

ARGUABLY THE FINANCIAL CAPITAL OF THE EAST

South Korea has something for everyone - from automobiles to temples, the country is full of diverse history and tradition. Its long and complicated history dates back to 2333BC. Today the country is arguably one of the world's fastest growing economies - in the 1960s its GDP levels were comparable to deprived third world countries of Africa, however, over the past forty years, it has become the 32nd best country, according to Forbes, for business after establishing itself as a global economy.

Korea was ruled by Japan from 1910, until the end of World War II, where it and the United States of America

faced Chinese, Russian and North Korean forces. The conflict lasted 3 years and claimed 1 million lives. The most prominent commemoration of the victims of the war is at the War Memorial of Korea, which is located in Yongsan-dong, in the country's capital of Seoul. It opened in 1994 and displays over 13,000 war memorabilia and military equipment - it's worth a look for history enthusiasts and tourists.

The country is now heavily industrialized and known for its technology giant Samsung and automobile company Hyundai - and is one of the world's largest exporters of car parts and appliances.

The Korean alphabet, or Hangeul, was made in the 15th century by King Sejong the Great, the fourth King of the Joseon Dynasty by his scholars in the Hall of Worthies, a royal research institute that he himself set up. It was staffed by the nation's best scholars and they conducted a variety of research activities to 'strengthen King Sejong's rule and the nation.' The project to form an alphabet started in 1420 and was completed in 1444 and introduced to the public some two years later. His joint tomb, shared with his wife Queen Secheon, is located in Yeongneung-ro. King Sejong is one of only two leaders to be accredited with the title 'the Great'.

NIGHTLIFE IN THE CAPITAL OF ASIA



South Korea is home to some of Asia's best nightlife and casinos. Itaewon is perhaps the most popular party destination for foreigners and offers some of the best international restaurants and bars. Korea has its own music scene, which it shows off through its numerous clubs and Hongdae is filled with two dozen clubs, so you'll always find one that suits your tastes.

“The country's music scene was started by the Government to boost the economy”

Seoul is arguably the definition of old and new - from its state of the art travelling system, the subway, which is the most reliable in the world and used by hundreds of thousands daily and is the easiest way of travelling around the densely populated city, to its old palaces and Buddhist temples - Buddhism is the most practiced religion in the country.

It is home to some of the biggest corporations, operation centres and business and financial hubs and has had some of the biggest economic growth expansions in Asian history, thanks to its national music scene, Kpop, which was started in 1997 by the Korean Government. Its economy was worth just 30 billion in 1960 and today its worth over a trillion dollars - it also hosted the G20 summit for the first time in 2010.

Once a place that was just dreaming of the future, South Korea is now definitely living in the future - Seoul itself is ranked as the world's 'leading digital city', and has the third most Internet users among OECD-listed countries, which includes European giants such as the UK and France.

Fashion is becoming prominent in the country with many celebrities endorsing now globally trading brands such as Kappa. Fashion trends which were formerly inspired by Western clothing are now making an appearance in Western markets due to the influence of KPop, or the Korean wave - known as the appreciation of Korean culture and entertainments. The wave started by harsh advertising by Government led schemes in an attempt to recover from the Asian Financial Crisis.

RICH CULTURE AND HISTORY



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Incredible sites, great beaches, rich culture and fascinating people
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Perhaps the least visited of the Southeast Asian nations, Cambodia lies in the Indochinese peninsula and is home to some of the richest and arguably most preserved historic buildings and temples.

Cambodia is most probably only known to most as it is home to the Angkor Wat, however, there is much more to this economically developing country.

The Virachey National Park located in North-Eastern Cambodia was created in 1993 and today covers over 3,325km² of land, with the sole aim of preserving some of Cambodia's and Asia's, respectively, most critically threatened species.

The park, which is elevated between 400 metres to 1,500 metres comprises of dense savannah and bamboo thickets and inhabits rare mammals such as sun bears, elephants, clouded leopards and tigers. Although the chances of seeing these endangered mammals are slim, tourists year upon year still visit the park and it is currently one of the most organised eco-tourism programs around.

Cambodia is also the home to the 12th longest river in the world, the Mekong, which flows from Southern China into the country, passing Burma, Laos,

Thailand and eventually into Vietnam, where it meets the sea on the country's eastern border.

The river's biodiversity is only second to the Amazonian river and new species are constantly being found - in 2009 alone over 140 new species were found, comprising of over 29 fish species. The river contains the most large fish species in the world.



THE EFFECT OF

AN
unexplored
gem





Rice, meat and vegetables are the base of every meal

Korean cuisine is largely based upon prized meat such as chicken and beef (which is often considered a delicacy), pork, vegetables, spices and fish. Rice is a common part of the Korean diet and it is the country's most important crop - South Korea produces and exports over 2 million metric tons of rice each year.

Although grains and legumes are the most important staple of the diet, most dishes are accompanied by banchan, or side dishes - which are usually composed of vegetables with multiple seasonings. Kimchi is made of fermented vegetables which has been left underground in jars for months and is perhaps considered the most important, traditional side dish and accompanies a meal in a restaurant free of charge, similar to salads which are served in Western restaurants. Popular dishes include spicy rice cakes and kimbap.

SEOUL CITY CUISINE

THE EFFECT OF