

JULY 25 - JULY 30, 2020
The Victory Day Tour

5 nights in North Korea + Beijing-Pyongyang travel time
Experience one of North Korea's most important national holidays that will see mass dances and other festivities! This tour will also travel to Kaesong and the DMZ and Pyongsong.

From 979 EUR per person

Overall

Travel to North Korea for Victory Day will give you a deep insight into the country and the culture. Not only will you get to enjoy all the must-see sights of the capital Pyongyang, but you'll also be there for North Korea's Victory Day celebrations.

July 27th 1953 was the day the Korean War armistice was signed. This occasion is celebrated in North Korea as 'Victory Day' and is a major annual holiday. This year will mark the 67th anniversary and we will make sure that you're in Pyongyang on the day for one of the most unique holidays and join in the celebrations with the locals, who are all in high spirits. This includes picnicking in Moran Park, attending (and taking part in) mass dances, and enjoying any other events planned on this day.

As well as a city tour of Pyongyang including the Juche Tower, Kim Il Sung Square and the local Kwangbok supermarket, you will also have the opportunity to visit the DMZ North-South Korea border and stay in traditional Korean accommodation.

Highlights

- Victory Day celebrations on July 27th, the 66th anniversary of the Korean War Armistice
- The Pyongyang Metro; Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum and other Pyongyang highlights
- Panmunjom Truce Village and the DMZ in historic Kaesong, capital of the medieval Koryo Dynasty

Itinerary

Briefing Day - July 24 | Friday

*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.

17:00 | 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 - July 25 | Saturday

Arrival day in Pyongyang

AM

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

PM

Flight departure from Beijing on Air Koryo flight JS252 at 13:05. A 1.5-hour flight with basic lunch (no vegetarian option).

Flight arrival into Pyongyang's Sunan International Airport (FNJ) at 15:35. DPRK immigration and customs, meet your Korean guides and transfer to the city.

War Heroes' Cemetery | Cemetery dedicated to heroes of the Korean War. Opened in 2013 and centred around a monument of a rifle and red flag.

Train arrival to Pyongyang Railway Station.

Kim Il Sung Square | Pyongyang's central square lined with government ministries, museums and The Grand People's Study House, Korea's national library. See the centre of it all!

Walk on post-war Pyongyang's oldest street Victory (Sungni) Street from Kim Il Sung Square to Pyongyang Grand Theatre.

Overnight | Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang. Home away from home for most (but not all!) foreign visitors to Pyongyang, this 47-story hotel is located on an island in the middle of the Taedong River and offers great views of the city. Comfortable rooms and comprehensive leisure facilities: swimming pool, spa, billiards, bowling, gift shops, tea houses, beer brewed on-site, and a Chinese-run casino.

Day 2 - July 26 | Sunday

Pyongyang and Pyongsong, satellite city of Pyongyang

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

Pyongsong City Square | Central square of Pyongsong City with statues of the DPRK leadership. A presentation of flowers is customary. Heritage Site.

PM

Pyongsong Primary School | A local primary school with tour of classrooms, demonstration rooms, dance and music halls, and gymnasium. See the school's award-winning dance troupe and take on the schoolchildren in ping-pong, a sport this school specialises in teaching.

Konji-Ri Revolutionary Site | Headquarters of the Korean People's Army during the Korean War in the hills north of Pyongyang. Preserved traditional homes which served as army offices during the war, bunkers, as well as burnt trees and bomb casing from American aerial attacks set among a bucolic landscape. The on-site museum compliments the War Museum in Pyongyang.

Return to Pyongyang.

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

Overnight | Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang.

Day 3 - July 27 | Monday

Victory Day, the 66th anniversary of Korean War Armistice Agreement.

AM

Mansudae Fountain Park | Centrally-located pleasant park popular with local citizens afterschool, on weekends.

Flanked by examples of representative architecture from different eras.

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 dress code (close-toed shoes and covered legs and shoulders). Here we will also see the Chollima Monument, or 'thousand ri (400 km or 250 miles) horse' - a symbol of speed- commemorating the quick rebuilding of the country in the 1950s following the Korean War.

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

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 | Massive archway commemorating the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonial rule. Made for the 70th anniversary of President Kim Il Sung in 1982.

PM

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

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

Mass Dance | As it's a national holiday, we expect to see large student organised dances held around Pyongyang on major holidays (weather dependent). Join in the fun!

Kaeson Funfair | Take on the rides of Pyongyang's small but excellently located central funfair with the locals: pirate ship, 'vominator', rollercoaster, bumper cars, arcades, and more. Entry and ride tickets purchased on the spot (€-€€). Open April-October.

Overnight | Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang.



Day 4 - July 28 | Tuesday

Sariwon-Kaesong

AM

Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum | A world-class museum led by a local museum guide. Renovated in 2012 and its exhibits of Korean War from the DPRK perspective containing 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 spy ship USS Pueblo. Central to the understanding of the country today and highlight of the trip. Unmissable.

Drive south along the 'Reunification Highway' to Sariwon, provincial seat of North Hwanghae Province and centre of ago-industry. A 1-hour drive.

PM

Sariwon Folk Village and City View | Mock-up of a traditional Korean town which includes a history museum, food street, and pavilions. There is a small tavern selling Makkoli, traditional rice wine. Climb a nearby hill for a view of Sariwon City and the surrounding plains.

Pakyon Waterfall | Light walking in relaxing wooded area to a scenic waterfall. There are hiking trails of various lengths. Local people commonly visit here for picnics and sometimes bathing/swimming.

Kayagum Performance | Traditional Korean stringed instrument performance at the Minsok Folk Hotel. Tip recommended (1-3 EUR per person on group tours) for this beautiful demonstration of Korean music.

Overnight | Minsok Folk Hotel, Kaesong. Traditional style hotel where guests sleep on heated floors in Korean style. Housed in beautiful courtyards of Kaesong's old city, structures date back to the Ri Dynasty. Basic bathroom facilities. Hot water not guaranteed and erratic electricity supply – please bring a torch.

Day 5 – July 29 | Wednesday

Kaesong and DMZ Tour

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.

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

Concrete Wall and view of DMZ | View of a complex fortification system erected on the southern boundary of the DMZ accompanied by a military guide. The wall is seen as evidence of intent to permanently divide the nation. 45 minute drive each way from Kaesong through the countryside.

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. A 2.5-hour drive.

Golden Lane Bowling Centre | Where Pyongyang locals go for their ten-pin fix, billiards and 90's arcade games. (€ per activity). Excellent for people-watching on weekends and holidays.

Overnight | Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang.

Day 6 – July 30 | Thursday

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 10:10 with transfer in Dandong. The scheduled arrival is to Beijing Station on Wednesday, July 31 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 (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.

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.

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.

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 North Korea

NOT INCLUDED

- North Korean visa fee 50 EUR
- Optional Air Koryo flights (one-way: 199 EUR; round-trip: 299EUR)
- Optional single room supplement (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)
- 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.