

MARCH 17 - MARCH 21/22 2020

Koryo North Korea Budget Tour (March)

4 nights in North Korea + Beijing-Pyongyang travel time
See Korea as it awakens from the cold of winter and welcomes spring.

From 775 EUR per person

Overall

March is an important time of year in Korea as the country emerges from the cold winter North Korea climate and into a much warmer, welcoming one. Although still a quiet time for tourism, North Koreans are getting busy in the countryside agricultural work begins in anticipation for the coming spring harvest.

On this tour, we take you to see the main sites of the capital city Pyongyang, including; a ride on the Pyongyang Metro, Juche Tower, Kim Il Sung Square, and a walk down one of Pyongyang's newest streets.

We will also head out of Pyongyang to go to Pyongsong, the centre of scientific research. and the North-South Korea border DMZ. Here you can be one of the first foreigners to enjoy the recent freedom of being able to step over the demarcation line into the South.

This North Korea budget tour helps you get the most for your money on your trip to North Korea. Great for first-timers, or those with little time (or money!), we take you to see the main sites in and outside of Pyongyang.

Be warned, there will be little time to for rest on this action-packed itinerary - not that you'll want to, though!

Highlights

- Kumsusan Palace of the Sun: grand mausoleum of the DPRK leadership
- Pyongyang Metro: deepest metro system in the world
- Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum: world-class museum of the Korean War and site of the captured USS Pueblo
- Panmunjom and the Demilitarized Zone: signing hall of the 1953 armistice and Joint Security Area, patrolled by soldiers from both sides
- Pyongsong: Provincial seat of South Pyong'an province and centre of specialist education

Itinerary

Briefing Day – March 16 | Monday

*Pre-Tour Briefing | 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.

10:00 | Briefing for those departing by train.

PM

16:00 | Briefing for those departing by flight.

17:27 | Train travellers depart Beijing Station by domestic sleeper train to Dandong, the Chinese city on the border with the DPRK. Please arrange independent travel to the train station and arrive at least an hour and a half early for the train departure.

Overnight | Hotel in Beijing not included in the tour for those taking the flight the next day. Contact us for recommendations near our office! Those travelling by train will spend the night on the train.



Day 1 - March 17 | Tuesday

Arrival Day in Pyongyang

Train transfer at Dandong Station from overnight sleeper train to Dandong-Pyongyang local. Our local representative in Dandong will assist with the transfer. Train crosses the China-North Korea border followed by North Korean customs and immigration.

Free bus from the Koryo Tours office to Beijing Capital Airport Terminal 2 for those taking the flight. 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 JS152 at 12:55. A 1.5 hour flight with basic lunch (no vegetarian option).

Flight arrival into 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, museums, and The Grand People's Study House.

Train arrival to Pyongyang Railway Station.

Walk on Future Scientists' Street | An evening stroll through one of Pyongyang's newest neighbourhoods.

Overnight | The Sosan Hotel, Pyongyang. A sports-themed hotel located in West Pyongyang's Sports Village. Sports shop, bookstore, numerous bars, spa and small gym. Renovated in 2015.

Day 2 - March 18 | Wednesday

Kaesong City and DMZ Tour

AM

Drive 160 km south on the 'Reunification Highway' to Kaesong, historic capital of the Koryo Dynasty (918-1392) and today located near the Korean Demilitarized Zone. 2.5-hour drive.

Panmunjom Armistice Village and DMZ | The site of the signing of the 1953 armistice that ended the Korean War and demarcation line between north and south. On some days it is possible to visit the hut straddling the line, where negotiations between both sides once took place. Here we will be accompanied by military guides from the Korean People's Army.

Kaesong Koryo Museum | Once the Songgyung Academy, a Confucian school, and now a museum on the Koryo Dynasty exhibiting historical objects, statues, pagodas, and porcelain from that era. A UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Kaesong Korean Stamp Exhibition Hall | Store selling stamps, postcards, local ginseng, souvenirs, art, and more! One of the best postcard collections in the country and friendly staff.

Traditional Royal Korean Lunch (pangsanggi) | A meal made of 12 dishes served in brass bowls fit for the kings of old. The more dishes, the more distinguished the guest! Traditional Korean 'sweet meat soup' is an option here (5 EUR).

PM

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

Drive back to Pyongyang. 2.5 hours.

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

Kwangbok Department Store | Shop with the citizens of Pyongyang and exchange for Korean currency! Try the snack stands for some of Pyongyang's best local eats.

Overnight | Sosan Hotel, Pyongyang

Day 3 - March 19 | Thursday

Pyongyang City Tour

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. Visitations are by special request only and 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.

Mansudae Grand Monument | Enormous bronze statues of the DPRK leadership overlooking downtown Pyongyang. A presentation of flowers and bow by the group is customary here. Visitations are by special request only and decent dress is required. No shorts or flip-flop sandals allowed here.

PM

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.

Arch of Triumph | A 60-m archway commemorating the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonial rule and larger than its counterpart in Paris.

Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum | Tour this world-class museum led by a local museum guide.

Renovated in 2012 and it exhibits the Korean War from the DPRK perspective with artefacts, documents, photos, and lifelike dioramas. The exterior grounds house the War Victory Monument and displays of Korean People's Army Hero

Equipment and captured equipment from the US military, including the USS Pueblo. Central to the understanding of the country today and highlight of the trip.

Mangyongdae Schoolchildren's Palace | Tour one of Pyongyang's centres of extracurricular excellence with study rooms for fine arts, dance, sports, and music, then watch a spectacular performance put on by the students.

Drive north to Pyongsong, a satellite city of Pyongyang and centre of scientific research. A 45 minute to 1-hour drive.

Overnight | Jangsusan Hotel, Pyongsong. The only hotel in Pyongsong open for tourists, an excellent bar with one of the best bartenders in the DPRK makes this hotel one of the most fun in the whole country! Basic facilities with fairly reliable electricity and hot water. Billiards, karaoke, haircut, and outdoor eateries in summer.



Day 4 – March 20 | Friday

Pyongsong and Pyongyang City Tours

AM

Pyongsong City Square | Central square of Pyongsong City with statues of the DPRK leadership and flanked by the provincial revolutionary museum. Presentation of flowers customary.

Kim Jong Suk Higher Middle School | One of the DPRK's top middle schools for gifted students, tourists are encouraged to help teach an English class!

Paeksong Provisions Factory | A factory producing a range of foods and drinks: biscuits, cakes, soju, candy, and snacks. Here you can have a taste of the products and tour the production facilities.

PM

Drive back to Pyongyang. 45 minute - 1-hour drive.

Mangyongdae Native House | Birthplace and childhood home of President Kim Il Sung. A traditional Korean house in a beautiful natural surrounding.

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.

Tower of the Juche Idea | Iconic tower dedicated to the DPRK's guiding philosophy and located on the Taedong River. Take the elevator to the top for great views of the city (elevator ticket is 5 EUR).

Mansugyo Beer Bar | A bar serving seven types of beer. Popular with locals after work and on weekends. Best place to drink pints with local people.

Golden Lane Bowling Centre | Where Pyongyang locals go for their ten-pin fix (2.5 EUR per person per game). Also has billiards and arcade games. Non-bowlers can head next door to the Kumrung Leisure Centre for an air gun shooting range (approximately 6 EUR per 20 round cartridge) and some of the best coffee in Pyongyang.

Farewell group dinner at the Golden Lanes Bowling Centre's bulgogi BBQ restaurant.

Overnight | Sosan Hotel, Pyongyang.

Day 5 – March 21 | Saturday

Departure Day from Pyongyang and Return to Beijing by flight or train. Please confirm your preferred transport method upon booking*

AM

Flight departure from Pyongyang on Air Koryo Flight JS151 at 08:50 with scheduled arrival at Beijing Capital Airport (PEK) Terminal 2 at 09:50.

OR

Train departure by train to Beijing at 10:25 with transfer in Dandong. The scheduled arrival is to Beijing Station on Sunday March 22 at 08:38. For this tour the default option is hard sleeper (six beds per berth).

End of Tour

Extras

Transport | Train and Flights to North Korea (Standard) 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 199 EUR you can upgrade to a one-way flight. A round-trip ticket costs an additional 299 EUR.

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.

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.

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.

Insurance for up to six 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 – Beijing
- All meals on the tour apart from meals on the train
- Hotel accommodation
- Two local Korean guides, and a driver per group
- A Koryo Tours tour leader
- All transportation in the DPRK

NOT INCLUDED

- DPRK visa fee 50 EUR
- Optional Air Koryo flights (one-way: 199 EUR; return: 299 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 special events if applicable – for example Pyongyang Circus (approx. 20 EUR per person) or film screening (approx. 10 EUR)
- 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.