SEPTEMBER 19 – SEPTEMBER 24/25, 2019

Pyongyang International Film Festival Tour & Autumn Trade Fair Tour

5 nights in the DPRK + Beijing-Pyongyang travel time

Join us for the Pyongyang International Film Festival and DPRK Autumn Trade Fair! Be there to see the glitz and glamour of the film festival opening ceremony, plus see the latest goods on the market in North Korea!

From 1,049 EUR per person

Overall

A special tour focused on ‘Chollywood’, the North Korean domestic film industry, and the annual Pyongyang International Film Festival (PIFF). PIFF is one of the major international events held in the DPRK and hosts both international and domestic films.

We will attend the festive PIFF Opening Ceremony, meet people involved in the DPRK film industry, visit shooting locations for classic North Korean films in Pyongyang and Kaesong, and learn the subtle (or often not so subtle) message and cultural significance of DRPK cinema. Specifically we will look in-depth at the classic film 'Flower Girl' (1972), romantic comedy 'O Youth!' (1994), and the first joint DPRK-foreign production 'Moranbong' (1957).

Included in the tour are a special film screening of the Koryo Tours’ co-production 'Comrade Kim Goes Flying (2012)' in Pyongyang, as well a Q&A with those involved in the film’s production and promotion.

We’ll stop by the first day of the Pyongyang International Autumn Trade Fair for a look around too at the company stands and the newest DPRK products on display. You can also opt to stay on in the country to see more of the trade show on a custom private. custom extension to your tour.

In addition to PIFF and the Autumn Trade Fair, the covers the main highlights of Pyongyang and Kaesong, such as the Pyongyang Metro, Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum and the USS Pueblo, the Juche Tower, and to Panmunjom for a DMZ tour from the northern side.

Koryo Tours has been a partner of the Pyongyang International Film Festival (PIFF) since 2002 and has produced three full-length documentaries and one feature film in the DPRK, three of which have shown at PIFF:

'The Game of Their Lives' (2002)
'Crossing the Line' (2006)

Scroll down for an overview of the Pyongyang International Film Festival & Autumn Trade Fair Tour highlights, tour itinerary, transport options, DPRK tourist visa information, and extra add-ons.
Highlights

- Pyongyang International Film Festival Opening Ceremony
- Exclusive DPRK film screening and talk with North Korean filmmakers
- The Pyongyang International Autumn Trade Fair

ITINERARY:

Pre-Tour Briefing - September 18 | Wednesday

We require all travellers to attend a pre-tour briefing that covers regulations, etiquette, safety, and practicalities for travel in North Korea. The briefing lasts approximately one hour followed by a question and answer session. Please be punctual for the briefing. You can come early, meet your fellow travellers, pay any outstanding tour fees and browse our collection of Korean art. A proper briefing is an essential part of travel to North Korea.

For this tour, we will hold two briefings. One in the morning for those departing by train this afternoon and the other in the afternoon for those departing by flight the next day.

AM
Recommended latest arrival in Beijing.

PM
16:00: Our group assembles for a pre-tour group briefing at the Koryo Tours office in Beijing. This briefing will last approximately one hour and designed so that you will get the most out of your tour. It will cover travel etiquette, safety, and practicalities for travel in the DPRK. Have your last-minute questions answered and meet your fellow travellers. Please be punctual - you can come early, pay any outstanding tour fees and browse our collection of Korean art.

An optional film screening of Koryo Tours' documentary 'Crossing the Line' will follow the briefing to get in the spirit of the Pyongyang International Film Festival. Crossing the Line (2006) is the story of US army defector Joe Dresnok, who crossed into North Korea in 1962 where he raised a family and lived out the rest of his days. Wine included.
Day 1 - September 19 | Thursday
Arrival day in Pyongyang

AM
Free bus from the Koryo Tours office to Beijing Capital Airport Terminal 2. Exact time TBC at the pre-tour briefing. Alternatively meet the group at the Air Koryo check-in counter.

PM
Flight departure from Beijing on Air Koryo flight JS 152 at 13:05. A 1.5 hour flight with basic lunch (no vegetarian option).

Arrival to Pyongyang's Sunan International Airport (FNJ) at 16:05. DPRK immigration and customs, meet your Korean guides, and transfer to the city.

Kim Il Sung Square | Pyongyang’s central square lined with government ministries, museum and The Grand People’s Study House, Korea’s national library. See the centre of it all! Filming location for numerous North Korean films and parades!

Foreign Languages Bookshop | Store selling Korean publications translated into English, German, French, Russian, Chinese, and Spanish. Also pick up film DVDs, postcards, and small works of art.

Walk in the city centre and riverside | Walk from Pyongyang's central square to the Pyongyang Grand Theatre and then on the way we'll pass government ministries, 1950's socialist apartments, and theatres. We'll also take a walk along the riverbank for a distant view of the Yanggakdo International Cinema, the main venue for the Pyongyang International Film Festival.

Exclusive Film Screening of Comrade Kim Goes Flying with the film actors | Comrade Kim Goes Flying is the first joint DPRK-UK and is a romantic comedy about a rural woman pursuing her dreams of becoming a trapeze artist at the Pyongyang Circus. The film was co-produced by Koryo Tours' founder Nicholas Bonner. Free popcorn!

Overnight | The Yanggakdo Hotel, Pyongyang. Great views of the city and creature comforts on an island in the middle of the Taedong River. Home away from home for the majority of tour groups visiting Pyongyang. Shops, bookstore, cafes, revolving restaurant, beer brewed on-site.

Day 2 - September 20 | Friday
Pyongyang City Tour and Pyongyang International Film Festival Opening Ceremony!

AM
Mansudae Grand Monument | Enormous bronze statues of President Kim Il Sung and Leader Kim Jong Il overlooking downtown Pyongyang. A presentation of flowers and bow by the group is customary here (5 EUR). Please note this is a government-administered sight and visits are subject to cancellation. Visits are optional and require a certain dresscode (close-toed shoes and covered legs and shoulders). Here we will also see the Chollima Monument, or ‘thousand ri (400 km or 250 mile) horse’ - a symbol of speed- commemorating the quick rebuilding of the country in the 1950’s following the Korean War. This location appears in numerous North Korean films.

Grand People’s Study House | National library and public correspondence university with Neo-traditional Korean and great views of the city. Filming location for O Youth! (1994).

Pyongyang Metro Tour | One of the deepest metro systems in the world with stunning artwork reflecting the name of each station. Ride six stations on the Chollima Line. Filming location of for numerous Korean films, including the joint DPRK-Italian co-production Ten Zan - The Ultimate Mission (1988).

Arch of Triumph | Massive archway commemorating the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonial rule. Made for the 70th anniversary of the birth of President Kim Il Sung in 1982. This location appears in numerous DPRK films.

PM
Pyongyang International Film Festival Opening Ceremony | Attend the opening ceremony to PIFF 2018 and mingle with the movers and the shakers of Chollinwood. Opening ceremony tickets included in the tour.
Post-opening ceremony drinks at Paradise Micro-Brewery (0.5 EUR per glass) and noodle dinner at the Pyongyang Ramen House operated by famous Japanese chef Kenji Fujimoto. Ramen noodles included in the tour fee; sushi can be ordered on the spot; dishes starting from 50 EUR).
Overnight: The Yanggakdo Hotel, Pyongyang.

Day 3 - September 21 | Saturday
Pyongyang Film Locations Tour

AM
Korea Film Studio | A special interpretive tour through the studio which has produced many of Korea’s films. We’ll tours the sets and learn about the North Korean classic Flower Girl (1974) as well as other movies made here.

PM
Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum and USS Pueblo | We’ll tour this world-class museum led by a local museum guide. Renovated in 2012 and its exhibits of Korean War from the DPRK perspective containing artifacts, documents, photos, and lifelike dioramas. The exterior grounds house the War Victory Monument and displays of Korean People’s Army Hero Equipment and captures equipment from the US military, including the spyship USS Pueblo. Central to the understanding of the country today and highlight of the trip.

Tower of the Juche Idea | Iconic tower dedicated to the DPRK’s guiding philosophy on the Taedong River. Take the elevator to the top for great views of the city (elevator ticket is 5 EUR). This location appears in numerous DPRK films.

Monument to the Party Foundation | Iconic structure featuring the hammer, sickle, writing brush which represent the workers, farmers, and intellectuals that make up the Worker’s Party of Korea.

Overnight | The Yanggakdo Hotel, Pyongyang.
Day 4 - September 22 | Sunday
Pyongyang with the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun

AM
Kumsusan Palace of the Sun | Mausoleum of the DPRK leadership where President Kim Il Sung and Leader Kim Jong Il lie in state and the most solemn location on the itinerary. Please note formal dress is required. Men require collared shirt with tie, dark non-jean pants, and dark shoes. Women require covered shoulders, knee-length dress or pants, and closed toed shoes. The visit will take most of the morning and visitors are asked to bow a number of times inside. This is a state-administered site and visits are subject to local conditions. Cancellations are rare but possible.

PM
Drive south along the 'Reunification Highway' to Kaesong, historic capital of the Koryo Dynasty (918-1392) and today located near the Korean Demilitarised Zone. A 2.5 hour drive.

Pakyon Waterfall and Gwanum Temple | Light hike in relaxing wooded valley past a scenic waterfall and to a beautiful Ri Dynasty era temple and a cave with a marble Bodhisattva dating back to the 10th century.

Tomb of King Kongmin | Tomb of the 31st king of the Koryo Dynasty, a talented statesman and prolific painter, and his Mongolian wife set at the end of a picturesque valley. A UNESCO World Heritage Site. Filming location of Moranbong (1957).

Janam Hill | Statues of the DPRK leadership on a hill overlooking Kaesong city and historic pavilion used for archery demonstrations in days of yore. Filming location of Moranbong (1957).

Kayagum Performance | A beautiful performance of this Korean stringed instrument. There is even a North Korean film about the history of the instrument! Small tip (1-2 EUR recommended).

Overnight | Minsok Folk Hotel, Kaesong. Spend the night in a traditional-style Korean house in Kaesong’s old city. Here guests sleep on mats on the floor. The hotel has also served as a set in Korean films.

Day 5 - September 23 | Monday
Kaesong Day Trip and DMZ

AM
Drive south along the 'Reunification Highway' to Kaesong, historic capital of the Koryo Dynasty (918-1392) and today located near the Korean Demilitarised Zone. A 2.5 hour drive.

Panmunjom Truce Village and DMZ | Located in the middle of the 4 km wide Demilitarised Zone, Panmunjom is the site of the signing of the 1953 armistice at the end of the Korean War. This is the only location where visitors can directly view soldiers from both sides and the demarcation line dividing Korea. On some days it is possible to enter the hut straddling both Koreas and there cross temporarily into the south.

Old City Walk and South Gate | A morning stroll through Kaesong's historic district lined with homes dating back to the late Ri Dynasty to the city’s historic South Gate. Filming location of Moranbong (1957).

Sonjuk Bridge | Small stone bridge built in 1290 which was the site of the assassination of Jong Mong Ju by a son of Ri Song Gye, founder of the next dynasty, in 1392. This bloody act extinguished the Koryo which had ruled over Korea for 474 years and is said to have left a permanent mark on the bridge to this day.

PM
Drive back to Pyongyang with a stop at the Monument to the Three Charters of Reunification, a large stone archway over the highway memorializing joint agreements between north and south. 2.5 hour drive

Farewell dinner of Korean barbecue at the Golden Lanes Bowling Centre, where Pyongyang locals go for their ten-pin fix (2.5 EUR per person per game). Also has billiards and arcade games.

Overnight | Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang.
Day 6 - September 24 | Tuesday
Departure Day from Pyongyang and Return to Beijing

AM
Flight departure from Pyongyang on Air Koryo Flight JS 251 with scheduled arrival at Beijing Capital Airport (PEK) Terminal 2 at 10.00.

OR
Train departure by international train to Beijing at 10:25 AM with transfer in Dandong. The scheduled arrival is to Beijing Station on Wednesday, September 25 at 08:30. For this tour the default option is hard sleeper (six beds per berth).

End of Tour

Extras:
Transport | Train and Flights to North Korea (High-season) This tour travels between Beijing-Pyongyang by train each way in a hard-sleeper carriage (6 bunks per compartment). The train journey takes 24 hours with a transfer at the city of Dandong. One-way or round-trip flights are also available. The flight takes around 90 minutes. For an extra 232 EUR you can upgrade to a one-way flight. A round-trip ticket costs an additional 420 EUR. We recommend flight entry with a train return for the best overall experience on your trip.
Visit the DPRK border town of Sinuiju If you’re heading back to Beijing by train this option lets you get off for an overnight in Dongrim before the next day’s tour of Sinuiju — the border city with China. Spend an extra 24 hours in the DPRK seeing the sites of North Pyongan province. You will then continue on through to Beijing.
Visit Dandong — the Chinese gateway to the DPRK Instead of immediately returning to Beijing when your tour ends you can take some extra time to visit this fascinating border city, which directly faces the DPRK town of Sinuiju, but
lies on the Chinese side of the Yalu River. We offer both one-night and two-night fully guided extensions that take in all the sights of Dandong, with a special North Korea theme.

Upgrade to your own room All hotel rooms on our all-inclusive group tours feature twin beds, and will be shared. If you'd like a room to yourself then you can upgrade for an extra 40 EUR per night.

Helicopter flight over Pyongyang Why not take a helicopter sightseeing flight over the DPRK’s capital? Grab this rare opportunity to tour the skies above the city in a 40-minute helicopter trip aboard an Air Koryo Mi-17 chopper. The flight offers an unrivalled view from above, and great opportunities for photos and video from a completely different angle.

New for 2018: Take a cooking class in Pyongyang! This is a unique opportunity to cook with chefs of the Culinary Association of the DPRK, who will teach you how to cook Korean classics like Pyongyang cold noodles (raengmyon), kimchi, green bean pancakes, and other local delicacies. This optional cooking class costs 75 EUR for two hours, and will be followed by a dinner of your own making. Please do note that by participating in this cooking course, you might miss out on some evening activities and a dinner in Pyongyang.

Hotel booking in Beijing Koryo Tours is able to arrange hotel bookings in Beijing at the following hotels on behalf of people travelling with us. We have four hotels on offer with different levels of comfort and all located a short walk from our office. Select which hotel you are interested in and your Tour Manager will confirm the dates and cost for you. We will make the booking and add the cost to your tour invoice.

Insurance (7 to 9 nights) We’re unable to take you on one of our tours if you do not have medical insurance that covers the destination in question. Issues of isolation and infrastructure where we go mean it would be irresponsible of us to do so. We can provide this if you do not have it — or you can use your own.

What is / is not included?

**INCLUDED**
Train Beijing – Pyongyang with transfer at Dandong
Train Pyongyang – Beijing with transfer at Dandong
All meals on the tour apart from the meals on the train back to Beijing
Hotel accommodation
Koryo Tours tour leader
Two local Korean guides, and a driver per group
All transportation in the DPRK
Film festival opening ceremony
DPRK film screening in Pyongyang
DPRK film screening in Beijing

**NOT INCLUDED**
DPRK visa fee 50 EUR
Optional Air Koryo flights (one-way: 219 EUR; round-trip: 394 EUR)
Optional single room supplement of 40 EUR per night
Tips for the local Korean guides and driver (approx 10-15 EUR per day)
Optional activities such as the lift up the Juche Tower (5 EUR) or a visit to the funfair (approx. 2 EUR entrance fee per person)
Entry tickets for additional film screenings (approx. 20 EUR per person)
Entry tickets special events if applicable – for example Pyongyang Circus (approx. 20 EUR per person)
Meals include a complimentary beer and water, but you will need to purchase extra drinks if needed
Spending money for souvenirs
SINUIJU EXTENSION: RMB 50 for the bus across the bridge to Dandong to be paid on the spot to the local guides

Notes
Groups will be in the experienced hands of two or three local Korean guides. Furthermore, for groups of 10 or more, a member of the Koryo Tours team will accompany the trip.

Please note that when on tour your day-to-day itinerary may differ slightly to what is advertised above. Your tour leader will ensure, however, that everything available at the time is covered, and replacement options are provided where needed. We will also add in extras when there is time (such as a visit to a local bar or amusement park). We visit the DPRK regularly so know all the best places to go, and how to make the most of your days there to guarantee the experience of a lifetime. After the tour, we will send out a list of all participants’ emails, so you can keep in touch, swap photos etc. If you do not wish to be on this list then please let us know.

Visa Information
We arrange your North Korean visa as part of your tour package [+50 EUR]. However, given the tour starts and finishes in China you may also need to consider entry and exit procedures in China for your trip. This can be obtained at a Chinese embassy abroad. We recommend obtaining at least a double-entry Chinese visa for your trip.

Over 50 nationalities can obtain a visa-waiver for up to 144 hours when in transit through Beijing Capital Airport (PEK) using direct international flights. Most other nationalities can transit for up to 24 hours. If you don’t want to visit China as part of your trip, this could be the easiest option for you. It is not possible to obtain a transit-waiver when using a train for entry or exit from China.

Please be sure to check your visa status for travel through China while planning your trip. We may be able to assist with Chinese visas. We can also provide documentation in support of visa applications upon payment of a tour deposit.