



CAPITAL CITY

The capital city of the Republic of Korea is **Seoul**.

SIZE

The total land area of South Korea is 100.210 km²

GEOGRAPHICAL SITUATION

South Korea is located on the **southern half of the Korean Peninsula**, extending from the far east of the Asian continent. It **shares a border with North Korea**, marked by the Korean Demilitarized Zone (**DMZ**) established after the Korean War. The country is surrounded by the Yellow Sea to the west and the East Sea to the east. The country's terrain is mostly mountainous, but there are large coastal plains in the west and south. Major islands include **Jeju**, **Ulleungdo**, and **Dokdo**.

POPULATION

As of **February 2025**, South Korea's total population is approximately **51,191,817**.

The 65+ age group now makes up about 20.3% of the total population, indicating a rapidly aging society.

LANGUAGE

Korean is the official language; the Korean writing system is Hangul.

English is commonly taught as a second language in schools and is widely used in business and tourism regions.

CURRENCY

The currency of South Korea is the **Korean Won (KRW) (₩)**.

As of **March 2025**, the exchange rate is approximately: **1 USD = 1,451 KRW, 1 EUR = 1,550 KRW**

- Coins: available in 10 KRW, 50 KRW, 100 KRW, 500 KRW. **1 KRW and 5 KRW coins are rare.**
- Banknotes: 1,000 KRW (blue), 5,000 KRW (red), 10,000 KRW (green), 50,000 KRW (yellow).

ATM & Credit Card Usage

- Most **ATMs in South Korea now accept foreign cards**, especially those operated by major banks. Signs on ATM booths is displayed with '**Global**' or '**Foreign Card Accepted**'.
- **Visa and MasterCard** are widely accepted, while **American Express and UnionPay** may be accepted in select locations.

CLIMATE

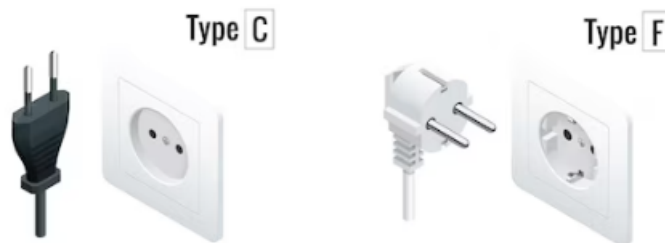
- **Spring (March–May):** This is a great time of year to be in Korea. Pleasant temperatures with cherry blossoms in bloom.
- **Summer (June–August):** The season of hot temperatures and humid with monsoon rains.
- **Autumn (September – November):** This is also the best time to be in Korea. The temperature is cool, with dry weather and vibrant autumn foliage.
- **Winter (December – February):** The weather is cold, with snow in some regions. This a good time to go skiing or hot-spring hopping. Ideal for winter sports. However, January and February can be very cold due to Siberian winds from the north.

LOCAL TIME

South Korea follows Korea Standard Time (KST, UTC+9).

ELECTRICITY

The standard voltage is **220V**, and the power outlets use two round pins (Plug type C and F). Travelers are advised to **bring an adapter or converter**.



If you do not have a multi-voltage travel adapter, you can borrow one from your hotel's front desk. If you want to buy one in Korea, you can do so at a duty-free shop, convenience shop at Incheon International Airport, or Yongsan Electronics Shopping Town.

TAP WATER

Tap water in South Korea is **safe to drink**, but locals often **filter or boil** it due to its chlorine taste. Bottled water is widely available.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The phone country code of South Korea is **82**.

South Korea has one of the world's best telecommunications infrastructures. 4G LTE and 5G coverage is excellent in most areas.

Wi-Fi is available in hotels, cafes, subways, and public areas.

Travelers can rent SIM cards or pocket Wi-Fi devices at major airports or telecom stores.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

South Korea has high-quality healthcare services. Major hospitals in big cities have international clinics with English-speaking staff.

For emergencies, dial 119 for ambulance services.

TRANSPORTATION

South Korea has **7 international airports**, including **Incheon International Airport (ICN)**, **Gimpo Airport (GMP)**, and **Gimhae Airport (PUS)**.

The KTX high-speed train connects major cities.

Public transportation is efficient, safe, and affordable, including subways, buses, and taxis.

Note: Ferry services are available to connect other countries (Japan, China, and Russia). However, Phoenix Voyages does not recommend using them due to their frequently changing schedules and regular cancellations.

DRIVING

An **International Driving Permit (IDP)** is required for foreigners driving in South Korea. In general, roads are well-maintained, and signs are in Korean and English.

Car rental rates vary by vehicle type and rental period, but prices start at around 60,000 KRW per day.

CUISINE

Korean cuisine is based on rice, noodles, tofu, vegetables, fish, and meat. Meals are usually served with kimchi (Korean cabbage) or marinated vegetables such as cabbage, turnip, radish, or cucumber and various side dishes (called banchan).

Street food: South Korea is famous for its street food, and you'll find some of the most delicious and unique snacks in places like Myeongdong, Gwangjang Market, and Insadong in Seoul, as well as other night markets across the country.

Dessert is not a traditional practice in Korea, and therefore it is not included on the menus.

- **Popular dishes:** Bulgogi (grilled marinated beef); Bibimbap (mixed rice with vegetables and chili paste); Samgyeopsal (grilled pork belly).
- **Popular Korean drinks:** Soju (Korean distilled spirit); Makgeolli (Korean rice wine); Beer.

CUSTOMS AND HABITS

Being on time is highly important to Korean people and therefore, schedules must be observed. Otherwise, it may cause unnecessary delays that may affect the services contracted.

During peak seasons, it can be challenging to make changes to other services too.

SHOPPING

South Korea offers an incredible shopping experience with a mix of modern malls and charming markets, from modern high fashion to traditional crafts.

- **Shopping Districts in Seoul:** **Myeongdong** - Famous for beauty products, **Insadong** - Traditional crafts, traditional teas and souvenirs like antique or art items; **Hongdae** - Trendy fashion items, and **Gangnam** for high-end luxury brands.
- **Market in Seoul:** **Namdaemun** - the largest and oldest market in South Korea, offers everything from clothing and accessories to food and souvenirs. **Dongdaemun** – famous for wholesale and retail fashion.

Payment Methods: Credit cards are widely accepted in South Korea, but it's always a good idea to carry some cash (Korean won) for smaller shops and street vendors.

Bargaining is acceptable in traditional markets like Namdaemun or Dongdaemun, especially if you're buying multiple items, vendors are often willing to offer discounts. so don't hesitate to nicely ask for a better price.

Shopping Hours: Shops typically open between 10 and 11 AM and stay open until late evening, while markets often remain open even later—sometimes until midnight.

TIPPING

Tipping is not a common practice in South Korea. However, service charges are included in restaurants and hotels.

ACCESS

South Korea is well-connected globally with direct flights from 157 airports in 49 countries, including major hubs like Tokyo, Beijing, and Singapore.

Incheon International Airport, the largest in South Korea, is the main airport for many of these airlines.

Major airlines in South Korea are Korean Air, Asiana Airlines, and Jeju Air. International airlines such as Air France, Finnair, Lufthansa or Delta, American Airlines, Cathay Pacific, and Air China also operate direct flights there too.

VISA & ENTRY REGULATIONS

In celebration of "Visit Korea Year", K-ETA will be temporarily exempted to 27 countries/regions until December 31, 2025 (for the majority, the period of stay allowed is 90 days): Australia, Austria, Belgium (3 months), Canada (6 months), Czech Republic, Denmark, Emirates, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Macao, Netherlands (3 months), New Zealand (3 months), Norway, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, UK, US (including Guam).

NOTE: All foreigners who are NOT exempted from a K-ETA must apply before entering the country: <https://www.k-eta.go.kr/portal/newapply/index.do>

BEFORE GOING

Travelers are advised to seek medical advice about vaccinations. Specialized travel-medicine clinics are the best source of information. Most vaccines don't produce immunity until at least two weeks after they're given, so visit a doctor four to eight weeks before departure.

For safety reasons, we advise travelers not to leave valuables in vehicles during their journey.