

Things to do in Seoul in winter

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If your vacations usually involve sun-drenched beaches and colorful cocktails, then Seoul in winter may not be the most obvious choice for your next one. But keep an open mind, because there's a lot to love about the Korean capital in the depths of winter – even apart from accommodation and transport being considerably cheaper. There are plenty of outdoor activities to warm you up, cozy nightlife hubs and sizzling street food stalls on every corner. Yes, you'll need your thermals, but the stunning views and magical landscapes make it worth the effort. To keep warm in this cool capital, try some of these invigorating attractions and activities:

- Palaces
- Nami Island

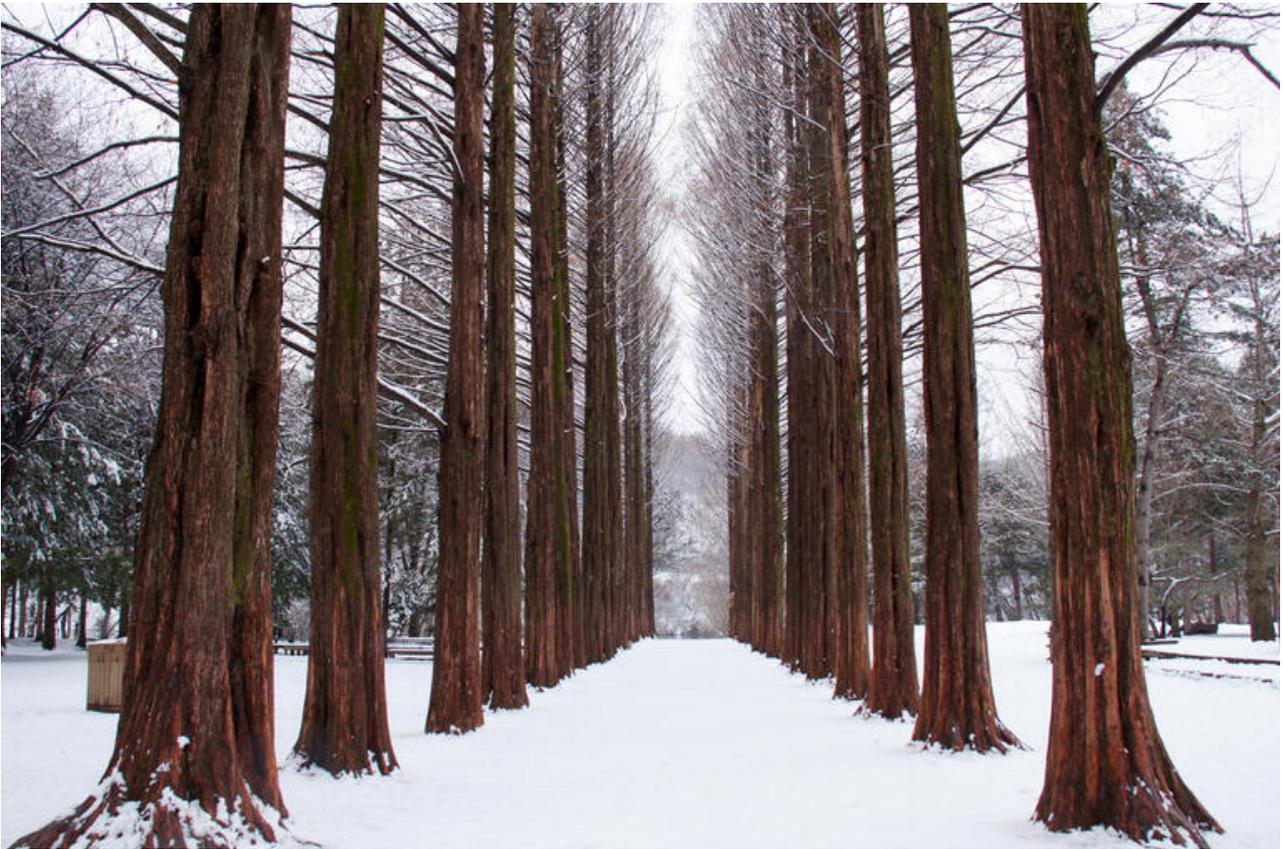
- Traditional bathhouses
- N Seoul Tower
- Evening entertainment
- Lotte World
- Everland

Palaces



Seoul may be hi-tech and modern, but you don't have to go far in this city before you'll stumble upon one of the five Royal Palaces with their impressive gates and curved roofs. In winter, they're even more stunning than usual, with frozen lakes and delicate frost clinging to the pagodas – but they're at their prettiest when coated under a glittering blanket of snow. This is most likely in January, but you may get lucky any time between late November and early March. Start with the [Changdeok Palace](#), with its 10 acres of grounds to explore, or the [Gyeongbokgung Palace](#), which has several museums you can duck into when your toes need thawing out. Both of them have hanbok rental available, if you want to create some stunning photo souvenirs in traditional Korean costume.

Nami Island



If you fancy a trip out of the city while you're here, you'll find stunning natural views and loads of cozy cafes on [Nami Island](#). Though this tiny, crescent shaped island in the Han River is famous for its autumn colors – and being the setting of the famous K-drama *Winter Sonata* – its avenues of ancient pines and giant redwoods create a stunning contrast to a white landscape, and you simply *have* to explore the groves of bare birches hiding curved pagodas with snowy caps. To complete your day out, finish with a trip to the Garden of Morning Calm, which is transformed in the winter evenings to a wondrous winter fantasia with illuminated plants, romantic walkways and the famous Tunnel of Light.

Traditional bathhouse



Is there anything better than dipping frosty toes into a steaming hot bath? Unless that's putting the rest of you in too and letting the tingling sensation run through your whole body as you thaw out. That's what you'll get at a jjimjilbang, which are public bath houses that also offer spa and leisure facilities. Start off with a whole-body scrub to get all the old and dead skin off, then take a dip in some hot and cold tubs to get the circulation going. While you're there, you might also enjoy a massage, a workout, or even a film. There are several of these winter oases in the city, as well as in towns and resorts around the country – some, like Onyang Hot springs to the south of the capital, feature natural, outdoor hot springs where you can relax in steamy comfort while looking up at the icy winter sky – *ahhh!*

N Seoul Tower



Let's be honest – anywhere that's indoors and heated is a good place to go in Seoul in winter. But if you're going to go anywhere, it might as well be somewhere with awesome views, right? Head to the [N Seoul Tower](#) to the east of the center and that's what you'll get – 360 degree views from a comfortable observation deck, 774 feet above the city. You'll see over palaces, parks and mountain ranges – and the best part is, it's open until 10pm every day, so you can choose to get the far-ranging day time views, or city lights night time views. To get maximum warming effect, hike to the base at the top of the Namsan Mountain, or cheat and take a cable car from the nearby Myeong-dong Station (we won't judge, we promise).

Evening entertainment



The temperature outside may be hitting single figures, but that's no reason to hide away in the evenings! Rug up and head out for some entertainment – perhaps go and see the hilarious Cookin' Nanta Culinary Show (no knowledge of the Korean language required), or if you'd prefer to scope some more trendy nightlife spots, how about joining a pub crawl to help you get to know the neighborhood – and maybe some new friends as well? Or, if you prefer just to wander and explore, head for the Royal Palaces which are very pretty at night, or find some night markets and warm up with some spicy noodle soup, stuffed pancakes, and a shot of Korea's national drink, soju.

Lotte World



A little south of the city center in the Jamsil district are the Lotte World Adventure and Magic Island theme parks. Both inspired by the magic of Disney, between them they have over 50 attractions including roller coasters, carousels, bumper cars and live entertainment. It's a fun place at any time of year, but in winter it's transformed into an enchanting wonderland with Santa's Village, snow-covered castles, an ice rink and Christmas-themed decorations everywhere. Take the whole family and warm up with some adrenaline-pumping rides, then head indoors where you'll find shopping malls, an IMAX theater and the visually stunning Lotte World Folk Museum.

Everland



If your idea of winter fun is sliding down hills and making snow angels, then a day trip to Everland should be at the top of your list of things to do in Seoul in winter. It's Korea's biggest theme park, with all the usual rides, a zoo and themed zones – but in winter, it's all about the Winter Wonderland and Snow Festival, with Christmas parades and a winter garden. Be sure to head for the Snow Buster, a large snowy hill with tubes for hire. You can slide down as many times as you want, which is a good thing as there are several routes (from scarily straight down to curvy and gentle) to choose from. The best way to get there is via a shuttle bus from Seoul, which will drop you off in the morning and take you back at the end of the day.

Turn up the heat with Go City

There's no reason to feel the cold in Seoul – just keep your Go City Explorer or All-Inclusive Pass handy, and you'll get hot savings on your favorite attractions all around the city.