

Dear traveller to North Korea,

We would like to say thank you for choosing Korea Konsult as your travelling partner. Korea Konsult AB is based in Stockholm, Sweden and it is the major European gate to North Korea. Sweden was the first Western country that established a diplomatic mission in North Korea and until now has been representing the United States, Canada and some other countries in the Democratic People Republic of Korea. As a Swedish company we are proud to be a bridge to North Korea for people from all over the world. Our mission is to let travellers enjoy an adventure in this unique country and acquire unbiased experience of North Korea as it is.

You are on the way to the one of the most reserved countries on the planet Earth and therefore the following information is prepared in order to make your journey convenient and pleasant. Please feel free to contact us if you need any further clarification.

Time zone

(UTC/GMT +8.5 hours). Pyongyang is 30 minutes ahead of Beijing (China) and 1.5 hours behind Vladivostok (Russia).

Money

The acceptable currencies in the DPRK are Euro, USD and Chinese Yuan (Renminbi). All payments are made in cash. Foreign nationals are not allowed to pay with or buy local currency (North Korean Won) in the DPRK except to Special Economic Zone Rason. We would suggest:

- Sometimes it is difficult to get change in souvenir or book shops thus consider bringing cash in small denominations (Euro coins, one or five Dollar bills)
- American cents (coins) or Chinese coins CANNOT be used in the DPRK
- Travellers' cheques are impossible to cash in the DPRK
- Foreign credit cards are not accepted in North Korea, there are no ATMs in the DPRK and thus you won't be able to withdraw cash or pay by your credit card
- There are no limitations on how much currency you can bring to the DPRK

If you travel to Free Economic Zone Rason please note that Chinese Yuan (RMB) is the most popular currency followed by USD. In Rason you can hardly use Euro to pay for goods and services.

Extra out of the pocket expenses

Your tour covers most of your expenses (hotel, meals, excursions, and guide) in Korea nevertheless there will be some extra expenses during your trip. You should expect some

extra cost and you may consider bringing some cash for your out of the pocket expenses such as:

- **Tickets for shows and various performances** (~100 Euro), circus performance (~20 Euro), orchestra concert (~20 Euro), soccer game (~30 Euro).
- **Ascending to the tower of Juche idea:** you can take the elevator to the top and enjoy a fantastic view on Pyongyang (~ 5 Euro). It is definitely worth it.
- **Train meals** are not free of charge. You can buy lunch/dinner/breakfast at a restaurant-carriage (Korean in the DPRK and Chinese in China) while taking the train. Before your train trip we also recommend to buy drinking water and some snacks either in Beijing or in the hotel shop in North Korea.

Shopping

There will be many opportunities to buy **souvenirs** during your stay in the DPRK:

- North Korean ginseng (5 ~ 100 Euro)
- Local liquors (10 ~ 40 Euro)
- Various pins with North Korean symbols, stamps, and postcards (1~5 Euro), hand-painted propaganda posters (20~60-Euro)
- t-shirts (15 Euro)
- Professional oil paintings and handicrafts (10 ~ 1000 Euro)
- Books (1~30 Euro) and CD (5~10 Euro) with North Korean music and movies
- Kimjongilia and Kimilsunglia are the two flowers representing North Korean leaders. You can buy flower bulbs and bring them home

Mobile Phones, International Calls, Internet & Email

From 1 January 2013 it is ok to bring mobile phones to the DPRK including the phones with GPS. In order to be able to make calls you will need to buy a local SIM card - **NO ROAMING PROVIDED:** visitor's phone will not work in North Korea without local SIM card.

To use mobile phone, visitors will require an unlocked cell phone compatible with 3G services in the 2,100MHz band. Most 3G phones should work just fine. Koryolink voice-only SIM card to make international calls can be purchased (~50 Euro) at the airport on arrival. North Korea's cell phone network operates with two tiers of service, with a barrier existing between local North Korean users and foreigners in the city. Therefore visitors will not be able to make a call from their phone to the local North Korean number.

International telephone calls

It is very expensive to call overseas from North Korea, 4~5 Euro / minute, but it is always recommended to check at the reception the exact minute cost to your country.

Internet

Mobile Internet (3G) is available almost in all major cities of the DPRK and the Internet-capable SIM-card can be bought at Koryolink office at Pottonggang Hotel in Pyongyang. The speed of the Internet connection is fast enough to stream live skype video. To use mobile Internet you need to buy a data service plan:

- SIM card: 120 USD (195 voice minutes, 20 sms), sim card will be active for about 2 months (as of May 2015)
- + Internet Activation (50Mb): 90 USD
- +Additional Internet Data (prepaid service): 0.38 USD / Mb

The only hotel in Korea where Internet is available in rooms is Masik Ski Resort near Wonsan. There will be no WiFi available anywhere in the DPRK.

Email

From 2007 onward it is possible to send an e-mail from your hotel (Pyongyang only). It costs 2 Euro to send one e-mail (if the e-mail size is less than 30 KB; you will need to pay extra fee for big attachments) and it is free to receive e-mails. Please note that you will be sending e-mails from the hotel's e-mail account and not from your private e-mail account, so please ask your correspondent to put your room number as a message subject.

Food & Water

Three meals a day will be provided in the DRK, these are covered by the tour price. The quality of food is quite fair. Most of the meals consist of traditional Korean or fusion Chinese foods: "Bibimbap" (rice with fresh vegetables and fried egg), "Pyongyang Naengmyon" (cold buckwheat noodles), "Bulgogi" (barbecued pork or beef which you cook yourself), "Kimchi" (spicy pickled cabbage), "Ojingno" (dish of sautéed squid and vegetable).

There is a rather limited menu for vegetarians. If you are a vegan contact us before traveling. Unfortunately we will not be able to serve you with vegetarian menu but we will help to arrange simple meals without meat or fish. We would recommend for vegetarians bringing to North Korea nutritious bars, peanuts, canned and packaged foods to diversify basic rice-kimchi ration.

Local beer (half a bottle per person is included, extra can be ordered at very reasonable price) and Ginseng wine are available at meal times. If you feel uncomfortable with Asian style food you may consider bringing with you some snacks.

Tap water is not recommended for drinking. Drinking water can be purchased in plastic bottles at any hotel at very reasonable price.

Please note that in the DPRK there will be available green and herbal tea (but not black/red tea), coffee (canned and powder), canned juice, strong liquors (imported such as vodka and locally produced). It is a good idea to take packets of coffee pre-mixed with powdered milk and sugar as well as black tea bags.

If you have any special dietary requests or allergy on any kind of food, please inform us while booking your tour.

Health & Personal Safety

We have never had any health or safety-related issues in the DPRK nevertheless we recommend you acquire a private travel insurance. Please make sure that your insurance covers your risk while in North Korea.

We also advise:

- Take with you all medicines that you normally use. Please don't put medicine you use daily in your check-in luggage because your luggage can be delayed
- Unfamiliar food may cause temporarily disruption of your digestion and thus it is a good idea to bring some stomach medicine
- Toilet paper roll in your backpack may help avoid some unpleasant experiences
- You may bring some disinfecting napkins or spray

Customs Control, Visa & Passport

During the flight/train journey to Pyongyang you will be given 3 customs forms to fill in:

1. Entry Form
2. Exit Form
3. Customs Health Declaration

In these forms please write "KITC" (which stands for "Korea International Travel Company") in "Name of delegation" and "Accompanied by" fields.

If your passport contains stamps from visits to South Korea or the United States it will NOT create any problems when entering North Korea. We have never heard either of anyone experiencing problems when entering the United States or South Korea because of North Korean stamps in the passport.

Citizens of the United States of America and Israel are allowed to visit the DPRK. US citizens can enter and exit the DPRK by air only; they are not allowed to take train to/from North Korea

Be aware that your luggage might be thoroughly inspected at both arrival and departure. Please note that your camera and all pictures taken might be checked by the Korean customs when you leave the DPRK and some of the pictures might be deleted.

It is forbidden to bring plants and their seeds to North Korea. The usual list of prohibited items applies here i.e. arms, drugs, pornography etc. Do not take with you any books criticizing North or featuring South Korea.

Printed books and photo/video materials

Since recently North Korean customs has tightened its policy regarding printed materials (travel guides, books, magazines, etc), which are allowed to the DPRK. There were several cases when North Korean travel guides were confiscated in the airport.

We strongly advise not to bring to the DPRK printed guides on North Korea or any other materials related to Korea. It is also likely that customs officer will ask you to turn on your laptop or iPad in order to check whether there are any movies or photos.

Electronic Gadgets

Electric voltage in North Korea is 220V and electric sockets are of the same type as in Western Europe. A universal adapter can be rented at the reception in your hotel in Pyongyang. Electricity shortages can occur from time to time, so it is recommended to bring a pocket lamp with batteries or an electric torch, as well as set of spare batteries for your gadgets

Digital cameras (both photo and amateur small-size video-camera), laptops, tablets, MP3, E-book readers are ok to be brought to the DPRK.

North Korean Guides

At all times during your trip to North Korea two local guides will accompany the group: one of the guides speaks English and another may speak some other language. Guides speaking in German, French, Spanish, Russian, Polish, Hungarian, Chinese and Japanese can be arranged on request (subject to availability). If you are traveling in individual tour you may want to book a guide speaking your language. Please notice that this arrangement should be done at least 2 months in advance.

Tips For North Korean Guides and Driver

Before departing Korea it is customary to present tips for the guides and the driver (usual amount gifted by other visitors is 10-15 Euro for each guide and 5 Euro for the driver). If you give tips please try to do it in private settings (try to avoid hotel lobby or airport hall), your guides will appreciate it.

Accommodation and Traveling Facilitates

The DPRK has certain deficiencies in infrastructure but international tourists in North Korea have access to the best facilities in the country. When you exercise your judgement regarding the standard of hotels, quality of service and food please take into account that you are traveling to the country practicing “Juche” (relying on its own resources) which has been under strict international economic embargo for decades.

At the hotels located in the countryside the hot water may be available only during 1 hour in the morning before breakfast and 1 hour in the evening before or after dinner. This is also applicable for Haebansan, Chonnon, Sosan hotels located in Pyongyang

Hot water is supplied 24 hours in Koryo Hotel and Yanggakdo International Hotel (situated in Pyongyang) as well as in Nampo Hot Spa Hotel (located in Nampo), Kumgangsan Hotel (located at Diamond mountain area), and Masik Ski Resort (located near Wonsan).

It is possible to do laundry in the hotel (extra charge apply). Ask your hotel's reception desk for help. Various **leisure activities** are also usually available in your hotel: bowling, bar, swimming pool, casino etc.

Transport

Each group will have its own comfortable air-conditioned bus that will accompany the group during its stay in the DPRK. If you are traveling to Chilbo mountain area you should expect a basic bus with no special amenities in it.

Individual tourists will have a private car to accommodate tourists and guides. Minivan (Korean or Chinese make) can be arranged on demand in advance (about 40 Euro/day extra charge).

Etiquette and Traditions in North Korea

While in the North Korea try to show respect for Korean traditions and way of life even if they are different from what you think they should be. Guides are not likely to appreciate questions on politically sensitive topics but would be glad to hear stories about your life in your home country.

- Please follow your guide's instructions
- Please do not leave the hotel on your own
- Please informing your guides if you want to go somewhere on your own
- We suggest bringing some little presents/souvenirs for locals. Men appreciate cigarettes (most Korean men smoke) and women like inexpensive cosmetics. Chocolate, sweets and pens will be a good present for children.

Taking Pictures & Video

Usually you can take pictures during the trip (including on the go from the bus) but please be prepared that sometimes your guides will ask you not to take pictures in certain areas. Always ask for permission if you want to take picture of people closely, especially military personnel. Note that it is prohibited at all times to take any pictures when passing military checkpoints.

If you travel in a group sometimes North Korean cameraman may join the group and film your journey. In the end of the trip you can buy video DVD with your trip as a souvenir (~ 40 Euro).

What to Wear While in the DPRK

Generally there are no restrictions on the clothing you can wear in the DPRK. Please avoid shirts/t-shirts with US/Japanese or Korean flags/emblems or provocative text. If you travel between June and August you should bring an umbrella for a rainy season.

If you travel in wintertime please note that winter in North Korea can be very cold and most buildings are not heated enough and some of them are not heated at all. Therefore please make sure you bring appropriate winter clothing to stay warm.

Mausoleum ("Kumsusan Palace of Sun")

If you are scheduled to visit Mausoleum it is important to observe appropriate dress code: shorts, blue jeans, mini-skirts, t-shirts without sleeves, barefoot sandals, sport sneakers or high heeled shoes/boots will not be allowed. Please pack up a set of formal outfit (a pair of trousers or skirt, long-sleeve shirt or jacket, formal/smart-casual shoes) for such events.

Please note that people younger 18 year old are not allowed to visit Mausoleum.

North Korean Airlines

AirKoryo is the state-owned national flag carrier airline of North Korea. According to the flight schedule AirKoryo operates a modern jet fleet on its Beijing – Pyongyang route:

- Tu-204 is a modern aircraft launched in production in 1995. Air Koryo was officially handed over to the first Tu-204 on 27 December 2007. This aircraft complies with noise regulations described in Chapter 3 of Supplement 16 to ICAO and meeting all current European and ICAO requirements. This aircraft allowed AirKoryo to recommence its flights to the EU in 2010
- Antonov-148 is a modern aircraft that took its maiden flight on 17 December 2004. The plane completed its certification programme on 26 February 2007 and it complies with all current European requirements

During the peak seasons AirKoryo may use its older aircrafts for additional flights to/from Beijing. However, during the past 3-4 years we didn't see these older aircrafts on AirKoryo's international routes and we have never experienced any safety-related issues with AirKoryo flights since we started operating trips to North Korea in 2003.

Weight allowance

Cabin luggage allowance is 8 kg. Economy class check-in luggage weight allowance:

- Beijing-Pyongyang, Pyongyang-Beijing: 20kg
- Vladivostok-Pyongyang: 30kg
- Pyongyang- Vladivostok: 20kg

Flight delays and rescheduling

Your AirKoryo e-ticket will be normally issued one week prior to your departure to Pyongyang. Please note that sometimes during peak seasons AirKoryo may reschedule flights and delay your departure from Beijing to Pyongyang. We will let you know about any changes in flight schedule as soon as possible but usually we get informed about such changes when e-tickets are issued. For example, in October 2015 flight for one of our groups was rescheduled from 12 pm to 6 pm on the same day.

If you fly with Air China please be informed that during low seasons (November-March) Air China tends to cancel flights to Pyongyang with very short notice. In low season Air China doesn't operate Wednesday flight.

Your DPRK Tour Itinerary

Itineraries for our group and independent tours should both be considered only as PRELIMINARY ones. Unexpected events may influence your itinerary, and eventual itinerary changes after your arrival in the DPRK are beyond our control. Sometimes there will be unexpected opportunities to visit sights, events or performances that are not part of your original itinerary. Under no circumstances can Korea Konsult be held responsible for any itinerary changes.

Long bus rides

If you stay in Korea more than 3 days it is likely that you will go by bus to areas outside of Pyongyang. The roads in the DPRK are quite bumpy and even though nominal distance can be quite short it may take quite a lot of time to travel between cities:

- Pyongyang-Myohyang: 170km, 2.5-3h ride
- Pyongyang-Kaesong-DMZ: 160 km, 2.5-3h ride
- Pyongyang-Wonsan: 200 km, 3.5-4h ride
- Wonsan-Mt.Kumgang(Diamond):150 km, 2.5-3h ride
- Wonsan-Hamhung(Diamond): 115 km, 2-2.5h ride

- Pyongyang-Nampo: 55 km, 1h ride
- Pyongyang-Haeju: 140 km, 2.5-3h ride
- Orang-Mt.Chilbo: 70 km, 3h ride (mountain road)
- Orang-Chongjin: 30 km, 1h (countryside road)
- Chongjin-Rajin: 90 km, 2h ride (mountain road)
- Rajin-Tumangang: 50 km, 1.5h (countryside road)
- Sonbong-Tumangang: 35 km, 1h (countryside road)

Closing Remarks and Check List

We hope that the information in this brochure will be helpful for your preparation for the trip and it will be useful while you are traveling in North Korea. Here you are a checklist to make sure you don't miss anything:

Documents to bring to Korea

- Bring your passport with you
- Don't forget your North Korean visa if it is not stamped into your passport
- Make sure you have China visa or you are eligible for visa-free transit
- Print out and bring along your e-ticket Beijing-Pyongyang, Pyongyang-Beijing
- Print out and bring along your flight tickets from home to Beijing and from Beijing back home

Things to bring to Korea

- Money for your out-of the pocket expenses: USD, EUR or RMB in small bills
- Photo or amateur video camera
- Roll of toilet paper
- Formal trousers/skirt, shirt/blouse and shoes if you are going to visit Mausoleum
- Power adapter for your electronic gadgets
- Flashlight, batteries, chargers for your gadgets
- Wet tissues
- Your regular medicine
- Stomach medicine
- Travel pillow for long journeys on the bus
- Snacks: peanuts, energy bars, black tea etc.

Things to LEAVE at home

- Paper guides on North or South Korea
- Paper books or magazines about South or North Korea
- Photos or movies on your laptop or iPad
- CD/DVD/VHS of any kind

Our Contacts

If you have more questions, please contact us:

- Tel: +46-739810372 or +46-701165525
- E-mail: postmaster@koreakonsult.com

Korea Konsult wishes you a nice trip!