

# Chungcheongbuk-do

## 충청북도



Chungbuk is the only province that has no coastline, but it makes up for it by being the country's lake district. A two-hour ferry ride along Chungju Lake zips past attractive cliffs that inspired Joseon-era artists and poets. Lakeside, Cheongnamdae is a holiday villa used by Korean presidents that is open to the public for most of the year. Another lakeside attraction is the resort town of Danyang, within walking distance of a huge limestone cave and a bus trip away from a national park and the unique Gu-insa temple complex.

You can stroll round the attractive spa resort of Suanbo Hot Springs in a matter of minutes, but after a therapeutic dip and massage, you can savour local specialities such as rabbit, duck and pheasant meals in the restaurants that make up most of the town. Just a couple of kilometres down the road is Korea's most modest ski resort, which lures beginners who don't want a crowded ski-resort feel.

No less than three national parks line the province's southwest border with Gyeongsangbuk-do: Songnisan, famous for its giant Buddha statue; Sobaeksan, popular in late spring when the mountain azaleas paint the hillsides purple; and Woraksan, where rare but shy goral antelopes roam freely.

The province produces apples, peaches and chestnuts and provides a weekend escape for city folk from Seoul and Daejeon.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Board a fast ferry on **Chungju Lake** (p328) for Korea's most scenic waterway trip
- Tour the presidential holiday villa and gardens at **Cheongnamdae** (p327)
- Relax in lakeside **Danyang** (p340) and visit limestone caves, temples and mountain summits
- Soak in **Suanbo Hot Springs** (p338), savour pheasant meals, and hike or ski
- Safari through **Woraksan National Park** (p339) looking out for goral antelopes
- Explore **Songnisan National Park** (p328) and admire Beopjusa and its huge Buddha



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 043

■ POPULATION: 1.5 MILLION

■ AREA: 7432 SQ KM

## History

The province was historically the southern boundary of the Goguryeo kingdom, and Sunbo Hot Springs has been providing therapeutic baths for a thousand years, but the province's main claim to historical fame is based on Heungdeoksa, a temple in Cheongju city that no longer exists, where the world's first book was printed using movable metal type (p325).

## National & Provincial Parks

Don't miss the unique temple complex in the north of Sobaeksan National Park (p343) or the wonderful azalea blooms in May in the park's south. Songnisan National Park (p328) has a huge Buddha statue and peaks over 1000m,

while Woraksan National Park (p339) is home to a growing herd of goral antelopes.

## Getting There & Around

The province is best reached and toured by bus, but don't miss the Chungju Lake boat trip.

## CHEONGJU 청주

pop 579,000

Cheongju is the provincial capital and an education centre, but is easily confused with Chungju and Jeonju. It's the gateway to the presidential villa (Cheongnamdae) and Songnisan National Park. The city boasts some historical sites that include an easy-to-reach mountain fortress, as well as a popular pe-

destrianised shopping precinct and the lively Chungdae Jungmun student district.

## Information

**Hana Bank** (Sajingno)

**Post office** (Seong-an-gil)

**Shinhan Bank** Near the express bus terminal.

**Tourist information centre** (☎ 233 8431; 11 8.30am-7pm) Outside the intercity bus terminal. Free internet access.

## Sights

**EARLY PRINTING MUSEUM** 고인쇄박물관

A small but modern museum (☎ 269 0556; adult/youth/child ₩800/600/400; 11 9am-6pm Tue-Sun, 9am-5pm Nov-Feb) tells you everything about *Jikji*, a book of Buddhist sayings that is the oldest book in the world printed with movable metal type. Unfortunately the book is not here but in the National Library of France (it was purchased by a French official in 1853). The book was printed in 1377 at Heungdeoksa, a temple that used to stand to the right of the museum. Discipline was strict in those days – any mistake by a printer was punished by a flogging. On the left is Uncheon Gong-won, a small park with an artificial waterfall.

Take bus 831 from outside the express bus terminal or take any bus downtown, get off at the stadium stop and walk 15 minutes to the museum.

**KOREAN CRAFT MUSEUM** 한국공예관

Next to the Early Printing Museum, this exhibition centre (☎ 268 0255; admission free; 11 9am-7pm Tue-Sun) has three floors of imaginative modern ceramics and other craft by leading local artists.

**HEUNGDEOK SEONGDANG**

청주교회흥덕성당

This fortresslike Catholic church (Jijingno) incorporates many diverse elements in a unique design. Mass in English is held every Sunday at 5pm.

**GOLDEN PAVILION** 청주종합운동장

The Daesun Jilhoeh Buddhist sect (www.daesun.or.kr), founded by Gang Jeungsan (1871–1909), known as Sangje, has a striking five-storey golden pavilion on Sajikro, Cheongju's main street. Ask at the office and someone may be free to show you inside the pavilion, which contains an awesome golden statue of Sangje, with clouds and birds on

his gown, that hardly fits inside. The rock garden outside is beautiful when the azaleas are in bloom.

**YONGDUSAJI IRON FLAGPOLE**

용두사지 철당간

Outside Cheongju department store is one of the oldest and tallest (13m) iron flag poles in Korea, made in AD 962 during the Goryeo dynasty. Originally 30 iron canisters high, it would have been placed outside a temple, where flags would have flown from it on special occasions such as Buddha's birthday.

**JUNG-ANG PARK** 중앙공원

A shady little historical park across the road from the flagpole contains pavilions, memorials, a 900-year-old tree and one of Heungseon Daewon-gun's anti-foreigner stone inscriptions that were erected throughout the country in the 1860s and 1870s. In those days Korea really was the Hermit Kingdom.

**SANGDANG SANSEONG** 상당산성

This large mountain fortress is 4km northeast of Cheongju. Originally built in the 1590s and renovated in the 18th century, the walls stretch for 4.2km around wooded hillsides. Korea's many amazing mountain fortresses are an Asian treasure that should be more widely known. Burn calories and immerse yourself in the natural surroundings as you hike round this significant historical monument (1½ hours) before dining at an excellent country-style restaurant (p326).

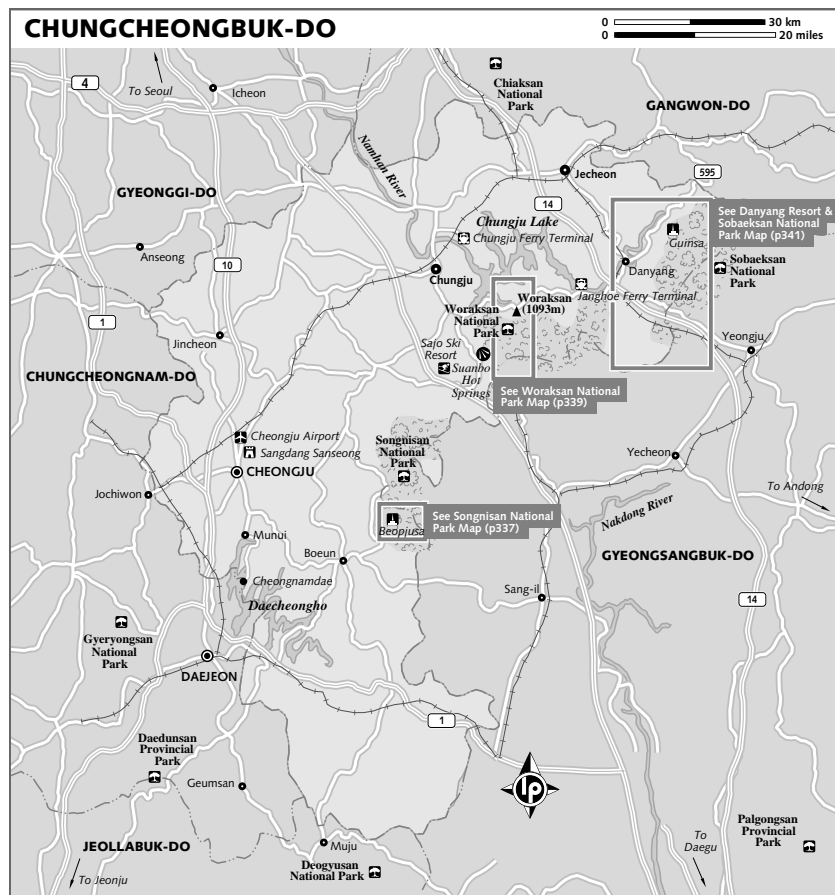
Bus 862 (₩850, 30 minutes, hourly) leaves from the stadium bus stop and goes all the way to the fortress. Buses 861 and 863 drop you 1km from the fortress.

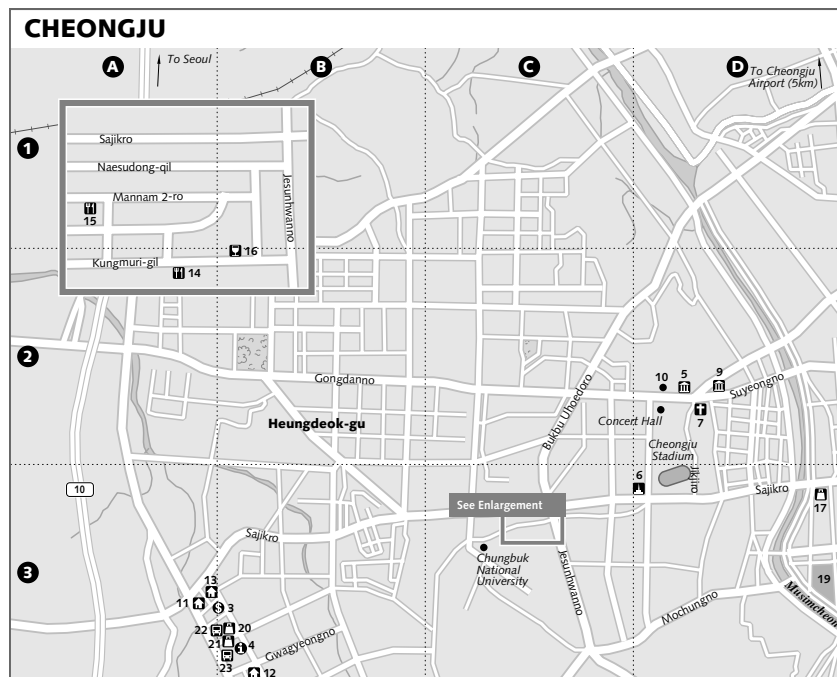
## Sleeping

The best motels are clustered around the bus terminals.

**Plaza Motel** (☎ 234 1400; r ₩30,000; a ) Located off Gwageongno. Look for the castle turrets and alpine log-cabin entranceway in this clean and well-kept motel with rooms that include fancy headboards and a sofa. Hand the key to the jovial owners when you go out.

**Sting Motel** (☎ 235 6668; r ₩30,000; a i ) This smart, high-rise castle motel, next door to Baekje Tourist Hotel, has light and airy rooms that are filled with facilities. The owner welcomes you with a smile. Rooms with a computer are ₩40,000.





**Baekje Tourist Hotel** (☎ 236 7979; fax 236 0979; d/tw/stg W85,000/105,000/140,000; a i ) The ordinary rooms are uninspiring, but go for a suite for more space than nearby motels offer. Carpets need cleaning, but prices include breakfast and a computer in your room.

## Eating & Entertainment

### CHUNGDAE JUNGmun

Restaurants and stalls in this entertainment zone outside Chungbuk University compete to offer the lowest prices. To visit Chungdae Jungmun, take any city bus (W850) to Sachang bus stop.

**Gongpoui** (Kungmuri-gil; meals W2500-4000; 11 10am-6am) A lively student hang-out that always provides a good deal, with self-serve greenery wraps and free *pajeon* (green-onion pancake) with the *samgyeopsal* (삼겹살; barbecued pork). Otherwise try *gochujang bulgogi* (고추장 불고기), which is pork, *ramyeon* (noodles) and sauce cooked in a foil tray – you mop up the sauce with a mixture of rice, lettuce and dried seaweed.

**Yugane** (Mannam 2-ro; meals W3000-6000; 11 9.30am-midnight) Another student cheapie that offers

simple *bokkeumbap* (볶음밥; fried rice) meals with chicken or seafood, cooked at your table in a big metal pan. Put in only half the sauce for a less spicy version. Self-serve coffee is free.

**Pearl Jam** (Kungmuri-gil; beer & whisky W4000; 11 6pm-late) This comfortable rock-music den hosts a local band, The Smokers, who play Western rock classics every Friday at 11pm. Saturday often features live music too.

### SANGDANG SANSEONG

**Sangdangjip** (상당집; meals W5000-16,000) Opposite the bus stop, this restaurant makes its own tofu in a giant cauldron – try *dubujjim* (두부짬; steamed tofu) for something light, but the recommended meal is *hanbang ogolgye* (한방 오골계), locally sourced black chicken in a medicinal broth of bark, roots and cloves, and served with *bindaetteok* (mung bean pancake), rice and tasty side dishes.

**Makgeolli** (rice wine) is W1000 a bowl or W4000 a kettle. *Hanbang oribaeksuk* (한방 오리백숙; herbal duck soup) is also available. Buses (p325) run from the bus stop back to town until 9.50pm.



## Shopping

**Carrefour/Homever** (Sajingno; 11 10am-11pm), **Cheongju department store** (Seong-an-gil; 11 10.30am-8pm) and the covered market are always buzzing with a cheerful crowd, as is the pedestrianised shopping street, Seong-an-gil.

**Dream Plus** (Fashion Ville) Next door to Lotte Mart, this high-rise fashion mall is packed with small stalls. A 24-hour sauna and spa is on the 3rd floor, a food court is on the 6th floor and cinemas are on the 8th floor.

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

Cheongju Airport has flights to Jeju and China, with services to Japan in summer.

### BUS

Departures from Cheongju express bus terminal include:

Destination	Price (W)	Duration	Frequency
Busan	14,200	4½hr	9 daily
Daegu	10,000	2¾hr	hourly
Seoul	6500	1½hr	every 10min

### INFORMATION

Hana Bank 하나은행	1	E3
Post Office 우체국	2	E3
Shinhan Bank 신한은행	3	B3
Tourist Information Centre 관광안내소	4	B3

### SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Early Printing Museum 고인쇄 박물관	5	D2
Golden Pavilion 청주종합운동장	6	D3
Heungdeok Seongdang 청주교회흥덕성당	7	D2
Jung-ang Park 중앙공원	8	E3
Korean Craft Museum 한국공예관	9	D2
Uncheon Gong-won 윤천공원	10	D2
Yongdusaji Iron Flagpole 용두사지철당간	(see 18)	

### SLEEPING

Baekje Tourist Hotel 백제관광호텔	11	A3
Plaza Motel 프라자호텔	12	B3
Sting Motel 스팅호텔	13	A3

### EATING

Gongpoui 공포의	14	A2
Yugane 유가네	15	A1

### DRINKING

Pearl Jam 펄잼	16	B2
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### SHOPPING

Carrefour/Homever 가르푸	17	D3
Cheongju Department Store 청주백화점	18	E3
Covered Market 시장	19	D3
Dream Plus	(see 22)	
Lotte Mart 롯데마트	20	B3
Seong-an-gil Shopping Street 성안길	21	B3

### TRANSPORT

Express Bus Terminal 고속 버스 터미널	22	A3
Intercity Bus Terminal 시외버스터미널	23	B3

Departures from the intercity terminal:

Destination	Price (W)	Duration	Frequency
Chuncheon	14,300	3½hr	hourly
Chungju	6400	1½hr	every 20min
Daejeon	3000	50min	every 15min
Danyang	12,500	3½hr	every 30min
Gyeongju	14,800	3hr	9 daily
Songnisan	6200	1¾hr	every 30min

## CHEONGNAMDAE 청남대

The **holiday villa** (☎ 220 5677; <http://cheongnamdae.com>; adult/youth/child W5000/4000/3000; 11 9am-6pm Tue-Sun) of South Korean presidents overlooks Daecheong Lake. It was built by President Chun Doo-hwan in 1983. The gardens and lakeside setting are beautiful, but the villa is surprisingly modest. President Chun enjoyed skating on the pond, while President Roh Tae-woo liked the five-hole golf course. Beef was



served to all the employees whenever he had a good round. President Kim Young-sam disapproved of golf because of its association with corruption, and the golf course hasn't been used in recent years. President Kim Dae-jung planted the honeysuckle (the Korean word for it means 'overcoming hardship', which was his nickname) and built the thatched pavilion containing mementos from his hometown in Jeollanam-do. It's thanks to President Roh Moo-hyun that the residence was opened to the public in 2003. All of the villa and gardens are open to the public, and you can even peep into the presidential bedroom.

### Getting There & Away

Take local bus 311 or 302 (W1250, 50 minutes, hourly) from outside Cheongju intercity bus terminal to Munui, 15km south of Cheongju. Walk out of Munui bus depot, turn left, and in a couple of minutes you reach the parking lot and ticket office for the shuttle buses (W2000 return, 15 minutes) to Cheongnamdae, which operate between 9am and 4.30pm.

### SONGNISAN NATIONAL PARK 속리산국립공원

This park (☎ 542 5267; adult/youth/child W3800/1500/1200; ㄱ 5am-8pm) covers one of central Korea's finest scenic areas with forested mountains and rocky granite outcrops. Its name means 'Remote from the Ordinary World Mountain', which refers to its famous temple Beopjusa. A tourist information centre (☎ 542 5267; ㄱ 9am-6pm) is in the park's bus-terminal building.

The large temple complex of Beopjusa dates back to AD 553, but has often been rebuilt. Dae-ungbojeon, with its large golden Buddha statues, and Palsangjeon, a unique five-storeyed wooden pagoda, are outstanding features. The huge, 33m bronze standing Buddha weighs 160 tonnes and was completed in 1990 at a cost of US\$4 million. Ancient relics include stone lanterns, an elegant Unified Shilla seated Buddha hewn out of rock, a massive bell and a giant iron cauldron, cast in AD 720, that was used to cook rice for the hundreds of monks who once lived at the temple.

Beyond the temple, hiking trails extend up to a series of 1000m-high peaks. A popular hike is the relatively easy climb up Manjangdae (1033m); back in 1464 King Sejo was carried up to the top in a palanquin. Using your own two feet, it's three hours up and two hours down. If you still have the energy, at the top you

can return via Munsubong and Sinseondae, or even carry on to Ipseokdae and Birobong before heading back down. The highest peak, Cheonhwangbong, (1058m) is not on the loop and is too far for most hikers to attempt.

Buses leave Cheongju (W6200, 1¼ hours, every 30 minutes) for Songnisan National Park.

### Sleeping

Two camping grounds (free) are open in July and August.

**Songnisan Park Hotel** (☎ 542 3900; r W39,000; a ) Clean and comfortable Western and *ondol* rooms can be found here in front of Lake Hills Hotel in the tourist village. The off-peak room price is W30,000.

**Birosanjang** (☎ 543 4782; r W60,000) This special *yeogwan* (motel) is all on its own in a great location up in the mountains inside the park. You can hike up to it (one hour) or get a taxi (W10,000). The off-peak price is W40,000.

### Eating

Hundreds of restaurants offer the usual tourist-village meals such as *bulgogi jeongsik* (불고기 정식; banquet of sliced beef); *sanchae jeongsik* (산채 정식; banquet of mountain vegetables), *beoseot jeongsik* (버섯 정식) and *sanchae bibimbap* (산채비빔밥; rice, egg, meat and mountain vegetables). Snacks include rice crackers and pizza-sized slabs of toffee, sesame and nuts, but dentist bills could result. *Dongdongju* (rice wine) flavoured with red dates is served from big pots.

### CHUNGJU 충주 pop 220,000

Chungju (www.chungju.chungbuk.kr) is the gateway to the Chungjuho (Chungju Lake) ferries, Woraksan National Park and Suanbo Hot Springs. Every autumn the World Martial Arts Festival (p337) hits town.

A tourist information centre (☎ 850 7329; ㄱ 9am-6pm) is located inside the bus terminal.

### Chungju Lake 충주호

The two-hour, 52km boat ride (☎ 851 5771; www.chungjuho.com; adult/child under 12 W18,000/9000) along the large artificial lake from Danyang to Chungju (or vice versa) is a highlight, with constantly changing scenery that on misty days looks like a sequence of Joseon-era landscape paintings.

(Continued on page 337)

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From Danyang it's a 30-minute boat ride to Janghoe ferry terminal, where the rocky cliffs are the most scenic. If you exit the terminal at Janghoe then turn right and continue 100m, opposite the bus stop is the ticket office for the western part of **Woraksan National Park** (adult/youth/child W1600/600/300; ㄱ sunrise-sunset). A 2.5km hike up Jebibong (721m) takes three hours return.

From Janghoe to the next ferry pier, Cheongpung, takes another half hour. Nearby is a folk village and across the bridge is a resort with a bungy jump. After another hour the boat arrives at Chungju ferry terminal. Only seven buses a day (W950, 30 minutes) run from here to Chungju bus terminal, so you may have to wait some time. A taxi costs W13,000.

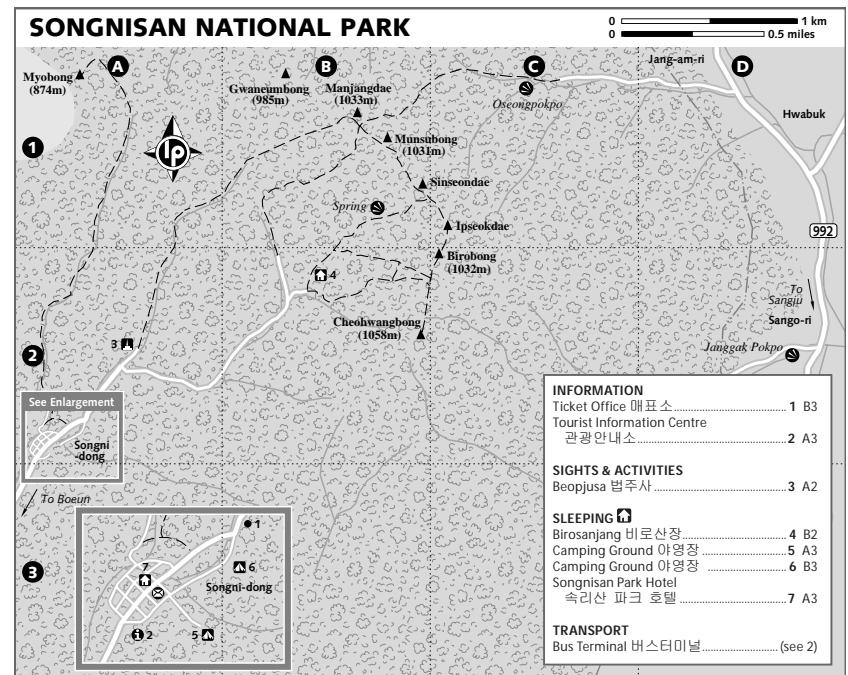
Going the other way, from Chungju ferry terminal ferry boats go to the Woraksan terminal (W8000 return), Cheongpung (W9000), Janghoe (W13,000) and Danyang (W18,000). The ferry boats run at least twice a day, but the schedule depends on the number of passengers. If the ferry isn't running to Danyang, take a ferry to Janghoe and a bus to Danyang.

### MARTIAL ARTS FIESTA

Every October since 1997, Chungju has hosted a week-long **World Martial Arts Festival** (☎ 850 6740; www.martialarts.or.kr) together with a cultural festival that features food stalls, music and dances. Martial arts exponents from Korea and around the world flock to the city, where they demonstrate their amazing and varied skills. See displays of Chinese *wushu*, Malaysian *silat*, Brazilian *capoeira*, Indian *kalan*, Uzbekistan *kurash* and other martial arts from as far apart as Venezuela, the Ukraine and the Philippines. See also p384.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Titanic Motel** (타이타닉모텔; ☎ 842 5858; r W25,000; a ㄱ ) Chungju's flashiest motel is adorned with white castle battlements and blue turrets outside. Inside is a disco-décor lift and a flame-effect corridor leading to luxury rooms with ornate furniture and snazzy black-and-white tiles in the bathrooms that feature all-body showers. More spacious rooms with



a computer or Jacuzzi are W5000 extra. Opposite the train station, Titanic (named after the love-story movie rather than the sinking ship) is a 15-minute walk or W2000 taxi ride from the bus terminal.

**Pongaksan** (푼각산; Aehyangdaero; meals W4000-10,000; 11 24hr; C ) A large family restaurant that serves just about everything; it's along the road facing the train station. Always busy despite the dull decor, it has a children's play area plus every child's dream: free self-serve ice cream!

## Getting There & Away

### BUS

Chungju's new bus terminal is a 15-minute walk or a W2000 taxi ride from the motels in front of the train station. Local buses from outside the bus terminal run to Suanbo Hot Springs (W1000, 35 minutes, every 40 minutes) and to Songgye-ri in Woraksan National Park (W1000, 45 minutes, five daily). From across the road outside the bus terminal, bus 301 (W950, 25 minutes, seven daily) leaves for Chungju Dam and the Chungju Lake ferries.

From Chungju bus terminal, destinations include:

Destination	Price (W)	Duration	Frequency
Cheongju	6400	1½hr	every 20min
Daejeon	8000	2¼hr	hourly
Danyang	6200	1½hr	hourly
Seoul	6200	2hr	every 20min

## KOREA'S MOST SCENIC BOAT RIDE

Stalls and shops clustered around the ferry terminal at Chungju Dam (p328) sell Darth Vader sun visors, fried grasshoppers, Frisbee-sized slabs of toffee and bottles of North Korean 'Bilberry Bog Wine'.

Stepping onto a ferry boat, a gang of jolly Korean pensioners is already in party mode and dancing in the aisles. As the boat skims along the lake at over 20 knots, an old man, nattily dressed in a trilby hat, white baggy trousers and a lilac waistcoat, and with more gold than ivory in his mouth, beckons me to get up and dance with him. A wrinkled grandma in colourful trousers and a clashing top passes me a paper cup of *soju* (Korean vodka) and a couple of biscuits. Fortunately the Korean pensioner dancing style is nothing too ballroom, so I hope that my uncoordinated wriggling doesn't stick out like a sore thumb, even if my height and Western face does.

Virgin green hillsides reach down to the water's edge of the artificial lake that was created in 1985. Here the pristine forest scenery isn't marred by gas stations or plastic greenhouses. At Cheongpung Resort we watch a brave soul leap off the 60m bungee jump. But the trip's highlight is at Janghoe where the rocky cliffs were greatly admired by Joseon-era poets and painters and inspired much poetry and art. Today the magical cliffs inspire the pensioners into a frenzy of digital-camera button-pushing.

## TRAIN

*Mugunghwa* (semi-express) trains (W11,700, five daily) run to Seoul.

## SUANBO HOT SPRINGS 수안보

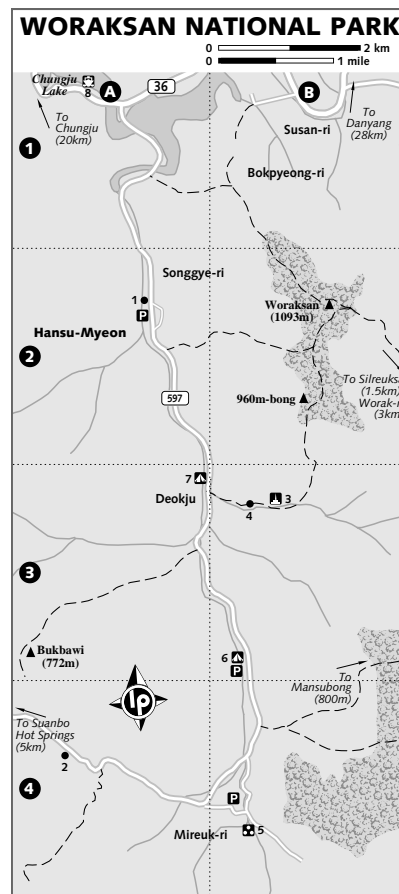
This relaxing spa resort, 21km southeast of Chungju, is small enough to walk round, and its restaurants specialise in rabbit, duck and pheasant meals. Nearby is Woraksan National Park and a small ski resort. The tourist information centre (☎ 845 7829) is on the main street near the bus terminal.

Less than 2km from Suanbo Hot Springs is **Sajo Ski Resort** (사조스키리조트; ☎ 846 0750; www.sajoresort.co.kr), which is very modest in scale, a big handicap in a country that believes bigger is better. There are seven slopes and three lifts, and ski equipment can be hired. Night skiing is also possible. Near the slopes is a hotel and a youth hostel, but the best plan is to stay in Suanbo and use the free shuttle buses that run during the ski season.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Sinheung Hotel** (신흥호텔; ☎ 846 3711; fax 846 1760; r W25,000; a ) On the main road, a one-minute walk from the tourist information centre, is the best (and about the only) budget *yeogwan*. The corridors need upgrading, but the rooms are light and straightforward. The small *oncheon* (hot spring bath) downstairs is free to guests and is open from 6am to 7pm. Prices increase W10,000 on Saturdays.

**Suanbo Royal Hotel** (수안보로얄호텔; ☎ 846 0190; r W50,000; a ) On the main road is this new



and bright hotel containing smallish rooms that have large bathrooms equipped with electronic bidets. The *oncheon* and sauna is W3000 for guests, W5000 for nonguests.

**Suanbo Sangnok Hotel** (수안보상낙호텔; ☎ 845 3500; fax 845 7878; r from W130,000; a i ) Appealing, comfortable rooms can be found here, but the main attraction is the *oncheon* spa and sauna (W6000 and only available to guests). The restaurant serves local specialities such as pheasant or duck *shabu shabu* (beef and noodle casserole; W60,000), which are meant for sharing.

**Satgatchon** (삿갓촌; meals W5000-50,000; 11 7.30am-10pm) This small, rustic restaurant is the best place for *kkwong* (꿩; pheasant *shabu shabu* (샤브샤브)), a seven-course

## INFORMATION

Park Office 공원 관리 사무소..... 1 A2  
Ticket Office 매표소..... 2 A4

## SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Deokjusa 덕주사..... 3 B3  
Dongmun 동문..... 4 B3  
Mireuksaji 미륵사지..... 5 B4

## SLEEPING

Camping Ground 아영장..... 6 B3  
Camping Ground 아영장..... 7 A3

## TRANSPORT

Woraksan Ferry Terminal 월악산선착장..... 8 A1

meal consisting of pheasant served up in seven different ways: kebabs, dumplings, meatballs, barbecued, *shabu shabu*-style, meat and in soup. It costs W50,000 and is meant for sharing. Walk down the Suanbo Sangnok Hotel road to the three green signs, look left and it's the restaurant with black tiles on the roof.

## Getting There & Away

Local buses (W1000, 35 minutes, every 40 minutes) leave from outside Chungju bus terminal to Suanbo Hot Springs. Intercity buses depart from Suanbo bus terminal to destinations such as Daegu (W11,800, three hours, six daily) and Dong-Seoul (W9900, 2½ hours, hourly).

## WORAKSAN NATIONAL PARK

### 월악산국립공원

Woraksan, which means 'Moon Crags Mountains', offers fine hiking through picturesque forests, with lake views and the slim chance of seeing an endangered goral antelope (p340). Tickets can be purchased at the ticket office (☎ 653 3250; adult/youth/child W1600/600/300; 11 sunrise-sunset).

A road runs right through the park, so access is no problem. Mireuk-ri, the tourist village at the southern entrance, is 11km southeast of Suanbo Hot Springs. Scattered near the tourist village is Mireuksaji, the remains of a temple that was originally built in the late-Shilla or early-Goryeo period. A couple of stone pagodas and a stone Buddha are the main relics, though a replacement shrine hall is being built.

The most popular hiking route starts deeper in the park at another small tourist village, Deokju, which has a camping ground. Follow the trail up to Dongmun, the east gate of an ancient



mountain fortress, whose walls stretched for 10km, that dates back to the Goryeo dynasty. Further on is a temple, Deokjusa, after which you bear left to the uninspiringly named peak '960m-bong' – Korea has so many mountain peaks that it's run out of names. Carry on to Woraksan (1093m) and then descend the steep slope back down to the access road and Songgye-ri, another tourist village at the northern entrance to the park. The total distance is around 10km and takes about six hours.

There are shops, restaurants and *minbak* (private homes with rooms for rent) in Songgye-ri, Deokju and Mireuk-ri, plus two camping grounds (W3000 to W6000 per night).

Local buses (W1000, 45 minutes, five daily) leave from outside Chungju bus terminal to Mireungni and through the park to Songgye-ri. They can also be picked up in Suanbo's main street (W1000, 10 minutes, five daily).

## DANYANG 단양

pop 41,000

Danyang is a resort town nestled in the mountains on the edge of Chungju Lake (p328). Lakeside motels are as retro as the town itself, but you can spend a couple of pleasant days exploring the sights. Visit at least one of the limestone caves and don't miss the awesome temple complex, Gu-insa (p327).

## Information

**Nonghyup Bank** Changes major currencies.

**Post office** Uphill from the bus terminal.

**Tourist information centre** (% 422 1146) Located just over the bridge.

## Sights & Activities

### GOSU DONGGUL گوش동굴

This spectacular limestone cave (% 422 3072; adult/youth/child W4000/2500/1500; h 9am–5pm) is the

## ONDAL THE FOOL

The guy with bushy eyebrows that you see on signboards all over Danyang is Ondal. Born in the Three Kingdoms period, he was the local fool, but he married Princess Pyeonggang, who inspired him to study hard and become a skilled soldier. He was made a general but was killed by soldiers from Shilla. Education and a good wife turned him from a mocked fool into a respected local hero.

## SAVE THE GORAL!

Goral antelopes have been a protected species in South Korea since 1967, but their numbers have declined in recent years. Most of the 700 or so that live in the wild can be found in Seoraksan National Park or the DMZ. However, Woraksan National Park has been identified as an ideal habitat for these brownish-grey animals that have short horns and look like goats. Fifteen to 20 goral antelopes live in the park – they are so elusive that no one knows their exact number. Six have been released into the park and others were there originally or were born there. Plans include the release of 10 more goral, so keep a look out for these shy creatures when hiking in the park.

most impressive in Korea. Endless metal catwalks and spiral staircases allow you to see the varied formations up close, and the subdued lighting is effective. Discovered in the 1970s the cave system is 1.7km long, so allow at least an hour to look round. Keep a look out for small cave-dwelling creatures. The stalagmites usually grow about 1cm every five to 10 years, so you can estimate their approximate age. The cave was inhabited back in prehistoric times. It's a 10-minute walk from Danyang – walk across the bridge and turn right.

Local honey is sold in the tourist village by the cave's entrance, and restaurants sell farmed *seong-eo* (trout).

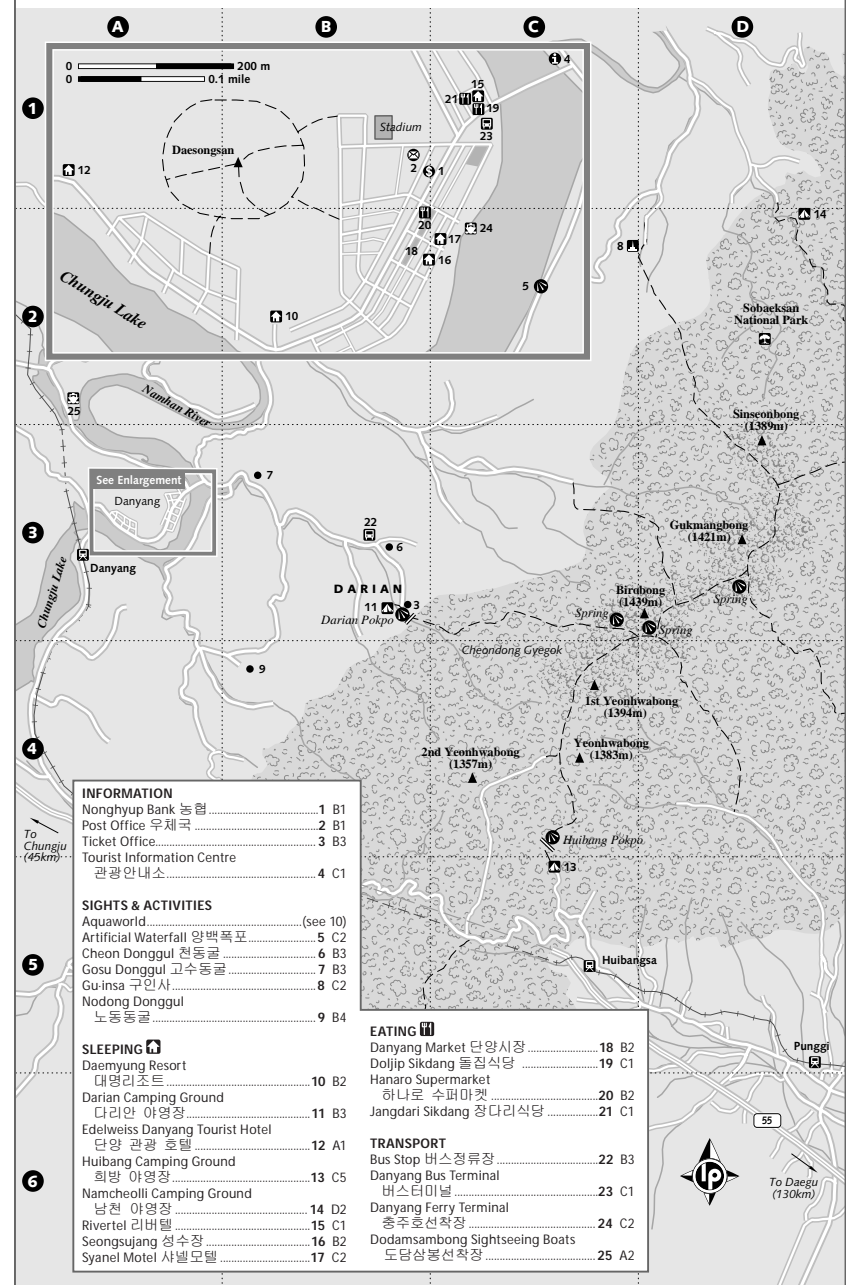
## AQUAWORLD 아쿠아월드

Swim in this smart, mainly indoor water park (% 420 8311; adult/child W15,000/10,000 Mon-Fri, W20,000/15,000 Sat & Sun; h 10am–8.30pm or longer), which has linked pool areas. Immerse yourself in pine-needle, sulphur and Jacuzzi baths, and then steam away any remaining stress in jade, charcoal and amethyst saunas (W3000 extra). Play pool and four-ball or release vocal energy in the *noraebang* (karaoke) next to the restaurants and shops. Up above are resort condos (p342).

## LAKESIDE WALK 호수주변산책로

Take an evening stroll along the promenade – lined with trees, flowerbeds and lighting – that runs along the lake from outside the bus terminal, past an artificial waterfall and outdoor concert area to the tourist hotel.

## DANYANG & SOBAEKSAN NATIONAL PARK



**DAESONGSAN** 대송산

Behind Danyang is this wooded hill. There are shady walks under the fir trees, and exercise areas and artworks are scattered around the place.

**Festivals**

The usually sleepy town comes alive during the 10-day Azalea Festival in late May, which features concerts, fireworks, a funfair, outdoor films, sporting contests and stacks of stalls. A must-do is to hike up Birobong to admire the mountain azalea blooms.

**Sleeping**

Danyang lacks new motels, and the lakefront accommodation, like the town itself, is 20 years behind the times. Despite their Graeco-Roman façades, motel rooms are only average. Daemyung Resort is the best bet if you can obtain a special deal.

**Rivertel** (☎ 422 2619; www.erivertel.com; r W30,000; a i ) A variety of small, rather basic rooms are available here from owner Mr Kim, who speaks some English. Choose between a good view, a computer in the room or a larger room with a table and chairs.

**Syanel Motel** (☎ 423 0151; r W30,000; a i ) In this motel with a blue-and-white classical façade, rooms contain big TVs and a computer, and showers have firepower.

**Seongsujung** (☎ 421 2345; r W30,000; a ) Small but OK rooms – try for No 208, which has a balcony overlooking the lake and the artificial waterfall, and ask for some chairs.

**Edelweiss Danyang Tourist Hotel** (☎ 423 7070; www.danyanghotel.com; r W70,000; a i ) Out of town, but the price is reasonable for this tourist hotel with a lobby and rooms with light decor and lake views. The restaurant serves steak and oxtail soup. Prices rise to W99,000 on Saturday.

**Daemyung Resort** (☎ 420 8311; www.daemyungresort.com; package specials W98,000; a ) Special off-season deals that include two meals are usually possible in the studio apartments above Aquaworld.

**Eating**

Hanaro supermarket and Danyang market can supply self-caterers.

**Jangdari Sikdang** (meals W5000-15,000; 11 10am-9pm) Order the speciality of this bright, clean restaurant, which is *pyunggang* (마늘술밥 정식), a garlic hotpot rice meal (W10,000). It

includes a dish of real meat, soups, 15 other side dishes and the special hotpot rice that is cooked on a mega 24-hotpot electronic cooker. The bean-and-barley side dish makes a good dessert and the coffee is free.

**Doljip Sikdang** (meals W5000-15,000) With bonsai trees outside, this white-fronted restaurant offers diners their own private dining room. The foreigner-friendly food covers *bulgogi* (불고기), *galbi* (갈비) and hotpot rice meals with umpteen side dishes.

**Getting There & Away****BOAT**

From Danyang ferry terminal, boats leave for Janghoe (adult one way/return W6000/10,000) and continue along Chungju Lake to Cheongpung Resort (adult one way/return W10,000/17,000) and Chungju Dam Ferry Terminal (adult one way/return W18,000/30,000). The boat schedule varies and if the water level at Danyang is too low for the ferry boats, you can catch a bus to Janghoe and pick the ferry up there.

One excursion idea is to take a boat (or bus) to Janghoe, hike up Jebibong (5km, three hours return) in Woraksan National Park and then return to Danyang by bus.

**BUS**

Buses connect Danyang to the following destinations:

Destination	Price (W)	Duration	Frequency
Chungju	6200	1½hr	hourly
Daejeon	14,200	3hr	5 daily
Gu-insa	2600	30min	hourly
Seoul	11,700	3½hr	every 30min

**TRAIN**

*Mugunghwa* (W10,000, 2¾ hours, five daily) and *Saemaul* (express; W14,800, 2½ hours, two daily) services run to Cheongnyangni station in Seoul from the train station in old Danyang, 3km from the main town.

**AROUND DANYANG****Nodong Donggul** 노동동굴

Not as grand or as crowded as Gosu Donggul, this cave (adult/youth/child W4000/2500/1500; 11 9am-5pm) also has stacks of limestone formations that have built up drip by drip over the centuries, and the steel staircases and catwalks give you a close-up view of them.

The cave has a poor bus service – local buses (W950, five minutes) leave from outside Danyang bus terminal at 9.25am and 2pm but return at 2.30pm and 5.50pm.

**Cheon Donggul** 천동굴

More of an adventure activity, this cave (☎ 422 2972; adult/youth/child W4000/2500/1500; 11 9am-5pm) requires visitors to squeeze through narrow clefts and crawl through low tunnels. It's only 470m long and was discovered in 1977.

The cave is a 10-minute walk from the nearby bus stop and a 15-minute walk from the entrance to Sobaeksan National Park. Buses (W950, 10 minutes, hourly) leave from outside Danyang bus terminal for Darian (Cheondong-ri).

**Dodamsambong Sightseeing Boats****도담삼봉선착장**

View more celebrated rocky scenery on these boat trips (☎ 422 3033; per trip W6000). Small, sightseeing boats take you on a short trip to view nearby rocky cliffs from the Namhangang (river).

**SOBAEKSAN NATIONAL PARK****소백산국립공원**

**Sobaeksan** (Little White Mountain; ☎ 423 0708; adult/youth/child W1600/600/300; 11 8am-6pm), one of Korea's largest parks, is rich in flora and offers good hiking trails through dense forests. The climbs are not particularly steep, but can still be hard work.

**Birobong** (1439m) is the highest peak in the park and is most easily reached from Darian/

Cheondong-ni (three hours up and two hours down if you're reasonably fit). The route follows a picturesque 6.5km trail along the beautiful Cheondong valley. The peak is famous for azaleas, which bloom around late May.

**Gu-insa** 구인사

Deep in the mountains stands the isolated and impressive headquarters of the Cheontae sect of Korean Buddhism, which was re-established by Sang-wol Won-gak in 1945. The temple complex (admission free) consists of 30 multi-storey concrete buildings that line a narrow road and are connected by elevated walkways. The buildings are squeezed into a steep, narrow, thickly wooded valley. The opulence is obvious and building work is continuing at a hectic pace. Carry on past the buildings to reach the founder's tomb.

The temple has the atmosphere of a utopian community: the gardens are beautiful, everything is spotless, and the monks, nuns and lay members, dressed in loose-fitting grey trousers and shirts, appear to be uniformly quiet and polite. The communal kitchen serves hundreds of simple but free vegetarian meals three times a day and visitors are welcome.

Camping is available at Darian, Namcheolli and Huibang, and plenty of *minbak* charge from W20,000 at the park entrances.

Buses (W950, 10 minutes, hourly) leave from outside Danyang bus terminal for Darian. Direct buses (W2600, 30 minutes, hourly) leave Danyang bus terminal at 20 minutes past the hour for Gu-insa.

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