



Autumn in Korea - Conservancy Travel Special Event October 17 - November 1, 2024

Join Elaine on a comprehensive, mostly inclusive journey around South Korea at the peak of Autumn foliage. Limited to a select, ultra-small group of not more than 8 people (including Elaine), this trip is designed to see and experience many places and activities that may become components of future Conservancy Travel group tours.

This trip is best suited to travelers in good physical condition who enjoy fully-scheduled, active days, are flexible and have a good sense of humor and like Korean food.

Itinerary Summary

Seoul, 3 nights in 4* hotel
Sokcho, 2 nights in 4* hotel
Andong, 1 night in 3* hotel
Gyeongju, 1 night in 5* hotel
Busan, 2 nights in 4* hotel
Suncheon, 1 night in 4* hotel
Gwangju, 1 night in 4* hotel
Jeonju, 1 night in 4* hotel
Incheon, 1 night in 5* hotel

Site Inspection Special Price

\$5459 per person sharing a double room

\$6427 in a single room

Full payment is due with registration

Registration cut off - when we reach our maximum of 8 total, or August 12, 2024; whichever comes first.

Inclusions

Ultra-Small Group - limited to 8 people (including Elaine)

Pre-departure Korea Information to help you prepare for your journey

Arrival Meet & Greet and transfer from ICN Airport to hotel in Seoul

13 nights accommodation

Private Transportation in a 10-passenger van

Private English Speaking Guide Days 2 - 14

Entrance fees for all included sightseeing as described in the itinerary

36 meals (13 breakfasts, 12 lunches and 11 dinners) including 3 special features: Temple Cuisine, Hweh (Korean sushi) and Royal Cuisine.

Hands on experience: Learn to make Flower Tea in a traditional house in Andong

CIMER Jjimjilbang Korean Sauna Entrance ticket

Exclusions

International Airfare to Korea

Beverages

2 dinners

Personal Expenses

Porterage and baggage handling

Gratuities for Guide suggested at \$120 per person; and Driver, suggested at \$60 per person

Travel Insurance

Activity Level

This is a fast paced, action-packed trip, with fully scheduled days and little down time, except during the drives between destinations. There is extensive walking: Because Korea is seventy percent mountains, and almost all temples are in the mountains, expect extensive uphill and downhill walking and stairs. It is traditional to remove shoes at the entrance to many buildings and socks must always be worn - no bare feet. In traditional buildings and many restaurants, seating is on the floor or very low seats. Please plan to travel light, with one day bag plus a roll-aboard type suitcase or duffel bag as the van has limited space for luggage. If you plan to shop, bring a folding bag.

Note on Korean Food

Included meals are all Korean cuisine. Korea boasts a rich culinary tradition with distinct regional specialties. Each region offers unique dishes that reflect its geography, climate, local and seasonal ingredients, and this trip endeavors to experience as much of that as possible. Breakfast is buffet and includes a variety of both Asian and Western dishes. All included lunches and dinners are a set menu. Korean meals feature a protein accompanied by many side dishes, rice or noodles or both. It is not possible to customize or alter the set menu, but you can choose to not eat any of the components. While not all Korean food is spicy, gochujang, a spicy red pepper paste is a feature in many dishes. It is not possible to guarantee gluten-free, as soy sauce forms the basis of many sauces. And yes, kimchi is a part of every meal.

Registration

Upon submitting your registration information and payment, you will receive an automatic email confirmation with arrival/departure travel information and optional travel insurance information, and the pre-departure booklet.

No registration is taken without payment and acceptance of Conservancy Travel Terms and Conditions

Air Travel

You should make your international air travel arrangements as soon as you receive your confirmation of registration for the trip.

Optional Pre-tour Extra Night(s)

Arrive Early in Seoul (Free time on your own/ rest and travel recovery)

1 Extra Night: Arrival Thursday, October 17

\$224 per person sharing a double room

\$298 in a single room

Arrival Meet & Greet, private transfer, 1 night hotel and 1 breakfast

2 Nights: Arrival Wednesday, October 16

\$307 per person sharing a double room

\$455 in a single room

Arrival Meet & Greet, private transfer, 2 nights hotel and 2 breakfasts



DETAILED ITINERARY

Thursday, October 17, 2024

Day 1 Depart the USA to Korea (Airfare under own arrangements.)

Friday, October 18

Day 2 ARRIVALS IN SEOUL, KOREA

Arrivals in Incheon International Airport (ICN). You'll be met at the exit of baggage claim by an English-speaking guide and transferred to our hotel in Seoul.

Time TBA: Meet in the hotel lobby to walk to dinner in a nearby Korean restaurant. (Time will be determined based on everyone's flight arrival times.)

Seoul Garden Hotel or similar (D)

Saturday, October 19

Day 3 SEOUL

Daily breakfast included in each hotel.

Full day visit of Seoul Highlights including the Changing of the Guard and visit of Gyeongbokgung Palace, National Folk Museum, Bukchon Hanok Village, Insadong Antique Alley; Lunch in a Korean restaurant.

Dinner on own.

Seoul Garden Hotel or similar (BL)

Sunday, October 20

Day 4 SEOUL

Today we'll visit the DMZ - Demilitarized Zone - on the border of North and South Korea, but instead of the typical tourist visit, we're taking a special one-mile gentle hike along the recently opened DMZ Peace Trail, that due to its isolation, is one of the best ecological preserves on the Korea peninsula. Over the six decades since the armistice, the area has been closed off from human interference. Despite the huge military presence, the area has developed into an unexpected refuge for endangered species of migratory birds and wild mammals including deer and mountain goats. The routes take in a seaside trail running along unused train tracks dotted with observation posts. Visit the Dorasan Peak Park and the Inter-Korean Transit station.

Special Temple Food Lunch (vegetarian)

Return to Seoul and visit the Museum of Contemporary History: Examine the artefacts that illustrate Korea's history from 1876 through to the present: Efforts to establish an independent, modern nation; the Korean War, the process of South Korea's economic development and democratization and the Great Leap Forward that changed South Korea from one of the world's poorest to one of the most advanced.

This evening, we'll have a special dinner at a famous, Michelin starred noodle restaurant.

Seoul Garden Hotel or similar (BLD)

Monday, October 21

Day 5 SEOUL - SOKCHO

After breakfast, check out and depart to Sokcho on the east coast of the Korean peninsula. (125 miles / 3.5 hours total driving). En route, we'll visit the gorgeous Garden of the Morning Calm, which will be adorned in its Autumn glory. For lunch we'll have a local specialty, Dakgalbi - spicy, stir-fried chicken. Continue to Sokcho and check in at the hotel.

Dinner in a local restaurant, featuring local specialty Yaksu Dolsot Jeongsik.

Sea Cruise Sokcho or similar (BLD)

Tuesday, October 22

Day 6 SOKCHO

This morning, we'll visit the eastern peninsula's border with North Korea at Unification Observatory in Goseong, which was built in 1984 to reflect on the pain of division and desire for reunification of Korean Peninsula, and visit the DMZ Museum. Then, we'll head to Mt. Seorak National Park, take a cable car up to the heights of Kwongseumseong Fortress and visit Shinhungsa Temple. Mt. Seorak is Korea's third-highest peak and is the Korean peninsula's most iconic landscape. Admired for its unique rock formations, rich wildlife, hot springs, gushing waterfalls, thick forests and ancient Buddhist temples, we'll be enjoying its glorious Autumn Foliage.

Then we'll do as Koreans, and soak our feet at a unique Foot Bath Park.

For dinner, we're heading to Abai Village, historically significant as it became a refuge for North Korean refugees during the Korean War, many of whom settled there and infused the village with their cultural heritage. This blend of history and culture is reflected in the local cuisine and traditional practices, offering visitors a unique glimpse into the lives of these displaced individuals. We'll try the village's famous stuffed squid and fresh seafood dishes.

Sea Cruise Sokcho or similar (BLD)

Wednesday, October 23, 2024

Day 7 SOKCHO - YEONGJU - POONGGI - ANDONG

Today we drive south to Andong (5 hours total driving time). First, we'll stop in Yeongju to visit Buseoksa Temple. Then continue to Poonggi, an area known for its cultivation of ginseng and its famous Ginseng Wholesale Market. Arriving in Andong, we'll walk through the Gusijang Old Market. For dinner, we'll have a local specialty, Andong Jjimdak. After dinner, stroll the iconic Wollyeonggyo Bridge.

Andong CM Park or similar (BLD)

Thursday, October 24, 2024

Day 8 ANDONG - GYEONGJU

Check out of the hotel and visit Andong's historic Hahoe Hanok Village, and its Mask Museum, Buyongdae Cliff, and Byeonsan Confucian School. We'll have lunch in a local restaurant. This afternoon, we'll have a hands-on experience making Flower Tea in a Gotaek - a traditional Korean House.

Continue to Gyeongju (89mi / 2 hrs.) Explore the grandeur of the Silla Dynasty, that ruled two-thirds of the Korean Peninsula from this capital city from 57BC to 935AD. Walk through the Royal Tumuli Park and go inside the Flying Horse Tomb.

For dinner this evening, we enjoy Korean Royal Court Cuisine, consisting of twelve dishes, rice and soup, served family style, as they would have been presented to royalty upon special copper dishes. After dinner, take a stroll around the illuminated Anapji Pond, taking in the scenic viewpoints and reflections.

Lahan Select Gyeongju or similar (BLD)

Friday, October 25, 2024

Day 9 GYEONGJU - BUSAN

Check out of the hotel and make a short stop at the Gyeongju National Museum to see treasures of the Silla Kingdom. Then we leave Gyeongju city and visit Bulgoksa Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that has some of the original pagodas dating from the year 751, Seorkguram Grotto and we'll try to catch the Sunmudo Zen Martial Arts demonstration at Golgulsa Temple before continuing to Busan and our hotel on Haeundae Beach. After dinner, we'll head to Cheonghak Reservoir Observatory for stunning nighttime views over Busan.

Shilla Stay Haeundae or similar (BLD)

Saturday, October 26, 2024

Day 10 BUSAN

Explore the city of Busan, where mega-high-rises contrast with traditional neighborhoods. Walk through the UN Memorial Cemetery, the burial ground for UN Command casualties of the Korean War, the only United Nations cemetery in the world. Next, head to the colorful streets of Gamcheon Culture Village, constructed on the foothills of the coastal mountain range. The residents have decorated their houses and streets with murals and sculptures, creating a unique neighborhood. In the traditional old quarter of Busan, we'll take in the lively scene at the Jagalchi Fish Market, with its amazing array of fresh fish and seafood.

We'll have a traditional Korean Hweh (sushi) lunch - fresh raw fish - is preceded and surrounded by many side dishes of vegetables, cooked fish, rice, pickles and then ending with a soup made from the fish bones, an amazing, tasty feast that covers the table.

This afternoon, visit Haedong Yonggungsa Temple - the only seaside temple in Korea.

As its Saturday night, after dinner in a local restaurant, we'll head to Gwanganli Beach for the Drone light show (weather permitting.)

Shilla Stay Haeundae or similar (BLD)

Sunday, October 27

Day 11 BUSAN - SUNCHEON

Depart Busan for the south coast to visit the Suncheon Bay Wetland Reserve, a protected coastal area in Suncheon, South Korea. Renowned for its diverse ecosystem, the reserve features extensive mudflats, salt marshes, and vast reed fields. Home to various plant and animal species, it serves as a crucial stopover for migratory birds like the hooded crane, black-faced spoonbill, and Eurasian oystercatcher. The reed fields create a stunning landscape, especially in autumn when they turn golden brown.

We'll visit Suncheon Bay National Garden.

Continue to Naganeupseong Folk Village, a well-preserved historical village offering a glimpse into traditional Korean life during the Joseon Dynasty. Featuring traditional hanok houses, government offices, and fortress walls, the village showcases typical Korean architecture with thatched roofs and wooden structures. Still inhabited by residents who maintain the traditional way of life, Naganeupseong is set in a picturesque landscape surrounded by mountains and fields.

Check in at the hotel; dinner in a local restaurant.

Suncheon Ecograd Hotel or similar (BLD)

Monday, October 28

Day 12 SUNCHEON - GURYE - DAMYANG - GWANGJU

Check out of the hotel, depart Suncheon to Seonamsa Temple, on the slopes of Jogyesan Mountain, one of the most revered and ancient Buddhist temples in the country, known for its beautiful natural surroundings and historical significance. The one kilometer trail from the entrance to the temple is famous for its stunning scenery, with colorful leaves of the maple and ginkgo trees contrast beautifully with the traditional architecture of the temple buildings and the natural landscape of the mountain.

Stop at Gurye Village. (This village is a famous Spring destination, when the sansuyu fruit trees are in bloom.)

Next we'll visit Hwaeomsa temple, situated at the foot of Mt. Jirisan. Continue to the picturesque Juknokwon Bamboo Garden and much photographed Metasequoia Path, then arrive in the city of Gwangju and check in at the hotel.

Holiday Inn Gwangju *or similar* (BLD)

Tuesday, October 29

Day 13 GWANGJU - JEONJU

This morning we'll visit the city of Gwangju, a thriving hub of culture and art, that hosts the Gwangju Biennale & Exhibition, a world-class art exhibition on even numbered years (September - November, 2024). We'll stop in at the exhibition, and visit the National Asian Culture Complex. Visit the May 18 Memorial Park, that commemorates the lives lost during the the 1980 Gwangju Uprising, also known as May 18. The uprising was a response to the coup d'état of May Seventeenth, which installed a military dictator and implemented martial law. People in Gwangju protested authoritarianism and demanded democratization. The South Korean military violently suppressed the uprising, leading to casualties and injuries. The Carter administration supported the suppression, fearing the uprising might spread and involve North Korea. The Gwangju

Uprising became a pivotal moment in South Korea's march toward democracy.

Visit the traditional Yangnim History Culture Village.

Depart to the city of Jeonju (1.15-hour drive.) Upon arrival, enjoy a guided a walking tour of Jeonju Hanok Village, the largest hanok village in Korea. Check in at the hotel.

Jeonju Gloster or Jeonju Best Western Hotel *or similar* (BLD)

Wednesday, October 30

Day 14 JEONJU - INCHEON

After breakfast, check out of the hotel and drive approximately three hours to Incheon, where we end our journey at the five-star Paradise City Hotel and Resort complex in Incheon. After an included lunch, the afternoon is at leisure at Paradise City CIMER, to relax and refresh at an included traditional Korean jjimjilbang - sauna: optional spa treatments available at your own cost. Explore the Art Space, shop, stroll, enjoy live music or relax at the pool. The complex has much to discover! Incheon Paradise City Hotel and Resort (BL)

Thursday, October 31

Day 15 DEPARTURE

Breakfast included in the hotel. END OF TOUR SERVICES

(B)

Independent departures. The hotel has a free shuttle bus to Incheon International Airport (ICN).

Elaine will also be departing Korea to Boston today.