



04 – 15

SEPTEMBER, 2024

THE ART & CULTURE OF SOUTH KOREA

memories of the future

The Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art in Seoul exhibits traditional, modern, and contemporary works by Korean and International artists in buildings designed by Internationally renowned architects – it is a physical and cultural metaphor for South Korea today. First impressions of Seoul hover between the familiar and the futuristic, what we recognize and what we might dream about.



absolute luxury travel.



On the evening drive into Seoul – the traffic. Lanes of luxury cars, super-highways, tunnels, row after row of residential towers, more luxury cars and traffic. Wide city streets lined with coffee shops, restaurants, beauty spas, five-star hotels, people leaving work and returning to work. Welcome to successful South Korea!

In Seoul we visit Art Museums displaying traditional Korean artworks as well as modern and contemporary works, in buildings that are themselves architectural masterpieces. Together with reconstructed Palaces and Temples, Seoul's museums highlight South Korea's unique achievement in preserving the OLD while creating its own, soaring version of the NEW.

At the Frieze and KIAF International Contemporary Art Fairs we will see how long-term investment in cultural planning and infrastructure is rewarded in globally appealing artistic expression, with prices to match. Enthusiastic local collectors include rappers, K-Pop stars and K-Drama notables, so have your camera nearby!

From Seoul we travel by coach to Gyeongju, the UNESCO site of the ancient Silla Dynasty and Royal Tombs. This is an opportunity to slow down the pace, see something of the Korean countryside and do some traditional dining.

Our next destination is the port city of Busan. Known for its beaches, seafood, night markets, contemporary art and home to Korea's thriving film industry, Busan is a melting pot of 20th and 21st century Korean culture and history. From Busan we return to Seoul for two nights, allowing time to further explore this city's cultural and shopping delights!

SEOUL

(7 nights)

GYEONGJU

(1 night)

BUSAN

(2 nights)

DAY - 01 / WEDNESDAY 4 SEPTEMBER**Welcome to Seoul and South Korea!**

Today we fly from Sydney at 07:55AM (KE 402), arriving into Incheon International Airport Seoul at 17:45PM. We will be met by our local guide and transferred to our hotel by a private limousine bus.

◆ **Accommodation:** Courtyard by Marriott Seoul Namdaemun – 4.0-Star
Meals: Own arrangements this evening.

2ND OF 5 NIGHTS IN SEOUL

DAY - 02 / THURSDAY 5 SEPTEMBER

Today, we will attend two premier Contemporary Art Fairs: Frieze and KIAF, held at the Starfield COEX Convention and Exhibition Centre in the highly fashionable Gangnam District. We'll explore Starfield COEX Mall, home to the impressive Starfield Library and numerous restaurants and cafes along Gourmet Street. Additionally, this area is an official hotspot for the latest in world fashion, lifestyle, and beauty trends. Shoppers, remember to bring your passports!

◆ **Accommodation:** Courtyard by Marriott Seoul Namdaemun
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

3RD OF 5 NIGHTS IN SEOUL

DAY - 03 / FRIDAY 6 SEPTEMBER

This morning, we will step back in time with a visit to Changdeokgung Palace, the best-preserved palace complex of the Joseon Dynasty and a UNESCO World Heritage site. Our private guide, Angela, will take us through the royal residence and lead us to the Secret Garden, a private retreat for the king and his family.

After exploring the palace, we'll travel to Gwangjang Market for a delicious lunch, followed by a visit to Zaha Hadid's neo-futuristic Dongdaemun Design Plaza. We'll return to our hotel in the mid-afternoon. Those who wish to stay longer at DDP can do so and share taxis back to the hotel.

◆ **Accommodation:** Courtyard by Marriott Seoul Namdaemun
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

4TH OF 5 NIGHTS IN SEOUL

DAY - 04 / SATURDAY 7 SEPTEMBER

Today, we will explore the National Museum of Korea, which houses and displays over 5,000 years of art, history, and culture. Opened in 1945 and built in the neoclassical style, its architecture is described as a contemporary reinterpretation of traditional Korean design. Next, we'll visit the Leeum Samsung Museum of Art, renowned for its striking architecture and impressive collections of both traditional and modern art. Both museums feature a café and a shop for you to enjoy. Lunch today will be at Maple Tree House, known for its delicious Korean cuisine. After lunch, we will visit the War Memorial of Korea, a museum dedicated to commemorating Korea's long military history.

◆ **Accommodation:** Courtyard by Marriott Seoul Namdaemun
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

5TH OF 5 NIGHTS IN SEOUL

DAY - 05 / SUNDAY 8 SEPTEMBER

Today is a flexible day: depending on the special exhibition schedules at the Museum of Modern & Contemporary Art and the Seoul Craft Museum, we will visit one of these cultural landmarks. For lunch, we'll head to Insadong and/or Ikseondong, where we can explore tiny lanes and streets filled with specialty shops, art galleries, restaurants, themed cafes, and much more!

Optional: Some of our group will embark on a tour to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) to gain a deeper understanding of the historical and current relationship between the bordering countries.

◆ **Accommodation:** Courtyard by Marriott Seoul Namdaemun
Meals: Breakfast

DAY - 06 / MONDAY 9 SEPTEMBER

This morning, we will check out of our Seoul hotel and travel by private bus to Gyeongju (approximately 3 hours and 30 minutes), the capital of the ancient Silla Kingdom (57 BC–935 AD). In Gyeongju, we will visit the Daereungwon Tomb Complex and the Gyeongju National Museum, which houses relics from the ancient Silla Kingdom. At sunset, we will visit Donggung Palace and Wolji Pond to enjoy the spectacular views surrounding this ancient site.

- ◆ **Accommodation:** The-K Hotel Gyeongju – 4.0-Star
- Meals:** Breakfast

1ST NIGHT OF 2 NIGHTS IN BUSAN

DAY - 07 / TUESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER

This morning, we will check out of our Gyeongju hotel and travel by private bus to Busan (1hr and 10mins). Upon arriving in Busan, our guide Angela, will show us the city's highlights before stopping at F1963, a former wire factory now transformed into a vibrant cultural centre featuring a bookshop, gallery, and café.

After lunch, we will visit the Museum of Art: Space Lee Ufan, a museum designed by the artist himself that seamlessly integrates his art with the architectural space. This evening, we will visit the Bupyeong Kkangtong Night Market, known for its diverse street food and bustling atmosphere.

- ◆ **Accommodation:** Shilla Stay Haeundae – 4.0-Star
- Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

2ND NIGHT OF 2 NIGHTS IN BUSAN

DAY - 08 / WEDNESDAY 11 SEPTEMBER

Today, we will explore Gamcheon Culture Village, which originated as a settlement of mountainside shacks for refugees from the Korean War in the 1950s. Now preserved as a vibrant piece of living history, the village offers a unique glimpse into Korea's past. After visiting Gamcheon Village, we'll make a stop at Johyun Gallery and enjoy lunch before returning to our hotel. Dinner this evening will be at Daegae Manchan Seafood Restaurant: the best and most amazing crab dishes you have ever tasted!

- ◆ **Accommodation:** Shilla Stay Haeundae – 4.0-Star
- Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

1ST NIGHT OF 2 NIGHTS IN SEOUL

DAY - 09 / THURSDAY 12 SEPTEMBER

This morning, we'll check out of our hotel and take a private bus to Busan Station to travel on board South Korea's high speed bullet train, the KTX022 (09:27–11:53) bound for Seoul Station. Upon arrival, we'll be met and transferred to our hotel. The afternoon is yours to enjoy at leisure.

- ◆ **Accommodation:** Courtyard by Marriott Seoul Namdaemun
- Meals:** Breakfast

2ND NIGHT OF 2 NIGHTS IN SEOUL

DAY - 10 / FRIDAY 13 SEPTEMBER

Today, we travel south from Seoul to Icheon Ceramic Village, where artisans have been crafting high-quality traditional porcelain for 500 years. We'll have the opportunity to meet the renowned clay artisan Kwak Kyung-tae, introduced to us by the Australian ceramicist Shannon Garson, whom some of you may remember from Salmon Galleries. Kwak will demonstrate his technique for creating large Onggi vessels by hand. After his demonstration there will be time to explore and purchase from Mr Kwak's collection.

From Mr Kwak's studio, we will make a short visit to the studio shop of another artisan Judith met last year, Park Jong Hwan. His ceramic work is very different from Mr Kwak's.

Icheon is also famous for its rice production and hot-pot clay cooking. We'll enjoy a special lunch at a local rice restaurant before heading back to Seoul.

- ◆ **Accommodation:** Courtyard by Marriott Seoul Namdaemun
- Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

HALF DAY SEOUL; AFTERNOON DEPARTURE

ITINERARY 3/3

DAY - 11 / SATURDAY 14 SEPTEMBER

Enjoy a FREE DAY until 3:00PM, when our private limousine bus will pick us up from the hotel for our transfer to Incheon Airport. Our flight home is on KE 401, departing at 18:55PM.

◆ Meals: Breakfast

DAY 12

DAY - 12 / SUNDAY 15 SEPTEMBER

Arrive Sydney at 06:20AM



HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Delve deep into South Korea's vibrant contemporary art scene
- ◆ Visit UNESCO World Heritage-listed Changdeok Palace
- ◆ Visit Seoul's amazing museums and galleries
- ◆ Seoul's Art Week: Frieze Seoul + Kiaf SEOUL, South Korea's leading art fairs
- ◆ Must-see contemporary Seoul architectural highlights, including Zaha Hadid's Dongdaemun Design Plaza
- ◆ Explore Busan, the Miami of South Korea! Beautiful beaches, fashion and an arts hotspot
- ◆ Busan Museum of Art, Space Lee Ufan and Bupyeong Khang Tong Night Market
- ◆ Explore palaces and traditional Korean villages
- ◆ Learn the history of South Korea and its delightful combination of tradition and modernity
- ◆ Seoul's colourful and local Gwangjang Market
- ◆ Meet the masters at Icheon Ceramics Village, a UNESCO city of crafts and folk arts
- ◆ Experience Starfield Library – it will take your breath away!
- ◆ Gyeongju, once the capital of the 8th-century Silla Kingdom and a treasure trove of history, brimming with palaces, temples, and tombs
- ◆ Experience the scenic landscape of Gamcheon Village, once a settlement for refugees during the Korean War
- ◆ Travel by KTX Express Train to Seoul

INCLUSIONS

- ◆ Return economy class flights from Sydney to Seoul with Korean Air. Upgrades available through Natalie!
- ◆ VIP roundtrip airport transfers
- ◆ 10 nights upscale accommodation 4 star hotels
- ◆ Daily breakfast, Wi-Fi and guaranteed late check-out
- ◆ All sightseeing, cultural activities and entrance fees (as per itinerary)
- ◆ Experienced English speaking guide who will accompany us throughout our travels
- ◆ Private air-conditioned vehicles for transportation (as per itinerary)
- ◆ Pre-departure background information and reading with your host Judith Salmon
- ◆ The intimacy of small group touring with a maximum of 12 guests

17 meals

**10 breakfasts, 6 lunches,
1 dinner**



absolute luxury travel.

12

**DAY FLY/
TOUR PACKAGE**

Including return Korean Air
Economy Air Fare.



For enquiries, contact Natalie Jeffers on 0412 880 367
or email natalie@absoluteluxury.travel