters. Watermark of the main portrait image. Color shifting ink on the "5000" from gold to green. Microlettering with "5000" or "Bank of Korea".



Back (Reverse)

5000 Won (old)

Front (Obverse)



Issue Date: June 2002

Size: 76 x 156 mm

Color: Peach

(F) Detail: A portrait of Scholar Yulgok (Lee I).

(B) Detail: Ojukheon (Birthplace of Yulgok)

Security: See-through register. Braille dots for the blind. Three kinds of colored threads. A widowed security thread with hologram letters. Watermark of the main portrait image.



Back (Reverse)

10000 Won

Front (Obverse)



Issue Date: January 2007

Size: 68 x 148 mm

Color: Green

(F) Detail: A portrait of King Sejong the Great.

(B) Detail: A celestial globe (a celestial clock).

Security: See-through register. Braille dots for the blind. Three kinds of colored threads. A widowed security thread. Micro lettering. Latent image. Color-shifting ink. Watermark of the main portrait image. A hologram of a map of Korea and the number "10000". Color shifting ink on the "10000" from gold to green. Microlettering with "10000" or "Bank of Korea". The main images are intaglio printed.



Back (Reverse)

10000 Won (old)

Front (Obverse)



Issue Date: June 2000

Size: 76 x 161 mm

Color: Pale Green

(F) Detail: A portrait of King Sejong the Great and a Water Clock.

(B) Detail: Gyeonghoeru (Pavilion of Auspicious Gatherings, Gyeongbok Palace)

Security: See-through register. Braille dots for the blind. Three kinds of colored threads. A widowed security thread. Micro lettering. Latent image. Color-shifting ink. Watermark of the main portrait image.

Back (Reverse)



Coinage

Denominations: 1, 5, 10, 50, 100, 500 (Won)

Click on an image to enlarge

1 Won

Front (Obverse)



Back (Reverse)



Diameter: 17.2mm

Weight: 0.73g

Shape: Round

Edge: Plain

Material: Aluminum

(F) Detail: Rose of Sharon

(B) Detail: Year of minting and the coin's value.

5 Won

Front (Obverse)



Back (Reverse)

**Diameter:** 20.4mm**Weight:** 2.95g**Shape:** Round**Edge:** Plain**Material:** Copper-Zinc alloy**(F) Detail:** Turtle Ship**(B) Detail:** Year of minting and the coin's value.**10 Won**

Front (Obverse)



Back (Reverse)

**Diameter:** 18.0mm**Weight:** 1.22g**Shape:** Round**Edge:** Plain**Material:** Copper clad Aluminum**(F) Detail:** Dabotap Pagoda**(B) Detail:** Year of minting and the coin's value.**50 Won**

Front (Obverse)



Back (Reverse)

**Diameter:** 21.6mm**Weight:** 4.16g**Shape:** Round**Edge:** Milled**Material:** Copper_Zinc_Nickel alloy**(F) Detail:** Stalk of Rice**(B) Detail:** Year of minting and the coin's value.

100 Won

Front (Obverse)



Back (Reverse)

**Diameter:** 24.0mm**Weight:** 5.42g**Shape:** Round**Edge:** Milled**Material:** Copper-Nickel alloy**(F) Detail:** Admiral Yi Sun-Shin**(B) Detail:** Year of minting and the coin's value.**500 Won**

Front (Obverse)



Back (Reverse)

**Diameter:** 26.5mm**Weight:** 7.70g**Shape:** Round**Edge:** Milled**Material:** Copper-Nickel alloy**(F) Detail:** Crane**(B) Detail:** Year of minting and the coin's value.**Traveler's Checks, Credit Cards, and ATMs****Currency**

Foreign exchange banks and other licensed moneychangers are the best places to exchange foreign banknotes and traveler's checks. These are found in downtown Seoul, Itaewon, and at the international airports. Keep in mind that only hard hard currencies are exchangeable (i.e., U.S. dollars and Japanese Yen). Currency exchange for other Asian currencies will be a problem. Korean currency export is restricted to the declared amount on arrival.

The Shinhan Bank and Tour2Korea.com came together to issue the T2K Card, which both foreign travelers or residents can use. With the T2K Card, travelers can avail discounts on currency charges, accommodation, recreation performances, etc. The card is available at Shinhan Bank's currency exchange stall at Incheon International Airport.

ATMs

Korean-instructed ATMs that use domestic cards are found throughout South Korea. However, foreign cards will prove more difficult to use. Cash advances can be procured on an ATM if you have a major international credit card. Find an ATM with a "Global Service" sign and a Visa, Mastercard, or other credit card logo. Without the Global Service logo, you will not be able to use the machine without a local card. Debit-card holders should know that their cards will not work in Korean ATMs, although they may be able to use them for purchases if they area linked to a major credit card. Bank ATMs are generally accessible during working hours with instructions in Korean. Public ATMs are accessible 24 hours and can be found at convenience stores and subway stations.

If you bank with a large, international bank in your home country, transactions may be free if you use ATMs of that

same bank or its associated banks in other countries. Check with your bank before departure for ATM locations at the destination to which you plan to travel.

Traveler's Checks

Traveler's checks are accepted, but in smaller towns might prove difficult to change. Use checks in U.S. dollars in order to save on exchange rate charges.

Credit Cards

South Korea originally implemented credit cards to stem the tide of corruption in the 1990's. Credit cards introduced a way to track the underground economy, which had existed on untraceable cash transactions. Credit card companies have a strong presence in this nation, and among developed countries, South Korea stood at fifth place in credit card spending in 2006 according to the Bank of Korea. The commonly accepted cards are American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard, and Visa. They are usually accepted at major hotels and shops, many restaurants, and department stores. Large American retailers and franchises like McDonald's and Walmart also accept credit cards. The commonly accepted cards are American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard, and Visa. They are usually accepted at major hotels and shops, many restaurants, and department stores. Large American retailers and franchises like McDonald's and Walmart also accept credit cards.

Your credit card company translates foreign purchases into your own currency when the charges appear on your credit card statement. However, be aware that most credit card companies now charge a "foreign transaction fee" for converting foreign currency into U.S. dollars—sometimes up to 2% of each purchase transaction! This could add up quickly. Read the fine print of your card disclosure paperwork or call your credit card company to verify. For details regarding merchant acceptability and other available services, you must check with your credit or debit card company.

Travelers should also notify their credit card company when they travel out of the country. Cards and the requisite funds can suddenly be frozen without any notification if credit card security notices unusual activity and flags it as suspicious. In this case, your card will be declined if you attempt to use it, i.e., at the end of an otherwise successful business deal in a restaurant. If this does occur, notify your card company immediately, as it may take 24 hours to reinstate! Have other payment options on hand in case such an occasion does occur.

VAT / GST

VAT (Value Added Tax) and GST (Goods and Services Tax) are indirect government taxes placed on a product or service at each stage of production in certain countries. This tax does not apply to goods exported to other countries, including purchases made by foreign visitors if the goods are taken back to their own countries. It also excludes services used by foreign business people.

VAT refund is possible in all E.U. countries and specific others: Canada, Croatia, Japan, Norway, South Africa, South Korea, Switzerland, and Turkey.

For additional information, [click here](#).

American Express

Freedom Travel

11th Floor, No.88 Da-dong

Jung-gu

Seoul 100180

Tel: [82] (2) 3455-0027

Fax: [82] (2) 777-0079

Email: kimeunhae@freedom.co.kr

Hours: Monday to Friday 8:30a.m. to 9p.m., Saturday and Sunday 9a.m. to 6p.m.

Additional locations may be found on the AmEx website:

www.travel.americanexpress.com/travel/personal/resources/tso.

MasterCard/Maestro/Cirrus ATM Locations

Myeong-dong

7 Myeong-dong 1-GA

Jung-ku

Seoul

Shinhan Bank

775 Shindang-dong

Jung-ku
Seoul

Woori Bank

Hoehyondong 1-GA
Jung-ku
Seoul 203

For other MasterCard ATM locations, see their website at:

www.mastercard.com/us/personal/en/cardholderservices/atmlocations/index.html.

Visa ATM Locations**Kiup Bank**

50 Euljiro 2-GA
Jung-ku
Seoul 100-758

Koram Bank

205 Su-Yu-dong
Gangbuk-gu
Seoul 142-877

Seoul Bank

120 Namdaemunro 2 GA
Jung-ku
Seoul 100-095

For other Visa ATM locations, visit their website at: <http://visa.via.infonow.net/locator/global/>.

Lost or Stolen Cards and Checks

Always try to call toll-free, unless only a collect-call number is listed, or if you are unable to get through on the toll-free line. Reverse phone charges may be declined if a toll-free number is available to caller.

American Express Lost and Stolen Cards

Toll-free: 00368-440-0087

Diners Club

In the country: (02) 3015-9607

Out of the country: [82] (2) 3015-9607

MasterCard

Toll-free: 0079-811-887-0823

Visa Card

Toll-free: 00798-11-908-8212

Visa Traveler's Checks

Toll-free: 00308-442-0094

Money Wiring

Wire transfers and all sorts of other electronic international transactions are often most easily facilitated by the following two companies and others like them.

MoneyGram**Hanvit Bank**

Kangdongku Chonhodong
Seoul
Tel: [82] (2) 476-8131

Woori Bank

Myeongnyun dong 3 ga 53
Seoul 110-523
Tel: [82] (2) 766-5329

Gil dong 320 5
Seoul 134-010
Tel: [82] (2) 482-5556

Suyu Dong 191 1
Seoul 142-073
Tel: [82] (2) 902-8111

For other MoneyGram locations see their website at: www.moneygram.com.

Western Union

Industrial Bank of Korea

716-1 Sangkye-2dong
Nowon-gu
Nowon yeok Branch
Seoul 139-202
Tel: [82] (2) 939-3811

440 Yeongdeungpo-dong
4-Ga Yeongdeungpo
Yeongdeungpo Branch
Seoul 150-030
Tel: [82] (2) 678-0151

Kookmin Bank

17 2 Sogong dong
Jung-gu
Sogong dong Branch
Seoul 100-070
Tel: [82] (2) 7548-4436

166 2 Gaebong dong
Guro-gu
Gaebong dong Branch
Seoul 152-090
Tel: [82] (2) 261-121-425

For other Western Union locations, see their website: www.westernunion.com.

Banks

Seoul

Banca Intesa

6th Floor Dukheung Building
1328-10 Seocho-dong
Seocho-ku
Seoul 137-858
Tel: [82] (2) 3473-6412
Fax: [82] (2) 3473-6423
Web: www.bancaintesa.it
Email: banca@intesaseoul.co.kr

Bank of America NA and SA (Seoul Branch)

9/F Hanwha Building
No.1 Changkyo-dong
Jung-ku
Seoul 100-797
Tel: [82] (2) 2022-4500
Fax: [82] (2) 2022-4560

Web: www.bankamerica.com

Bank of New York (Seoul Branch)

Young Poong Building, 23rd Floor
33 Seolin-dong
Chongro-ku
Seoul 100-752
Tel: [82] (2) 399-0001
Fax: [82] (2) 399-0055
Web: www.bankofny.com

BNP Paribas

23rd and 24th Floor, Taepyeongno Building
310 Taepyeongno 2-ga
Jung-ku
Seoul 100-767
Tel: [82] (2) 317-1700
Fax: [82] (2) 757-2530
Web: www.bnpparibas.co.kr
Email: bnppseoul@asia.bnpparibas.com

Citibank, N.A. (Seoul Branch)

1F Trade Center
159-6 Samseong-dong
Gangnam-gu
Seoul
Tel: [82] (2) 551-6300
Web: www.citibank.co.kr

2F Daerung Post Tower
212-8 Guro-dong
Guro-gu
Seoul
Tel: [82] (2) 855-2700
Web: www.citibank.co.kr

Hana Bank

101-1 Euljiro 1-ga Jung-ku
Seoul 100-191
Tel: [82] (2) 2002-1662
Fax: [82] (2) 2002-1441
Web: www.hanabank.co.kr
Email: hanair@hanabank.com

Industrial and Commercial Bank of China

17th Floor, Taepyeongno Building
310 Taepyeongno 2-Ga
Jung-ku
Seoul 100-767
Tel: [82] (2) 3788-6688
Fax: [82] (2) 7563-127
Web: www.icbc.com.cn
Email: general@kr.icbc.com.cn

ING Bank NV

15th Floor Hungkuk Life Insurance Building
226 Shinmunro 1-ga
Chongro-ku
Seoul 110-061
Tel: [82] (2) 317-1500

Fax: [82] (2) 317-1883

Web: www.ing.com

Kookmin Bank

9-1 Namdaemun-Ro

2-ga

Jung-Gu

Seoul 100-703

Tel: [82] (2) 2703-7114

Web: www.kookmin.co.kr

Korea Development Bank

16-3 Yoido-dong

Youngdeungpo-ku

Seoul 150-973

Tel: [82] (2) 787-4000

Fax: [82] (2) 787-6496

Web: www.kdb.co.kr

Email: kdb.ir@kdb.co.kr

Korea Exchange Bank

181 Ulchiro 2-ka

Jung-ku

Seoul 100-793

Tel: [82] (2) 729-8000

Web: www.keb.co.kr

Kwangju Bank Ltd.

7-12 Daein-dong

Dong-gu

Gwangju

Seoul 501-719

Tel: [82] (2) 767-3462

Fax: [82] (2) 780-4662

Web: www.kjbank.com

Email: kjb@kjbank.com

National Australia Bank Ltd., Seoul Branch

16th Floor, Korea Deposit Insurance Building

33 Da-dong

Jung-ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 3705-4600

Fax: [82] (2) 3705-4601

web: www.nabasia.com/seoul

Shinhan Bank

120 Taepyeongro 2-ka

Jung-ku

Seoul 100-865

Tel: [82] (2) 1544-8000

Fax: [82] (2) 774-7013

Web: www.shinhanbank.com

Société Générale

10th Floor, Sean Building

116 1-Ka Shinmun-ro

Chongro-Ku

Seoul 110-700

Tel: [82] (2) 2195-7777

Fax: [82] (2) 2195-7700

Web: www.sgcib.com

Standard Chartered Bank (korea first bank)

100 Kongpyung-dong

Chongro-gu

Seoul 100 702

Tel: [82] (2) 750-6114

Fax: [82] (2) 3702-4933

Web: www.scfirstbank.com

UBAF Seoul

Ace Tower, 3rd Floor

Soonhwa-Dong

Jung-Ku

Seoul 1-170

Tel: [82] (2) 3455-5300

Fax: [82] (2) 3455-5353

Web: www.ubaf.fr

Email: UBAF_seoul@ubaf.fr

Union Bank of California, N.A. (Seoul Branch)

12th Floor, Kyobo Life Building

1.Chongro I ka

Chongro-ku

Seoul 110-714

Tel: [82] (2) 721-1830

Fax: [82] (2) 732-9526

Web: www.uboc.com

Wachovia Bank NA

10th Floor, Samwha Building

21 Sogong-Dong

Jung-ku

Seoul 100-070

Tel: [82] (2) 3706-3100

Fax: [82] (2) 3706-3141

web: www.wachovia.com

Woori Bank

203 Hoehyondong 1-ka

Jung-Ku

Seoul 100-792

Tel: [82] (2)2002-3000

Fax: [82] (2)2002-5686

Web: www.wooribank.com

Travel Essentials

Visa and Passport

Passport¹	Yes
Visa²	Yes/No
Return Ticket³	Yes
Restrictions	No

¹Passport

A passport that is valid for six months beyond date of travel is required by all travelers.

²Visas

Types of visas:

Tourist, business

*Length of stay: Three months, at the discretion of Korean Immigration

1. Tourist Visa

Required for:

- Nationals of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Cuba, Georgia, Ghana, India, Iran, Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Laos, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, People's Republic of China, Philippines, Russia, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

Not required for:

- (Stays up to three months)**
Nationals of Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Colombia, Commonwealth of Dominica, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Spain, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Surinam, Switzerland, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, United Kingdom, Vietnam
- (Stays up to 90 days)**
Chile, Cyprus, Egypt, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia,
- (Stays up to two months)**
Nationals of Italy, Lesotho, Portugal
- (Stays up to 30 days)**
Nationals of the United States

Note: In general, travelers not listed under a specific length of stay (above) are allowed into the Republic of (South) Korea for tourist stays up to 30 days.

For further information contact:

Embassy of the Republic of Korea in the United States: www.koreaemb.org

Immigration, Ministry of Justice, Republic of Korea: www.moj.go.kr

Duration: Three months, at the discretion of Korean Immigration

Required documents: (Dependent on nationality) In general, a valid passport, 1 completed application form, 1 passport photo, proof of sufficient funds, return ticket or onward travel documents, plus a fee. For further information regarding passport and visa requirements, check with your consulate or embassy in the Republic of Korea or the consulate or Embassy of the Republic of Korea in your country.

Embassy of the Republic of Korea in the United States: www.koreaemb.org

Immigration, Ministry of Justice, Republic of Korea: www.moj.go.kr

2. Business visa

Required for:

Anyone entering and remaining in the country for business purposes.

Duration: Three months, at the discretion of Korean Immigration

Required documents: (Dependent on nationality) In general, a valid passport, 1 completed application form, 1 passport photo, proof of sufficient funds, return ticket or onward travel documents, letter of invitation from Korean host detailing the reason for visit, plus a fee. For further information regarding passport and visa requirements, check with your consulate or embassy in the Republic of Korea or the consulate or Embassy of the Republic of Korea in your country.

Embassy of the Republic of Korea in the United States: www.koreaemb.org

Immigration, Ministry of Justice, Republic of Korea: www.moj.go.kr

Return Ticket

A return ticket or proof of onward travel is required for entry into the Republic of (South) Korea.

Note: Cost for specific visas varies according to nationality, type of visa, and length of stay. For further information regarding passport and visa requirements or the possibility of other types of visas, check with your consulate or embassy in the Republic of Korea or the consulate or Embassy of the Republic of Korea in your country.

Embassy of the Republic of Korea in the United States: www.koreaemb.org

Immigration, Ministry of Justice, Republic of Korea: www.moj.go.kr

Immunization**Vaccinations required**

None

Vaccinations suggested

Hepatitis A and B, typhoid, tetanus-diphtheria, measles, chickenpox

Customs Entry (Personal)**Customs Offices**

Seoul [82] (2) 3438-1666 (Korean)

Kimpo Airport [82] (2) 665-3100 (Korean)

Kuro (Seoul) [82] (2) 856-3100

Duty Free

- **Tobacco:**
200 cigarettes, 50 cigars, or 250 g pipe tobacco (total quantity not exceeding 500 g)
- **Alcohol:**
1 liter bottle of alcohol
- **Perfume:**
2 oz of perfume
- **Other:**
Gifts up to ₩300,000

Prohibited or Restricted**Prohibited**

- Any printed material, films, tapes or phonograph records considered by the authorities to be subversive or harmful to national security or public interests
- Any firearms, explosives, or other weapons
- Radio equipment and any animals or plants prohibited by the relevant regulations

Departure Formalities

Foreign currency exceeding the equivalent of ₩6 million (US\$5,000) will be confiscated upon exit unless pre-registered. Duties will have to be paid on items such as jewelry and camera equipment unless a full declaration is made upon entry to Korea. Receipts are necessary to reconvert won back to your local currency in amounts exceeding US\$500.

Tipping

Tipping is not common in Korea. Restaurants and hotels add service charges to their bills, but small tips are appropriate for porters, taxi drivers who help with baggage, and guides who are especially helpful. Otherwise, a sincere thank you will do.

Emergency Information

Police and Crime

Crime is low in South Korea, but petty crime exists. Avoid flashy displays of wealth, and dress and behave conservatively. Leave most of your cash, traveler's checks, jewelry, and other valuables in your hotel safe. Carry photocopies of your passport instead of the original. Carry cash in a money belt, and use credit cards or traveler's checks for most transactions.

Women can walk around in relative safety, but they should be aware of their surroundings at all times. There are police stations literally on every street, and the police are extremely helpful but language skills are limited.

Emergency Numbers

Police	112
Fire	119
Ambulance	119
Korean National Police	(2) 313-0842
Korean Local Time	116 (ARS in Korean)
Local Information	114
Long-Distance Information	(Area Code) +114
Lost and Found	(2) 2299-1282 Fax: (2) 2298-1282
Operator (English speaking)	0077
Overseas Information	00794
Overseas Operator	00799
Telegram Service	00795
Tourist Complaint Center	(2) 735-0101
Tourist Information	1330
World Standard Time	042 + 116 (ARS in Korean)
Weather Forecast	131 (ARS in Korean)
U.S. Embassy (Seoul)	From within Seoul: 397-4114 From elsewhere in South Korea: 0-2-397-4114 From outside South Korea: [82] (2) 397-4114

Seoul: City View

Ancient yet strikingly modern, Seoul is both the capital and the heart of Korea. Sealed to foreign visitors for most of its history and devastated by the Korean War, a new modern city has grown from the rubble, one of the largest metropolises in the world.

Seoul served as the capital of a united Korea from 1394 until the formal division of the country in 1948. Formerly called Hansong and Kyongsong, the word "Seoul" itself has come to mean "capital" in the Korean language. Seoul lies in northwestern Korea on the Han River, 60 km (37 miles) from the Yellow Sea. Set in the lowland of a topographic basin surrounded by low pine-covered hills, beauty surrounds Seoul at every turn.

Seoul's population, grown sharply since 1950, now stands at over 12 million in a country of 45 million people. Now ranked as the fifth largest city in the world, Seoul has one of the highest population densities in the world. The capital has four distinct seasons: Spring (March to June) and autumn (September to November) are both pleasant but short. Summers (July and August) can be hot and humid, with the rainy season running from late June to late July. Winters are not too severe, although the city is dusted with regular snowfall.

Tourist attractions include several ancient **Royal Palaces**, the **Chongmyo Royal Shrine**, the **National Museum of Korea**, the **Chongye Temple**, the **Seoul Metropolitan Museum of Art**, and the amusement parks **Seoul Dream Land** and **Lotte World**. For shopping try **Tongdaemun** or **Namdaemun Market**.

Seoul's industries include textiles, machinery and chemical manufacture, food and beverage processing, plus printing and publishing. Several stock markets and banks have their headquarters here, and the city hosts many annual trade shows.

In spite of the city's antiquity, Seoul has good roads, but the sheer volume of traffic makes congestion the norm. Excellent public transportation systems help ease the crush. Air pollution has become a serious problem, although treatment plants have cleaned up the Han River. Housing has been a chronic problem, although Seoul's once-famous slums, home to a third of the city's population, have shrunk to less than a tenth of the city's populace.

Seoul manages to hold onto a sense of its illustrious past as it becomes an economic and political giant in Asia. An uncertain economy, and the future of relations between North and South Korea, seem to be the only clouds in the sky.

Seoul: Hotels

Top-end

Grand InterContinental Seoul

159-8 Samsung-dong

Gangnam-gu

Seoul 135-650

Tel: [82] (2) 555-5656

Fax: [82] (2) 559-7990

Web: www.seoul.interconti.com

Email: seoul@interconti.com

541 rooms, 273 suites; city center; restaurants; bars; conference facilities (up to 1,800); business center, secretarial service; in-room modem connection, cable TV, minibar, coffeemaker, safe deposit, bathroom amenities; 24-hour room service; laundry/valet; beauty salon; shops; car rental; parking; fitness; sauna; massage.

Grand Hilton Seoul

200-1 Hongsun-dong Suhdaemoon-ku

Seoul

Tel: [81] (2) 3216-5656

Fax: [81] (2) 3216-7799

Web: www.hilton.com

396 rooms and suites, 107 apartments; located on summit of Lotus Hill; nine restaurants, bars; convention center (up to 2500); business center; in-room air conditioning, direct-dial phone, satellite TV, VCR, radio, minibar; 24-hour room service; courtesy shuttle; health club; fitness; aerobics; indoor pool; sun deck; car rental; parking.

Grand Hyatt Seoul

747-7 Hannam dong, Yongsan-gu

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 797-1234

Fax: [82] (2) 798-6953

Web: www.hyatt.com

Email: buzctr@grandhyattseoul.com

520 rooms, 49 suites; restaurants; bars; conference facilities; business center, secretarial service; in-room safe, minibar, modem connection, cable TV; 24-hour room service; beauty salon; parking; fitness; sauna; massage; pool; whirlpool; tennis.

Hotel Lotte

1 Sogong-dong, Chung-ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 771-1000

Fax: [82] (2) 777-1057

Web: hotel.lotte.co.kr

Email: hotelprd@hotel.lotte.co.kr

1,486 rooms; city center; 17 restaurants; bars; conference facilities (up to 1,500); banquet halls (up to 1,500); business center, secretarial service, cellular phone rental, fax/copier/typewriter rentals; meeting rooms; in-room safe, minibar, cable TV, hairdryer; 24-hour room service; laundry/valet; beauty salon; shops; car rental; airport transfer; parking; fitness; sauna; massage; pool; whirlpool; tennis; golf; executive floor.

JW Marriott

19-3 Banpo-dong

Seougho-gu, Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 6282-6262

Fax: [82] (2) 6282-6263

Web: www.marriott.com

497 rooms and suites; largest guest rooms in Seoul; restaurants; coffee shop; cocktail lounge; business center; secretarial service; meeting rooms; in-room work desk, 2-line phone, speaker phone, data port, satellite/cable TV, movies, weekday newspaper, minibar, hairdryer, trouser press, bathrobe, safe; 24-hour room service; laundry valet; hair salon/barber; concierge; gift shop; newsstand; express check-in/out; car rental; free parking; health club; full spa; sauna; solarium; indoor pool; whirlpool; squash; jogging.

Millennium Seoul Hilton

395, 5-ga, Namdaemun-ro

Chung-gu, Seoul KR 100-676

Tel: [82] (2) 317-3114

Fax: [82] (2) 754-2510

Web: www.hilton.co.kr

684 rooms and suites; six restaurants; bars; meeting rooms; business center; secretarial service; office rental; in-room voicemail, three phones, minibar, temperature control, hairdryer, daily newspaper, pay movies on demand, message service, bathrobe, slippers; room service; laundry service; baggage storage; barber shop/beauty salon; clothing store; concierge; elevators; florist; currency exchange; furrier; gift shop; safe boxes; tour desk; shoe shine; car rental; pool table; disco.

Radisson Seoul Plaza

2ka-23, Taipyung-ro

Chung-ku, Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 771-2200

Fax: [82] (2) 755-8897

Web: www.seoulplaza.co.kr

490 rooms; restaurants; bar; banquet/conference facilities (up to 1000); in-room view, electronic safe box, voicemail, dual-line phone, fax machine, modem/Internet port, on-demand movies, cable/satellite TV, humidifier, personal safe, hairdryer, flashlight, complimentary tea service, complimentary bottle of water, bathroom amenities, bathrobe; non-smoking rooms available; fitness club; aerobic studio; saunas; health clinic; pool; indoor golf exercise club.

Renaissance Seoul

676 Yoksam-dong, Kangnam-ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 555-0501, 556-0601

Fax: [82] (2) 553-8118

Web: www.renaissance-seoul.com

Email: reservations@renaissance-seoul.com

495 rooms; city center near exhibition grounds; restaurants; bars; conference facilities (up to 1,200); business center, secretarial service; in-room safe, modem connection, cable TV, hairdryer; 24-hour room service; laundry/valet; beauty salon; shops; parking; fitness; sauna; pool; whirlpool.

Ritz Carlton Seoul

602 Yeoksam-dong

Kangnam-ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 3451-8000

Fax: [82] (2) 3451-8282

Web: www.ritz.co.kr

Email: info@ritz.co.kr

410 rooms; central Seoul; nine restaurants, bars; banquet facilities; business center (24 hours on weekdays); technical butler (24 hours); in-room Internet service, views, minibar, safe, bathrobes, hairdryer, on-demand movies; barber shop; beauty salon; fitness club; men and women's spa; indoor pool; outdoor sun deck; indoor golf driving range; outdoor track.

Sheraton Walker Hill

San 21, Kwangjang-dong, Kwangjin-ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 453-0121

Fax: [82] (2) 452-6867

Web: www.sheraton.com

Email: hotel@walkerhill.co.kr

623 rooms; city suburb; 9 restaurants; bars; casino; conference facilities (up to 3,170); business center; secretarial service; in-room modem connection, safe deposit, hairdryer, iron/ironing board, coffeemaker; 24-hour room service; laundry/valet; beauty salon; florist; shops; car rental; parking; fitness; sauna; massage; pool; whirlpool; tennis.

Shilla Hotel

202 2-Ga Jangchung-dong, Chung-ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 2233-3131

Fax: [82] (2) 2233-5073

Web: www.shilla.net

Email: reserve@shilla.net

505 rooms; city center; six restaurants; bars; conference facilities; business center, meeting rooms, laptop access, cell phones, slide projector rentals, secretarial service, high-speed ISDN and high definition PDP, video conferencing; in-room safe, minibar, hairdryer, cable TV, wireless Internet, IDD phone, two bottles mineral water daily; 24-hour room service; daily laundry service; non-smoking rooms available; shoeshine; beauty salon; shops; parking; fitness; sauna; massage; pool; whirlpool; tennis; 23 acres of land.

Westin Chosun Seoul

87, Sokong-dong

Chung-ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 771-0500

Fax: [82] (2) 752-1443

Web: www.starwood.com or www.westinchosun.co.kr

456 rooms and suites; eight restaurants; bars; seven conference/banquet facilities (up to 800); business center; secretarial and translation service; cellular phone rental; computer rental; in-room Heavenly beds, high-speed Internet access, voicemail, daily newspaper, work desk, minibar, coffee/tea maker, safe deposit, air conditioning, climate control, IDD phone, data port, movies, cable/satellite TV, VCR, radio/alarm clock, hairdryer, bathrobes, slippers; 24-hour room service; laundry/dry cleaning; valet service; luggage storage; hairdresser; barber; 24-security; doorman; smoke detector; florist; sundry shop; heliport; express check-in/out; car rental; free downtown shuttle service; City Athletic Club; sauna; in-room massage treatments; indoor pool.

Expensive**Amiga**

248-7 Non Hyn-dong, Kang Nam-gu

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 344-0800

Fax: [82] (2) 344-0825

Web: www.amiga.co.kr/english/inde-e.htm

City center; European boutique hotel; restaurant; conference facilities (up to 400); business center; secretarial service; in-room modem connection, minibar, safe deposit, cable TV; 24-hour room service; laundry; beauty salon; parking; fitness; sauna; massage; pool; whirlpool.

Holiday Inn Seoul

169-1 Dohwa-dong, Mapo-gu

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 717-9441

Fax: [82] (2) 715-9441

Web: www.holiday-inn.co.kr/en

Email: info@holiday-inn.co.kr

362 rooms, 6 suites; city center; four restaurants; bars; business center; in-room modem connection, cable TV, minibar, hairdryer; 24-hour room service; laundry; beauty salon; florist; shops; currency exchange; airport transfer; parking; fitness; sauna; massage; pool; whirlpool; badminton.

Hotel Ellelui

129 Jongdam-dong

Gangnam-gu

Seoul 135-100

Tel: [82] (2) 514-3535

Fax: [82] (2) 548-2500

Web: www.ellelui.co.kr

124 rooms; view of Hangong River; restaurant; bar; nightclub; banquet/conference halls (up to 400); business center, fax/copy service, Internet access, email, secretarial services; in-room cable/satellite TV, pay-per-view, high speed Internet access, message service, morning newspaper, daily laundry service; luxury suite includes whirlpool bathtub; Ondol suite available; noon-smoking rooms; fitness club; swimming pool; sauna; wedding reception hall; tailor; parking.

Hotel Sejong

61-3, 2ka, Choongmu-ro, Chung-ku

Seoul, Korea 100-012

Tel: [82] (2) 773-6000

Fax: [82] (2) 755-4906

Web: www.sejong.co.kr

250 rooms; city center view of Myong-dong Street; restaurants; coffee shop; pastry shop; bar; banquet facilities (up to 430); computer terminal; in-room voice message system, tea service; room service; laundry service; fitness;

sauna.

Koreana Hotel

61, 1-Ka Taepyung-Ro, Chung-ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 730-9911 to 20, 730-8611

Fax: [82] 734-0665

Web: www.koreanahotel.com

345 rooms and suites; center of Seoul at the Kwanghwamun Intersection; four restaurants; bar; coffee shop; banquet halls; business center, secretarial service, fax, copy machines, computers, Internet access; postal service; morning newspaper; in-room view, air conditioning, temperature control, direct-dial phone, minibar, refrigerator, TV, movie system; room service; laundry/valet service; tailor; barber shop; shopping arcade; fitness; sauna.

Novotel Seoul Ambassador

603, Yoksam-dong, Kangnam-gu

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 567-1101

Fax: [82] (2) 564-4573

Web: www.novotel.com

338 rooms; city center; four restaurants; lobby lounge; pub; conference facilities (up to 600); 24-hour business center, secretarial and translation services; in-room air conditioning, IDD telephone, cable TV, high-speed wireless LAN, Internet access; executive floors; parking; fitness; aerobics studio; indoor pool; tennis; indoor/outdoor golf driving range; jogging track.

Royal Hotel

6 Myung Dong 1-ga

Jung-gu

Seoul 100-021

Tel: [82] (2) 771-4500

Fax: [82] (2) 756-1119

Web: www.royal.co.kr

Email: info@seoulroyal.co.kr

310 rooms; heart of fashion district; restaurant; bar; nightclub; banquet halls; business center, PCs, printer, fax, copier, printing, interpreter, wireless LAN and notebook rental; wireless Internet; in-room minibar, wireless Internet, TV, voicemail, IDD telephones, air conditioning, radio, slippers, sewing kit, shoe shine kit, shoe horn, cloth brush, heater, flashlight, bathtub, telephone in bathroom, hairdryer, toiletry kit (soap, after shave, lotion, facial tissue, shower cap, clothes line, towels, cotton swabs, and sanitary bags); accupressure; buffet; shopping center; sauna; fitness club; breakfast included in price.

Seoul Palace

63-1 Panpo-dong, Socho-gu

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 532-0101

Fax: [82] (2) 532-0399

Web: www.seoulpalace.co.kr

2283 rooms; city center, Kangnam area; restaurant; bar; conference facilities (up to 500); business center, fax, PC, DHL service; in-room hairdryer, tea maker, minibar, cable TV; room service; parking; fitness; sauna; massage; pool; whirlpool; indoor golf course.

Sofitel Ambassador

186-54, 2-Ka Changchung-dong, Chung-ku

Seoul 100-855

Tel: [82] (2) 2257-1101

Fax: [82] (2) 2272-0773

Web: www.ambatel.com/sofitel/english/

Email: sofitel@ambatel.com

450 rooms; city center; 5 restaurants; bars; conference facilities (up to 1,500); business center; secretarial service; in-room minibar, hairdryer, safe deposit; 24-hour room service; parking; fitness; sauna; massage; pool; golf.

Tower Hotel

5-5, San 2-ga, Jangchoong-dong, Chung-gu

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 2236-2121

Fax: [82] (2) 2235-0276

Web: www.towerhotel.co.kr

170 rooms, 31 suites; city center; restaurant; coffee shop; bar; conference facilities (up to 600); business center; secretarial service; in-room safe deposit, minibar, cable TV; 24-hour room service; parking; fitness; sauna; pool; golf driving range; tennis.

Moderate

Green Grass Hotel

141-10 Sam Sung-dong

Kangnam-gu, Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 555-7575

Fax: [82] (2) 554-0643

Web: www.greengrasshotel.com

Near Solleung subway station and Teheran Road; Japanese restaurant; nightclub; coffee shop; banquet hall; in room television, telephone, bathroom amenities; Ondol rooms available.

Holiday Inn

Seongbuk

3-1343 Jongam-Dong

Seongbuk-ku 136-090

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 929-2000

Fax: [82] (2) 929-0204

Web: www.ichotelsgroup.com/h/d/hi/1/en/hd/seosb?irs=null

Email: info@holiday.co.kr

128 rooms; 5 suites; 32 non-smoking rooms; central Seoul; conference facilities, business center; ATM; secretarial services; courier service; mobile phone rental; printer; private limousine; FAX machines; bureau de change; room service; in-room internet access, TV, telephone; childcare; fitness center; nearby golf, shopping, tennis.

Samjung Tourist Hotel

#604-11, Yueksam-Dong

Kangnam-ku, Seoul 135-080

Tel: [82] (2) 557-1221

Fax: [82] (2) 556-1126

www.samjunghotel.co.kr

Email: info@samjunghotel.co.kr

City center; restaurants; bar; banquet hall, Internet access; in-room amenities.

Savoy Hotel

23-1 Jungmuro 1-ga

Jung-gu Seoul 100-011

Tel: [82] (2) 776-2641

Fax: [82] (2) 755-7669

Web: www.savoy.co.kr

Email: savoy@savoy.co.kr

100 rooms; downtown Seoul; restaurant; bar; Korean-style rooms with Ondol (heated floors) as well as Western-style rooms available; in-room television, telephone, air conditioning; car rental.

Youngdong Tourist Hotel

6, Nonhyeon-Dong

Kang Nam-Gu

Seoul 135-010

Tel: [82] (2) 542-0112

Fax: [82] (2) 546-8409

Web: www.youngdonghotel.co.kr

Email: master@youngdonghotel.co.kr

131 rooms; near Itaewon shopping area; restaurant; coffee/tea house; nightclub; cabaret; karaoke bar; two banquet halls (up to 100); in-room data port, fax, printer, CATV movie, telephone, hairdryer, complimentary mineral water, tea set, bathroom amenities; Ondol rooms available; sauna; massage.

Other Accommodations

Human Touch Ville

606-18, Yeoksam-dong,

Kangnam-gu, Seoul, Korea 135-080

Tel: [82] (2) 552-3921

Web: www.humantouch.co.kr

Large-scale deluxe serviced studios apartments exclusively for foreigners in the heart of the city near the business

district. The apartments are furnished with Internet access, telephones, and televisions.

Yeogwons

A Korean-style inn (Yeogwon) provides friendly hospitality to many budget-conscious Korean businessmen as well as to travelers. A typical Yeogwon provides a private bathroom, TV, a Korean mattress (yo), a Korean quilt (ibul), a hard pillow filled with wheat husks (byeogae), and Korea's unique under-floor heating system (Ondol) for the cold Korean winters. Room rates range around US\$20 to 30 dollars. Reservations are not normally required, however, guests must pay for their room upon check-in.

*For a list of recommended Yeogwons, please click the following site: www.tournetkorea.com/sub04/c1.htm

Seoul: Restaurants

Note: Use country code [82] when dialing from outside South Korea.

Ariake \$\$\$

Japanese

Hotel Shilla, 202

2-Ga Jangchung-dong, Chung-ku

Tel: (2) 2230-3356

Ban Jul \$\$

American

12-16 Kwancholdong, Chongrogu

Tel: (2) 735-5437

Bear House \$\$\$\$

American

San 5-1 Songbukdong, Songbukgu

Tel: (2) 762-1448

Benkay \$\$\$\$

Japanese

Hotel Lotte, basement

1 Sokongdong, Chunggu

Tel: (2) 771-1000

Cafe Gardenia \$\$

Local cuisine

Hotel Lotte, 2nd floor

1 Sokongdong, Chunggu

Tel: (2) 771-1000

Cafe Suisse \$\$

Swiss/international

Lower lobby Swiss Grand Hotel

201-1 Hongeun-dong, Suhdaimmon-gu

Tel: (2) 2287-8270

Chonju-Chib \$

Local cuisine

12-2 Bukchangdong, Chunggu

Tel: (2) 752-9282

Daewongak \$\$\$

Local cuisine

323 Songbukdong, Songbukgu

Tel: (2) 766-4010

Da-Rae \$\$\$\$

Seafood

13-3 Chamwondong, Seocho-gu

Tel: (2) 544-7777

Grand Havana

French/Asian

2-6 Chungdam-dong, Kangnam-gu

Tel: (2) 514-0271

Hard Rock Cafe \$\$

American

91-2 Chungdam-dong, Kangnam-gu

Tel: (2) 547-5671

Kamjabawoo \$\$

Vegetarian

623 Shinsadong, Kangnam-gu

Tel: (2) 549-4331

Ka Ya Rang \$\$\$

Korean

239-4 Itaewondong, Yongsangu

Tel: (2) 797-4000

Korea Foundation \$

Local cuisine

526 Namdaemunno 5-ga, Chunggu

Tel: (2) 753-3463

Koryo Samgyetang \$

Local cuisine

55-3 Sosomundong, Chunggu

Tel: (2) 752-9376

L'Abri \$\$\$

French

Kyobo Building, 2nd floor

1 Chongro 1-ga, Chongrogu

Tel: (2) 739-8830

La Continentale \$\$\$

French

Hotel Shilla, 202

2-Ga Jangchung-dong, Chung-ku

La Seine

European Buffet

Lotte Hotel, 37th floor

Tel: (2) 771-1000, ext. 5142

Moghul \$\$

Indian

116-2 Itaewondong, Yongsangu

Tel: (2) 796-5501

Nae Sa Rang \$

Steak and hamburgers

Seodaemun-gu

Tel: (2) 362-0640 or 362-0642

Nak San Garden \$\$

Local cuisine

1-36 Tongsungdong, Chongrogu

Tel: (2) 742-7470

Namhae Nakji \$\$

Seafood

660-18 Shinsadong, Kangnam-gu

Tel: (2) 548-1503

Paris Grill

European

Basement Grand Hyatt Hotel

747-7 Hannam-dong, Yongsan-gu

Rose Garden \$\$\$

Italian

13 Jungangro, Bangbaebomdong, Seochogu

Tel: (2) 537-1101

Sanchon \$\$

Local cuisine

2-2 Kwanhundong, Chongrogu

Tel: (2) 735-1900, 735-0312

Sansu \$\$\$

Chinese

Grand Hyatt Hotel, basement

747-7 Hannamdong, Yongsangu

Tel: (2) 798-0061

Sok Ran \$\$\$

Local cuisine

50-5 Daeshindon, Seodaemungu

Tel: (2) 793-4690

Sukchonho \$\$

Local cuisine

28 Bangidong, Songpagu

Tel: (2) 422-6050 or 414-6329

Thai Orchid

Thai

737-24 Hannam-dong, Yongsan-gu, 3rd Floor

Tel: (2) 792-8836

Wood and Brick

Italian

6, Shinmunro 1-ga, Ghongno-gu

Tel: (2) 735-1160

Yongbin Garden \$

Local cuisine

50 Kwanhundong, Chongrogu

Tel: (2) 720-8970

Social Unrest and Cultural Conflicts

Since the division between North and South Korea in 1953, South Korea has developed into one of Asia's most affluent countries. It has resisted international calls for sanctions against the North, and since the late 1990s has pursued a "sunshine" policy towards North Korea. This has involved food aid, shipments of fertilizer, reunions between North and South Koreans, tourist projects, and economic cooperation. In addition, South Korean companies employ thousands of North Korean workers at the Kaesong industrial complex, near the border.

Memories of the years of Japan's brutal 1910-1945 colonization of Korea still rankle. In 2005, furious protests erupted when Japan claimed sovereignty over a cluster of disputed islands. Protesters sliced off fingers, set themselves on fire, and in one case committed suicide.

Several demonstrations occurred in the first half of 2004, with participants protesting either for or against labor accords, the impeachment of the Korean President, and the war in Iraq. The majority of these demonstrations were not violent in nature. Although the Republic of Korea is generally safe, foreigners should exercise caution and avoid areas in which demonstrations are being held.

Health and Medical

Health Notes

General Conditions

Medical services are government controlled and good; doctors are well trained, and many speak English. Costs are reasonable, pharmacies are plentiful, and all necessary drugs can be found at a low cost. Most illnesses are preventable either through vaccination, or by taking the necessary precautions against infection. All travelers should visit either a travel health clinic or their personal physician four to eight weeks before departure for regular vaccinations and any specific medications needed for travel.

Vaccinations

Required: none

Suggested: hepatitis A and B, typhoid, tetanus-diphtheria, measles, chickenpox

Immediate Concerns

- **Health risks**

Travelers' diarrhea and exposure to: Japanese encephalitis, HIV, rabies, vibrio vulnificus (acquired by eating raw fish or shellfish; also through cuts in the skin), Enterovirus 71 (hand, foot and mouth disease), hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome, tick-borne encephalitis, leptospirosis, brucellosis, Scrub typhus, murine typhus (rare), paragonimiasis (lung fluke), clonorchiasis (Oriental liver fluke), diphyllbothriasis (fish tapeworm)

- **Food and Water**

Do not drink the tap water or use ice unless staying at a top hotel. Bottled water is readily available. Unless water is boiled and chemically treated, it is not safe to drink. Avoid dining at street stalls or eating fruits and vegetables unless they are peeled or precooked. Dairy products vary widely in quality and should be avoided when possible. Do not eat uncooked fish, as it may contain poisonous bio-toxins and/or parasites.

- **Insects**

Ticks, fleas, and mosquitoes pose the greatest risk of insect-borne disease transmission.

Medical Precautions

It is prudent for travelers to pack a personal medical kit complete with necessary medications, including syringes, and a physician's letter documenting their medical usage. This kit should include extra pairs of contact lenses and glasses, as well as any specific medications for travelers' diarrhea, allergies, motion sickness, or other over-the-counter medication, as supplies are often limited and expensive.

Insect repellents are also recommended, in conjunction with other measures to prevent insect bites, such as protective clothing, bed-netting, and DEET-based repellent. For additional protection, apply permethrin-containing compounds to clothing, shoes, and bed nets. Avoid contact with stray animals, especially farm animals. If bitten, clean wound thoroughly with soap and water, and seek medical attention immediately.

HIV/AIDS is present. Use condoms for all sexual encounters, and avoid blood transfusions or injections.

Women's Health Issues

Women should pack a personal medical kit to cover a broad range of personal health requirements, including birth control pills and specific medications. Note that differences in climate can cause changes in a woman's pH balance. If prone to bacterial infections, women should pack any necessary supplies to counteract this problem. Women should consider taking extra vitamin, mineral, and food supplements to ensure optimum physical health. See [Women's Health Issues](#).

Medical Care

Seoul

Hospitals and Clinics

Arrhythmia Clinic

28 Yongon-dong, Chongno-ku
SNUH Department of Cardiology
Seoul 110 744

Tel: [82] (2) 760 2224

Email: yunschoi@snu.ac.kr

Asan Medical Center

388-1 Poongnap-dong, Songpa-ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 2224 5001

Tel: [82] (2) 2224 3333 (Emergency after 5:30p.m.)

Fax: [82] (2) 2224 5004

Web: www.amc.seoul.kr

Cha Medical Hospital

650-9 Yoksam-dong, Kangnam-ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 3468 3000

Fax: [82] (2) 2558 1119

Web: www.chamedical.com

Hanyang University Medical Center

17 Haengdang-dong, Songdong-ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 2290 8114

Fax: [82] (2) 2290 9192

Kangnum St. Mary's Hospital

The Catholic University of Korea

505 Banpo-dong, Seocho-ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 590 1114

Fax: [82] (2) 590 2198

Web: www.kangnamcmc.com

Email: kangnam@cmc.cuk.ac.kr

Monday to Friday from 8:30a.m. to 12p.m. and 12:30p.m. to 4p.m., Saturday from 8:30a.m. to 12p.m.

Samsung Seoul Hospital

50 Ilwon-dong

Kangnam-ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 3410 2114

Tel: [82] (2) 3410 2061 (Emergency)

Tel: [82] (2) 3410 2063 (Emergency)

Tel: [82] (2) 3410 0200 (International Clinic)

Fax: [82] (2) 3410 3284

Fax: [82] (2) 3410 0229

Web: www.samsunghospital.com

Email: ih@smc.samsung.co.kr

Monday to Friday from 8a.m. to 5p.m., Saturdays from 9a.m. to 12p.m.

Seoul Adventist Hospital

29-1 Hwiyong-dong, Dongdaemoon-ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 2210 3333

Fax: [82] (2) 3410 0229

Fax: [82] (2) 2249 0403

Web: www.sah.co.kr

Monday to Friday from 9a.m. to 12p.m. and 1p.m. to 3:30p.m., Saturdays from 9a.m. to 12p.m.

Seoul National University Hospital

28 Yongon-dong, Chongro-ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 760 2114

Tel: [82] (2) 741 0545 (Dental)

Tel: [82] (2) 760 2473 (Emergency)

Tel: [82] (2) 760 2474 (Emergency)

Web: www.snuh.snu.ac.kr

Email: ih@snuh.snu.ac.kr

Hours: Monday to Friday from 9a.m. to 12p.m. and 1p.m. to 3:30p.m.

Saturday from 9a.m. to 12p.m. (appointment only)

Severance International Health Care Center

134 Sinchon-dong, Seodaemun-gu

Seoul 120 752

Tel: [82] (2) 2227 0114

Tel:[82] (2) 2228 0114

Web: www.severance.or.kr

Email: kimss2866@yumc.yonsei.ac.kr

St. Paul Cath. Lab

St. Paul Hospital

620-56 jeonnong-dong

Seoul 130 709

Tel: [82] (2) 958 2466

Email: tairho@catholic.ac.kr

Dentists

A+ Dental Clinic

5th floor, Chungdam bd.

41-1 Chungdam-dong, Kangnam-ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 3442 7575

Web: www.aplusdental.co.kr

Email: aplust@aplustdental.co.kr

Chonghap Dental Clinic

Yoksam-dong, Kangnam-ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 556 6836

WILL Dental Office

Yoksam Station Exit #7

Tel: [82] (2) 552 0030

Tel: [82] (2) 562 0030

U.S. Certified Specialist in Restorative and Implant Dentistry

Yonsei University Dental Hospital

134 Sinchon-dong, Seodaemun-gu

Seoul 120 752

Tel: [82] (2) 2227 0114

Tel: [82] (2) 2228 0114

Web:www.yumc.or.kr

Health Club

Health clubs in Seoul are very exclusive social institutions run on expensive life-membership payment systems; therefore, it is almost impossible to go for a casual workout. Your best bet is to go with a club member willing to sign you in as a guest. Most deluxe hotels, including the Hyatt, the Hilton, the Shilla and the InterContinental, have their own clubs catering to hotel guests.

Otherwise, public facilities offer extensive options for outdoor play.

Banpo area

Tel: (2) 3780-0756

Soccer field, volleyball court, boating site, fishing spots, free parking lots

Gwangnaru area

Tel: (2) 3780-0716)

Soccer field, volleyball court, basketball court, tennis court,

children's playground, swimming pool, water skiing and yachting area,roller skating rink, fishing spots, free parking lots

Ichon area

Tel: (2) 3780-0766

Soccer field, volleyball court, basketball court, handball court,tennis court, children's playground, swimming pool, boating site, nature study field, TurtleShip Pier, fishing spots, roller skating rink, ice skating rink, charged parking lots

Jamsil area

Tel: (2) 3780-0726

soccer field, volleyball court, basketball court, children's playground, ferry wharf, swimming pool, motor-boating area, roller skating rink, ice skating rink, fishing spots, charged parking lots

Jamwon area

Tel: (2) 3780-0746

Soccer field, volleyball court, basketball court, tennis court, yachting area, swimming pool, boating site, windsurfing area, nature study field, roller skating rink, fishing spots, free parking lots

Mangwon area

Tel: (2) 3780-0796

Soccer field, volleyball court, tennis court, physical training site, windsurfing area, fishing spots, swimming pool, boating sites, roller skating rink, free parking lots

Ttukseom area

Tel: (2) 3780-0736

Soccer field, volleyball court, basketball court, badminton court, handball court, tennis court, fishing spots, children's playground, ferry terminal, boating sites, swimming pool, nature study field, roller skating rink, charged parking lot

Yanghwa area

Tel: (2) 3780-0786

Soccer field, volleyball court, basketball court, children's playground, yachting area, fishing spots, free parking lot

Yeouido area

Tel: (2) 3780-0776

soccer field, basketball court, physical training site, children's playground, boating site, swimming pool, nature study field, Youth Plaza, pedal-boating area, ferry wharf, roller skating rink, ice skating rink, fishing spots, charged parking lot

Transportation

Air Travel

A plethora of airlines fly into Korea, most frequently Korean Air and Asiana, both Korean carriers. For travel within Korea, Korean Air handles most flights. The longest domestic flight only takes about an hour.

Korea City Air Terminal

Tel: [82] (2) 551-0731

Airport

Incheon International Airport

Transportation to City Center

This airport opened to the public on March 29, 2001, replacing Kimpo International Airport, which has now become a domestic airport. Incheon lies 52 km (36 miles) from Seoul, on reclaimed land between the islands of Yeongjongdo and Yongyu-do near the city of Incheon. Traffic to the airport travels via the newly built Airport Expressway, which connects to the Seoul Beltway. From Seoul, traffic is not allowed to enter between the beltway and the airport. From the airport, traffic can also enter at four interchanges along the way. This toll road costs W6,100 from the airport to the beltway, or W3,000 from the airport to the North Incheon Toll Plaza.

Rail

A rail line linking Incheon to downtown Seoul is scheduled to be completed in 2007; rail travel to downtown will take under an hour. The first phase, scheduled for 2005, will link Incheon by rail to Kimpo Airport. In the meantime, travel to the airport is expected to be more difficult, up to three times more expensive than Kimpo, and time-consuming. Budget an hour and a half to get to the airport.

Taxi

The taxi rank lies just outside the terminal, but because of the distance to the city, the metered fares will run extremely high, probably in the neighborhood of W50,000, plus tolls. Drivers expect an extra W2,000 per bag if they help with your luggage.

Bus

Korean Airlines (KAL) limousine buses leave from the front of the terminal and drop off at all the major hotels, running every 20 minutes from 7a.m. to 10p.m. Several other bus companies will commence service shortly.

Ferry

For the time being, ferries will probably prove the fastest way to get to Seoul. Ferries to the Yuldo passenger terminal (Daebo Hae-un) run every 30 minutes, from 5a.m. to 10p.m. The fare costs W800 per passenger, 4,000 per vehicle. They run to Wolmido Yeongjong-do (Yongjiu Hae-un) every 20 to 30 minutes, from 5:30a.m. to 9:30p.m., for a fare of W1,000 per passenger, or W4,500 per vehicle. If these get congested, expect extra routes to be added and fares to rise. For ferry information, call 579-2329 (Yuldo) or 762-8880 (Wolmido).

Since the airport is so new, all transportation facilities have not yet been established. For up-to-the-minute information, call the Japan Travel Phone, toll-free 0088-22-4800.

Car Rental

Perpetual congestion, treacherous driving habits, difficult parking, and motorcycles riding on the sidewalks make driving in Seoul a distinctly unpleasant experience.

Car Rental Agencies:

Avis	[82] (2) 3663-2847
Daehan	[82] (2) 585-0801
Hanyang	[82] (2) 376-3491
Hertz	[82] (2) 663-8000
Korea Express	[82] (2) 719-7295
Young Nam Rent-a-Car	[82] (2) 7913-7427

Airport Amenities

After more than eight years of construction, Incheon has opened as one of the most technologically advanced airports in the world. Its huge passenger terminal stands more than 60 times the size of a football field, and a second one is scheduled to open in 2020. All departures take place on the third level, with all arrivals and international transfers on the second level. Incheon also aims to rival the best airports in elegance and style.

Choheung Bank (tel: [82] (2) 743-6000), Hanvit Bank (tel: [82] (2) 743-5000), Shin han Bank (tel: [82] (2) 743-

5100), and Korean Foreign Exchange Bank (tel: [82] (2) 743-2222) all offer full-service banking, and currency exchange booths and ATMs are conveniently located throughout the terminal. Both national and local tourist information booths dot the terminal with English-speaking staff. A transit hotel (tel: [82] (2) 743-3000) offers layover passengers food and drink, movies, and space to relax. A business center (tel: [82] (2) 743-6100) offers conference facilities, secretarial and translation services, mobile telephones, and Internet access. Other facilities include a full-service post office (tel: [82] (2) 740-2900), hotel information desk (tel: [82] (2) 743-2570), medical center (tel: [82] (2) 743-3119), and baggage storage (tel: [82] (2) 743-4747). As a modern facility, Incheon will have an extensive selection of restaurants, snack bars, and cafes, offering both Japanese and Western food. Shopping and duty-free stores offer spirits, tobacco products, perfumes, clothing and footwear, watches and jewelry, toys, electronics, and Japanese souvenir shops (tel: [82] (2) 743-7766).

A "City Air Terminal" has now opened in what was Terminal #2 at Kimpo. This allows international passengers flying on Korean Air and Asiana to check in at Kimpo, check their luggage and receive boarding passes, then travel to Incheon by limousine bus. Kimpo is still handling a few international flights, but these will be completely phased out by November 2001. Incheon has a departure tax of W9,000 payable at currency exchange counters at the airport. Some hotels will add it to your bill and give you a receipt to present at the airport. For general and flight information, call [82] (2) 741-0104.

Airport Contact Information

Airport Information: [82] 1577-2600, 741-0114, 0104

Tourist Information (KNTO): [82] (32) 743-2600 to 3

Web: www.airport.or.kr

Kimpo Airport

Transportation to City Center

The airport lies 16 miles (26 km) from the city. With an efficient infrastructure in place, Kimpo Airport is well served by economical modes of transport. Airport express bus line #600 takes travelers between the airport and Chamsil in seven-minute intervals from 5a.m. to 10p.m. Bus #601 transports passengers between the airport and Tongdgaemun (East Gate) every 10 minutes. The KAL Limousine Bus services the airport and the following downtown locations in 15-minute intervals at a cost of W5,000:

- Line 1 (6:45a.m. to 10p.m.): Koreana, Seoul Plaza, Lotte, Westin Chosun, KAL Building.
- Line 2: (7:09a.m. to 9:39p.m.) Holiday Inn Seoul, Seoul Train Station, Seoul Hilton, Grand Hyatt, Seoul Tower, Hotel Shilla, and the Sofitel Ambassador.
- Line 3: (6:35a.m. to 9:50p.m.) Palace Hotel, Ritz Carlton, Novotel, Inter-Continental, and Seoul Renaissance.
- Line 4: (6:42a.m. to 10:20p.m.) Lotte World, Dong Seoul Express Bus Terminal, and Sheraton Walker Hill.

Taxis into town are also available; however, expect to pay far more than a bus for the 45- to 60-minute trip into town.

Airport Contact Information

Kimpo Airport Information Center

Tel: [82] (2) 665-0086

Web: www.kimpo-airport.co.kr

Airline Numbers

Note: The country code is [82] when dialing from outside the country.

Seoul

Airlines	Telephone Number	URL
Aeroflot	(2) 569 3271	www.aeroflot.ru
Air Astana	(2) 3788 0170	www.airastana.com
Air Canada	(2) 3788 0100	www.aircanada.com
Air China	(2) 774 6886	www.airchina.com.cn
Air France	(2) 3483 1033	www.airfrance.co.kr
Air India	(2) 752 6319	www.airindia.com
Air Macau	(2) 3455 9900	http://en.airmacau.com.mo
Alitalia	(2) 560 7001	www.alitalia.co.uk
ANA	(2) 752 5500	www.ana.co.jp
Asiana Airlines	(2) 2127 8282	http://us.flyasiana.com
China Airlines	(2) 755 1523	www.china-airlines.com
China Southern Airlines	(2) 3455 1600	www.cs-air.com
Emirates	(2) 779 6999	www.emirates.com
Eva Air	(2) 757 1522	www.evaair.com
Garuda Indonesia	(2) 319 0098	www.garuda-indonesia.com
Iran Air	(2) 319 4555	www.iranair.com
Japan Airlines (JAL)	(2) 757 1711	www.jal.co.jp
KLM	(2) 3483 1133	www.klm.com
Korean Air	(2) 2656 2001	www.koreanair.com
Malaysia Airlines	(2) 777 7761	http://hq.malaysiaairlines.com
MIAT Mongolian Airlines	(2) 756 9761	www.miat.com
Northwest Airlines	(2) 732 1700	www.nwa.com
Philippine Airlines	(2) 774 7730	www.philippineairlines.com
Qatar Airways	(2) 3708 8543	www.qatarairways.com
Royal Khmer Airlines	(2) 739 9933	www.royalkhmerairlines.com
S7 Airlines	(2) 3455 1234	www.s7.ru
Singapore Airlines	(2) 755 1226	www.singaporeair.com
Thai Airways International	(2) 3707 0133	www.thaiair.com
Turkish Airlines	(2) 777 7054	www.thy.com
Uzbekistan Airways	(2) 722 6856	www.uzairways.com

Taxi

Taxis are inexpensive and efficient and offer one of the best ways to get around town. Since many streets have no name, it is wise to know landmarks to help your driver find his way. Keep in mind that many drivers also speak no English. Indicator lamps on the inner windshield or on the roof of a cab will let you know if the cab is vacant. Three kinds of taxis serve the people of Seoul: regular, deluxe and call taxis.

Regular Taxis

Normally, fares run about W1,600 for the first 2 kilometers, and W100 for each additional 168 meters. If the cab is traveling less than 15km. per hour (as in a traffic jam), the meter will charge W100 per 41 seconds. Expect an 20 percent increase in fare between midnight and 4a.m.

Deluxe Taxis (*mobeom*)

These black cabs with a yellow sign on top offer more passenger space and higher standards of service at higher rates: W4,000 for first 3 km and W200 for each additional 205 m. -- or per 50 seconds if the speed of the cab drops below 15 km/per hour. No late-night surcharges apply. Look for these cabs at hotels, bus stations, train terminals, and on major city streets.

Jumbo versions of deluxe taxis, in the form of 8-passenger vans, also ply the city streets. These jumbo cabs can store more luggage, have a credit card processing terminal, as well as simultaneous foreign language interpretation by phone.

Jumbo Taxi: (2) 992-7000 or (2) 888-2000.

Call Taxis

These cabs have slightly higher rates as they will come to you on call. Discuss the fare in advance if you are taking a call taxi as they are allowed to charge more than the meter.

Goodwill Guide Taxi	[82] (2) 3431-5100
Green Call	[82] (2) 555-8585 (in Korean)
Seoul Call Service	[82] (2) 3531-5100 (in Korean)
Ulyimteo	[82] (2) 665-6565 (in Korean)
Worldcup Arirang Taxi	[82] (2) 664-1114 (military related)

Road Conditions

Although South Korean roads are well paved, traffic lights function and most drivers comply with basic traffic laws, the ROK has one of the highest traffic fatality rates in the world. Causes of accidents include excessive speed, frequent lane-changes, running of red lights, aggressive bus-drivers, and weaving motorcyclists. Pedestrians should be aware that motorcycles are sometimes driven on the sidewalks and drivers of all types of vehicles do not always yield to pedestrians in marked pedestrian crosswalks. It is safer to use pedestrian underpasses and overpasses where available. Traffic in Seoul is heavy.

Rules of the Road

At many intersections with traffic lights, drivers are not permitted to make a left-hand turn if there is a green light and no oncoming traffic; normally there is a green arrow for left-hand turns and drivers may turn only when the left-hand arrow is illuminated. In most other cases, left-hand turns are prohibited and drivers must continue until special u-turn lanes are indicated, where drivers may reverse direction and make a right-hand turn at the desired intersection. Drivers may turn right on a red light after coming to a complete stop.

Seat belts are mandatory. Children riding in the front seat of vehicles must wear a seat belt or must use an appropriate child car seat. Passengers on motorcycles must wear protective helmets. An international driving permit is required of short-term visitors who drive in Korea. Otherwise, drivers must have a Korean driver's license.

In all accidents involving an automobile and a pedestrian or motorcycle, the driver of the automobile, regardless of citizenship, is presumed to be at fault. Police investigations of traffic accidents usually involve long waits at police stations. Police may request to hold the passport of a foreigner involved in a traffic accident if there is any personal injury or a dispute about the cause of the accident. Criminal charges and heavy penalties are common in accidents involving injury, even if negligence is not proven. Persons arrested in accidents involving serious injury or death may be detained until the conclusion of the police investigation and legal process. Driving under the influence of alcohol is a serious offense. People driving in South Korea may wish to carry a disposable camera to document any traffic accidents, even minor ones.

For specific information concerning South Korea driver's permits, vehicle inspection, road tax, and mandatory insurance, please contact:

The Korea National Tourism Organization office

Fort Lee, N.J.

USA

Tel: 1-800-868-7567 (toll free in the U.S.)

Web: www.tour2korea.com

Auto Rental

Rental cars are available but not recommended for the inexperienced visitor. Many roads have no names and traffic is heavy. Most city roads have a 60 k/hr. speed limit, and city expressways have an 80 k/hr. speed limit. Parking fees vary from W2,000 to 3,000 per 30 minutes. Only large restaurants or hotels may offer free parking. Take care and avoid the bus-only lanes, which are enforced until 9p.m. daily.

Auto Rental Numbers

Car rental companies at Incheon Int'l Airport, Incheon City:

Avis

Airport - Incheon City

Tel: [82] (32) 743-3300

Web: www.avis.com

Hours: 6a.m. to 11p.m.

Hertz

Tel: [82] (32) 743-8000

Web: www.hertz.com

Kumho Rent-a-Car

Tel: [82] (32) 797-8000

Web: www.kumhorentcar.co.kr**Daehan Rent-A-Car**

Tel: [82] (32) 585-0801

Jangwon Rent-A-Car

Tel: [82] (32) 1588-0880

Korea Express Rent-A-Car

Tel: [82] (32) 719-7295

Saehan Rent-A-Car

Tel: [82] (32) 896-0031

Sambo Rent-A-Car

Tel: [82] (32) 591-5711

Seoul Rent-A-Car

Tel: [82] (32) 474-0011

VIP Rent-A-Car

Tel: [82] (32) 838-0015

Train

Rail services connect much of the country. Some first-class cars have air-conditioning and dining services. Many station signs are in English as well as Korean.

Three classes of train will whisk passengers to and from their destinations: super express (Saemaeul-ho), express (Mugunghwa-ho), and limited express (Tongil-ho). Reserve and purchase tickets in advance at travel agencies or at stations for weekend or holiday travel. To find out about fares and schedules, click here: www.korail.go.kr/eng/

Seoul Rail Station Center

122 Bongnae-dong 2-ga

Jung-gu

Tel: [82] (2) 3149-2530, 1544-7788

Information: (2) 392-7788

Web: www.soulst.go.kr

Central rail station of Seoul. Subway Lines 1 and 4 reach the station.

Busan Station

Tel: [82] (51) 463-5783

Travel time from Seoul: 4.5 hours (Super Express)

Cheongryangni Station

northeastern Seoul

588-1 Jeonnong-dong

Dongdaermun-gu

Tel: (2) 1544-7788

Web: www.cnnst.go.kr

Routes originating from Seoul to the East Coast and several national parks include: Gyeongchun, Jungang, Taebaek and Yeongdong. Subway Line 1 travels to the station.

Daejon Station

Tel: [82] (42) 253-7788

Dongdaegu Station

Tel: [82] (53) 954-7788

Gyeongju Station

Tel: [82] (54) 743-8052

Travel time from Seoul: 4 hours and 10 minutes (Super Express)

Mokpo Station

Tel: [82] (61) 242-7788

Subway

Fortunately, an extensive subway system exists in Seoul to transport people around this massive city. Subway lines are color-coded and travel to the most outlying areas of the Seoul and its satellite cities. Passengers may purchase tickets at station ticket windows or at either coin-only vending machines or coins- and bills-vending machines (W1,000 denomination).

There is also a new form of payment called T-money which is a new type of transportation card. Beginning July 1, 2004, T-Money may be used for public transportation on intra-city buses and all subways serving routes that link Seoul and the local districts in Gyeonggi Province and Incheon.

Subway Information

Lines 1, 2, 3, 4

Tel: (2) 520-5000

Web: www.seoulsubway.co.kr

Lines 5, 6, 7, 8

Tel: (2) 6211-2000

Web: www.smrt.co.kr

Lost and Found Centers

Web: www.lost114.com

Subway Line 1, 2	City Hall Station	(2) 753-2408
Subway Line KNR	Guro Station	(2) 869-0089
Subway Line 3, 4	Chungmuro Station	(2) 2271-1170
Subway Line 5, 8	Wangsimni Station	(2) 2298-6767
Subway Line 6, 7	Taereung Station	(2) 949-6767

Bus

Buses are inexpensive, but drivers often speak no English, and help for those who don't speak Korean is sporadic. If boarding a bus, hold on tight as the ride resembles that of an amusement park with fast stops and accelerations. The colorful experience is further enhanced by loud, blaring music often played on board. Three kinds of city buses serve the city: **City**, **City Express**, and **Deluxe Express**.

City buses (*ilban*): numbered according to routes; signs only in Korean; W600

City Express (*jwaseok*) buses: comfortable and air conditioned; W1,200

Deluxe Express buses: W1,300. Since bus signs are normally only posted in Korean, seek assistance from your hotel, passers-by, or the information center to find the correct route number and bus stop.

There is also a new form of payment called T-money which is a new type of transportation card. Beginning July 1, 2004, T-Money may be used for public transportation on intra-city buses and all subways serving routes that link Seoul and the local districts in Gyeonggi Province and Incheon.

T-money Information:

Tel: [82] (2) 1644-0088

Web: www.t-money.co.kr

Long-distance Buses

Two kinds of express buses, regular and deluxe, connect towns and cities also exist and compete with trains for passengers. Deluxe buses offer such added features as telephone, VCR, and more spacious seats.

Seoul Express Bus Terminal Center

Banpo-dong, Seocho-gu

Tel: (2) 782-5551, 535-4151, 780-2323, 6282-0600

Tel: [82] (2) 537-9198

Dong Seoul Express Terminal

Guui-dong, Gwangjin-gu

Gangbyeon Station

Tel: (2) 458-4852 to 4

Kangnam Tourist Information

Tel: [82] (2) 782-5551

Web: <http://english.kangnam.seoul.kr>

Water Travel

South Korea is surrounded on three sides by water. Naturally, water services abound. Busan (previously Pusan) serves as the seafarer's gateway to Korea, its biggest port and its second largest city. High-speed hydrofoil service also serves Fukuoka, Japan. Incheon port features service to China.

Bugwan Ferry

Busan - Shimonoseki

Fare: W50,000 to 85,000 (one way)

Schedule: November to February: 7p.m. to 8:30a.m. (overnight); March to October: 8p.m. to 8:30a.m. (overnight)

Korea Ferry

Busan to Hakata

Fare: W55,000 to 100,000 (one way)

Schedule: November to February: 6p.m. to 8:30a.m. (overnight); March to October: 7p.m. to 8:30a.m. (overnight)

Hakata to Busan

Schedule: Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 7p.m. to 8:00a.m. (overnight)

Korea Marine Express

Busan to Hakata (Hydrofoil)

Fare: W85,000 (one way)

Schedule: Winter, one crossing per day; Summer, 2 crossings a day.

Bugwan Ferry	(2) 738-0055 (Seoul) (51) 464-2700 (Busan) (832) 24-3000 (Shimonoseki)
Korea Ferry	(2) 775-2323 (Seoul) (41) 466-7799 (Busan) (92) 262-2323 (Hakata)
Korea Marine Express	(2) 730-8666 (Seoul) (51) 465-6111 (Busan) (92) 282-2315 (Hakata)
Jinchon Ferry	(2) 517-8671
Weidong Ferry	(2) 3271-6753

Within Seoul, visitors and residents alike can cruise the Han River, which runs through Seoul. The cruise boats depart from Yeoido Ferry Terminal, between the Wonhyo and Mapo Bridges, as well as from Jamsil, Ttukseom, and Yanghwa Terminals.

Travel Assistance

Korea Tourism Organization

10 Cheonggyecheonno, Jung-gu

Seoul 100 180

Tel: [82] (2) 729 9498

Tel: [82] (2) 729 9499

Tel: [82] (2) 735 0101 (Tourist Compliant Center)

Fax: [82] (2) 319 0086

Fax: [82] (2) 777 0102 (Tourist Compliant Center)

Web: www.tour2korea.com

Email: angelica@mail.knto.or.kr

Korea Travel Bureau

1465-11 Seocho-Dong

Seocho-Gu

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 585 7072

Tel: [82] (2) 585 7074

Fax: [82] (2) 585 1187

Web: www.ktbonline.com

Email: tour@ktbinc.co.kr

Seoul

Holidayplanners Co. Ltd.

#1208 LG Palace Bulding, Donggyo-dong, Mapo-gu

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 336 3532

Fax: [82] (2) 336 3522

Web: www.holidayplanners.co.kr

Email: operation@Holidayplanners.co.kr

International Travel Agency

Daehan Ilbo Building 707

CPO Box 207

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 777 6722

Fax: [82] (2) 777 4971

Web: www.besttourkorea.com

Email: master@chinatravel.co.kr

Lighting Travel

F 375-27, Seokyo-dong, Mapo-gu

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 338 8869

Fax: [82] (2) 326 1668

Web: www.lgtravel.net

Email: webmaster@lgtravel.net

Seoul Tourist Information Center

1 Euljiro 7(chil)-ga, Jung-gu

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 2236 9135

Tel: [82] (2) 2236 9136

Web: www.visitseoul.net

Communications

Quick Start

Country Code 82

(Code used to call South Korea from another country)

To call South Korea dial your International Access Code + 82 + area code + local number

Examples

- From USA 011 + 82 + area code + local number
- From UK 00 + 82 + area code + local number
- From Hong Kong 001 + 82 + area code + local number

International Access Code 001

(Prefix used to make an international call from South Korea)

To call a country from South Korea dial 001 or 002 + country code + area code + local number

Examples

- To USA 001 + 1 + area code + local number
- To UK 001 + 44 + area code + local number
- To Hong Kong 001 + 852 + local number

Domestic Access Code 0

(Prefix used to make a call between cities in South Korea)

To call between cities in South Korea dial 0 + area code + local number

Examples

- To Seoul from outside the city 0 + 2 + local number

Ring Tone Equal tones, separated by short pauses

Busy Tone Equal length on and off tones

Capital Seoul

Predominant Language Korean

Online Directory Business Directory: www.yellowpages.co.kr (in Korean)

Dialing Guide

How To Call South Korea	Calls Within South Korea	International Calls From South Korea
Dial your country's IAC + country code for South Korea + area code in South Korea + local number	<u>Local Calls</u> : Dial local number <u>Long Distance</u> : Dial the DAC for South Korea + area code + local number	Dial South Korea's IAC + country code of country being dialed + area code (or) cell phone prefix + local number
Example A call from the USA to, Seoul , South Korea. 011 + [82] + (2) + local number	Example Long Distance A call from Seoul to Incheon. 0 + (32) + local number	Example A call from South Korea to San Francisco, USA. 001 + [1] + (415) + local number
<p>IAC (International Access Code) Prefix to get international access from a country. DAC (Domestic Access Code) Prefix to call between cities within a country.</p>		

City/Area Codes

Cellular Number Prefixes

(0)11, (0)16, (0)17, (0)18, and (0)19

Area Codes

Cheju	64
Chonbuk	63
Chonnam	61
Chulla-Do province	65 - 69
Chungbuk	43
Chungnam	41
Daejon	42
Incheon	32
Jeonju	52
Kangwon	33
Kwangju	62
Kyongbuk	54
Kyonggi	31
Kyongnam	55
Pusan	51
Seoul	2
Taegu (Daegu)	53
Ulsan	52

Emergency and Assistance Numbers

Police	112
Fire	119
Ambulance	119
Korean National Police	(2) 313-0842
Korean Local Time	116 (ARS in Korean)
Local Information	114
Long-Distance Information	(Area Code) +114
Lost and Found	(2) 2299-1282 Fax: (2) 2298-1282
Operator (English speaking)	0077
Overseas Information	00794
Overseas Operator	00799
Telegram Service	00795
Tourist Complaint Center	(2) 735-0101
Tourist Information	1330
World Standard Time	042 + 116 (ARS in Korean)
Weather Forecast	131 (ARS in Korean)
U.S. Embassy (Seoul)	From within Seoul: 397-4114 From elsewhere in South Korea: 0-2-397-4114 From outside South Korea: [82] (2) 397-4114

Unusual Calling Features

1. Area codes in South Korea contain one or two digits.
2. Subscriber numbers in South Korea contain seven to eleven digits.
3. When calling between cities within South Korea, dial the Domestic Access Code '0' before the area code. Do not dial this access code when calling from another country.
4. Cell phone numbers in South Korea contain nine to ten digits. The first two digits are always '11', '16', '17', '18', or '19'.
5. When calling a cell phone from within South Korea, always dial the Domestic Access Code '0' before the nine- to ten-digit number. Do not dial this access code when calling from another country.
6. Toll-free numbers start with the prefix '0-80'.
7. Dial '9' to get access to an outside line when dialing from within an office or other type of self-contained (PBX) telephone system.
8. Subscribers can sign up for call forwarding, call waiting, and caller identity.

Local Calls

A three-minute local call will cost about W50.

Long Distance Calls

Before placing a long-distance domestic call, be sure to dial the area code including a preceding '0'.

International Calls

South Korea's two telephone competitors, Korea Telecom (001) and Dacom (002) both offer international direct dial, although Dacom is the less expensive option. If you are wondering what the catch is, Dacom may only be reached from a private telephone, and Korea Telecom will not connect you to them. Onse Telecom (008) now also offers international connections. To go through any of these international services, begin by dialing their international access code + country code + area code + local number.

Thirty percent discounts apply between 9p.m. and 8a.m. Monday to Saturday and all day Sundays and holidays. Bear in mind that discounts will be more than amply increased if calling from a hotel phone. In this case, it's good to know that Korea also offers Home Country Direct access numbers to reach a home operator:

Australia	0090-610
Canada	0090-015
France	0090-330
Germany	0090-049
Netherlands	0090-310
New Zealand	0090-640

Cell Phones

Fixed line to Cell Phone	Cell Phone to Fixed line	Cell Phone to Cell Phone
<p>Local Calls: Dial South Korea's DAC + cell phone prefix ('11', '16', '17', '18', or '19') + remaining seven to eight digits of local cell phone number.</p> <p>Example A call from a fixed line in Seoul to a cell phone in Seoul: 0 + '11', '16', '17', '18', or '19' + remaining seven to eight digits of local cell phone number</p>	<p>Local Calls: Dial the local six- to eight-digit number.</p> <p>Example A call from a cell phone in Seoul to a fixed line in Seoul: Dial the local six- to eight-digit number</p>	<p>Local Calls: Dial South Korea's DAC + cell phone prefix ('11', '16', '17', '18', or '19') + remaining seven to eight digits of local cell phone number.</p> <p>Example A call from a cell phone in Seoul to a cell phone in Seoul: 0 + '11', '16', '17', '18', or '19' + remaining seven to eight digits of local cell phone number</p>
<p>Long Distance: Dial South Korea's DAC + cell phone prefix ('11', '16', '17', '18', or '19') + remaining seven to eight digits of local cell phone number.</p> <p>Example A call from a fixed line in Seoul to a cell phone in Pusan: 0 + '11', '16', '17', '18', or '19' + remaining seven to eight digits of local cell phone number</p>	<p>Long Distance: Dial South Korea's DAC + area code + local six- or seven- digit number.</p> <p>Example A call from a cell phone in Seoul to a fixed line in Pusan: 0 + (51) + local six- to eight-digit number</p>	<p>Long Distance: Dial South Korea's DAC + cell phone prefix ('11', '16', '17', '18', or '19') * + remaining seven to eight digits of local cell phone number.</p> <p>Example A call from a cell phone in Seoul to a cell phone in Pusan: 0 + '11', '16', '17', '18', or '19'+ remaining seven to eight digits of local cell phone number</p>
<p>International Calls: Dial South Korea's IAC + country code of country being dialed + area code (or) cell phone prefix + local cell phone number.*</p> <p>Example A call from a fixed line in South Korea to a cell phone in San Francisco, USA: 001 + [1] + (415) + local seven-digit cell phone number</p>	<p>International Calls: Dial South Korea's IAC + country code of country being dialed + area code (or) cell phone prefix + local number.*</p> <p>Example A call from a cell phone in South Korea to a fixed line in San Francisco, USA: 001 + [1] + (415) + local seven-digit number</p>	<p>International Calls: Dial South Korea's IAC + country code of country being dialed + area code (or) cell phone prefix + local cell phone number.**</p> <p>Example A call from a cell phone in South Korea to a cell phone in San Francisco, USA: 001 + [1] + (415) + local seven-digit cell phone number</p>
<p>*Note: Some countries have a unique dialing sequence for incoming calls to cell phones. Refer to the Cell Phone Dialing Guide for the country you are calling.</p>		

1. Cell phone numbers in South Korea contain nine to ten digits. The first two digits are always '11' or '16', '17', '18', or '19'.
2. When calling a cell phone from within South Korea, always dial the Domestic Access Code '0' before the nine- to ten-digit number. Do not dial this access code when calling from another country.
3. When making an international call to a cell phone in South Korea, dial: South Korea's country code [82] + cell phone prefix ('11' or '16', '17', '18', or '19') + remaining seven to eight digits of local cell phone number.

Traveling Cell Phones

1. Will My Cell Phone Work in South Korea?

Yes, if your home country service provider has a roaming agreement with a carrier in South Korea and your phone is compatible; check with your home country service provider on these two issues before you leave. [Click here](#) to find out how. **Note:** South Korea's cell providers offer digital CDMA services; two GSM 3G networks began operations in 2000.

2. Receiving Calls

Provided your home country service provider has a roaming agreement with a service provider in South Korea and your cell phone is compatible with a network in South Korea, your cell phone number travels with you. Your calls get through even if people don't know your location.

3. Making Calls

Dialing procedures are the same as for local cell phone users. Refer to the Cell Phone Quick Start.

4. Local SIM Cards

South Korea's digital CDMA networks do not support the use of SIM cards. Two GSM 3G networks (which will support SIM cards) began operations in 2000. [Click here](#) for more details on how SIM cards work.

U.S. Service Providers

Your phone must be compatible with the frequency band/range your mobile service supports in the country. A GSM quad-band phone supports the four major frequencies used globally. If a multi-band phone is not available to you, check below or with your service provider for specific frequency ranges in the country to determine if your phone is compatible.

Due to the dynamic nature of the cellular communications industry, this information changes rapidly. **Always** confirm service with your provider prior to departure.

Company	Service in South Korea	Frequencies	Contact Information
Cingular Wireless	Yes	UMTS 2100 CDMA 1800	Tel: [1] (916) 843-4685 (Outside U.S.) Toll-free: (800) 331-0500 (In U.S.)
Sprint-Nextel	Yes	Contact Sprint-Nextel.	Tel: [1] (817) 698-4199 (Outside U.S.) Toll-free: (888) 226-7212 (Sprint Worldwide Care)
T-Mobile	Yes	WCDMA	Tel: [1] (505) 998-3792 (Outside U.S.) Toll-free: (800) 937-8997 (U.S./Canada/Mexico)
Verizon Wireless	No	Not applicable.	Tel: [1] (880) 922-0204 (Outside U.S.) Toll-free: (800) 922-0204 (U.S./Canada/Mexico)

Local Service Providers**Renting a Cell Phone**

Travelers wishing to rent a cell phone may choose one of two options:

1. **Before departure:** Rent a locally compatible phone (short-term rental) *before* departure and have the advantage of cell service immediately upon arrival.
2. **After arrival:** Ask at your hotel for a local cellular phone rental service.

Click for a comprehensive listing of [Cellular Rental Services Worldwide](#).

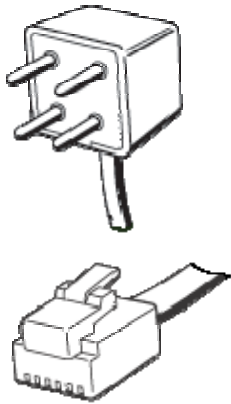
Setting Up a Local Account

Another option for cellular phone service is signing up with a local provider in South Korea. This may be the most cost effective option if you intend to stay for an extended period.

Cellular Systems Available in South Korea

Company (Network)	Digital	Analog	Contact
LG TeleCom	GSM	n/a	18-20 Floor, 679 LG Kangnam Tower Yuksam-dong, Kangnam-gu Seoul Tel: [82] (2) 2005-7114 Tel: [82] (2) 1544-0010 Web: www.lgtelecom.com Email: englishweb@lgtele.com
KT ICOM	3G	n/a	Web: www.ktf.com/eng/index.html Email: webmaster@ktf.com
SK Telecom	3G (CDMA2000, WCDMA)	n/a	SK Telecom 11, Euljiro, 2-ga, Jung-gu, Seoul 100-999, Korea Tel : [82] (2) 6100-2114 Web: www.sktelecom.com Email: ch8031@sktelecom.com

Phone/Modem Plugs



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Telephone / modem plug adapters are available through [Magellans](#) and other suppliers. Please visit the supplier's list found in the sidebar of the [Mobile Connectivity Problems and Solutions](#) section of the Global Road Warrior.

Public Phones

Coin- and card-based phones are all available in South Korea. You may purchase phone cards in increments of W2000, W3000, W5000, and W10,000 at convenience stores and banks.

Coin phones take W10, W50, and W100 coins. Little beeps during a call indicate the box is hungry for more coins. No change will be forthcoming for W50 or W100 coins, but if the phone isn't hung up, other calls may be made on the leftover credit by pressing the green button and hoping it works. If you spot an off-the-hook telephone receiver, most likely it was left so by the previous user for the next caller's benefit--or for the satisfaction of stiffing the telephone conglomerate by even just a few pennies.

**Card/Coin Telephone Instructions**

1. Lift receiver
2. Insert card or coins
3. Dial number
4. Upon completion, replace receiver and retrieve card or any unused coins

Note: Phones such as this one can handle domestic, long-distance, and international calls.

**Card Telephone Instructions**

1. Lift receiver
2. Insert card
3. Dial number
4. Upon completion, replace receiver and retrieve card

Note: Phones such as this one can handle domestic, long-distance, and international calls. Phone cards are easily purchased locally.

**Card/Coin Telephone Instructions**

1. Lift receiver
2. Insert card or coins
3. Dial number
4. Upon completion, replace receiver and retrieve card or any unused coins



Coin Telephone Instructions

1. Lift receiver
2. Insert coins
3. Dial number
4. Upon completion, replace receiver and retrieve any unused coins

Note: Phone will beep when time is expiring. Coin-only phones such as this one handle domestic calls only; no international calls can be made from these phones.

Calling Cards

Cards can be purchased at values of W3,000, W5,000, and W10,000.

In general, there are three fundamental types of cards:

1. Local prepaid phone cards
2. International phone cards
3. Home operator calling cards

Frequently Asked Questions

Click for more detailed information about [phone cards and calling cards](#).

International Calling Card Suppliers

Click for a comprehensive listing of [International Calling Card Suppliers](#).

Call Back Services

While you are abroad, a callback company connects you to your home country telephone network to take advantage of rates at home, which are often cheaper.

Travelers must designate a specific location (such as a hotel phone number) prior to departure. While abroad, users phone the callback service office, which will call you back at your location. It will then connect you to the telephone network in your home country and you can dial any number you wish to reach.

The process helps you to take advantage of telephone rates at home. Fees for call back services vary widely, depending on the company and the type of service required. Always check rates first; it may, in fact, be cheaper to call direct and have your associates or family call you back at a designated number.

Call Back Services Worldwide

Click for a select listing of [Call Back Services](#).

Fax

Fax machines are available in hotels, at an approximate cost of US\$8 per page.

Telegram

While most hotels provide telegram services, the main office dealing with telegrams and other telecommunications issues is:

Korea International Telecommunications Services

1, Choongmo-ro
Chung-gu, Seoul

Postal Service

Postal service is adequate at best. Airmail to the U.S. can take up to ten days. Authorities often censor mail and will withhold mail they deem a security risk. Addresses can also be written in English, but writing the address in Korean ensures faster delivery and lesser problems. *Korea Post* also operates financial services.

Hours of Service

Monday to Friday 9a.m. to 5p.m., Saturday 9a.m. to 1p.m.

Korea Post

Chungmu St., Jung-gu

Seoul

Tel: [82] 2-2195-1114

Web: www.koreapost.go.kr

Email: webpost@mic.go.kr

Business Services

Business Centers

Business centers provide a range of services that include secretarial, translation/interpretation, and office services, including normal business infrastructure components such as:

- Computer rentals
- Audio/visual equipment rentals
- Cellular phone rentals
- Copy and printing services
- All-inclusive rental of temporary office space and staff

Most large hotels (some of which may be listed here) also have business centers that offer many of the same services that independent centers provide. Chambers of commerce, ministries, trade associations, and world trade centers (see last listings in this section) are also good starting places for local information.

Unico Business Center

Hotel Lotte

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 774-2617

Courier Services

Airborne Express

Nam Sung Express Co. Ltd.

2nd Floor, Nam Sung Bldg.

364-70, Hapjung-Dong

Mapo-ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 334-8200

Fax: [82] (2) 334-9291

DHL

Tel: 1588-000 (toll-free)

Tel: [82] (2) 716-0001

Ilyang Bldg. 164-6

Yeomri-Dong, Mapo-Ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 710-0001

Fax: [82] (2) 719-6545

FedEx

Tel: [82] (2) 333-8000 (toll-free)

Tel: [82] (2) 732-8450 (freight)

TNT

550-8 Myung Yoon Dong

Dong Lae Ku

Pusan

Tel: [82] (51) 554-6661

Fax: [82] (51) 556-1319

Building 687-8, Konghang-dong

Kangseo-ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 666-6660

Fax: [82] (2) 666-1114

UPS

Korea Customer Service Telephone Centre

Tel: [82] (2) 3665-3651

UPS-Korea Express Co., Ltd.

282-19, YeomChang-Dong

KangSeo-Gu

Seoul 157-040

Tel: [82] (2) 3665-0016

Tel: [82] (2) 3665-3651 (pick-up)
Fax: [82] (2) 3664-0360, 3664-0363

World Trade Center

World Trade Center Seoul

#4603 Trade Tower
World Trade Center
159-1 Samsung-dong
Kangnam-gu
Seoul 135-729
Tel: [82] (2) 6000-5301
Fax: [82] (2) 6000-5181
Web: www.kita.or.kr
Email: kwtcsl@kotis.net

Chamber of Commerce

ICC Korea

45, Namdaemun-ro 4-ga
Chung-gu
Seoul 100-743
Tel: [82] (2) 316-3536, 316-3538
Fax: [82] (2) 757-9475
Email: trade@kcci.or.kr

Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry

45, Namdaemunno 4-ga, Chung-gu
Seoul 100-3114
Tel: [82] (2) 316-3114
Fax: [82] (2) 757-9475
Email: trade@www.kcci.or.kr

Technical/Internet

Internet Connection

Connecting to AOL in South Korea is similar to using it when traveling outside your own area code. See the introductory section for detailed information on connecting to your account through a different phone number.

Korea's Data Communications Corporation (DACOM) has developed a computer data packet network connecting 52 countries with 3,000 domestic end users and provides email, databases, videotex, and value added networks. The number of local area networks (LANs) has been doubling every year since 1980. DACOM's Customer Support Center numbers are [82] (2) 220-0220 or 080-023-0220 (toll-free).

Global Internet Service Providers

Companies that offer global roaming services have partnerships with local Internet service providers in many different countries. As such, Internet access is provided through a local call. These companies often provide local access in countries where your home Internet service provider does not. Service and rate plans vary greatly. Make sure to do your research prior to departure. Some options include:

- User pays only when using the service
- User pays a subscription rate with added usage fees when in the destination country.

Click [here](#) for a list of global Internet roaming service providers.

U.S. Internet Service Providers

Company	Service in South Korea	Local Access Numbers
America Online / CompuServe AOL Intl. Tech Support [1] (703) 264-1184	Yes AOL Globalnet US\$6/hr surcharge	Pusan (51) 462-5408 (28.8 baud) Seoul (23) 676-1610 (64 baud) Seoul (27) 756-647 (28.8 baud)
ATandT GlobalNet Helpdesk (in Asia Pacific): 2-3483-1144 Helpdesk (in Asia Pacific): 001-800-2255-4288	Yes **The availability of XN7 numbers is limited to ATandT Remote Access customers who are enabled for ATandT's Extended Access dial-up services, which does include all BIS customers.	Ansan 31-507-4734 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Ansan 31-507-4736 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Ansan 31-507-4737 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Daegu 53-281-4733 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Daegu 53-281-4735 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Daegu 53-281-4736 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Daegu 53-281-4737 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Daejeon 42-384-4730 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Daejeon 42-384-4736 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Daejeon 42-384-4737 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Daejeon 42-384-4735 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Incheon 32-262-4101 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Incheon 32-262-4107 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Incheon 32-262-4102 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Incheon 32-262-4105 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Kwangju 62-449-4735 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Kwangju 62-461-4730 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Kwangju 62-461-4733 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Kwangju 62-461-4736 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Kwangju 62-461-4737 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Kwangju 62-461-4735 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Nationwide 80-800-8020 (V.90/TOLL/XN1) Nationwide 80-836-3630 (V.90/TOLL/XN1) Nationwide 01441 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Nationwide 1544-1421 (V.90/TOLL/XN1) Nationwide 0800-80-0153 ** (V.90/ISDN/XN7) Nationwide 6432-0552 (V.90/TOLL/XN1) Pusan 51-937-4731 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Pusan 51-986-4104 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Pusan 51-462-5408 (28.8k/TOLL/SCRIPT/XN1) Pusan 51-937-4730 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Pusan 51-986-4102 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Seoul 80-369-9503 ** (V.34/XN7) Seoul 02-3018-3073 (SLIP/V.92/ISDN/LIG) Seoul 02-3447-0321 ** (V.90/ISDN/XN7) Sungnam 31-604-4730 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Ulsan 52-991-2201 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Ulsan 52-991-2205 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1) Ulsan 52-991-2206 (V.90/ISDN/TOLL/XN1)
Earthlink	No	None*
Microsoft Network (MSN)	No	None*
Verizon Business (regular Verizon accounts do not apply; requires Verizon Business account)	Yes	Seoul 2-30181344 (ISDN V.34+ K56flex V.90)

*Requires dialing a neighboring country where your service offers local access numbers. International dialing charges apply.

Local Internet Service Providers

Provided below is a list of ISPs servicing this country.

Note: Please remember that the ISP market is relatively new and constantly expanding. We advise that you check with any ISP company before you leave to ensure that it still exists.

L.G.Dacom Corp.

706-1 Yeoksahm-Dong Kangnam-Gu
Seoul 135-080
Tel: [82] (2) 2089-2146
Web: www.lgdacom.net

Hanarotelecom Inc.

Asia One Building, 17-7 Yoido-dong
Yeongdeungpo-Gu
Seoul 150-874
Tel: [82] (2) 6266-5500
Web: www.hanaro.com

Korea-Afis

899-4 Hogye-2 Dong
Dongan-ku
Anyang-City
Gyeonggi-Do 431-836
Tel: [82] (31) 427-4133
Fax: [82] (31) 477-4430
Web: www.korea-afis.co.kr
Email: afis@afis.co.kr

Korea Telecom

206 Jungja-dong, Bundang-gu
Seongnam-city
Kyeonggi-do 463-711
Tel: [82] (31)-727-0114
Web: www.kt.co.kr

Korea pc telecom (KOLnet)

KT HITEL 395-62
Shindaebang-dong
Dongjac-Ku 156-712
Tel: [82] (2) 513-2200
Fax: [82] (2) 513-2155
Web: www.kol.net
Email: info@kol.net

Kornet

Umyeon-dong, Seocho-gu, 17
Seoul 137140
Toll-free: [82] 080-014-1414
Fax: [82] (2) 766-5093
Web: www.kornet.net
Email: helpme@kornet.nm.kr

Shinbiro

Onse Building, 192-2
Gumi-Dong, Bundang-Gu
Sungnam-Si
Gyeonggi 463-500
Toll-free: [82] 080-880-0008
Fax: [82] (31) 738-6077
Web: www.shinbiro.com
Email: help-desk@shinbiro.co

Super Net

Asian Venture Tower
3th Floor 315-6, Yangche-dong
Seocho-ku
Seoul 137-130
Tel: [82] (2) 3017-0188
Fax: [82] (2) 3461-6074
Web: www.supernet.co.kr
Email: supernet@supernet.co.kr

Today and Tomorrow

Kolon Digital Tower Billant 13th Floor
222-7, Guro 3-Dong, Guro-GU
Seoul
Tel: [82] (2) 6334-0777
Web: <http://tt.co.kr>

Internet Cafes

For an updated listing of Internet cafés in South Korea, [click here](#) prior to departure, or, upon arrival, ask your hotel concierge.

Barnnet

1F, Sukjeon Building, 364-31
Seokyo-dong, Mapo-gu
Seoul 120-121
Tel: [82] (2) 3141-5566
Fax: [82] (2) 322-4197
Email: wscho@venus.iteg.co.kr

Forest Internet Cafe

WooJung Building 3F, 8-1
MyungRyun 2 Ga ChongRo-Ku
Seoul
Tel: [82] (2) 765-4588
Email: forest@forest.co.kr

GNA Soft Co. Ltd.

249-4 Urban Light Building 7th Floor
Nonhyundong Gangnamgu
Seoul 135-010
Tel: [82] (2) 512-8086
Web: <http://pcbang.steamasia.com>

Kinko's Inc.

Duckwoo Building, 68-7 Taepyung 2-ga, Jung-gu
Seoul 100-102
Tel: [82] (2) 779-4366

Laputa

B1 Sisa Academy Building
826 Yoksam-dong, Kangnam-gu
Seoul
Tel: [82] (2) 508-8261

Net Cafe

Kanghan Building, 2nd Floor
300-2 Chung jin-Dong, Chongro-gu
Seoul
Tel: [82] (2) 733-7973
Email: info@net.co.kr

Netsc'ape

Between Hongik Univ. and Mapo public library
Seoul
Tel: [82] (2) 336-6345

Starlet

591, Shinsadong
Kangnamgu
Seoul
Tel: [82] (2) 546-5677
Email: yoochw@shinbiro.com

Webspace

9-21 ChangChun-Dong
ShinChon, SeoDaeMun-ku
Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 313-7671

Hardware/Software Vendor Support

Apple

United States:

Tel: [1] (408) 996-1010

Web: www.asia.apple.com/support

Web: www.info.apple.com

Dell

United States:

Tel: [1] (512) 723-6309

Fax: [1] (512) 728-3653

Tel: [1] 512-728-7424 (International Queue: Latitude or Inspiron / toll call)

Toll Free: 800-285-1653 (Latitude or Inspiron / in U.S. and Canada)

Web: <http://support.dell.com/us/en/home.asp>

Fujitsu

United States:

Tel: [1] (901) 259-5790 (Notebooks, Tablets, Desktops and Workstations)

Tel: [1] 408-746-6304 (Software)

Web: <http://www.fujitsu-siemens.com/support/helpdesk.html>

Web: <http://www.computers.us.fujitsu.com/www/contact.shtml?contact>

Gateway

United States:

Tel: [1] (605) 232-2191

Web: <http://www.gateway.com/about/contactus/index.php>

Web: <http://support.gateway.com/s/faq/c-custserv/cserv9.shtml>

Hewlett-Packard/Compaq

United Kingdom:

Presario and Pavilion MultiMedia PC and Notebook products and HP media Vault:

Tel: [44] 870 010 4320 (In warranty)

Tel: [44] 906 477 0 477 (Out of warranty)

Tel: [44] 906 470 0870 (Software support)

Web: http://welcome.hp.com/country/uk/en/contact/phone_assist.html

United States:

Tel: 1 800-474-6836 (HP products) (No direct international line to HP in United States)

Web: http://www.hp.com/country/us/en/contact_us.html

Web: http://www.hp.com/country/us/en/contact/phone_assist.html#sectio

IBM

Korea:

Tel: 1588-5801 (ThinkPad and ThinkCentre) (Korean)

United States:

Tel: 1-800-426-7378 (Hardware and software support) (No direct international line to IBM in United States)

Tel: 1-800-426-4968 (General information)

Web: www-307.ibm.com/pc/support/site.wss/document.do?Indocid=YAST-3P2QY&Landsitestyle=lenovo

Microsoft

United States:

Tel: [1] (650) 526-6950 (Microsoft Office)

Tel: 1-866-452-4755 (Microsoft Office / U.S. and Canada Only)

Tel: 1-800-936-3500 (Support Customer Care / U.S. and Canada Only)

Web: <http://support.microsoft.com/?LN=en-us&dx=9&andy=13>

Web: <http://support.microsoft.com/gp/hublist>

NEC

International:

Tel: [1] (801) 578-5103 (UltraCare Intl. Warranty Service Program)

United States:

Tel: 1-800-632-4662 (NEC Display Solutions Monitors)

Tel: 1-866-632-8061 (PowerMate eco systems, MobilePro 780, 790, 900 handhelds, Versa Litepad Tablet PCs)

Web: <http://support.neccomp.com>

Novell

United States:

Tel: [1] (801) 861-1329

Tel: 1-800-529-3400 (Toll-free in U.S. only)

Web: <http://www.novell.com/support/supportcentral/supportcentral.do?id=m1>

Palm

United Kingdom:

Tel: [44] (20) 7867-0108

Web: www.palm.com/intl/Europe-support.html

United States:

Tel: [1] (813) 313-4913 (LifeDrive, Palm Handhelds, Tungsten, Zire, Handspring)

Web: www.palm.com/us/support/using.html

Sony

United States and Canada:

Tel: [1] (239) 768-7676

Tel: 1-888-476-6972 (Vaio Computers)

Web: <http://esupport.sony.com/US/perl/support-contacts.pl>

Web: <http://esupport.sony.com/EN/info/software-support.html> (Software Support Numbers)

Toshiba

United States:

Tel: [1] (949) 583-3000

Tel: 1 800 457-7777 (Toll-free in U.S. only)

Web: www.toshibadirect.com

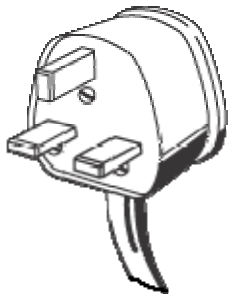
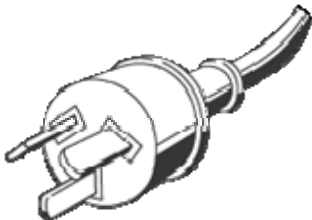
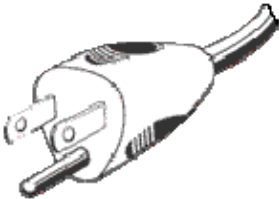
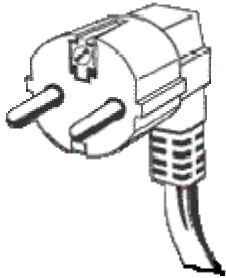
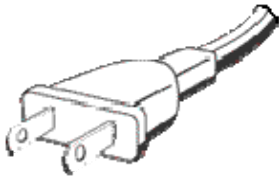
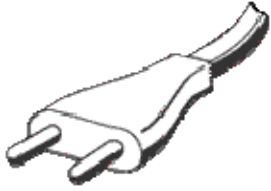
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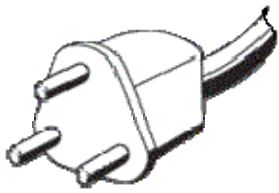
Electrical

Voltage

110/220 volts AC, 60/50 Hz

Electric Plug



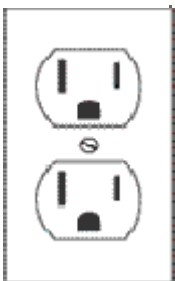
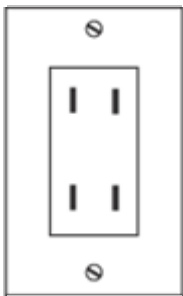


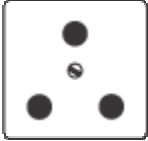
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Electrical plug adapters are available through [Magellans](#) and other suppliers. Please visit the supplier's list found in the sidebar of the [Mobile Connectivity Problems and Solutions](#) section of the Global Road Warrior.

Socket

Typical sockets.





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Business Culture

Historical Notes

The Korean Peninsula was occupied by human settlements for several millennia before written records first appeared in the 12th century B.C. At first just a loose conglomeration of tribes, the first "state" was formed in the north at Koguryo in the 1st century A.D. in response to constant attacks from China. Down south other kingdoms sprang up in the form of the Paekche in A.D. 250 and Silla in A.D. 350. By the 7th century, the Silla had conquered the entire peninsula.

In 935, a bloodless coup was staged by one Wang Kon, who re-dubbed the nation Korya. Peace reigned for three centuries until the Mongols arrived bent on destruction. A three-decade war ensued until the local Koreans submitted in 1261. In 1392, Yi Songgye and his followers rose up (with a bit of assistance from China) and seized power from a greatly weakened Mongol dynasty. It was during the early years of the Yi dynasty that the Koreans first developed their own written language, having employed modified Chinese pictographs up to that point.

In 1592, a rebuffed invasion by Japan weakened the Koreans, and in 1637, the Manchu-led Chinese made good where Japan had failed. At this point, Korea sealed itself off from everyone but their Chinese rulers and became known as the Hermit Kingdom. This lasted until the Japanese returned in 1876 demanding to trade with the agriculturally rich Koreans. At this point, Korea opened up to the United States and Europe, hoping to avoid Japanese dominance.

Japan, however, solidified its control after a victorious war against China in 1898 and another victory over Russia in 1905. After this point, Korea became a virtual slave colony for Japan. The brutality of the rule, which lasted until after World War II, is still the subject of much controversy in both countries.

After World War II, the greatly impoverished Korea was occupied by the U.S.S.R. in the north sectors and the United States in the south. When the democratic south declared independence in 1950, the newly socialist north invaded. For the next three years, both sectors were devastated as North Korean, Soviet, and Red Chinese forces battled it out with United Nations and South Korean troops. After two million deaths, a truce (but no treaty) was signed in 1953, and the peninsula was formally divided into its present-day boundaries. A highly patrolled "no man's land" separates the two nations.

The south became a focus of investment from the West, and economic recovery began in quick order. Democracy did not fare as well, and martial law was declared in 1972, ostensibly to avert a coup. For the ensuing 15 years, the country banded back and forth between feeble government action and repressive political reaction. Protests grew in both size and vehemence until 1988, when Roh Tae-woo was elected. His political reforms greatly soothed protesters and foreign investors alike.

Four years later Kim Young-sam came into the presidency, and the corruption of former administrations was exposed. Roh and his predecessor Chun were both jailed for taking graft and remain so presently. Kim Young-sam was replaced by the former political prisoner Kim Dae-jung in 1998, just after South Korea's (and Asia's) economic plunge. He opened talks with a seemingly still hostile North Korea and expanded domestic political reforms. In 2000, Kim Dae-jung even journeyed to North Korea to meet his cantankerous counterpart, Kim Jong Il. Currently, South Korea is concentrating on economic rejuvenation while acting as an intermediary between an anxious West and an occasionally threatening North Korea. In 2006 South Korea continued to back its ally the United States in anti-terrorism efforts in hopes of keeping a lid on its northern cousins should "push come to shove" over nuclear issues on the Korean peninsula. South Korea has sent troops to Iraq and Afghanistan, and offered troops for the peacekeeping mission to Lebanon in 2006.

Greetings and Courtesies

Koreans are extremely courteous and formal in business dealings. Face, the measure of one's dignity, is crucial to Koreans. They are enormously sensitive to maintaining their own face, as well as that of visitors, in everything they do.

Koreans generally bow to each other when meeting, but with most foreigners the handshake is now the accepted greeting. In social situations, and if dealing with an older person, a slight head bowing is also appropriate. When not sure whether to bow or shake hands, allow the Korean counterpart to take the lead.

Business cards are a key element in Korean business, and the exchange of cards is somewhat ritualized. Foreign firms should have their cards translated with text in Korean on one side and the original on the other. Business titles and rank, along with any upper level academic degrees, should be listed clearly. Titles, especially academic ones, are regularly used for addressing people. Accurate translations must be made as job titles will dictate levels of access given to delegates during meetings. Cards are offered or received with both hands. Single-handed operations are considered rude. When offered a card, the receiver should not just pocket it casually. The card should be studied and responded to with all due respect, as it is truly representative of the giver. It is also improper

to write upon such cards in the presence of the Korean giver. It is better to keep the cards at hand and then match faces to names once meetings begin.

Note: Visitors from cultures that exchange embraces at greeting will find that such actions make the Koreans very uncomfortable. Koreans are very courteous but rarely show affection in public to non-family members.

Business Ethic and Framework

Koreans are generally highly disciplined and hardworking, but they can also be distrustful of outsiders and extremely nationalistic. Korean business behavior is largely determined by Confucianism, which teaches respect for superiors, duty to family, loyalty to friends, humility, sincerity, and courtesy. Workers generally respect the companies they work for and are driven to help their business succeed. Among coworkers, people of higher status and age are respected by those beneath them and are deferred to in speech and action. Business friends trust each other and help each other succeed both at work and at home.

Employees work hard, but labor strikes are common for both political and economic reasons. Management styles are a combination of Confucianism and Western behavior, depending on an individual's background. Business is conducted formally, with great value placed on punctuality, efficiency, and thriftiness. Korean bosses expect their directives to be carried out to the letter. This has caused problems when Korean managers work in less hierarchical societies.

Contracts are rigidly adhered to in Korea, so foreign firms must spell out exactly what is required. Korean courts have, relative to most of Asia, decent legal protection for foreign companies engaged in local markets.

Warning: Visitors need to realize that Koreans are very serious about conducting business and economically advancing their society. If they sense that foreigners do not share their attitudes, all deals are off.

Decision Making

Koreans make it a point never to act as individuals but to have group cohesion. Before any action is taken or a decision made, there must be consensus from everyone involved. This is reached by circulating memos that must receive some level of approval from everyone in the hierarchy. Top management serves only as a coordinator of the process rather than as the seat of true decision makers. While the process can be slow, it does make for a smooth implementation of decisions once they are made.

Note: Koreans try not to say "no" or deliver bad news in public. If a project or negotiation develops problems, no one will want to openly admit there are difficulties, and it may be necessary to look for subtle signs that something has gone wrong. Direct questions at meetings will only result in increasingly vague replies. The hard truths in Korea are only delivered in private.

Meetings

Business meetings are very formal in tone. The time and place must be arranged well in advance, and punctuality is required rather than requested. Before a meeting detailed agendas should be agreed upon and set.

Koreans generally are not sure how to behave at a first meeting until everyone's status is properly determined. Advance materials about the members of the foreign delegation will assist in easing this process. Even then, visitors will get questions about their education, families, place of birth, marital status, and age during the initial greeting. Much of this has to do with determining the proper forms of address in the Korean language and is not meant to be intrusive.

Once the small talk has subsided, the Korean leader will give a welcoming speech and visitors may reciprocate. Negotiations are conducted with managers of equal rank seated opposite each other. (This makes properly translated business titles very important.) Agendas will be rigidly observed, and side topics will be pushed to another meeting time. Light refreshments will be served, but the atmosphere will always be solemn. The Korean host will dictate break times, meal periods, and the end of a day's negotiating. Visitors will special needs or technical requirements for presentations should make them known before arrival in Korea.

Koreans are more at ease acting as a group than as individuals. They will become uncomfortable when visitors speak as individuals, argue among themselves, or when statements are made that are not in harmony with previous statements. The foreign firm's senior member should be designated as the sole spokesperson. Subordinates should filter their statements and questions through the team leader.

Note: Koreans are not known for their smiling faces and can appear quite grim during discussions. Their demeanor is in no way an indication of their pleasure or displeasure at what is being discussed. It is best to disregard this bit of body language altogether.

Business Entertaining

Like much of Korean business life, entertaining is a formal and an often downright serious matter. Koreans like to showcase their culture and cuisine when entertaining foreign firms. Music recitals, literary readings, sporting

events, and museum tours will all be offered with a distinct element of cultural self-promotion.

Food in Korea tends toward the spicy hot, so visitors should be prepared. Ingredients can also be a bit exotic and aromas are strong. However, the food is a cultural icon and should not be turned down casually lest an insult be lodged. Only medical or religious dietary restrictions will be accepted as a legitimate excuse for declining these delicacies. (Better to take small quantities than none at all.) Compliments about the food will score many points with the Koreans. Korea is also chopstick country, and visitors should be adept at their use if they wish to impress local counterparts.

Note: Korean men fancy themselves a tough lot, and heavy drinking is part of that image. Big westerners may find themselves challenged to drinking contests if post-prandial barhopping is on the entertainment agenda. Compete at the peril of a massive hangover during the next day's meetings, as such challenges can be a "last man standing" type ordeal.

Women

Women are regarded as second-class citizens in Korea and are generally employed only at lower-level administrative capacities in corporate offices. Foreign businesswomen, on the other hand, should experience few "respect" problems if their rank is made evident before arrival at a local counterpart's offices. However, foreign female managers are expected to be conservative in dress and speech without a hint of assertiveness. Women tend to rule the roost domestically in Korea, but in public and business they "follow a few steps behind."

Note: Confrontations between foreign women and Korean businessmen will escalate quickly and will cease only when the male feels his pride has been salved. However, in defense of Korean culture, confrontations at the negotiating table will have to be sought out intentionally by visitors of either gender.

Business Attire

Korean men dress conservatively for work and usually wear suits and ties regardless of weather. Visiting male managers should wear dark or gray suits, white shirts, and conservative ties. Bow ties (hand-tied only) are also popular among senior executives. Female visitors should stay with dark suits or conservative dresses. Overly revealing or tight clothing will only serve to make it more difficult to be taken seriously.

Koreans judge all visitors by their attire, so clothes of the best quality affordable are the most appropriate. Accessories and jewelry such as rings and watches will also be taken into account and admired by Korean business counterparts. Avoid excessively expensive or showy items, however.

Note: The Koreans are more akin to the Japanese than the Chinese in this area.

Politics and Graft

Politics in South Korea can be extremely volatile, and even former presidents have been sentenced to death for graft convictions. Much has been done to clean up the excesses of the 1980s, but government and business are still tightly linked. Requests for graft will usually be filtered through the Korean half of a joint venture involving foreigners. It can be declined at the risk of slowing down, but not stopping, a project. Requests for pettier amounts from licensing bureaucrats can also be deflected without too much consequence. Korea ranks with many emerging markets (e.g., China, Lithuania) when it comes to graft, so foreign firms should be prepared for the requests if not the payments.

Business Fraud

Korean companies have been playing on the global stage for several decades. The local courts offer, relative to most of Asia, pretty decent protection for foreign firms with commercial grievances. The highly competitive environment and a strong need for foreign investment are keeping cases of fraud to a minimum. Basic due diligence and inventory security measures should be sufficient for working inside of South Korea. Special attention should be paid to financial institutions chosen for handling investment funds.

Embassies & Consulates

Australia

Embassy of Australia

11th Floor Kyobo Bldg. 1

Chongro 1-ka

Chongro-ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 2003-0100, 2003-0111

Austria

Embassy of Austria

Kyobo Building, Room 1913

1-1, Chong-ro, 1-ka, Chongro-gu

Seoul 110-714

Republic of Korea

Tel: [82] (2) 732-9071, 732-9072, 732-9485

Fax: [82] (2) 732 9486

Web: www.austria.or.kr

Email: austroam@kornet.net

Canada

Embassy of Canada

10th and 11th Floor - Kolon Building

45, Mugyo-Dong - Chung-ku

Seoul 100 170

Tel: [82] (2) 3455-6000

Fax: [82] (2) 755-0686

China

Embassy of the People's Republic of China

1-10 Ka Hye Dong

Joungro-ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 743-1491

Fax: [82] (2) 743-1494

Estonia

Honorary Consulate General of Estonia

Room 501 - Daewoo Center Building

541 - 5-Ga Namdaemunno

Chung-Gu, Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 759-2020

Fax: [82] (2) 759-2035

France

Embassy of France

30, Hap-Dong

Sodaemun-Ku

Seoul 120-030

Tel: [82] (2) 312-3272

Fax: [82] (2) 393-6108

Email: ambfraco@elim.net

Ireland

Embassy of the Republic of Ireland

15 Floor Daehan Fire and Marine Ins. Bldg. 51-1

Namchang-dong. Chung-ku

Seoul (100-160)

(Subway Line #4(Blue), Hoehyun Station, Exit #5)

Tel: [82] (2) 774-6455, 774-6457

Fax: [82] (2) 774-6458

Email: hibernia@bora.dacom.co.kr

Israel

Embassy of Israel
Dae Kong Bldg
823-21 Yoksam-Dong
Kangnam-ku
Seoul
Tel: [82] (2) 564-3448
Fax: [82] (2) 564-3449
Email: israel@soho.ios.com

Italian Embassy
Embassy of Italy
1-398, Hannam-Dong
Yongsan-Ku
Seoul
Tel: [82] (2) 796-0491
Fax: [82] (2) 797-5560
Email: ambseoul@ktnet.co.kr

Japan
Embassy of Japan
9th Fl. - Kyobo Bldg.
Chongro-ku, Seoul
Tel: [82] (2) 765-3011/2/3
Fax: [82] (2) 742-4629
Web: www.japanem.or.kr
Email: japanem@chollian.net

Netherlands Embassy
Embassy of the Netherlands
Kyobo Building, 14th Floor
Chongro 1-ka
Chongro-ku
Seoul 100 714
Tel: [82] (2) 737-9514
Fax: [82] (2) 735-1321

New Zealand
Embassy of New Zealand
Kyobo Building, Rooms 1802 - 1805
1 Chongno 1-GA,
Chongno-Gu, (CPO Box 1059)
Seoul
Tel: [82] (2) 730-7794, 737-4861
Email: nzembseol@uriel.net

Singapore
Embassy of Singapore
19th Floor - Taepyungro Building
310, Taepyungro 2-ka - Chung-ku
Seoul 100-102
Tel: [82] (2) 774-2464
Fax: [82] (2) 773-2465
Email: singemb@unitel.co.kr

Spain
Embassy of Spain
Hannam-dong 726-52
Yongsan Ku
Seoul
Tel: [82] (2) 793-5703
Fax: [82] (2) 796-8207

Sweden
Embassy of Sweden
Hanhyo building 12th Floor
136 Seorin-dong - Chongro-ku

Seoul

Tel: [82] (2) 738-0846

Fax: [82] (2) 733-1317

Email: swedemb@swedemb.or.kr

United Kingdom

British Embassy

Taepyeongno 40

4 Jeong-dong

Jung-gu

Seoul 100-120

Tel: [82] (2) 3210-5500

Tel: [82] (2) 3210-5653 (Consular and Visa)

Fax: [82] (2) 725-1738

Fax: [82] (2) 736-6241 (Commercial)

Fax: [82] (2) 3210-5528 (Defence)

Fax: [82] (2) 738-2797 (Economic and Science/Technology/Environment)

Fax: [82] (2) 720-4928 (Press and Public Affairs)

Fax: [82] (2) 735-7473 (Political)

Fax: [82] (2) 3210-5653 (Consular)

Web: www.uk.or.kr

Email: bembassy@britain.or.kr

Email: postmaster.seoul@fco.gov.uk

United States of America

Embassy of the United States of America

Consular Section

82 Sejong-ro

Chongro-ku

Seoul 110-710

American Citizen Services:

Tel: [82] (2) 397-4114

Fax: [82] (2) 397-4101

Web: <http://seoul.usembassy.gov/>

Email: seoul_acs@state.gov (American Citizen Services)

Email: seouliv@state.gov (Immigrant Visas)

Email: seoulniv@state.gov (Nonimmigrant Visas)

Email: seoulgoldteam@state.gov (E, H, L, O, P and Q visas)

The Businesswoman

Women on the Global Road

Now an established presence in the management workforce and as traveling executives, women may find themselves on the road as much as their male counterparts in seeking to further business opportunities. However, specific gender concerns do need addressing when it comes to conducting business and travel in a country, place, or culture other than one's own. Arming oneself with information in advance will do wonders in overcoming many a difficult situation. The best sources from which to derive helpful hints are other female travelers. Seek them out and inquire of them what to expect, most especially those who have been to the destination to which you will travel. In a pinch, their tips may turn out to be your saving grace. Similarly, upon arrival it is in a woman's interest to observe female behavior in the country of travel to learn what is appropriate and how best to blend in.

Advice for Female Travelers

The crime rate in general for South Korea is quite low, and there are no unusually high rates of crime directed against women. However, that being said, women should not walk or take taxis alone at night in urban areas. Rural areas should be visited in group format only, day or night.

Sustained direct eye contact with Korean men is considered flirtation and is therefore open to misinterpretation. Western women are generally thought to be of lesser moral fiber than Korean women. Any boisterous or attention-getting behavior will be taken as an invitation.

Note: Many incidents of foreign women being offered part-time "modeling" jobs and then being hustled for prostitution have been reported. Such invitations should arouse immediate suspicion and be flatly declined.

Cultural Considerations

Women must consider that cultural norms are different for females in a foreign country. To argue with long-established customs interwoven with religion may only serve to antagonize your hosts and a prospective business deal. To establish respect, a woman should remain low-key with her delegation and avoid public displays of affection. Professional, reserved behavior and dress are imperative since a woman may fall under sharper scrutiny than her male counterparts.

Cultural Tips

- State your wishes clearly so that mixed signals do not become a problem.
- Wear a wedding band and carry a photograph of a husband and children (even if you have none) to stave off harassment.
- Try and look for other women to sit near on public transport; women-only compartments or areas are designated for this purpose.
- To repel harassment, ignore sexual advances, exposed genitalia, whistles, and various forms of catcalls; avoid eye contact and do not engage in any conversation. A loud shout in English may serve to embarrass and shame the culprit and send him on his way.

Business Attire

Female visitors should stay with dark suits or conservative dresses. Overly revealing or tight clothing will only serve to make it more difficult to be taken seriously. Young Korean women are quite fashion-conscious and will wear the latest fashions on their excursions about the city.

Koreans judge all visitors by their attire, so clothes of the best quality affordable are the most appropriate. Accessories and jewelry such as rings and watches will also be taken into account and admired by Korean business counterparts. Avoid excessively expensive or showy items, however.

Note: The Koreans are more akin to the Japanese than the Chinese in this area.

Women's Health Issues

Traveling involves extra stress and health concerns to consider. Change of diet, time zone, and living conditions will take up an enormous amount of physical reserve. Women should consider taking extra vitamin, mineral, and food supplements to ensure optimum physical health. Since many travelers avoid meat in developing countries, supplements are further encouraged. Other points to consider:

- Expect to experience irregular menstrual cycles or none at all due to jet lag, stress, and new and irregular

eating and sleeping habits.

- Bring any female hygiene products that you use at home, i.e.: tampons, pads, medication, prescriptions, etc. as they may not be readily available at the time of your arrival or even at all.
- Birth control pills may not work properly if you experience stomach upset or diarrhea. If you vomit within three hours of digesting a pill, take another to ensure proper protection.
- Yeast infections become more problematic in hot, humid climates. Stick to cotton undergarments and clothing that is loose fitting to allow maximum airflow to your body. Nylons and tight pants may also induce yeast infections. Come prepared with medication.
- Carry the telephone number or email of your gynecologist at home in case you have urgent questions. Try and steer clear of gynecological examinations in developing countries due to hygienic conditions.

Helpful Resources

Advancing Women

Web: www.advancingwomen.com

Canasian Businesswomen's Network

Email: cabninfo@apfc.apfnet.org

The International Alliance (TIA)

Email: info@t-i-a.com

Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT)

Web: www.owit.org

Women in Technology International (WITI)

Web: www.witi.org/Center/Offices/About

Email: info@witi.org

Women's Institute of Management (WIMNET)

Web: www.jaring.my/wimnet

Working Woman

Web: www.workingwoman.com

Business Strategies for Women

1. Prepare in advance what to expect, not only in terms of business, but attitude of the local culture toward women.
2. Behave and dress conservatively; it is your first and basic step toward gaining respect.
3. Anticipate equality issues as they will likely surface.
4. Maintain a sense of humor. A foreign country has many oddities, your presence possibly being one of them. Relieve some of the stress with a humorous outlook.
5. Brush off sexual innuendos and comments about appearance and carry on with the business at hand. Keep a cultural outlook on such remarks. If a member of the other delegation becomes a problem or nuisance, take him aside and inform him that it makes you uncomfortable, or tell another member of his delegation to put a stop to it.
6. Exhibit tolerance and understanding for the other culture. Questions about your marital status and family may prove ubiquitous, as it interests people how things work for you.
7. If you are a team leader, prepare your delegation in advance to treat you in a matter-of-fact, supportive fashion. A reaction from a delegation unaccustomed to working with females in authority may be derailed a bit if they observe your role is nothing but routine.
8. Generational attitude differences may exist toward women. Prepare to adjust to them.
9. Professional behavior, a respect for local traditions, and an in-demand service or product will assist you as a businesswoman.

General Safety Tips

1. Prearrange transportation for your arrival. In many countries, hagglers and touts will approach you at the airport offering transportation options. If you have none, decline and find the transportation booth in the airport; or, if possible, befriend someone on your flight with whom you might share a cab.
2. If you are being dropped off in an unlit area, ask your driver to wait until you are safely inside. Women should avoid traveling at night.
3. Find out from your hotel staff where it is safe to go alone and what areas merit avoiding.

4. If you plan on meeting with a stranger, do it in a busy place outside of your hotel.
5. If you encounter someone gesturing or honking for you to stop, do not stop until you have found a busy public place with plenty of lighting before determining the problem.
6. Women can dine alone outside of the hotel in Asian countries, but may receive curious looks from natives wondering why they travel alone.
7. Jogging is not recommended in Asian countries; such activity may be viewed as immodest and unorthodox. Top-end or expensive-rank hotels often have fitness facilities to use instead.
8. If you find yourself on a crowded bus, subway, or train with a male pressing up against you in an obviously sexual way, try embarrassing him by shouting in English. Public shame or humiliation will often keep further advances at bay.
9. Try and look for other women to sit near on public transport. If you feel uncomfortable in any situation, get out of it.
10. Women with light-colored hair will invariably receive more curious attention in an Asian country. Tying your hair back and/or donning a head covering will assist in taking some immediate attention away from you.

Hotel Safety Tips

1. Women should ask for a room on the second floor or higher and near the center of the hallway corridor away from fire exits where would-be assaulters can lurk and escape with more ease.
2. Don't feel shy about asking to see your room before deciding to take it. Do not let anyone except the front desk clerk see or overhear the number of your room.
3. Do not show your room key in public, and keep it under tight security. Avoid stairwells, an easy place for assaulters to hide, and don't travel in elevators alone with male strangers about whom your instincts send you a warning bell.
4. If a stranger is wandering the halls when you plan to enter or exit your room, wait until he leaves. If he doesn't, report him to the front desk.
5. Do not open the door for anyone who knocks whom you do not expect. Use the peephole. Call the front desk if necessary to verify the presence of any hotel staff wishing to enter.
6. When leaving the room, put out the "do not disturb" sign, and leave the TV on if you wish to deter possible thieves.
7. Pack a flashlight should the lights suddenly go out.
8. Take the business card of your hotel before going out in case you get lost. Do not give out the name of your hotel unless absolutely necessary, and do not share with anyone that you are alone. Use your creativity and make up a story if you must.
9. Always lock the door when you are inside the room. A portable extra door-locking device may prove a prudent pre-trip purchase. A rubber doorstopper is also an easy item to pack.

Essential Terms

ENGLISH	KOREAN
Yes	Ne
No	A ni yo
Good morning	An nyeong ha se yo
Hello (daytime)	An nyeong ha se yo
Hello (evening)	An nyeong ha se yo
Hello (telephone)	yeo bo se yo
Good-bye	An nyeong hie gye se yo
Please	Eo seo jom
Thank you	Gam sa ham ni da
Pleased to meet you	Man na seo bang gap seum ni da
Excuse me; I'm sorry	Jam-kan-man-yo/mi-an ham-ni-da
My name is ____	Je i reum-eun im-ni-da
I don't understand	Jway-song-ham-ni-da-man
Do you speak English?	Yeong-eo-reul ha-shim-ni-ka?

BASIC TERMS

ENGLISH	KOREAN
Help!	Do woom!
Emergency	Bi sang sa tae
Stop!	Joong ji!
I am sick	Na nuun apuda
Food	Eum sick
Water	Mool
Money	Don
Credit card	Shinyong card
Currency	You tong
Coins	Dong gun
Map	Ji do
Address	Joo bo
Baggage	Hwa mool
Clothes	Ot
Car rental	Cha imdae
Interpreter	Hae suck ja
Stamp	Woo pyo
Be (verb)	Woo I da
Have (verb)	Gajida

INTERROGATIVE TERMS

ENGLISH	KOREAN
How?	U tu ke?
How much?	Ul ma?
What?	Moo ossl?
When?	On je?
Where?	A di e?
Who?	Noo goo?
Why?	Wae?

PLACES

ENGLISH	KOREAN
Airport	Gong hang
Bank	Enn haeng
Bus station	Bus jung nu jang
Consulate	Young sa gwan
Doctor	Eui sa
Downtown (city center)	Do si
Embassy	Dae sa gwan
Foreign exchange	Wea hwan
Hospital	Byoung won
Hotel	Hotel
Pharmacy	Yack gook
Police station	Kyoung chal su
Post office	Woo che gook
Railway station	Youk
Restaurant	Shick dang
Taxi/Taxi stand	Taxi/Taxi jung tu jang
Telephone	Jun hwa
Toilet	Hwa jang sil
Tourist information center	Kwan kwang an nae so

OPPOSITE TERMS

ENGLISH	KOREAN
Cheap	Ssa da
Expensive	Bi ssa da
Fast	Pa ru da
Slow	Nu ri da
Easy	Shi woon
Difficult	A tyn woon
Near	Ga ka woon

Far	Mul da
Good	Jo enn
Bad	Na pun
Hungry	Bae go pun
Thirsty	Gal jong na nun
Warm	Ta tethan
Cold	Choo woon
Open	Youl lin
Closed	Dat hin
Free	Moo ryo
Occupied	Chajihan
Before	Jun e
After	Hoo e
In	An
Out	Back
In front	Aap
Behind	Duie
Enough	Choong boon han
Too much	Nu moo man enn
Entrance	Ip goo
Exit	Chool goo
Right	O run
Left	Whaen
Straight on	Ba ro
Above	We
On	We
Under	A rae
Yesterday	A jae
Today	O nul
Tomorrow	Nae il
Past	Gwa gu
Present	Hynn je
Future	Mi rae
Always	Hang sang
Often	Ja joo
Sometimes	Ga gum
Rarely	Du mul ge
Never	Junhyu

Maps



Society and Culture

Time & Punctuality

General Attitudes Toward Time

South Koreans attach great importance on punctuality, and most are careful to arrive punctually for both business and social occasions. The South Korean business culture is based on creating a respectful rapport with business associates, and they spend a significant amount of time developing and fostering personal contacts.

Business Engagements

Arrive punctually for all business appointments in South Korea, whether you are meeting an individual or a group. For the most part, your South Korean associates will arrive on time, although you may occasionally have to wait a few minutes for an especially busy executive. Long delays, however, are unusual. Business meetings over lunch or dinner are common in South Korea. It is equally important to be punctual for meetings that take place over meals. The same applies to meetings with government officials or functionaries—be punctual, and expect that your meeting will start on time.

When setting your schedule, plan on delays due to traffic congestion, as heavy traffic proves quite common in South Korean cities. Leaving enough time between meetings may take care of traffic problems or allow for an unforeseen luncheon invitation. Plan that your meetings in South Korea will begin and end on time. Remember to plan your visit around Lunar New Year, the Moon Festival, and the holiday period in July and August.

For the most part, you can expect South Korean companies to meet your production and service deadlines. If you have doubts, pad your schedule and stay in touch with your South Korean counterparts, but be careful not to appear too aggressive.

Social Engagements

When invited to a South Korean home for dinner, always arrive on time. The same applies for meal invitations in restaurants. For most parties or social functions, it is acceptable to arrive a few minutes late. For personal meetings with friends, arrive on time and assume that your friend will be punctual as well.

Women in Business

General View

South Korean women have traditionally suffered heavy discrimination throughout their history. Although certain prejudices still persist, contemporary South Korean women have become increasingly active participants in the country's economic sector and now make up about half the South Korean workforce, although they still have a limited presence in the business sector.

The South Korean government has taken steps and initiatives to encourage more women to start their own businesses. These measures have led to an increase in the number of women-run businesses and recent trends suggest that the trend is set to continue.

Legal Rights

South Korean women enjoy the same legal rights as men. Women were granted the right to vote in 1948 and they also possess the rights to own a business as well as to own and inherit property.

Gender-based pay discrepancies exist in South Korea, and statistics indicate that women earn about 65 percent of what men earn for performing the same job.

Women in Professions

The traditional jobs for rural South Korean women are taking care of the household and working on the farm. Urban South Korean women are concentrated in the nursing and teaching sectors, although an increasing number are branching out into the scientific and technical fields. A huge portion of the female workforce can be found in South Korea's factories, especially on assembly lines.

There are quite a few female heads of companies in South Korea, although they are in a minority when compared to the number of males who head companies. For instance, Sung Joo Kim is the CEO of Sung Joo DandD, Jeong Myung-keum is the president of the Korean Women Entrepreneurs Association, and Kim Sung Joo, designated by Asiaweek magazine as one of Asia's Most Influential Women, is the CEO of the import retailing firm Sung Joo International.

Trends gathered from various studies indicate that the outlook is bright for women's increasing participation in the business sector and other areas traditionally occupied by men.

There are a few positions in the military from which women are barred. They include the artillery, armor, anti-air, and chaplaincy corps. South Korean women follow Western styles of dress and there are no dress code restrictions that prevent them from taking up certain jobs.

Most South Korean women quit their jobs after giving birth in order to take care of the child. However, if the mother continues working, childcare is assumed by members of the extended family or, in the case of urbanites, by state-sponsored day-care centers.

Women as Business Owners

There are many women who own their own businesses and trends suggest that the numbers will continue to increase. Most women-owned businesses focus on clothing, cosmetics, food processing, jewelry, natural products, home appliances, health, ceramics, souvenirs, and magazine publishing.

Foreign Businesswomen Visiting the Country

South Korean business people have no problems in dealing with foreign businesswomen, although some of them do tend to look upon foreign women in general as sex objects.

First appearances are extremely important in South Korea, so women are advised to wear smart clothes that are not too revealing. The concept of a private space is foreign to South Koreans, who usually stand quite close together. Touching someone who is not a relative or close friend, however, is considered distasteful.

Holding hands is common among friends of the same sex who have only platonic relationships with each other, which should not be mistaken for homosexuality. Women who are close friends may even wrap their arms about the other's waist.

Women in Culture

General View and Position in Society

The position of women in South Korean society has improved since the days when Confucianism dictated that a woman's place was within the four walls of her home. Contemporary women are playing an increasingly wider role in all areas of Korean society as it becomes an increasingly industrialized and affluent nation. Over one half of South Korean women are employed and one quarter of married Korean women work full-time. Women workers put in an average of over 50 hours a week, which is a few hours less than Korean men and much more than men or women in most other developed countries. Women also still face widespread discrimination and restrictive social conventions that confine them to certain professions such as nursing.

A Korean woman's position depends a lot on her social class. In the urban middle class, women may be more or less confined to the home, but they are well educated and make decisions within their households. Working-class women, on the other hand, venture out of the house and into the workforce more often, but this is often out of economic necessity and comes with a decrease in decision-making power at home.

In politics, women occupy only 20 of the 299 seats in the National Assembly, although the Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition party are both women. In the judiciary, one of the 14 Supreme Court justices is a woman. Women also make up about 8.5 percent of all judges and prosecuting officers.

Rural South Korean women mostly work in the agricultural sector and lack access to the variety of educational and employment opportunities that their urban counterparts enjoy. They are also more vulnerable to traditional discriminatory customs and practices than urban women. To help them catch up with their urban counterparts, the government has begun initiatives to train rural women in skills required for work in technologically advanced workplaces.

South Korea has no linguistic or racial minorities, making it one of the world's most ethnically homogenous populations, and discrimination against interracial South Koreans is pervasive. Women who marry interracially and their children are subject to this social prejudice.

South Korean women follow a Western style of dress, and there are no particular dress code restrictions.

Legal Rights

South Korea women are guaranteed all the legal rights that men enjoy. They were granted the right to vote in 1948 and have the right to drive cars and to own and inherit property and assets. Laws prohibiting gender discrimination have increased the number of women in the workforce, but violence against women, including domestic abuse and rape, continues to be a very serious problem.

Abortions in South Korea are legal but subject to various restrictions. The procedure can be performed within 28 weeks of conception, with the consent of the pregnant mother and, if married, the concurrence of her spouse.

Women have the right to initiate divorces in South Korea, and divorced women can lay claim to custody of her children.

Education

South Korea's Constitution provides women equal access to education and forbids discrimination based on gender. According to 2003 estimates, the literacy rates for South Korean men and women are the same, at 99 percent. Almost all South Korean girls complete high school, and a large majority of them go on to pursue their college education. South Korea has a co-educational system of schooling, and men and women share the same classroom space.

Educated South Korean women have equal job opportunities as the men. In fact, women are deemed indispensable to certain sections of the South Korean workforce.

Dating, Marriage, and Family

Most South Korean women, especially those living in the urban areas, have the freedom to choose their own spouses. However, many South Koreans still practice "arranged" marriages where relatives, friends, parents, or professional matchmakers facilitate meetings.

South Korean women typically begin dating in their early teens. Common places for women to meet men include educational institutions, workplaces, and social events. Most South Korean women get married in their mid-twenties.

South Korean customs require spouses to maintain their own surnames after marriage. Although men are the traditional heads of the households, many women are the *de facto* decision-makers. South Korean men expect their women to behave according to traditional submissive roles in public, but often cede decision-making powers at home to their wives. South Korean women are legally permitted to hold assets separately from their husbands.

One effect of the increasing educational and employment opportunities for South Korean women is that they are having fewer children and are having them later in life. The average number of children per family dropped from six children in 1962 to two in 1990, and more than half of children born in South Korea in 2002 had mothers who were aged 30 or older. An increasing number of households in South Korea are headed by single women.

Traditionally, boys were greatly favored at the expense of girls, hence the saying "One son is worth ten daughters" and the practice of selective abortions. Recent data showing that over 115 boys were born for every 100 girls born in Korea seem to indicate that these traditional preferences are still very much alive. Infertility carries a severe social stigma, though the acceptance of women who remain voluntarily childless is slowly gaining ground.

South Korean women have claim to an equal share of the conjugal property in the event of a divorce. Although the mother can claim custody of her children, she cannot register them in her own family registry. Children are always registered in the father's family registry and it remains that way even after a divorce.

Health

Women in South Korea are guaranteed equal access to all healthcare facilities and medical services. The standards of healthcare in South Korea are very good, often much better than those in Western developed countries. Under the National Health Insurance Act, every citizen is provided national health insurance. Maternal mortality rates for the year 2000 stood at 20 deaths per 100,000 live births and infant mortality rates for 2006 stood at 6.16 deaths per 1,000 live births.

Most South Korean women are not permitted to make their own healthcare decisions. For example, abortion laws require the consent of the woman's husband before the procedure can be performed.

The government supports family planning measures, and the use of contraceptives is widespread. More than 80 percent of women practice contraception, with 67 percent of them using modern contraceptive methods.

Interesting or Unusual Social Customs

One unusual custom in South Korea is that of "booking." When same-sex groups visit bars, waiters tend to seat people of the opposite sex next to them. This practice is considered to be quite normal, and women accept this practice as a practical way to meet men and perhaps have a dance. There are no obligations between the groups, and everybody typically goes their separate ways afterwards.

Gift Giving

General

Gift giving is common in South Korean society, where gifts reflect the consideration and thoughtfulness of the giver. Reciprocation of gifts in South Korea is obligatory. Certain formalities must be observed where gifts are concerned, as the tradition of gift giving serves as an important cultural custom. The appropriate gift varies according to the specific event and your relation to the recipient. If unsure, ask a Korean for assistance in choosing the appropriate gift or monetary amount and the necessary protocols for your situation.

Personal and Family Gifts

South Koreans usually give presents for weddings, birthdays, and funerals. Money in a red envelope is an accepted gift for all occasions. Ask a Korean associate or friend if you are unsure of the appropriate amount for the specific event and your relation to the recipient. Giving too little or too much can serve as a major faux pas. Fruit, accessories, and liquor are also commonly given. When you are invited to a celebration, small mementos from your home country make appreciated gifts.

In South Korea, presents should always be wrapped in brightly colored paper, traditionally yellow with red or green stripes.

Business Gifts

Expect to give and receive gifts at your initial business meeting. It's a good idea to set out with an assortment of wrapped presents. Gifts with your company logo or souvenirs from your hometown are appropriate. Desk accessories and fruit also serve as acceptable gifts. Liquor can be given, but only to male colleagues. Wait for your South Korean counterparts to initiate the gift giving. When giving presents to multiple people, be aware of their status, and see that the most senior person receives the most valuable gift.

If you are unsure of the hierarchy, choose something that can easily be shared and give a gift to the whole team. Food items, such as a box of pastries or chocolates, are ideal.

South Koreans believe in an equal exchange of gifts, so be careful not to give expensive presents, which they may not be able to reciprocate. A South Korean who receives a present that's too costly will probably return it politely.

South Koreans give and receive gifts with both hands. It is good manners for the recipient to resist accepting a present, so insist gently and politely until your gift is taken. Follow the same protocol when offered a gift. Don't open presents in front of the giver unless they ask you to and you know each other well. Reciprocate any gifts as soon as possible, preferably on the spot.

Farewell gifts are common in South Korea, so be prepared to give and receive gifts when you take your leave. Items from your home country are appropriate.

Hospitality Gifts

While visiting a South Korean home, bring a small, good-quality gift. Fruit, cake, chocolates, flowers, and imported coffee are all good choices. Imported liquor is fine, but be sure to give it to your host rather than to the hostess.

Taboo Gifts

Koreans consider the number four unlucky, so avoid giving gifts in numbers of four and don't offer anything with the numeral four on the packaging. Do not give green hats and avoid red print or writing in red ink as part of a gift or on a gift card because these are associated with death. Stay away from very expensive gifts, or even gifts that carry the appearance of being too costly, because South Koreans will feel obliged to reject them.

Do not use black or dark-colored giftwrap. Also stay away from knives and scissors, as sharp items signify the severing of a relationship.

Holidays & Festivals

Holidays	2005	2006	2007
New Year's Day	January 1	January 1	January 1
Seollal Day ¹	January 8 to 10	January 28 to 30	January 17 to 19
Independence Day	March 1	March 1	March 1
Labor Day	March 10	March 10	March 10
Arbor Day	April 5	April 5	April 5
Children's Day	May 5	May 5	May 5
Buddha's Anniversary ²	May 15	May 5	May 24
Memorial Day	June 6	June 6	June 6
Constitution Day	July 17	July 17	July 17
Liberation Day	August 15	August 15	August 15
Mid-Autumn Festival (Ch'usok) ³	September 17, 18		
National Foundation Day	October 3	October 3	October 3
Christmas Day ^{*1}	December 25	December 25	December 25

¹ The first day of the first moon is Seollal (lunar new year; January/February).

² Buddhist celebration commemorating the birth, enlightenment, and entry into Nirvana of Gautama Buddha.

³ Known as the Harvest Moon Festival, and marked by family reunions, celebrations take place on the 15th day of the 8th month of the Chinese calendar. Korean Thanksgiving.

^{*1} Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. In A.D.320, Pope Julius I fixed the date at December 25 based on the Gregorian calendar. The Orthodox church calculates Christmas using the Julian calendar and celebrates 13 days later on January 7.

Lifecycle**Introduction**

South Korea has experienced modernization, industrialization, and Westernization at an almost unprecedented pace. As a result, society is now a mix of centuries-old traditional practices and modern values that have emerged in just the last couple of decades. The widespread adoption of Western values has resulted in a slow, but rising, disregard for traditional beliefs. Current trends like the declining rate of marriage, the growing divorce rate, preference for small-sized nuclear families, acceptance of premarital sexual activities, gradual empowerment of women, voluntary delay in having children, and high levels of materialism were almost completely absent from society even a few decades ago. That said, a uniquely Korean mixture of Buddhist and Confucian rituals marks almost all important stages in a South Korean's life, from birth to death.

Birth

The birth of a child is an occasion for great joy and celebration. Koreans believe that the destiny of the baby is dependent on the day on which it is born. Families cherish and take care of newborn children in a very loving way. Babies are rarely separated from their mothers for the first two years, and the mothers usually carry them around

on their backs.

Koreans make special prayers to *sanshin* (a mountain god) and *samshin* (a birth god) on certain days following a

child's birth.

South Korea had a very high infant mortality rate up until a few decades ago. These days, however, almost all deliveries take place in hospitals or nursing homes and are attended by skilled medical attendants.

In the past, a child's first birthday was considered a day of great importance, since many children died before reaching this milestone. Although this is no longer the case, the special significance of the first birthday has carried on to this very day. The *tol* ceremony on a child's first birthday includes a special prayer for the child's longevity, special food to be shared with family members and neighbors, and a prediction of the child's future. On this day,

children wear colorful clothes called

tol-bok, whose styles vary depending on the child's gender. Both boys and girls wear a long belt called the *tol-ddi*, which is supposed to increase longevity, and a silk pouch called *tol-jumuni* for good luck.

The parents prepare a special *tol* table to celebrate the child's birthday. The menu usually consists of specially prepared food, including twelve varieties of *ddeok* (rice cakes), each of which has a unique significance. For instance, white steamed rice cakes represent a pure and divine clean spirit and longevity, while rice cakes coated with rough red bean powder are used to ward off evil spirits. Sticky rice cakes ensure that the child grows up into a tenacious and strong adult. Two types of half-moon shaped rice cakes are prepared, one empty and the other stuffed. The empty moon cake ensures the child will be generous, and the stuffed one is to endow him with wisdom. Once the table is prepared, the child's mother or grandmother prays for the child's longevity.

Toljabee is the ceremony that predicts the child's destiny or future. During this ceremony, the child sits with his or her parents on a traditional Korean mattress called *bolou*. Various items like a large bundle of thread, brush, Korean calligraphy set, pencil, books, money, and a bow and arrow are arranged on the table. For girls, needles, scissors, and rulers replace the bow and arrow. The child's future is predicted according to the items it picks up first. The bow and arrow signify a future as a warrior, the needle and thread indicate a long life, and the small *jujubes* shrub foretells many descendants. Books, pencils, and other related items mean that the child will become a successful scholar.

It is a tradition for guests to give the child a gold item, typically a ring, on his or her first birthday. These gifts of gold are kept safely and used to pay for the child's future education or other such purposes. Gifts of clothing and toys are also given.

Among Buddhists, the name of the child is chosen on the basis of the child's *kika* (horoscope). A Buddhist holy person, or *rimpoche*, announces the name after cutting a strand of the child's hair.

Abortions are legally permitted and can be performed within 28 weeks of conception. The abortion rate is extremely high in South Korea due to the practice of selective abortions, where women who want a male child abort female fetuses. Many Korean women also use abortion as their primary form of birth control.

Childhood

Obedience, respect for elders, and filial affection are the major values strictly incorporated in all Korean children. Dependence on parents is encouraged and forms an important, long-term source of support.

Parents and grandparents are more or less equally involved in bringing up the children. In most cases, mothers are the primary caregivers, followed by the grandparents. Children are highly treasured and infants are rarely let out of sight. Many parents go to the extent of sleeping with the infants in the same room, thereby ensuring constant physical and emotional care.

Koreans, in general, are obsessed with having male children. The popular saying "one son is worth ten daughters" aptly sums up their cultural gender preference. In fact, the desire for sons is so great that many women adopt strange practices, like holding elaborate religious services or eating highly unconventional food, to boost their chances of giving birth to a boy. The primary reason for this preference is the traditional role of the son as the heir to the family lineage. After the death of the father, it is the son who inherits the family assets and takes over the role as head of the household. Moreover, it is the son who has to take care of his parents during their old age.

Education is very important in South Korea, and nine years of schooling is compulsory for all children. Children generally begin their formal schooling at the age of six. Almost all Koreans are very highly educated, and competition for entrance into top educational institutions is fierce.

Children are usually not expected to work and contribute to the maintenance of the household. Korean laws prohibit the employment of children under the age of 15 and impose huge fines on errant employers. Child labor is not a serious social problem, since the enforcement of laws is generally effective.

Coming of Age

Most South Koreans view circumcision as a rite of passage that marks the boy as having come of age. It is usually performed during adolescence, around the age of 12. Some families celebrate a boy's coming of age by tying his hair into a topknot and giving him a *gat* (a traditional hat made of horsehair). The girls, too, have their hair made into a *chignon*, which is held in place with an ornamental pin known as *binyeo*. Among peer groups, a round of "binge" drinking is an informal way of celebrating one's passage to adulthood. Socially, marriage is also considered a major rite of passage, since it is believed to bestow the person with a certain "adult" maturity.

Youth who have come of age are expected to continue their education and thereafter get a good job. Children are generally not expected to contribute to the household income until after completing their education, by which time they are at least 18 years old.

South Korea is one of the very few countries where online gaming is a major social problem among the youth. The country has one of the highest per capita rates of broadband connectivity and, as a result, millions of highly addicted online gamers. The meteoric growth of the online gaming industry has seen an increasing number of youth spend large amounts of money and free time playing Internet-related games at home and cybercafés. Many youth refuse to study, take up jobs, or even venture out their rooms, preferring instead to closet themselves with their computers. As a result of sitting glued to the computer for hours and even days at a stretch, eating and sleeping at the keyboard, some of them have, literally, dropped dead. In addition, this craze has given rise to related problems, such as children resorting to stealing and prostitution to fund their addiction. In some cases, people have even tracked down and physically abused or murdered players who killed their gaming characters during competitions. Despite government efforts to control the problem, the number of addicts is on the rise.

Dating and Courtship

Western-style dating is becoming increasingly common in South Korea and, unlike in the past, is no longer considered a taboo. The majority of young people start dating in their late teens. Popular meeting places for men and women include educational institutions, the workplace, and social gatherings. Dating couples frequent coffee shops, restaurants, bars, discos, and private parties. It is almost always the boy who pays for the dating expenses. Traditionally, the vast majority of marriages were arranged, a practice that has declined considerably. The services of professional matchmakers are still used quite often, and marriage brokers fix about half of all South Korean marriages. These days, while parents and relatives may still choose potential partners, the young person has the final say in approving or rejecting their choice.

Attitudes towards premarital sex are rapidly changing, and young South Koreans are a lot more accepting of the practice as compared to previous generations. Traditional values, however, have not completely disappeared and many youth, girls in particular, continue to view casual sex as a social taboo. In general, the country's patriarchal society expects women to remain virgins until marriage while boys are given unrestricted freedom to "experiment."

The majority of South Korean women prefer men who are superior to them in terms of social status, income, age, and intelligence. Although Koreans in general do not approve of foreigners dating locals, the number of mixed marriages is on the rise. One of the reasons for this increase is the migration of rural women to the cities, leaving the rural men to search for brides from neighboring countries like China, Vietnam, and the Philippines. In addition, exposure to globalization and other cultures has led many women to seek foreign husbands, primarily Chinese or Japanese. Another contributing factor is that there are simply fewer women than men in Korea because of gender selection.

Marriage proposals can take place between two individuals or between their respective families. In the past, families often used a matchmaker to deliver a marriage proposal.

Marriage

Marriage is celebrated as one of the most significant events in a South Korean's life, one that signifies his or her passage from adolescence to adulthood. Most people celebrate their wedding with a religious ceremony. However, the desirability of marriage is on the decline, especially among women. Surveys reveal that most educated women now prefer a good job to marriage, a choice that would have been unthinkable in the past.

The average age of marriage for South Koreans is 30 years for men and 27 for women.

Most marriages are based on Confucian principles, although the actual rituals are a lot less complicated nowadays.

Many South Koreans try to incorporate ducks and geese into their wedding ceremonies, as they are important marriage symbols. This is because they mate for life and therefore represent marital loyalty and faithfulness.

The traditional costume worn by the bride consists of a *jeogori* (short jacket with long sleeves), *chima* (full-length wrap), boat-shaped silk shoes, and white cotton socks. The *jeogori* usually has two long ribbons tied together to form an *otkorum*. The groom usually wears a *chigori* (jacket with loose sleeves), trousers tied at the ankles with straps, and an overcoat. These days, many couples, particularly Christians, opt for tuxedos and white gowns.

The venue and rituals surrounding the religious part of the wedding ceremony depend on the religion of the couple. Most South Korean weddings are either Christian or Buddhist. In traditional Buddhist weddings, there are four main parts, namely *ewheehon* (marriage discussions), *nabcha* (fixing the date of the wedding), *nabpneh* (obtaining permission to marry), and *chinyoung* (the wedding). The actual wedding ceremony, known as *choilye*, is similar to Western ceremonies in which the wedding vows are taken. The *choilye* table is the centerpiece of the wedding hall and bears a red and blue colored candlestick, two vases decorated with pine and bamboo branches, two rice bowls, and a pair of chickens. In addition, two washbasins, two towels, two wine cups, chestnuts, *jujubes*, red beans, and other seasonal fruits are arranged on the table. All these items signify chastity, longevity, and fertility. The groom and the bride stand on either side of the table, on the eastern and western sides respectively. The ceremony is elaborate and requires the couple to bow to each other numerous times and drink a lot of wine.

Almost all weddings are followed by the obligatory wedding reception, frequently held at wedding halls or hotel banquet rooms. The wedding reception is usually a mix of traditional and modern practices. The menu typically consists of *bulgogi* (barbequed beef strips), *galbi* (marinated short ribs), varieties of *kimchi* (pickled cabbage, radish, and seafood combined with hot spices), different types of sauces, and steamed white rice cakes molded in the shape of dragons. At the end, the couple typically cuts a multi-tiered wedding cake.

A traditional practice that continues to form an integral part of modern-day Korean weddings is the *pyebaek*. This is the first time that the bride formally greets her in-laws and relatives. The father-in-law then wishes the bride well and throws dates and chestnuts in the air for the couple to catch in the bride's skirt. This ceremony is usually held a few days after the wedding.

In the past, the couple moved in with the husband's parents and became part of a large, extended family. The couple was expected to bear children as quickly as possible. Gender equality in a marriage was never a part of Korean society, and men have almost always had the greater say in all marital affairs.

In the past couple of decades, however, higher levels of education and employment have seen women play increasingly active roles in their marriages. Typically, the husband is expected to earn and bring home an income while the wife is required to take care of all the household chores. Most couples either live with the husband's parents or on their own.

South Korea's laws were traditionally discriminatory in that they provided the husband with the legal status of head of the family. Those laws have since been abolished and women now have the same rights as the men in all areas of marriage.

Extramarital relationships, despite being strongly condemned by society, are widespread, particularly among men. Surveys indicate that 75 percent of men have had adulterous relationships compared to 15 percent of women. In fact, adultery is the primary cause behind most South Korean divorces. Surveys, however, indicate that the youth of today are significantly more accepting of extramarital affairs than past generations.

In the past, divorces carried a great stigma and couples, particularly those in arranged marriages, were very reluctant to divorce. The legalization of divorce and rapid modernization of society have brought about great change, however. Both spouses now have the right to apply for a divorce. Obtaining one is very easy, since it costs very little and is available on a wide variety of grounds, including domestic violence and adultery. The laws require the couple to undergo a reconciliation session or "cooling off" period ranging from two to four weeks. The country follows a fault-based system and the guilty party is usually required to relinquish child custody and pay the other person compensation charges. Women have equal rights with regard to their share of the marital property and child custody. The standards governing divorce rulings in South Korea are very flexible, and judges are given a great deal of discretion and freedom.

Widow remarriage, while socially unacceptable in the past, is now a very frequent occurrence that does not carry a social stigma. Many widowed women, particularly educated and working professionals, prefer bachelors who are, in a majority of cases, younger than themselves.

Family and Parenting

Traditionally, it was common for a family unit to consist of two or three generations living together under the same roof. Increasing modernization and urbanization have caused the nuclear family to replace the extended household as the most common form of family unit. At present, families consisting of two parents and their children make up about 51 percent of all households. The median size of households has been on a consistent decline over the past couple of decades and now stands at about three members.

Children are highly valued, cherished, and well taken care of during their childhood. Parents leave no stone unturned to provide their children with the best education and material comforts.

In the past, Korean families usually desired a large number of children. The current generation of South Korean women, however, is shying away from their traditional roles as mothers and wives, preferring instead to focus on building their careers. As a result, the number of children desired by women has declined, along with the fertility rate. On an average, a woman now gives birth to about one child.

The primary reason for having children was the stigma attached to childless women, who were made the object of social ridicule. This cultural practice, however, has almost completely died out with the rise in the numbers of educated, working women choosing to remain voluntarily childless.

In accordance to tradition and Confucian precepts, the husband is the head of the family. As the head, he is also the chief decision-maker and primary breadwinner. Traditional cultural customs required the wife to obey her husband in all matters and occupy the subservient position. Her main roles were having children, performing domestic chores, and caring for family members. These traditions, however, are undergoing change. Women are increasingly gaining high levels of education and working outside the home. As a result, they contribute to the family's income and, in return, expect an equal share of the decision-making authority.

South Koreans enjoy both traditional and modern pastimes. Watching television is a major pastime, as is playing computer games and socializing with friends. Games like *chajon nori* (juggernaut) and tug-of-war involving lots of people are popular. City-dwellers are increasingly choosing to spend their leisure time away from home and frequently travel to the country's many mountains and beaches on weekends and holidays. Significant numbers of youth and adults are turning to the Internet for recreation, and online activities top the list of informal national pastimes.

In the past, breakfast was the biggest meal of the day when the family ate together. Times have since changed, and dinner has now replaced breakfast as the day's main meal due to busy, and often conflicting, work schedules.

The increase in South Korea's divorce rates has matched the rapid pace of Westernization, resulting in major changes to living patterns. The current divorce rate is higher than that of Europe and Japan, and an estimated one in two marriages ends in a divorce. Due to the fault-based system of divorce, child custody is awarded to the "innocent" parent. In most cases, the mother obtains custody of the children.

South Korea's tight-knit family structure strongly encourages strong, lasting bonds between family members. Children, especially boys, are provided with all the necessary comforts when young and, in turn, are expected to care for their parents when adults. This Confucian tradition of caring for one's elderly parents is considered vitally important and, as a consequence, is deeply ingrained in society.

Old people mostly live with one of their adult sons, although urbanization and the resulting rise of nuclear families has led to an increase in the numbers of the elderly forced to live in nursing homes and other forms of institutional care.

Work / Professional Life

Laws prohibit the employment of people below the age of 15 without special permission from the Ministry of Labor. Most South Koreans enter the labor market during their early or mid-twenties.

The workweek is from Monday through Saturday, with Sunday the weekly holiday. Government offices generally operate from 9a.m. to 6p.m. on the weekdays while banks remain open till 4:30p.m. on weekdays and 1p.m. on Saturdays.

South Korea's strong economy is characterized by low rates of unemployment. The current rate is below 4 percent and finding a job is not a matter of great concern.

South Korean women have historically suffered from legal, social, and cultural discrimination. They were denied their due rights, banned from playing public roles, and expected to submit to the dictates of their husbands and fathers. Globalization and the adoption of Western values have resulted in great changes in a short span of time. South Korean women are now breaking free of age-old traditions and making an impact on the economic and social structure of the country. Thousands of women are employed in almost all sectors of the economy, including banks, service enterprises, textiles, and electronics. Moreover, women hold a significant percentage of the country's information technology positions.

Gender discrimination, however, continues to exist in many forms. Despite increasing female participation in the workforce, the number of senior-level positions held by women is low due to continuing preference for men in top-level jobs. At present, women occupy about 5 percent of all the management-level positions in large corporations. Employers prefer placing women in administrative posts and secretarial posts. Women are also discriminated against in the area of wages. Statistics show that women earn about 30 percent less than men for performing the same job.

Many families, particularly the educated middle-classes, continue to consider working to be a man's job and expect the wife to take care of the house and family. As a result, women generally stop working after marriage or childbirth.

However, traditional beliefs are slowly being discarded and the number of working mothers is on the rise. Most working mothers depend on their parents or childcare centers to look after the children while they are at work. In spite of the government's efforts at providing adequate daycare facilities, a significant number of women continue to resign their jobs after childbirth.

The legal retirement age for both men and women is 60 years.

Old Age

Respecting elders comes naturally to Korean children, since they are taught its importance from early in their lives. Younger people give the elderly seats of honor at gatherings and feasts or at the family table. They address them by a respectful title, not by their first names. When talking to elders, younger people commonly bow their head and avoid making eye contact as a sign of respect. The Confucian tradition of respect and filial piety extends to one's ancestors, who are worshipped and revered.

The elderly generally live with the families of their adult children, especially their first-born sons, and are not normally placed in old-age homes or nursing institutions. Family members are expected and required to spend quality time with the elders. The sixtieth and the seventieth birthdays, called *hwangap* and *jingap* respectively, are significant events in a South Korean's life. Both occasions involve grand celebrations attended by numerous friends and relatives. However, these traditions are slowly fading away with the rapid Westernization of the South Korean society. In addition, urbanization and the trend towards nuclear families are making it increasingly difficult and impractical for young people to support their old parents financially.

Death

Beliefs and practices involving death, the afterlife, and death rituals are primarily governed by Confucian or Buddhist teachings. Koreans treat the dead with respect, believing that they are linked to their descendants' future prosperity.

The Buddhists believe that a person will be blessed in his rebirth if his thoughts are directed towards Buddha during his final moments of life. The people who gather around a deathbed encourage the dying person to recite any one of Buddha's names, or they may whisper the name into his or her ear. Wailing loudly is a common way of expressing grief when a person dies.

After a ritualistic bathing ceremony, the dead body is placed in a decorated coffin and cremated. The ashes of people without relatives are not preserved but instead sprinkled over a body of water. The eldest son remains near the dead body and supports himself with a cane in a symbolic expression of his need for emotional support.

The duration of the mourning period depends on the status of the family. Some families follow tradition and mourn for at least two years, during which time they perform a number of prayers and rituals for the deceased. In addition, families observe a number of commemorative ancestral rites like *chesa*, *charye*, *shije*, and *sadang*, making offerings of food and wine to the soul of the deceased.

South Koreans generally believe that the afterlife is an extension of life on this earth and that ancestors maintain close relationships with the living. Buddhists, however, teach that a dead person either attains *nirvana* (enlightenment, a state in which the soul becomes one with God) or is reincarnated into another body.

Religion

Religions of the Country

Religion in South Korea is characterized by a high degree of diversity. The majority of the population does not possess any religious affiliation. Christian groups (Roman Catholics, Protestants, and others) represent 26 percent of the people, Mahayana Buddhists another 26 percent, Confucianists 1 percent, and other religions the remaining 1 percent.

Mahayana Buddhism, Confucianism, Chondogyoism, and Korean Shamanism (the original religion of the indigenous Korean people) are the traditional religions of the country and have played an important role in shaping the moral code of the people of South Korea.

Mahayana Buddhism in South Korea is composed of three sects: *Chogye*, *Taego* and *Chontae*. The Japanese-founded *Taego* and the *Chontae* sects do not require their monks and nuns to refrain from sexual activity.

Chondogyoism (the Heavenly Way) evolved in the early 1900s and is an indigenous syncretic faith that assimilates elements of Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Christianity.

Confucianism, the official ideology of the 500-year-long Joseon Dynasty, greatly influences both the Buddhist and Christian faiths in South Korea. Confucianism is not so much a religion as a philosophy and moral code defining proper behavior and a person's place in society. It is followed by a great majority of South Koreans regardless of their formal religious affiliation.

South Korea is home to several new faiths such as the *Wonbulgyo* (or Won Buddhism) movement, founded in

1916, which postulates the unity of all things, and the Unification Church (or The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity), founded in 1954 by the Rev. [Sun Myung Moon](#), which promotes a socially conservative, messianic form of Christianity. A small minority of Koreans also practices Islam. South Korea is also home to Christian apocalyptic sects who regularly predict end of the world scenarios. The last date for the world's demise passed peacefully in 2000.

Basic Tenets

Christianity is based on the belief in one God represented in three co-equal Divine Persons of Father, Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit. For most Protestants, an individual's faith in God and study of the Bible are the most important means of salvation. Roman Catholics, however, also consider Church teachings and sacraments as valid sources of truth and grace.

The "Four Noble Truths" of Buddhism are that existence is *dukkha* (suffering); the cause of *dukkha* is *trishna* (craving, attachment); the state of *nirvana* is liberation, enlightenment, and the "extinction" of attachment, personality, and personal desires; the way to end all *dukkha* and achieve *nirvana* is to practice the Eightfold Path: right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right awareness, and right concentration.

Mahayana ("Great Vehicle") Buddhism lays stress on *maha-karuna* (the great compassion) and the altruistic quest of the *Bodhisattva*. *Bodhisattva* is the great being who seeks to attain the *bodhicitta* or the "awakened mind" to lead all sentient beings into *nirvana* or enlightenment, instead of seeking selfish enlightenment for himself. Mahayanists also emphasize *shunyata* or the notion of nothingness or emptiness, under which no *dharma* (entity) has *swabhava* (self-nature): they are all "empty" of individual identity but depend on something else for existence. *Shunya Vada*, or the Doctrine of the Void, is a theory of relativity. The Mahayana can also, on occasion, communicate a mystical vision of the Buddha or *dharma* that has been mistaken for something like a Buddhist "God."

The Mahayanists consider the *sutras* (philosophic verses) as a manifestation of the Buddha himself. The Mahayana *sutras*, some of which are highly revered, such as the *Prajna-paramita Sutras*, the Lotus *Sutra* and the *Mahaparinirvana Sutra* are considered to possess enormous spiritual power. Seen as spells that can lead to liberation, they urge the readers (and reciters) to attain *nirvana* by imbibing its teachings.

The *Prajna-paramita*, comprising 18,000 lines, is the most significant scripture of Mahayana Buddhism and is reputed to give an utterly perfected insight into the essential quality of all *dharmas*.

despite doctrinal variation and development over time, Mahāyāna Buddhism has retained constancy on general principles. Because they believe that the Buddha himself issued some of the major *sutras* (such as the Lotus *Sutra* and the *Mahaparinirvana Sutra*), these *sutras* have utmost importance and highest doctrinal authority.

Spiritually Devout or Nominal

According to a report, 41 percent of Christians attend religious services or rituals at least once a week, 6 percent attended religious services two to three times a month, 10 percent attended once a month, 27 percent once a year, and 9 percent did not attend religious services at all.

Protestants had a very high attendance rate, with 71 percent attending religious services more than once a week. A mere 1 percent of practicing Buddhists regularly attended religious services.

Religious Conflict

The various religious groups in the country co-exist without religious conflicts.

Secularism

South Korea is a secular country with a healthy separation between state and religion.

Superstitions

Entrances to rural villages often have "spirit posts" with fierce images called *Changsung*. These posts are made of stone or wood from specially selected trees; they are believed to frighten off evil spirits threatening the village and to protect against natural calamities, poor harvests, and contagious diseases.

Koreans throw salt in the bathroom and beans about the house when they move into a new place in order to chase off any spirits of the previous occupants that may have remained. When Koreans move out of their houses they do not clean them, because they do not want to disturb the spirits who settled in the home while they lived there.

Many Koreans perform a special ceremony called *Gausah* when they purchase a new car to ward off evil and misfortune. After consulting with the ghost that lived in the place where the car was parked, they will eat rice cake, drink wine, and have a pig's head pressed into headcheese.

Religious Clerics

The Buddhist and Christian clergy derive their power from their knowledge of scriptures as well as from the

monetary contributions of their followers. The Christian clergy, besides conducting Mass, also pay routine personal visits to the homes of their flock. Buddhist monks may also conduct personalized prayer services in return for monetary donations.

Shamans, mostly women, derive their power from their ability to serve as a medium between the spirit world and their clients during *kut* (shamanistic rituals), seen as a cure for many physical and mental afflictions.

Aspiring Buddhist monks can receive training at any of several religious schools. The Christian clergy are trained in the seven seminaries in the country. In a survey conducted over a five-year period (2000- 2005), there was annual decline of 1.8 percent in the number of seminarians.

State Regulations

The government does not provide monetary assistance to religious clerics. However, the government has promulgated the Traditional Temples Preservation Law to protect cultural properties such as Buddhist temples, which receive government subsidies for their preservation and upkeep.

The government restricts religious instruction in public schools. Private schools, however, are free to impart religious education.

Religion and Public Life

The great religious diversity of South Korea reflects the complex role of religion in the socio-cultural development of the country. Many Buddhist traditions have been handed down over the years, and many Buddhist sites (such as the Pulguksa Temple and the Sokkuram Grotto in Kyongju and the Haeinsa Temple near Taegu) are regarded as important cultural sites rather than as places of worship.

Confucianism, which is less of a religion and more of an ethical doctrine taught by Confucius and his disciples, greatly influences the moral fabric of the Korean society, and its effect is particularly evident in the immense value ascribed by Koreans to education. Respect for one's elders, the submissive role of women, and general "meritocratic" principles are also pillars of Confucianism.

Christianity is identified as a religion associated with modernization and social reform. Many Christian political leaders and Christian-sponsored organizations have been advocates of human rights and critics of the government. Protestant missionaries who arrived in Korea during the 1880s converted a remarkable number of Koreans. Methodist and Presbyterian missionaries were especially successful in establishing schools, universities, orphanages, and hospitals.

Religious Holidays and Ceremonies

The major religious holidays that are recognized as public holidays include Buddha's Birthday and Christmas. Holy days of other religions are not regarded as national holidays.

The birthday of the Buddha is an important ceremonial day for Korean Buddhists. Lanterns are hung in the courtyards of Buddhist temples throughout the country and then carried through the streets in nighttime processions.

The Christian religious ceremonies include baptisms, celebration of the Eucharist during Mass, and weddings (marriage is a sacrament for Catholics).

Government and Religion

There is no state religion in South Korea and the government does not subsidize or favor a particular religion.

The Religious Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism takes the lead in promoting interfaith dialogue and understanding. Under the aegis of the Ministry, groups such as the Korea Religious Council and the Council for Peaceful Religions, organize regular events such as the Religion and Art Festival, the Seminar for Religious Leaders, and the Symposium for Religious Newspapers and Journalists.

The legal system of the country is totally separate from religion and the government has not laid down requirements to accord recognition to religions.

The Unification Church has a virulently anti-Communist platform and owns media companies, fishing fleets, educational institutions, and arms manufacturers in the United States. In Korea it has a great deal of right-wing political influence and its followers have been responsible for riots in 2006 that destroyed the *Dong-A Ilbo* newspaper office for writing about the church.

Persecution

The government accords full freedom to all religions. Foreign-based missionary groups operate freely in the country and an amendment in the Immigration Control Law in 1999 gave permission to foreign missionary groups to operate without registering with the government.

Any one can freely possess Bibles or other religious literature in South Korea. Foreign visitors are also free to

display their religious symbols or icons.

Religious Tolerance

Religious tolerance is highly pervasive in the Korean society and relations between religious groups are generally free of incident. There have been some reports of alleged vandalism against Buddhist temples and artifacts by "Protestant fanatics." Such untoward incidents are, however, rare and religious leaders regularly meet both privately and under the auspices of the government to promote religious harmony. These meetings are given wide and favorable publicity by the media.

The 1999 violence that erupted at the *Chogye-sa* Temple between Buddhist groups is said to have resulted from leadership strife rather than from religious motives.

Protocols for Foreigners

Foreigners have access to contemporary Christian worship services in English and they can freely participate in the various religious activities of the country.

Cultural Stereotypes

Stereotypes of South Koreans as accepted by foreigners

Duplicitous

Koreans never give you a straight answer, and they use "misunderstandings" as an excuse for all problems.

Directness is considered rude in most Asian cultures, including South Korea. Complete honesty can lead to conflict, and conflict disrupts harmony – this is very bad. Koreans may equivocate in order to please guests (or at least not offend), but this is "lying" only to those who do not understand the cultural subtleties. Korean culture is very "high context," so foreigners will have to read between the lines to succeed. When South Koreans are working overseas, they try to adopt their style to local cultural requirements.

Copiers Not Innovators

Koreans are very good at taking other people's ideas and exploiting them.

A goodly portion of South Korea's rise from poverty to the top percentiles of the global economies was accomplished by "reverse engineering" and product improvement. They duplicated and improved the technology of the West and adapted Japanese production systems with far greater success than other countries that had attempted the same goals. South Korea's reputation for lacking innovation was severely strengthened in 2006, when it was discovered that its recent cloning technique breakthroughs had been falsified.

Fiery Food

All Korean food is extremely spicy and strong smelling. It's like they are trying to test your endurance.

Korean food is famous for its use of hot peppers, garlic, and fermented vegetables. Its most famous dish, kimchi, is made of various vegetables (not just cabbage) fermented along with hot peppers and salt, and it is meant to be served at every meal. It is not for the faint of heart, but it is assuredly addictive to those who enjoy it. Koreans take great pride in the fact that their cuisine is so distinctive from the Chinese and Japanese. If you want to impress Koreans, ask for their favorite kimchi recipe.

Tough Customers

Koreans like to confront people, and they constantly test for signs of weakness.

Anyone who has walked down a crowded Korean street can attest to the in-your-face attitude of the locals. Unlike the courteous Japanese or the acquiescent Chinese, the Koreans can bump and jostle with the best of them and dare you to challenge their rudeness. Korean males are particularly confrontational and competitive. It is not rare for large westerners in Korean bars to be challenged to drinking contests by complete strangers looking for a few self-esteem points.

Hard Workers

Koreans keep their heads down and don't give up until the job is done. No fanfare, just hard work.

The success of South Korea's economy after the devastation of the 1950s wartime experience was accomplished through sheer hard work. South Korea was the second "tiger" in Asia after Japan, and it was the first to recover from the 1997 Asian slump. Korea puts heavy demands on its workers, and it has been criticized when it tries to apply those same standards in its overseas operations. Korean workers have recently suffered social problems stemming from the introduction of the 5-day workweek. Leisure consultants have been consulted.

Stereotypes of South Koreans as accepted by South Koreans

One People, Two Nations

It is central to our future that the two parts of the Korean peninsula be reunited.

The South Koreans make a big distinction between the people of North Korea and their government. Southerners tend to believe their northern brothers and sisters have been brainwashed and only need some TLC to bring them back into the fold. When the country split, many families were fractured as well, and this has kept the bonds between the two countries strong even during the most volatile times of the relationship. Like the West Germans, South Koreans tend to pity the Northerners rather than see them as enemies.

Quiet Tiger

We are the real success story in Asia. We started with less and accomplished more than Japan or China.

South Koreans feel that their own success has been overshadowed and remains unheralded because of the magnitude of Japan's and China's economies and populations. From the Korean point of view, they have done much more with far less help than their neighbors had from outside sources. Like the Chinese and the Japanese, the Koreans see themselves as a race of people, not just an Asian culture. The world's tendency to lump them in with the other smaller Asian economies is a stinging rebuke for the Koreans.

Regretful Hermit

The rest of the world does not take much interest in Korea. This is our own fault for being so introverted.

Koreans hate to be mistaken for Chinese or Japanese when they are traveling abroad, and do not like their country's association with low-quality goods. However, they also realize that they have done a very poor job of promoting their own country from the time it was the "hermit kingdom" right up until the present day. They have much to learn from the Japanese and Chinese when it comes to tooting their own horn.

Political Flashpoint

The only time that people think about South Korea is when North Korea rattles its saber.

South Korea is generally thought of in terms of its relationship with North Korea. When North Korea is not in the news, neither is the South. Even when tense negotiations are being set up with the poorer and less populous North, South Korea is often kept in a secondary – even tertiary – role as a host for discussions or as a transshipment point for bartered goods. South Korea could probably forgive the political neglect if it felt it was having any meaningful impact on relieving the impasse.

Too Hierarchical

We do not have enough independent thinkers in our culture. We work harder, but not smarter. South Korea has seen what happened to the Japanese economy when it failed to make necessary changes out of fear of offending elder politicians and managers. South Korea has taken steps to have many of its managers trained overseas in order to bring back new techniques and outlooks. However, once back home, these managers tend to fall into the hierarchical mindset of Confucianism that Korea has adopted – a version far more disciplined than that of Japan or China.

Superstitions & Folklore

General

Ancient Korea, as evidenced by its animistic religion and practice of shamanism, was very open to superstitious beliefs. When other beliefs and philosophies were introduced from China and Japan, Koreans welcomed these cultures and blended them into their own colorful heritage. Eventually, Koreans were also exposed to other religions, such as Christianity, but none of these were fully eradicated their earlier beliefs. It seems South Koreans have a unique ability to integrating beliefs and superstitions, so much so that it has become difficult to draw the lines among their cultural influences.

Selected Superstitions

The New Year

The Lunar New Year is considered the most important traditional celebration in the Korean culture. It is derived from the Chinese New Year and based directly on the Chinese Lunar Calendar. Korea, however, has added its own traditions and superstitions to the colorful feast.

Most Koreans also celebrate New Year's Day on the January 1. However, they still make it a point to observe the festival of *Seol nal* (Lunar New Year), which usually occurs on the 15th day of February—the first month of the Lunar Calendar. This day also marks the first day of spring. Besides serving as a time for families to get together, the festival is traditionally observed to usher in peace, health, and prosperity for the coming year.

A range of superstitions revolve around the rituals performed during New Year's Day, and most of them are based on the culture's strong belief in luck and ancestor worship. Like the lunar calendar, ancestor worship—particularly filial piety, is derived from Confucianism—a philosophy that originated from China.

Ancestor worship has its roots in the belief that the relatives and loved ones who have passed away continue to exist and still greatly influence the daily affairs of the family. Another aspect of this belief is familial protection and gratitude. Koreans believe that their ancestors provided and cared for them when they were alive, and in turn they must provide and care for their deceased family members. When they do so, Koreans believe that the ancestors

will protect them and bring them good fortune. To this day, ancestor worship is still integrated into South Korea's traditions and practices even though Koreans now practice other religions, such as Christianity and Buddhism.

Chesa or Chare

Chesa refers to the offering ritual of the South Koreans to their ancestors. During holidays, the regular offerings are served with liquor and tea, but instead of offering only rice, they make a special meat dish to go with it. These special holiday offerings are called *chare*.

The offerings are often prepared by the women a day before the celebration. They make *ttok* or *garettok* (fried meats), buy fruits, prepare fish, and make dumplings. They spend almost the entire day in the preparations. Before the altar is prepared, the offering room must be spotless and clean. Thereafter, a screen and a table altar are placed in the room. The food prepared the day before is placed on the altar in a particular order following tradition.

Method of Chesa (Chare)

Chesa and *Chare* calls for an elaborate step-by-step ritual which must be followed with precision to ensure the favor of the ancestors.

1. *Oel mo shim*: The head of the ceremony lights up the incense; pours some liquor into the glass; then pours some into a bowl of sand. After doing so, he bows twice in front of it to invite the spirits to come and join them.
2. *Il dong be rye*: All the participants bow twice after the head of the family bows to signify that the ceremony is commencing.
3. *Offering of the first drink*: The head of the family steps forward, kneels down on his left knee, and awaits the reading of *chuk mun* (a spirit invocation sheet).
4. *Chuk mun* reading: The person appointed to read the *chuk mun* kneels down on the left side of the father or head of the family. After he finishes reading, every participant bows twice.
5. Offering of the next drink: The next person who offers the liquor steps forward, empties the same bowl, and pours the liquor again into it, offers it and bows twice.
6. Offering of the final drink: A person who offers the third drink steps forward, pours out the second drink in the bowl, serves the third drink, and bows twice.
7. More drink: The head of the ceremony steps forward and pours in the last drink, allowing it to slightly overflow.
8. Putting a spoon in the rice: The lord of the ceremony opens the rice bowl and places a spoon facing east. As a signal to request the spirit of the ancestors to receive the offering, everybody prays, slightly lowering their heads.
9. *Soong nyoong* (the water used to boil the rice) offering: The bowl of broth is lowered and *soong nyoong* is served; three spoonfuls are placed in the *soong nyoong* bowl.
10. General bow: Everyone bows twice to signify the end of the ceremony.
11. Receiving of blessing: The lord of the ceremony eats a piece of meat and drinks liquor as a sign of receiving the ancestors' blessings.
12. Removing the offering table: To end, food is shared and the list of names and the *chukmoon* are burned.

Bok jo ri

A *jo ri* literally means a "strainer," and *bok* means blessing—hence, a strainer (or sieve) that brings good luck. It is usually used to sift rice and separate it from any particles like stones and straw. Koreans used to buy *bok jo ri* early New Year's Day morning and hang it up on the wall. It is believed to catch happiness and prosperity for the coming year.

In the past, people would hear vendors selling the *bok jo ri* on the streets. The home owner could not leave the house or even go past the front door, but had to call to the vendor to come in, because it was believed that good luck was brought into the house by the vendor as well. It was also believed that the earlier you purchased the *bok jo ri*, the more blessings you would receive. Nowadays, *bok jo ris* are not sold on the streets anymore.

Yakwanggy

As part of the *seol nal* festival, the story of *Yakwanggy* is told. *Yakwanggy* is a supernatural being that visits the human world during the night of *seol nal*. He enters people's homes and if he finds shoes that fit his feet, he will steal them. If you lose your shoes in this way, it means bad luck for that year. That is why children and adults alike gather their shoes every *Seol nal* and hide them in their attics.

To cast off the *Yakwanggy*, one must turn off the light, keep the shoes inside the house, and hang up a sieve (*bok jo ri*) on the wall of the inner patio. According to the story, when the *Yakwanggy* discovers the sieve while looking for the shoes, he mistakes the holes of the sieve for eyes. "So many eyes! ...I'll count them to see how many they are!" he exclaims. *Yakwanggy* starts counting, and not long after, he loses count and starts all over again. *Yakwanggy* then forgets about the shoes and just keeps counting the entire night. When dawn comes and the first bird sings, he runs away. This story is usually told to send the children to bed early on the day of the New Year celebration.

Fortune telling

At the beginning of the lunar year, it is a tradition for Koreans to consult a fortuneteller. This way, they can

anticipate what the coming year will bring. The fortuneteller usually uses the *Tojong bigyeo*, a book authored by Tojong bigyel (a pseudonym), also known as Jim Ham Lee — an eccentric person from the Chosun dynasty.

Because of his wisdom, people believed he had special powers to tell the future. At the beginning of each year, people would come to his house to ask him to predict their future. Since Tojung could not attend to all the people, he thought of writing a book that people could consult instead. Koreans still consult his book at the start of every Lunar year.

In the past, elders usually read the fortune every *seol nal*. Eventually, fortunetellers began to charge for the service, and some people made a living out of it. Although some Koreans do not believe this book (or do not believe in fortunetelling altogether), most still consult fortunetellers for fun. Some say that commercialism has taken over, because computerized fortunetelling machines are now available on the streets of Seoul, in the Nam San and Miari districts. These machines supposedly can tell your fortune for the price of a few coins.

Jishin Balpgi

New Year is usually welcomed with a ritual called *Jishin Balpgi*, which means, "Stepping on the Spirit of the Earth." It is a traditional folk festival that originated in various villages in Korea over 4,000 years ago. The ritual is believed to cleanse the village by chasing away evil spirits. The sound of loud drums and gongs played during the ritual are believed to scare off the evil spirits of the old year.

Tok-kuk and gui balki sool

Tok-kuk is a soup made of thinly sliced white rice cake, boiled in a thick beef broth and garnished with bright green onions. *Tok-kuk* literally means "to add age." It is believed that it is essential to eat this soup on New Year's Day to be able to grow a year older.

Also, they make it a point to drink *Gui balki sool* during *seol nal*, and it is served with the *seol nal* meal. *Gui balki sool* is a kind of liquor believed to clarify one's hearing. It has been said that drinking this on the day of the celebration will bring clear hearing all throughout the year.

Dog Meat

When visiting some authentic South Korean restaurants, one might come across a special soup called "restorative" or "nutrition" soup. This is one of the variations of Korean dog meat. Regardless of scientific findings showing that this meat doesn't have any special therapeutic effects, some Koreans still firmly believe that it brings special strength and acts as an aphrodisiac, especially for men.

In early days, dogs were eaten in very cold areas like Northern China and Korea, especially during winter. Due to the weather, it was not easy for the people to raise cattle for food, and the few cows that they owned were used for agricultural purposes only. During that time, a certain kind of dog, the yellow dogs, grew well in cold weather even without special care. These dogs were not kept as pets but were wandering dogs that Koreans called "manure dogs." They took on the name because they were known to eat leftovers and leave their droppings. People from these cold areas eventually discovered that the dogs' meat was good for eating.

Scientific studies show that dog meat contains certain enzymes similar to that of humans, making it easier to digest and a quick energy and heat source. With this characteristic, dog meat became a popular part of the Korean menu especially during cold seasons.

The claim that the meat is an aphrodisiac still remains unfounded, but the belief still prevails throughout South Korea, regardless of the protests of animal-rights activists and scientific findings. About 10 percent of the Korean population consumes it.

The phenomenon of Koreans taking on the western concept of dogs as domestic pets is currently causing, and may continue to cause, shifts in this practice. Aside from that, the fact that many are now promoting animal rights and raising inquiries about sanitation issues may result in a decrease, if not total eradication, of the practice.

Shamanism

Shamanism is rooted in the belief that the spirits and gods have sway in human daily affairs. It originated from Siberia and quickly diffused all throughout Northeast Asia. Korean shamanism is known to have existed in the Korean peninsula before 1,000 B.C. Society of that era was based on Iron Age agriculture, which greatly determined ancient shamanistic rituals. Shamanism is also associated with animistic practices.

Korean shamanism seems to encompass indigenous practices and beliefs from Buddhism or Taoism. In Korea, Shamanism is called *muism*, and a female shaman (most shamans in Korea are women) is known as a *mudang*. A *mudang's* role is to act as an intercessor between people and spirits or the gods. There are myriad gods, spirits, and ghosts, ranging from the "god generals," who rule the different quarters of heaven, to mountain spirits (*sansin*). Different gods also inhabit trees, caves, and piles of stones. There are those regarded as earth spirits, tutelary gods of households and villages, mischievous goblins, and the ghosts of persons who supposedly met violent or tragic deaths. These spirits are said to have the power to influence or to change the fortunes of living men and women. *Mudangs* are often enlisted by people who seek help from spirits or gods.

During early times, the most common rituals performed by *mudangs* were connected to agriculture. *Mudangs*

commonly invoked the gods of the harvest for abundance. As the Korean culture shifted to more modern practices and agricultural practices were replaced by modern means of living, *muism* also declined. Later on, the practice was discouraged and dismissed as mere superstition.

By the 1970's the practice began to resurface as *shamanism* began to be recognized as part of the Korean heritage. Koreans now openly showcase *guts* or *kuts* (services and rituals performed for different purposes). The *kut* is believed to invite good fortune for clients, cure illnesses (by exorcism of evil spirits), or appease local or village gods. *Kut* is also performed to help the soul or spirit of a deceased person to heaven.

A number of rituals surround the election of *mudangs*. Of the two types of *mudangs*, the *sessŭmu* is a shaman who inherits her position by birth. This variety is usually found in the southern peninsula of Korea. The other, *kangshimu*, is found throughout the peninsula, although known to be concentrated in northern Korea. The *kangshimu* are inducted through a ceremony known as a *naerim-gut*. During this induction ceremony, the shaman undergoes a state known as a *shinbyeong*, a state of physical pain and psychosis, the severity of which depends on her cultural background and surrounding environment. It is said that the physical and mental symptoms are not subject to medical treatment but may only cease by receiving full communion with the spirit or god.

Tetraphobia (Fear of the number 4)

The number 4 is deemed unlucky in South Korea, and the use of this number is avoided as much as possible. This superstition is prevalent in Asian countries like Korea, Japan, and China. It is said that this number is avoided because the Chinese, Sino-Korean, and Sino-Japanese word for the number four (si or shi) is pronounced the same way as the Chinese (also Sino-Korean and Sino-Japanese) word for *death*. As a result of this belief, many buildings in South Korea do not have a 4th floor. Instead, the 4th floor is marked with an F, or the 4th floor is skipped altogether.

Blood type

There is a prevailing superstition that determines one of the emerging pop cultures of Korea today. It is the belief that one can determine a person's personality through his blood type. Through this current pop culture, superstition has it that blood type can also determine the compatibility of partners. It is believed, for instance, that men with Type B blood possess a distinct temperament of being extremely obnoxious, thus deemed hardly compatible with any woman.

This topic is gaining popularity in Korean chat rooms, magazines and websites. In 2004, a movie was even made about it, aptly titled, "*My Boyfriend is Type-B*," which became a huge hit in the box office. A book authored by Kim Nang entitled "*Dating a Type-B Man*," also became a bestseller. This book is based on the premise that men with this blood type have difficult temperaments. The book offers advice or tips to women of different blood types as to how to deal with the ups and downs of their relationships with Type-B men.

Linking people's blood types to their personalities became popular in 1927 when a series of articles by Japanese scholar Takeji Furukawa called, "*The Study of Temperament through Blood Type*" hit the bookstores. The premise of these books, movies, and articles was never proven scientifically but, still, Japan and South Korea embraced the belief. The concept became even more popular in 1971 when Japanese writer Masahiko Nomi expanded upon Furukawa's ideas and wrote "*Understanding Compatibility from Blood Types*."

In these dissertations, it has been said that Type-O people were generally outgoing, expressive and passionate. Those with Type-A blood were considered introverted and perfectionists, while Type-ABs were said to be distant and unpredictable. People with Type-B blood were believed to be independent spirits with strong personalities. Such books from Japan have been translated into Korean. In fact, in most major bookstores in Seoul one will find books from Japan with subjects like how a Type-A mother should raise a Type-O son.

Dream interpretation

Dream interpretations are well integrated to Korean culture. It is believed that dreams can usually predict what the future brings. Examples of these superstitious interpretations are the following:

- If you dream of a dead body, clear water, or a pig, it is a sign that good luck will come your way.
- Dreaming of a dog will bring bad luck.
- Dreaming of teeth falling out means someone in the family will die.
- Dreaming of jewelry, flowers, or fruit is a sign that you are going to have a baby.
- If you dream about flying over the sky or riding a dragon, it means you will be promoted or find a better job.
- Dreaming of a fire at your house means good fortune for your family.

According to a traditional folktale, people can actually trade their dreams. One legend is told of a woman who had a very strange dream. The following morning, she told her older sister about it; the older sister asked if she could trade the dream for a skirt; and the younger sister agreed. The older sister went on to become a queen as a result of the trade, and the good luck was transferred to her.

Exam rituals

University entrance exams are taken seriously in South Korea. This may be because the competition to get into good universities is stiff. Most Koreans will never eat seaweed soup before the exam. Instead, they will eat *yut* (Korean sticky taffy) the evening before or the morning of the exam day. Koreans believe that since seaweed is slippery, it will cause the information in one's mind to slip out. On the other hand, since *yut* is sticky, Koreans believe that eating *yut* will make the information stick to their brains. In the same context, Koreans would rather not wash their hair before the exam because they fear that what they learned will be washed away.

Animals

In Korea, luck is also associated with animals. A good example of this is the superstition about the Korean magpie. It is believed that if you see a magpie in the morning, you'll get good news. This belief is reflected in folk stories and songs.

If a child loses his lower baby tooth, it should be thrown onto the west part of the roof. If the child loses an upper tooth, it must be thrown on to the east portion of the roof. It is said that a magpie will pick it up, and the magpie will bring a new tooth. Magpies always signify good things because Koreans believe that a magpie is a good omen.

Other animal superstitions are as follows:

Turtle

People believe that turtles have the power to predict the future. This is why fortunetellers used the shape of a turtle's shell to forecast the future. Turtle images often form the base of monuments or statues of famous people, especially that of Buddhist monks because they symbolize longevity.

Tiger

Koreans regard tigers as brave, dignified, cruel, and greedy. However, they still regard tigers as a symbol of good luck and protection from disease. Also, if a person dreams about tigers, it is a sign he will hold a public position or office.

Deer

Koreans consider the deer to be a holy animal because of its lovely appearance and mild temper. Images of a deer painted with pine trees, maples, rocks, or herbs are believed to signify longevity.

Monkey

Monkeys are called *i-hu* in Chinese, and since *hu* is pronounced the same way as emperor, the appearance of a monkey in dreams or symbols means promotion to a high-ranking position in the government.

Cat

Cats, which can see well at night, are believed to have the power to protect people from bad spirits. When the image or picture of a cat includes a butterfly, it also symbolizes longevity.

Bat

The Chinese ideogram for bat is pronounced similarly like good fortune (*pok* in Korean). This gave rise to the belief that bat images embroidered on pillow ends and incorporated into furniture designs and fittings are a symbol of good fortune. Bats were said to live 1000 years, and their image is also used as a symbol of longevity. A design of 5 bats, called *Obok* (5 blessings), represents the five fortunes: longevity, wealth, health, love of virtue, and natural death.

Red-crested White Crane

Koreans regard white cranes as holy and spiritual. Many Asians believe that those who led lives of lofty solitude become cranes when they die. A common phrase goes, "As a red-crested white crane lives thousands of years, a pine tree does ten thousand of years." Cranes were often painted with pine trees to symbolize longevity.

Rooster

It is believed that roosters can tell time and they are considered a symbol of hopeful beginnings and good omens. Furthermore, it is said that when a chicken clucks, all evil spirits disappear. The characteristic of intelligence is attributed to the rooster's crest as well. Likewise, when a rooster eats, it shares its food with others, signifying patience. A rooster also stays awake all night and crows consistently every morning, giving an impression of trustworthiness. Its sharp toenail represents war, and since it fights until death, it is regarded as a brave creature.

White Heron

To pass an all-important civil service examination, a picture of a heron must be painted with a lotus tip.

Mandarin Duck

Since a mandarin duck never acquires a new partner after its mate dies, it symbolizes fidelity of couples, affection, or a happy marriage. Newly married couples use pillows and comforters or bed sheets with mandarin ducks embroidered on them to bring fidelity to the marriage.

Wild Goose

Wild geese (seasonal birds) are believed to deliver good news. Also, just like the mandarin ducks, they are used in

traditional wedding ceremonies because they continue to be loyal even after their mate dies.

Butterfly

Butterflies, which are free to look for their mates (unlike the arranged marriages in Confucian societies), are symbols of free love and happiness.

Other superstitions

Other luck superstitions

You should not to cut your nails at night. It believed that if you cut your nails, animals like mice may eat them and thereby take your spirit.

- You should not sing at night. If you sing a song at night, snakes will appear to you.
- You should never sleep in a room with a fan on and all the windows closed. It is said that the fan will suck all the air out of the room and kill you, which is known as “fan death.”
- White hair ribbons cause bad luck. White is the color associated with funerals and death.
- Writing someone's name in red is considered bad luck as it signifies blood.
- When moving into a new house, you must throw salt around to chase off any spirits that may have remained from the previous occupants.
- Cab drivers believe that it is lucky to have a man as a first passenger of the day; a female passenger is a sign of a not-so-profitable day. Cab drivers also believe that if their first passenger wears eyeglasses, it will be an unlucky day.
- Shaking one's leg, standing on a threshold, sitting at the corner of a dining table, and eating while lying down are behaviors that are said to cause bad luck.

International Trade

Wood Packaging Material

South Korea has adopted and implemented the requirements of ISPM 15 (*International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures: Guidelines for Regulating Wood Packaging Material in International Trade**) as of 1 June 2005.

*ISPM 15 is produced by the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). South Korea is a contracting party to the IPPC.

ISPM 15 requires certain phytosanitary procedures, in particular heat treatment or methyl bromide fumigation, relating to wood packaging material (including dunnage) made of raw wood in use in international trade; the phytosanitary procedures are meant to minimize the risk of introducing and spreading certain pests that live and breed in raw wood.

For the full text (21 pages) of ISPM 15 in PDF format, [click here](#) .

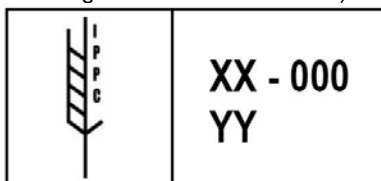
Requirements of ISPM 15

Wood packaging material in the form of:

- Packing cases, boxes, crates, drums, and similar packings
- Pallets, box pallets, skids, and other load boards
- Pallet collars
- actually in use in the transport of objects of all kinds, except:
- Raw wood of 6mm thickness or less
- Processed wood produced by glue, heat and pressure, or any combination thereof

The wood packaging material shall:

- Be subject to one of the approved measures as specified in Annex I To FAO ISPM 15 (currently, *heat treatment or methyl bromide fumigation*)
- **Display a mark with:**
 - The two-letter ISO Country Code (in place of **XX** in the image below)
 - A code identifying the producer (in place of **000** in the image below)
 - The code identifying the approved measure applied to the wood packing material in the mark as specified in Annex II to FAO ISPM 15 (in place of **YY** in the image below; examples are **HT** For “Heat Treatment” and **MB** for “Methyl Bromide Fumigation”)
 - Where “debarking” is required, the letters “DB” shall be added to the abbreviation of the approved measure included in the said mark
 - The logo as specified in Annex II to FAO ISPM 15 (this logo is the ippc trademarked graphic symbol shown in the image below on the left side)



- **Markings should be:**
 1. Permanent and not transferable
 2. Legible and visible, preferably on at least two opposite sides of the article being certified

DUNNAGE, i.e. wood used to wedge or support non-wood cargo, including that which has not kept its natural round surface except:

- Raw wood of 6mm thickness or less
- Processed wood produced by glue, heat and pressure, or a combination thereof
- Be marked in accordance with Annex II to FAO ISPM 15 (see directly above under "**Display a mark with:**")
- If not, at a minimum it should be made from bark-free wood that is free from pests and signs of live pests