

Directory

CONTENTS

Accommodation	381
Activities	384
Business Hours	385
Children	386
Climate Charts	386
Courses	386
Customs	386
Dangers & Annoyances	387
Embassies & Consulates	387
Festivals & Events	388
Food	388
Gay & Lesbian Travellers	389
Holidays	389
Insurance	390
Internet Access	390
Legal Matters	390
Maps	390
Money	390
Photography & Video	391
Post	391
Shopping	391
Solo Travellers	391
Telephone & Fax	392
Time	392
Toilets	392
Tourist Information	393
Tours	393
Travellers With Disabilities	393
Visas	393
Volunteering	394
Women Travellers	394
Work	394

ACCOMMODATION

Expect to pay W15,000 for a dormitory or room in a *yeoinsuk* (small, family-run budget hotel with shared bathroom); W25,000 for a *yeogwan* (motel with small en suite) or basic countryside *minbak* (private home with rooms for rent); W30,000 for a motel; W50,000 for a *pension* (upmarket rural retreat) or smart *minbak*; at least W90,000 for an upper midrange hotel; and W200,000 upwards for top-end luxury. Upper midrange and top-end hotels add 21% tax and service to the bill, but this has been included in all the prices quoted in this

guidebook. If the accommodation has internet access it will invariably be broadband.

Modern motels, often clustered around bus terminals, offer the best deal. Tip: look for the newest motel building and stay there.

Accommodation is normally charged per room, so solo travellers receive little or no discount. Still it's always worth asking. If you're staying a few days or it's off season (outside July and August on the coast or outside July, August, October and November in National parks), you can always try for discount.

Only staff in Seoul guesthouses and upper midrange and top-end hotels are likely to speak any English. An extra bed or *yō* (mattress or futon on the floor) is usually available. Check-out time is generally noon. Prices can rise on Friday and Saturday and at peak times (July and August near beaches or national parks, and October and November near national parks).

Laundry is a problem – bring lots of clothes or else many travellers wash their clothes every night and hang them up in their room to dry, or lay it on the *ondol*-heated floor in winter. Launderettes are virtually extinct and *yeogwan* and motels rarely offer laundry services.

In general, booking accommodation is unnecessary and is difficult in the case of motels as staff very rarely speak any English.

Budget accommodation is defined as rooms that cost W39,000 or less, midrange is rooms from W40,000 to W150,000, and top end is anything over W150,000.

Backpacker Guesthouses

Seoul has a dozen small guesthouses, ideal for budget-minded foreign tourists, where the staff are friendly and speak English, and

BOOK ACCOMMODATION ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at www.lonelyplanet.com. You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

PRACTICALITIES

- The *Korea Times* and *Korea Herald* newspapers carry mainly political and business stories, but 'Weekender' sections on Friday (*Korea Times*) and Saturday (*Korea Herald*) cover culture and what's-on.
- *Seoul* is an excellent 75-page monthly magazine covering life, culture and coming events in the always-buzzing capital city.
- KBS1, KBS2, MBC, SBS are the four main Korean-language TV networks. AFN (<http://afnkor.com>), which is run by the American military, English-language Arirang (www.arirang.co.kr), and 50 other channels (including CNN, BBC World, sports and movie channels) are available on satellite and cable.
- The video system is NTSC – rental charges are cheap (free in many motels) and videos are not usually dubbed into Korean. DVDs have an English-language option.
- Electricity supply is 220V at 60Hz and uses two round pins with no earth, although a few ancient *yeogwan* may still be wired for 110V and have two flat pins.
- The metric system rules, but real estate is measured in *pyeong* (3.3 sq metres, or almost 6ft x 6ft) and markets still use wooden measuring boxes.

it's easy to meet other travellers and pester them with questions. The guesthouses offer dormitories (W15,000 per night) and double rooms (W35,000), some of which are en suite. Communal facilities include toilets, showers, satellite TV, a kitchen and washing machine. Free internet and breakfast is also provided. Sadly they hardly exist outside Seoul.

Camping & Mountain Huts

Nature lovers can camp at beaches and at the entrances to some national and provincial parks. The cost is only W3000, but facilities are very basic and they are only open in July and August. *Sanjang* (mountain huts) cost the same although the better, newer ones cost W5000.

In general, *yeogwan*, motel and *minbak* accommodation at the national-park entrances are reasonably priced, and only a few major hikes in Seoraksan and Jirisan National Parks require overnighting in a mountain hut. Huts and camping grounds can be fully booked at weekends and peak times – log on to www.npa.or.kr to make a reservation.

Hanok

Staying in a *hanok* – a traditional *yangban* (aristocrat) wooden house – is a unique experience. Rooms are very small and grouped around a courtyard, and guests usually sleep on a *yo* on an *ondol*-heated floor. Seoul and Jeonju in Jeollabuk-do are just about the only places to experience a *hanok* stay as few have

survived the Korean War and the postwar bulldozers.

Homestays

View www.labostay.or.kr or www.homestaykorea.com to contact Korean families willing to offer rooms in their homes to foreigners. Guests often receive royal hospitality, and the cost is around US\$35 (single) or US\$50 (double) for bed and breakfast. Rates are greatly reduced for long stays. It's your best opportunity to experience the local lifestyle at first hand. Book online at least two weeks before you arrive.

Hotels

Luxury hotels are scarce outside of major cities and Jeju. They are world class in terms of communal facilities, but rooms and bathrooms can be on the small side with some imperfections – showers above baths are common as are marked carpets. The lobbies, fitness centres and restaurants are often their strong points. Hotels generally quote rack rates which then have 21% tax and service added on top, but discounts or packages are nearly always available.

Websites that offer discounted prices and special deals include www.koreahotels.net and www.khrc.com. Always check if discounted prices include the 21% service and tax. The discounts look good but may be less than you could obtain direct, and some hotels claim that the best rates are obtainable from their own websites.

Minbak & Pension

Most *minbak* provide basic accommodation (and usually meals) on islands, near ski resorts, in rural areas and near beaches and national parks. Expect to pay W25,000 for a room but double that in peak seasons. You sleep on a *yo* on an *ondol*-heated floor with only a TV and a heater or fan in the room. Facilities are usually en suite. Lots of people can squeeze into one room – an extra person usually costs W10,000. Nowadays there are more upmarket *minbak*, which are similar to *pension* and cost W50,000 or more, and provide smart, stylish rooms with beds and kitchenettes. *Pension* are more luxurious than most *minbak* and cost W50,000 to W70,000 with spacious rooms, often with stylish furniture, balconies, kitchens and great views.

Motels

They started out as love motels, and rooms can still be rented by the hour, but nowadays the modern motels also provide the best-deal accommodation for touring Korea. In general you don't need to worry about where to stay in Korea – motels are so numerous that there's no need to book ahead. How they all make money is a mystery. Invariably priced at W30,000 (but allow up to W10,000 extra for special facilities like a waterbed, Jacuzzi or a computer), the newest ones provide a mid-range style of room at a budget price. Most motel rooms are just regular rooms, although you might find large mirrors, mood lighting and maybe round beds or a free packet of condoms. It's unusual to come across erotic art, and you'll never see bondage gear or whips in the corner!

In modern motels, rooms and bathrooms are reasonably sized, with a high standard of fittings, furnishing and décor, a comfortable double bed, a large TV, video player (free videos available), air-con, a fridge with free soft drinks, a water dispenser, small towels, a hairdryer, shampoo, lotions and even hair brushes and toothbrushes. TVs have satellite or cable links and can pick up 50 or so channels including an X-rated one. Windows are double (or triple) glazed for quietness. Modern high-rise motels have 30 or so rooms and an elevator, but usually no English is spoken, no staff are employed to help with bags, and there is no coffee shop, laundry, restaurant, bar or communal facility. You just get a clean, facility-filled room.

Every city, small town and tourist area has batches of motels, usually surrounding the bus terminal or train station. Some look like Disneyland castles, while others are metal clad or have big neon signs on the roof. Staff rarely understand any English so write '방을 좀 볼 수 있을까요?' (Can I see a room please?) on a piece of paper and hand it over to the receptionist, who is usually hidden away behind a small glass window.

As with *yeogwan*, twin beds are not usually available, but you can ask for an *ondol* room (sleeping on padded quilts on the floor), or ask for a *yo* to be put in a room with a double bed. Any extra person usually costs W10,000. Don't be misled by the name 'motel' – some *yeogwan* call themselves a motel, but the exterior usually gives it away.

Rental Accommodation

Many expat workers live in accommodation supplied by their employers, but a few live in a guesthouse, homestay or *yeogwan* on a monthly basis and negotiate a reduced daily cost. Serviced apartments and apartment sharing are other options in Seoul, although spare rooms are difficult to find – try the notice boards on the Seoul government or newspaper websites, such as www.koreaherald.co.kr.

Renting an apartment is tricky because of the traditional payment system and because prices in Seoul keep going up. *Chonse* is when you loan from W50 million to W200 million (or more) to the landlord and get it all back at the end of the rental period. *Wolse* is when you pay a smaller returnable deposit of W3 million to W10 million plus a monthly rental fee. However some accommodation is available to foreigners on the Western system, with a small refundable deposit and a monthly rent.

If you are looking to rent, take note that real estate is measured in *pyeong* (1 *pyeong* is 3.3 sq metres). A large apartment is 50 *pyeong* and medium-sized is about 30 *pyeong*, though smaller budget ones of 15 *pyeong* to 20 *pyeong* do exist.

Sauna Dormitories

Saunas and *jjimjilbang* (luxury saunas) nearly all have a dormitory or napping room. They are not really meant for overnight sleepovers, but they can be used for that purpose. Pay the entry fee (usually under W10,000), use the

facilities and then head for the dormitory. Don't expect much in the way of bedding, and the pillow may be a block of wood.

Serviced Apartments

More than 20 serviced apartments have sprung up in recent years in Seoul as an alternative to small hotel rooms and the hassle of finding and renting an apartment. Known locally as residences or suites, prices range from W75,000 to W250,000 a day with a reduction for month-long stays.

Temple Stays

Overnight stays in Buddhist temples (www.templestaykorea.net) are a unique experience and cost around W50,000. Guests are given Buddhist robes to wear and stay in their own room or single-sex dormitory-style accommodation, sleeping on a padded quilt on the floor. Don't go to bed too late as guests are asked to get up around 3.30am the next day to join the monks at dawn prayers. Remember to take your shoes off before entering Buddhist shrines, and to use the side door. As you might expect, alcohol and cigarettes are not allowed.

Sweeping paths, making stone rubbings and hiking in the mountains could also be on the programme, as well as meditation and a tea ceremony. Simple vegetarian meals are provided. Temple stays are an enlightening experience, providing genuine insights into the daily lifestyle and beliefs of Korean monks.

Yeogwan & Yeoinsuk

Yeogwan provide old-fashioned budget rooms, but are only W5000 to W10,000 cheaper than the much better modern motels. Rooms (and bathrooms) are smallish but are fully equipped with satellite or cable TV, a fan, air-con, heating, a fridge, bed and sometimes a table and chairs. The drawbacks

are that furnishings and fixtures are dated, rooms and corridors are usually gloomy, and bedding is often quilts rather than sheets. Quilts are usually aired rather than washed so you may want to bring a pair of sheets with you. 'Adequate but shabby' sums up most *yeogwan*.

Few *yeoinsuk* (family-run budget hotels) have made it into this guide despite their bargain W15,000 to W20,000 price tag because most are too grotty to recommend. Facilities are usually shared, and rooms are tiny, bare cells furnished with just a TV and fan, and none too clean. The ancient proprietors may be unwilling to accept foreigners, and guests are usually Korean single males down on their luck. Youth hostel or sauna dormitories provide a much more pleasant budget option.

Youth Hostels

Sixty large youth hostels (www.HIhostels.com) are spread around the country. Modern and clean, the dormitories offer the best deal for solo travellers at W11,000 to W15,000 a night (W22,000 in Seoul). Family rooms cost as much as motel rooms and are not as good. Not many foreigners stay in these hostels, perhaps because they are rather institutional and soulless, can be inconveniently located and are sometimes full of screaming children on a school trip. Membership costs W25,000 for adults, W18,000 for youths.

ACTIVITIES

See the Korea Outdoors chapter for hiking (p74), cycling and mountain biking (p73), diving (p75), winter sports (p77) and hot spring spas (p76).

Martial Arts

Korean martial arts are attracting worldwide interest. Taekwondo is now an Olympic sport, but there are other lesser-known ones. English-speaking martial art groups advertise in the *Korea Herald* Bulletin Board on Thursdays. The World Martial Arts Festival, held every October in Chungju (p337), includes obscure martial arts from many countries.

GICHEON

Gicheon (www.gicheon.org) is an indigenous and ancient Korean martial art that is so little known that most Koreans have never heard of it. The mind/body discipline is based on six body postures and special exercises are

designed to promote joint flexibility and free up the *gi* energy paths. See the website for courses, contacts and more information.

HAPKIDO

This gentle martial art uses deep breathing to achieve focus, and practitioners are taught to make use of their opponent's aggression and weak points to achieve victory.

SUNMUDDO

This Zen Buddhist practice focuses on breathing as an aid to attaining enlightenment. To watch demonstrations or take part in Sunmudo training, head to the mountain temple at Golgalsa (p203).

TAEKWONDO

Millions of Korean children learn taekwondo in private academies, and you can often see them in local neighbourhoods heading to evening classes in their taekwondo outfits. All trainee soldiers in Korea also learn taekwondo, a Korean martial art with a global following that is based on *taekkyon*, a martial art which is thousands of years old and features on ancient Goryeo tomb murals. *Taekkyon* is a defensive art that teaches movement, while taekwondo is known for its high kicks.

The World Taekwondo Federation (Map pp96-7; www.kukkiwon.co.kr), based at Kukkiwon, has regular competitions and training sessions in the main *dojang* (hall), as well as a small museum.

Pool & Four Ball

There are pool halls all over the country that cost around W7000 an hour. Look for the obvious 'billiard cues and balls' signs outside. They often have pool (called 'pocketball' in Korea) and tables for games of 'four ball', which is similar to billiards, but there are no pockets and players must hit cannons. Two red balls and two white ones are used. The players (any number) hit the white balls in turn. The object of the game is to hit both of the red balls in one shot without hitting the other white ball. It sounds easy but it isn't.

You score minus one if you are successful, and you also get to take another turn. You score nothing if you hit just one red, and you score plus one if you hit the other white ball or miss everything. Beginners start with a score of three points and when you improve you start with five points, then eight and so on. When your score reaches zero, to finish

you must do a more difficult shot – hit one red and two side-cushions or two reds and one side-cushion without hitting the other white ball.

Ssireum

Korea has its own unique and traditional style of wrestling called *ssireum*, which is more similar to Mongolian wrestling than Japanese sumo. Wrestlers grab each other's *satba* (a cloth tied round the waist) and try to throw their opponent to the ground. Matches usually last seconds rather than minutes.

BUSINESS HOURS

For most government and private offices, business hours are from 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday. From November to February government offices may close an hour earlier. Tourist information centres are usually open from 9am to 6pm daily while national parks are open daily from sunrise to sunset. Keep in mind that many (but not all) government-run museums and tourist sites close on Mondays.

Banking hours are from 9.30am to 4pm Monday to Friday. The hours that ATMs are available vary and are written on the machine, but they are not generally open 24 hours. Post offices are generally open from 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday, but some are open longer hours.

Department stores traditionally open from 10.30am to 7.30pm six days a week. Nowadays some open every day and a few open until late evening. New youth-oriented shopping malls tend to stay open until 10pm. Small general stores often stay open until midnight even in suburban areas, and many convenience stores are open 24 hours. Shops are generally open from 10am to around 9pm every day, but the trend towards more days off means that some do now close on Sunday. Travel agents may take Saturday afternoon off as well as Sunday.

Restaurants usually open from 10am to 10pm every day. Cinemas traditionally open at 11am, with the last show ending just before midnight, but a few run later. In big cities, midnight showings and even all-night movies are becoming a more popular option.

Pubs and bars open daily from 6pm to midnight but they close later on Friday and Saturday. Some open at noon for the thirsty early birds.

BUDDHIST PRAYER BEFORE EATING A MEAL

Now we take our meal that caused no harm to any sentient beings.

Let us consider whether our behaviour deserves this meal.

Let us cultivate our minds away from greed, anger and foolishness.

We eat this meal to become enlightened.

There is plenty for night owls to do in Korean cities as some saunas, restaurants, PC *bang* (internet rooms), DVD *bang* (room for watching DVDs), *noraebang* (karaoke rooms), convenience stores, bars and nightclubs stay open all night.

CHILDREN

Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* is recommended reading. Foreigners travelling with young children are a novelty in Korea, but once they've got over their surprise, expect the locals to be particularly helpful and intrigued. View www.travelwithyourkids.com for general advice and a first-hand report on Seoul for kids, which gives the city a thumbs up.

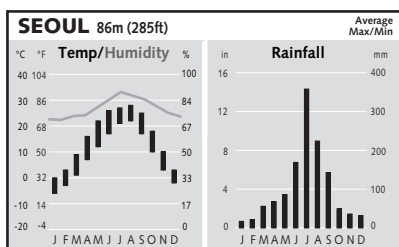
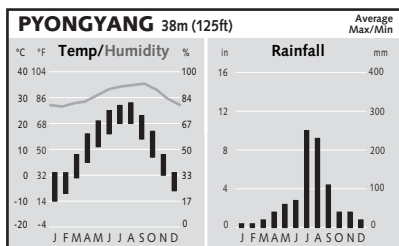
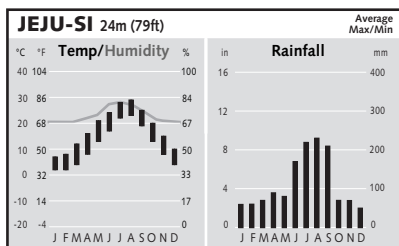
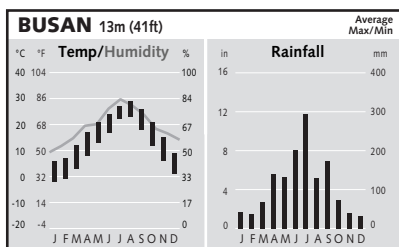
Only luxury hotels are likely to be able to organise a cot, but you could always ask for a *yo*. Bring your own car safety seat and bicycle helmets as they are rare. Few restaurants have high chairs. Nappy-changing facilities are more common in Seoul toilets than in the provinces. Bring your own baby food unless you can decipher *Han-geul* (Korean phonetic alphabet) labels. Baby-sitting services are almost non-existent, except in Lotte World Hotel in Seoul.

The good news is that zoos, funfairs and parks can be found in most cities along with cinemas, DVD rooms, internet rooms, video game arcades, ten-pin bowling alleys, *noraebang*, pool tables and board-game cafés. Children will rarely be more than 100m away from an ice cream, a cake or a fast-food outlet. In winter hit the ski slopes, and in summer head for the water parks or beaches. To keep kids happy in Seoul see p118.

CLIMATE CHARTS

Korea has four very distinct seasons: spring from mid-March to the end of May; summer from June to August; autumn September to November; and winter from December to mid-March. Of course the actual weather doesn't always fit these neat categories.

Temperatures vary hugely between mid-summer and mid-winter, with August being very hot and sticky, while December and January are literally freezing. Winters in the north are colder than in the more southerly Busan or Jeju. Heavy rainfall always arrives with the summer monsoon season (late June to mid-July). See p14 for advice about the best times to visit.



COURSES

Bullish for *bulgogi* or keen on *kimchi*? Check out Han's Culinary Academy (p118) in Seoul for Korean cooking classes in English.

Untangle *Han-geul* at Korean language classes in Seoul (p118).

CUSTOMS

All plants, fresh fruit and vegetables that you bring into Korea must be declared. You are

not allowed to bring in meat. If you have more than US\$10,000 in cash and travellers cheques, this should be declared and you have to fill in a form. Gifts worth more than US\$400 should also be declared.

When leaving the country, the duty-free allowance is not generous: 1 litre of alcohol, 200 cigarettes and 59ml (2oz) of perfume. Antiques of national importance are not allowed to be exported, so if you are thinking of buying a very expensive, genuine antique, check with the Cultural Properties Appraisal Office (☎ 6620106). View www.customs.go.kr for further information.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Drivers routinely jump red lights, so take extra care on pedestrian crossings even if they are protected by lights. Drivers almost never stop for pedestrian crossings that are not protected by traffic lights, so they are useless. Motorcyclists often drive along pavements and pedestrian crossings, particularly in Seoul. Cars also find pavements and pedestrian crossings a convenient place to park.

The lack of street names, signs and numbers can make navigation around cities difficult. This guidebook adds a street name to reviews where one exists and is signed, but don't expect taxi drivers, passers-by and even shopkeepers to know it. Tip: the small number signs on some buildings have the street name underneath, although only in *Han-geul*.

SMOKING OR NONSMOKING?

Many Koreans smoke and they used to be allowed to smoke anywhere they wanted. This has all changed recently, but the smoking rules (like the driving rules) are not always enforced. In theory smoking is banned in schools and hospitals and on public transport, and restricted to designated smoking areas in other public places. The nonsmokers are winning the war but hard-core smokers still light up in restaurants, cafés, bars and PC *bang*. It's not too common and so isn't usually a problem. However the nonsmoking icon has not been used in this guide book because many places that claim to be nonsmoking don't strictly enforce nonsmoking rules.

DISCOUNT CARDS

Bring your student or pensioner card to Korea if you have one, although benefits are fairly limited. A youth-hostel membership card provides a few discounts. Trains and subways are discounted for seniors, and other transport operators and government-run tourist attractions often offer discounts or free entry to anyone aged over 65 years old. Other organisations may restrict discounts to local residents, but it is always worth a try so just ask.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

South Korean Embassies & Consulates

- Australia** (☎ 06-270 4100; 113 Empire Circuit, Yarralumla, ACT 2600)
Canada (☎ 613-244 5010; www.emb-korea.ottawa.on.ca; 150 Boteler St, Ottawa, ONT K1N 5A6)
China (☎ 1-532 6775; www.koreaemb.org.cn; 4th Ave East, Sanlitun, Chaoyang District, Beijing 100600)
France (☎ 01 4753 0101; 125 rue de Grenelle, Paris 75007)
Germany (☎ 30-260 65432; www.koreaemb.de; Kurfürststrasse 72-74, Berlin 10787)
Hong Kong (☎ 2529 4141; 5th fl, Far East Finance Centre, 16 Harcourt Rd, Central)
Ireland (☎ 01-660 8800; 15 Clyde Rd, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4)
Japan (☎ 03-3452 7611; 1-2-5 Minami-Azabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo)
Netherlands (☎ 070-358 6076; Verlengde Tolweg 8, the Hague 2517 JV)
New Zealand (☎ 04-473 9073; 11th fl, ASB Bank Tower Bldg, 2 Hunter St, Wellington)
Philippines (☎ 02-811 6139; 10th fl, Pacific Star Bldg, Makati Ave, Makati, Metro Manila)
Russia (☎ 095-956 1474; 14 Spiridonovka St, Moscow)
Singapore (☎ 65-6258 0789; www.koreaembassy.org.sg; 47 Scotts Rd, 05-01 Goldbell Towers, Singapore 228233)
Taiwan (visa office ☎ 02-2758 8320; Room 1506, 333 Keelung Rd, Section 1, Taipei)
Thailand (☎ 02-247 7537; 23 Thiramarummit Rd, Ratchadapisek, Huay Kwang, Bangkok 10320)
UK (☎ 020-7227 5500; 60 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6AJ)
USA (☎ 202-939 5600; www.koreaembassyusa.org; 2450 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington DC 20008)
- Embassies & Consulates in South Korea**
 Go to www.embassyworld.com or www.embassiesabroad.com for contact details on embassies. Embassies in Seoul include:
Australia (Map pp88-9; ☎ 2003 0100; www.australia.or.kr; 11th fl, Kyobo Bldg, Jongno 1-ga, Jongno-gu)

YOUR OWN EMBASSY

It's important to realise what the embassy of the country of which you are a citizen can and can't do to help you if you strike trouble. Generally speaking, it won't be much help in emergencies if the trouble is remotely your own fault. Remember that you are bound by the laws of the country you are in. Your embassy will not be sympathetic if you end up in jail after committing a crime locally, even if such actions are legal in your own country.

In genuine emergencies you might get some assistance, but only if other channels have been exhausted. If you need to get home urgently, a free ticket home is very unlikely – the embassy would expect you to have insurance. If you have all your money and documents stolen, it might assist with getting a new passport, but a loan for onward travel is out of the question.

Some embassies used to keep letters for travellers or have a small reading room with home newspapers, but these days a mail-holding service is rare and newspapers generally tend to be out of date.

Canada (Map pp92-3; ☎ 3455 6000; www.korea.gc.ca; 9th fl, Kolon Bldg, 45 Mugyo-dong, Jung-gu)

China (Map pp88-9; ☎ 738-1038; www.chinaemb.or.kr; 54 Hyoja-dong, Jongno-gu)

France (Map pp86-7; ☎ 3149 4300; 30 Hap-dong, Seodaemun-gu)

Germany (Map pp88-9; ☎ 748 4114; www.gembassy.or.kr; 308-5 Dongbinggo-dong, Yongsan-gu)

Ireland (Map pp92-3; ☎ 774 6455; www.irelandhouse-korea.com; 15th fl, Daehan Fire & Marine Insurance Bldg, 51-1 Namchang-dong, Jung-gu)

Japan (Map pp88-9; ☎ 2170 5200; www.kr.emb-japan.go.jp; 18-11 Jungnahk-dong, Jongno-gu)

New Zealand (Map pp88-9; ☎ 730 7794; www.nzembassy.com/korea; 18th fl, Kyobo Bldg, Jongno 1-ga, Jongno-gu)

Russia (Map pp98-9; ☎ 752 0630; http://seoul.rus.embassy.org; 34-16 Jeong-dong, Jung-gu)

Singapore (Map p000; ☎ 779 2464; www.mfa.gov.sg/seoul; 28th fl, Seoul Finance Centre, 84 Taepyeongno 1-ga, Jung-gu)

Taiwan (Map pp88-9; ☎ 399 2767; 6th fl, Gwanghwamun Bldg, 211 Sejongno, Jongno-gu)

UK (Map pp92-3; ☎ 3210 5500; www.britisheembassy.or.kr; 4 Jeong-dong, Jung-gu)

USA (Map pp88-9; ☎ 397 4114; http://seoul.usembassy.state.gov; 32 Sejongno, Jongno-gu)

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Festival dates alter, so check before you go.

Snow Festivals (January) Held in Taebaeksan and other mountain areas. Expect giant ice sculptures, sledding fun and igloo restaurants.

Cherry Blossoms (April) Every region has streets and parks where people go to enjoy the blossoms.

World Ceramics Biennale (April to June) Korea's top bash for people potty about pottery is held in odd-numbered years in Icheon (p148), just south of Seoul.

Buddha's Birthday Parade (May) Held in Seoul starting at 7pm on the Sunday evening before Buddha's

birthday. It's the country's biggest and most joyful street parade.

Modern Dance Festival (May) International dance groups strut their stuff in Daehangno, Seoul.

International Mime Festival (May) The lakeside city of Chuncheon hosts street performers, magicians, acrobats and quirky shows such as a soap-bubble opera.

Dano Festival (May or June) Held according to the lunar calendar, this traditional festival (p176) features shamanist rituals, mask dances and market stalls.

Mud Festival (July) Held on Daecheon Beach with stacks of muddy fun and games (p320).

Gwangju Biennale (September to November) Korea's leading international art show (p254) is a two-month carnival of the avant garde. It is held in even-numbered years.

Pusan Film Festival (September/October) Korea's top international film festival (www.piff.org) is held in Busan (p234). Don't let Pusan/Busan fool you – the film festival has retained the old spelling.

Mask Dance Festival (late September/early October) A well-established 10-day festival that brings together more than 20 traditional dance troupes in Andong (p219).

World Martial Arts Festival (October) See all sorts of unusual martial arts in Chungju (p337).

Baekje Festival (October) This major festival (p315), packed with events, is held in Buyeo in even-numbered years and in Gongju in odd-numbered years.

FOOD

Exploring Korea's unique and diverse cuisine is one of the pleasures of any visit — see p62. Western, Japanese, Chinese and fast food is also widely available. Price categories for the eating listings in this book are:

Budget Most meals under W7000.

Midrange Most meals in the W7000 to W18,000 range.

Top end Most meals cost more than W18,000.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Korea has never passed any laws that overtly discriminate against homosexuals, but this should not be taken as a sign of tolerance or acceptance. Korean law does not mention homosexuality because it is considered so bizarre and unnatural as to be unmentionable in public. Many older Koreans share the outlook of conservative American Christian fundamentalists. Younger people are less prejudiced than their parents, so some progress is being made, although only one celebrity so far has outed himself.

Virtually all Korean gays and lesbians keep their sexual orientation a secret from their extended family, work colleagues and friends, although the closet door is inching open. Major cities have a handful of gay clubs, bars and saunas, although they maintain a low profile. Despite increasing discussion of the issue in the media, it is generally a taboo topic, especially for the older generation. Gay and lesbian travellers who publicise their preferences can expect some shocked and hostile reactions. But if you don't raise the issue it's unlikely that anyone else will.

Male to male (and female to female) touching is more common in Korea than in the more uptight Western nations, but is simply a sign of friendship, nothing more.

View www.chingusai.net for news of a gay men's activist group, www.seoul sisters to link up with mainly expat lesbians, and www.utopia-asia.com for the latest news on gay

and lesbian issues plus listings of bars and events in Korea's bigger cities. See p131 for information on the gay scene in Itaewon, Seoul, where Koreans and foreigners mix and mingle.

HOLIDAYS

Public Holidays

Eight Korean public holidays are set according to the solar calendar and three according to the lunar calendar, meaning that they fall on different days each year. Restaurants, shops and tourist sights stay open during most holidays, but may close over the three-day Lunar New Year and Chuseok (Thanksgiving) holidays. School holidays don't cause any particular problems for tourists, although beaches can be busy in August, but school trips in May can overcrowd museums and tourist sights.

New Year's Day (1 January) Bells ring out at midnight.

Lunar New Year (7 February 2008, 26 January 2009, 14 January 2010, 3 February 2111, 23 January 2012)

Korea grinds to a halt during this three-day holiday when everybody returns to their hometown, visits relatives, bows to their elders and eats rice cakes. Trains and planes are booked up months ahead and expressways are one long traffic jam.

Independence Movement Day (1 March) The anniversary of the day in 1919 when nationwide protests against Japanese colonial rule began.

Children's Day (5 May) Take the darlings out for the day and load them up with gifts.

Buddha's Birthday (24 May 2007, 12 May 2008, 2 May 2009, 21 May 2010, 10 May 2111, 28 May 2112) Baby Buddha is ceremoniously washed, and colourful lanterns decorate all the Buddhist temples and overflow into the streets.

Memorial Day (6 June) Honours those who died fighting for their country.

Constitution Day (17 July) Commemorates the founding of the Republic of South Korea in 1948.

Liberation Day (15 August) Celebrates the day the Japanese surrendered to Allied forces in 1945, marking the end of their 35-year rule of Korea.

Chuseok (Thanksgiving; 25 September 2007, 14 September 2008, 30 October 2009, 22 September 2010, 12 September 2111, 30 September 2012) The Harvest Moon Festival is a three-day holiday when families get together, eat crescent-shaped rice cakes and visit their ancestors' graves. Avoid travelling at this time.

National Foundation Day (3 October) Dan-gun, the legendary founder of the Korean nation, was supposedly born on this day in 2333 BC.

Christmas Day (25 December) Grandfather Santa hands out presents.

UNUSUAL FESTIVALS

Korea's many oddball festivals include:

- Gangneung's **Cuttlefish Festival** – has a tricky catch-a-cuttlefish-by-hand competition
- Chodang's **Uncurdled Tofu Festival** – only exciting for vegetarians
- Jeong-eup's **Bullfighting Festival** – more pushing and shoving than actual fighting
- Muju's **Firefly Festival** – the tiniest festival theme
- Gimje's **Horizon Festival** – because all the other festival topics have been taken.

Visit www.tour2korea.com for more festival information.

INSURANCE

A policy covering theft, loss, medical expenses and compensation for cancellation or delays in your travel arrangements is highly recommended. If items are lost or stolen, make sure you obtain a police report straightaway – otherwise your insurer might not pay up. There is a wide variety of policies available, but always check the small print. See p404 for health insurance and p402 for car insurance.

Worldwide coverage to travellers from over 44 countries is available online at www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services.

INTERNET ACCESS

Internet rooms (all with high-speed access) are on almost every street in the country, mainly serving youthful computer game addicts playing Starcraft or Lineage. They charge W1000 to W2000 per hour – look out for the 'PC 방' signs. Many post offices and some tourist information centres, cafés and other establishments provide free internet access, as do guesthouses in Seoul. Some motels and nearly all hotels provide computers with broadband access. Internet Service Providers (ISPs) can offer you an English-language home page and continuous broadband access for around W25,000 a month. See p393 for useful regional tourism websites.

LEGAL MATTERS

Most tourists' legal problems involve visa violations or illegal drugs. In the case of visa transgressions, the penalty is normally a fine and possible expulsion from the country. As for using or selling narcotics, think twice: you could spend a few years researching the living conditions in a South Korean prison.

MAPS

The Korean Tourism Organisation (KTO) and tourist information centres in every prov-

ince and city hand out free tourist maps in English, which are good enough for most purposes. Ask at the ticket booths at national and provincial parks for good-quality hiking maps which usually contain some English.

MONEY

The South Korean unit of currency is the won (W), which comes in W10, W50, W100 and W500 coins. Notes come in denominations of W1000, W5000 and W10,000. The highest-value note was worth about US\$10 at the time of research, so be prepared to carry around a thick wad of notes. See p15 for the cost of everyday items, and the inside front cover for exchange rates at the time of printing. Go to www.keb.co.kr for current exchange rates.

Banks in most high streets offer foreign exchange services (look for a 'Foreign Exchange' or currency sign), although changing money can take some time. Tourist shops and hotels exchange money, but compare their rates and commissions with the banks before using their services. US dollars are the easiest to exchange but any major currency is accepted. Travellers cheques have a slightly better exchange rate than cash.

Don't forget to reconvert any surplus won into another currency before you leave the country, as exchanging won outside Korea can be difficult or impossible. If you reconvert more than US\$2000 worth of won at Incheon airport, you will have to show bank receipts to prove that you exchanged the money legally.

ATMS

Korean ATMs are a little strange. If you have a foreign credit card, you need to find an ATM with a 'Global' sign or the logo of your credit card company. NICE ATMs often accept foreign cards. Most Global ATMs have basic instructions in English and operate in units of W10,000. ATMs can be found outside banks and post offices and inside deluxe hotels, subway stations and department stores. Restrictions on the amount of money you can withdraw vary from machine to machine; it can be below W300,000 per day, but many ATMs have a W700,000 limit. Another problem is that ATMs have time restrictions and most only operate between 9am and 10pm. If you can't find one, Itaewon subway station (Line 6) has a Global ATM that has instructions in English, is open 24 hours and has a withdrawal limit of W300,000.

LEGAL AGES

Women can get married at 16 but men have to wait until they are 18, while the age of consent for sex (outside marriage) is 18. To drive a car you must be 20 years old, but you can now vote at 19. Anyone under 20 is not allowed to buy or drink alcohol nor to buy or smoke cigarettes.

Credit Cards

More and more motels, hotels, shops and restaurants in cities and tourist areas accept foreign credit cards, but there are still plenty of *yeogwan*, restaurants and small businesses that don't. Be prepared to carry around plenty of cash, especially if you are touring around outside the main cities.

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO

Korea is more than up to date with all the latest digital equipment and services. Due to the arrival of the Digital Age, photographic shops are not as numerous as they once were, but they can burn your memory-stick photos onto a CD (W3000). All the major camera and video brands are available including the local ones, such as Samsung, which are challenging the Japanese manufacturers. Yongsan Electronics Market and Techno Mart in Seoul (p135) are the best places to buy the latest camera and video equipment.

Most people do not mind being photographed, but monks, market traders, riot police and *haenyeo* (female divers) in Jeju do are among those who may not want to be photographed, so always ask first. Never take photographs inside Buddhist shrines or of shamanist ceremonies without asking permission first. In the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) you can take photos, but always follow the advice of your tour guide or you might spark off a second Korean War. For professional hints on how to improve your pictures, purchase Lonely Planet's *Travel Photography*.

POST

Korean postal services (www.koreapost.go.kr) are reliable and reasonably cheap, and post offices often have free internet access. Domestic postal rates are W190 for a postcard, W220 for a letter and W2700 for a package weighing 2kg. Local mail is usually delivered in two days or so, but letters with the address in English can take a day or two longer.

Postcards are W350 and aerograms W400 to any country, but international letter and parcel rates vary according to the destination. Airmail letters (20g) cost W650 (for zone three: North America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand). For zone three, airmail rates are W18,000 for a 2kg packet, W86,200 for a 10kg parcel and W133,000 for 20kg. Surface rates are W12,000 (2kg), W28,000 (10kg) and W48,000 (20kg).

Don't seal your package if you want to take advantage of the lower rate that applies to sending printed papers only. Larger post offices have a packing service that costs from W2000 to W5500.

SHOPPING

Bustling traditional markets that sell everything under the sun can still be found in most cities and towns, while modern high-rise fashion malls, ritzy department stores packed with brand-name shops, and chain stores cling together in semi-pedestrianised streets that fill up with people in the evenings. Korean craft shops abound and souvenir shops are mixed in with restaurants in the tourist villages that have grown up at the entrances to national and provincial parks. In Seoul, specialist markets (p135) cover everything from fashion, fish and flowers to electronics, embroidery and eel-skin bags.

Global Refund (% 02-776 2170; www.globalrefund.com) and **Korea Refund** (% 02-537 1755) offer a partial refund of the 10% VAT (between 5% and 7%). Spend more than W30,000 or W50,000 in any participating shop and the retailer gives you a special receipt, which you must show to a customs officer at Incheon International Airport. Go to a Customs Declaration Desk (near check-in counters D and J) before checking in your luggage, as the customs officer will want to see the items before stamping your receipt. After you go through immigration, show your stamped receipt at the refund desk to receive your won refund in cash or by cheque.

SOLO TRAVELLERS

Solo travellers are at a disadvantage in Korea because few motels and hotels have single rooms, and singles pay the same or almost the same as a couple. When touring solo around the country, budget travellers could consider staying in youth-hostel dormitories, although motels are a better option if you don't mind paying W30,000 a night.

Some traditional Korean meals are for sharing and are not available in single portions, so find a companion if you want to enjoy *hanjeongsik* (Korean-style banquet), *jjimdak* (steamed chicken in a hot sauce) or a barbecue meal.

On the plus side, lone travellers in particular can expect locals to go out of their way to help or act as a tourist guide.

TELEPHONE & FAX

Fax

If you want to send a fax, first ask at your guesthouse, motel or hotel, but if they can't help you, try the nearest stationery store or photocopy shop. Deluxe hotels have business centres which are usually helpful.

Mobile Phones

Korean mobile phones operate on the CDMA system, which few countries other than Japan and Korea use, but you can rent mobile phones at Incheon International Airport from one of the three main providers, SK, KTF or LG. They offer similar but not identical schemes. Charges at present are W3000 a day. Incoming calls are free while outgoing domestic calls cost W660 a minute, or W750 to W1000 a minute to the US for example, depending on the international access code used. Other countries cost more – up to W1700 a minute. Local text messages are usually free. A SIM card can be rented for W1300 a day. Check that prices quoted include the 10% VAT, and since the industry is in constant flux, don't be surprised if things have changed. A couple of deluxe hotels in Seoul offer rent-free mobile phones to their guests.

Phone Codes

Korea's nine provinces and seven largest cities have their own area codes. It's easy to forget that the major cities have their own codes – thus Gwangju City's code (% 062) is one digit different to the surrounding province of Jeollanam-do (% 061). South Korea's country code is % 82. Do not dial the first zero of the area codes if you are calling from outside Korea. Phone numbers that begin with a four-figure number starting with 15 do not have an area code.

Province/City	Code
Busan	% 051
Chungcheongbuk-do	% 043
Chungcheongnam-do	% 041
Daegu	% 053
Daejeon	% 042
Gang-won-do	% 033
Gwangju	% 062
Gyeonggi-do	% 031
Gyeongsangbuk-do	% 054
Gyeongsangnam-do	% 055
Incheon	% 032

Jeju-do	% 064
Jeollabuk-do	% 063
Jeollanam-do	% 061
Seoul	% 02
Ulsan	% 052

Phonecards

Telephone cards usually give you a 10% bonus and can be bought at convenience stores and many small shops. There are two types of cards so if your card does not fit in one type of phone, try a different-looking phone. The more squat phone accepts the thin cards. A few phones accept credit cards. Local calls cost W140 for three minutes.

Dial KT (% 001), Dacom (% 002) or Onse (% 008) to call abroad, and you can make international calls from many phone booths. Much cheaper international rates (up to 380 minutes to the US for W15,000) are offered by other providers whose call-back telephone cards are on sale in Itaewon and Dongdaemun in Seoul. Some cards are discounted on their face value. Internet phones are even cheaper.

TIME

South Korea has one time zone, Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) plus nine hours. When it is noon in Seoul it is 1pm in Sydney, 3am in London, 10pm the previous day in New York and 7pm the previous day in San Francisco. See the time-zone world map at the back of this book. Korea does not have a daylight-saving period.

TOILETS

Korea's *hwajangsil* (public toilets) have greatly improved and there are more and more clean, modern and well-signposted ones. Virtually all toilets are free of charge, some are decorated with flowers and pictures and cleaning staff generally do an excellent job. But always carry paper tissue around with you as few restrooms supply toilet paper. If there is toilet paper it's usually somewhere outside the cubicles.

All tourist attractions, parks, subway stations, train stations and bus terminals have public toilets. It's quite okay to use toilets in office blocks or anywhere else if the need arises. Even when you go hiking in the mountains there are lots of toilets although some are very basic. Asian-style squat toilets are losing their battle with European-style ones with seats, but there are still a few around. Face the hooded end when you squat.

TOURIST INFORMATION

In Seoul the excellent KTO tourist information centre (KTO; Map pp88-9; % 729 9496; www.tour2korea.com; 11 9am-6pm) has stacks of brochures on every region as well as helpful and well-informed staff. They can book hotels for you and advise you about almost anything.

A very useful tourist phone number (% 1330; 11 24hr) connects you with English-speaking tourist information staff. They can also act as interpreters if someone can't understand you and you have a mobile phone. Dial % 02-1330 if you're on a mobile phone. If you want to contact a tourist information centre outside Seoul, dial the provincial or metropolitan code first – so for information on Gang-won-do, dial 033-1330.

Many tourist areas throughout the country have their own tourist information centres, so it's not a problem to find one.

For tourist information on the provinces and metropolitan areas check the following websites:

Busan www.pusanweb.com
 Chungcheongbuk-do <http://foreign.cb21.net/english>
 Chungcheongnam-do www.chungnam.net
 Daegu www.thedaeguguide.com
 Daejeon www.daejeon.go.kr
 Gang-won-do <http://eng/gwd.go.kr>
 Gwangju www.gwangju.go.kr
 Gyeonggi-do www.gg.go.kr
 Gyeongsangbuk-do www.gyeongbuk.go.kr
 Gyeongsangnam-do <http://english.gsnd.net>
 Incheon <http://english.incheon.go.kr>
 Jeju-do <http://tour2jeju.net>
 Jeollabuk-do www.provin.jeonbuk.kr
 Jeollanam-do www.jeonnam.go.kr
 Seoul www.seoul.go.kr
 Ulsan www.ulsan.go.kr and www.theulsanweb.com

TOURS

Hyundai Asan (% 02 3669 3000, 02 773 2122) operates tours to Geumgangsán in North Korea that run by bus across the DMZ, using the east coast road north of Sokcho in Gang-won-do. Geumgangsán (spelled 'Kumgangsán' in North Korea) is a famous scenic area of towering mountain peaks, granite pinnacles and waterfalls (p371). No visas are required. If you share a dormitory (six people) a three-day/two-night tour costs W230,000, while the same tour costs W350,000 per person if you share a double room at Haegeumgang Hotel. Hiking, a hot spa bath, a circus and shopping are available on the tour. The North Korean government

sometimes cancels tours for political or other reasons. Other tours of the North may become available (to Kaesong for example).

See p119 for tours around South Korea.

TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

In the past, Korea did not cater for disabled travellers as Koreans with disabilities tended to stay at home and there were very few disabled foreign tourists. But in Seoul and some other cities this is changing, although promised improvements have been slow to arrive. Most subway stations in Seoul now have stair lifts, elevators and toilets with wheelchair access and handrails. Tourist attractions, especially government-run ones, offer generous discounts or even free entry for disabled people and a helper. More information is available on www.easyaccess.or.kr.

VISAS

With a confirmed onward ticket, visitors from nearly all West European countries, New Zealand, Australia and around 30 other countries receive 90-day permits on arrival. Visitors from the USA and a handful of countries receive 30-day permits, citizens of Italy and Portugal receive 60-day permits, and Canadians receive a six-month permit.

Around 20 countries, including the Russian Federation, China, India, the Philippines and Nigeria, do not qualify for visa exemptions. Citizens from these countries must apply for a tourist visa, which allows a stay of 90 days. You cannot extend your stay beyond 90 days except in rare cases such as a medical emergency; if you overstay the fine starts at W100,000. Log on to www.moj.go.kr or www.mofat.go.kr to find out more.

Applications for a work visa can be made inside Korea, but you must leave the country to pick up the visa. Most applicants fly (or take the Busan ferry) to Fukuoka in Japan, where it usually takes two days to process the visa. You can also apply for a one-year work visa before entering Korea but it can take a few weeks to process. Note that the visa authorities will want to see originals (not photocopies) of your educational qualifications. This is a safeguard against fake degree certificates.

You don't need to leave Korea to renew a work visa as long as you carry on working for the same employer. But if you change employers you must normally apply for a new visa and pick it up outside Korea.

If you don't want to forfeit your work or study visa, you must apply at your local immigration office for a re-entry permit before making any trips outside South Korea. The fee is ₩30,000 for a single re-entry or ₩50,000 for multiple re-entry, but permits are free for some nationalities.

If you are working or studying in Korea on a long-term visa, it is necessary to apply for an alien registration card within 90 days of arrival, which costs ₩10,000. This is done at your local immigration office.

VOLUNTEERING

Volunteers are always needed to teach English and entertain children who live in orphanages. Around 26,000 children are stuck in the orphanage system with little chance of escape as Koreans are very reluctant to adopt children, partly because of the huge educational costs and partly because of the traditional emphasis on blood lines. Contact the Y-Heesun Volunteer Support Group (www.yheesun.com) for more information.

Willing Workers on Organic Farms (WWOOF; % 02 723 4458; www.wwoofkorea.com) has 50 farms that welcome volunteer workers who work a few hours a day in return for free board and lodging. For a ₩50,000 joining fee you'll receive a booklet with contact details.

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Korea is a relatively crime-free country for all tourists including women, but the usual precautions should be taken. Korea is a very male-dominated society, although it is becoming less so.

WORK

South Korea is a deservedly popular place for English-language teachers to find work. Recently salaries have been rising and native English teachers on a one-year contract can expect to earn ₩2 million or more a month, with a furnished apartment, return flights, 50% of medical insurance, 10-days paid holiday and a one-month completion bonus all included in the package. Income tax is very low (around 4%), although a 4.5% pension contribution (reclaimable by some nationalities) is compulsory. Careful spenders can save heaps. Koreans have an insatiable appetite

for studying English so finding an English-teaching job should not be too difficult. New teachers in Seoul should check out p131.

Most English teachers work in a *hagwon* (private language school) but some are employed by universities or government schools. Private tutoring, company classes, English camps and even teaching via the telephone are also possible. Teaching hours in a *hagwon* are usually around 30 hours a week and are likely to involve split shifts, and evening and Saturday classes. Overtime (around ₩20,000 an hour) is often possible if you want it.

A degree in any subject is sufficient as long as English is your native language. However it's a good idea to obtain some kind of English-teaching certificate before you arrive, as this increases your options and you should be able to find (and do) a better job. Conversation classes are easy enough, but you never know when a student might fire a tricky grammar question at you. Just what is the difference between 'I have eaten *kimchi*' and 'I ate *kimchi*'?

Some *hagwon* owners are less than ideal employers and don't pay all that they promise, so check out the warnings on the websites below before committing yourself. Ask any prospective employer for the email addresses of foreign English teachers working at the *hagwon*, and contact them for their opinion and advice. One important point to keep in mind is that if you change employers, you will usually need to obtain a new work visa, which requires you to leave the country and fly or take a ferry to Fukuoka in Japan to pick up your new visa. That is likely to cost over ₩300,000, although your new employer may pick up all or at least part of the tab.

The English-language newspapers have very few job advertisements, but hundreds of English-teaching vacancies are advertised on the following websites:

www.englishspectrum.com Has stacks of job offers (job seekers can advertise too) and a bulletin board with accommodation options.

www.eslcafé.com A dozen new job postings daily and useful forums on working and living in Korea.

www.eslcity.com Offers lesson ideas as well as job vacancies.

www.eslhub.com Contains full- and part-time teaching jobs and other classifieds.

www.pusanweb.com Has jobs in Busan and elsewhere.

Transport

CONTENTS

Getting There & Away	395
Entering The Country	395
Air	395
Land	398
Sea	398
Getting Around	400
Air	400
Bicycle	400
Boat	400
Bus	400
Car & Motorcycle	401
Hitching	402
Local Transport	402
Train	403

GETTING THERE & AWAY

ENTERING THE COUNTRY

Disembarkation in Korea is a straightforward affair, but you have an extra form to fill in if you are carrying more than US\$10,000 in cash and traveller's cheques.

Passport

There are no restrictions when it comes to citizens of foreign countries entering Korea. Most visitors don't need a visa, but if your country is not on the visa-free list, you will need one (p393).

THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

AIR Airports & Airlines

Most international flights leave from Incheon International Airport, which is at least an hour from Seoul by bus, and there are six regional airports that provide international flights, mainly to China and Japan. The two major ones are Gimhae International Airport (which serves Busan, Korea's second-largest city) and Jeju International Airport on Korea's southern holiday island. View www.airport.co.kr for information on all the airports. Eight flights a day travel between the small international terminal at Seoul's Gimpo airport and Haneda airport in Tokyo (both airports are nearer their respective cities' downtown areas than Incheon and Narita).

Korea's own carriers are Korean Air and Asiana Airlines. Many airlines serve Korea including:

Aeroflot (airline code SU; ☎ 02-551 0321, airport 032-744 8672; www.aeroflot.com) Hub Moscow.

Air Canada (airline code AC; ☎ 02-3788 0100, airport 032-744 0898; www.aircanada.ca) Hub Pearson International Airport, Toronto.

Air China (airline code CA; ☎ 02-774 6886, airport 032-744 3256; www.air-china.com) Hub Beijing.

Air France (airline code AF; ☎ 02-3483 1033, airport 032-744 4900; www.airfrance.com) Hub Charles de Gaulle International Airport, Paris.

All Nippon Airways (airline code NH; ☎ 02-752 5500, airport 032-744 3200; www.fly-ana.com) Hub Narita Airport, Tokyo.

Asiana Airlines (airline code OZ; ☎ 1588 8000, airport 032-744 2134; www.flyasiana.com) Hub Incheon International Airport, Seoul.

Cathay Pacific Airways (airline code CX; ☎ 02-311 2800, airport 032-744 6777; www.cathaypacific.com) Hub Hong Kong International Airport.

China Eastern Airlines (airline code MU; ☎ 02-518 0330, airport 032-744 3780; www.ce-air.com) Hub Shanghai.

China Southern Airlines (airline code CZ; ☎ 02-3455 1600, airport 032-744 3270; www.cs-air.com) Hub Guangzhou.

Garuda Indonesia Airways (airline code GA; ☎ 02-773 2092, airport 032-744 1990; www.garuda-indonesia.com) Hub Soekarno-Hatta International Airport, Jakarta.

Japan Airlines (airline code JL; ☎ 02-757 1711, airport 032-744 3601; www.japanair.com) Hub Narita Airport, Tokyo.

CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motor transport generates CO₂ (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the greenhouse gases they are responsible for with contributions to energy-saving projects and other climate-friendly initiatives in the developing world including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, supports the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: www.lonelyplanet.com.

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines (airline code KL: % 02-2011 5500, airport 032-744 6700; www.klm.nl) Hub Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam.

Korean Air (airline code KE: % 1588 2001, airport 032-744 5132; www.koreanair.com) Hub Incheon International Airport, Seoul.

Lufthansa Airlines (airline code LH: % 02-3420 0400, airport 032-744 3400; www.lufthansa.com) Hub Frankfurt Airport.

Malaysia Airlines (airline code MH: % 02-777 7761, airport 032-744 3501; www.malaysiaairlines.com) Hub Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

Northwest Airlines (airline code NW: % 02-732 1700, airport 032-744 6300; www.nwa.com) Hub Detroit Metro Airport.

Philippine Airlines (airline code PR: % 02-744 3581, airport 032-744 3720; www.philippineair.com) Hub Manila Airport.

Qantas Airways (airline code QF: % 02-777 6871, airport 032-744 3283; www.qantas.com.au) Hub Kingsford-Smith Airport, Sydney.

Singapore Airlines (airline code SQ: % 02-755 1226, airport 032-744 6500; www.singaporeairlines.com) Hub Changi International Airport.

Thai Airways International (airline code TG: % 02-3707 0011, airport 032-744 3571; www.thaiair.com) Hub Bangkok International Airport.

United Airlines (airline code UA: % 02-757 1691, airport 032-744 6666; www.ual.com) Hub Los Angeles International Airport.

Tickets

Be sure you research all the options carefully to make sure you get the deal that best suits your circumstances and requirements. The internet is a useful resource for researching airline prices.

Automated online ticket sales work well if you're doing a simple one-way or return trip on specified dates, but are no substitute for a travel agent with the low-down on special deals, strategies for avoiding layovers and other useful advice.

Paying by credit card offers some protection if you unwittingly end up dealing with a rogue fly-by-night travel agency, as most card issuers provide refunds if you can prove you didn't receive what you paid for. Alternatively, buy a ticket from a bonded agent, such as one covered by the **Air Travel Organisers' Licensing** (ATOL; www.atol.org.uk) scheme in the UK. If you have doubts about the service provider, at the very least call the airline and confirm that your booking has been made.

The following websites can search for air fares to Korea when booking online or researching prices prior to visiting your travel agent: **www.airbrokers.com** American round-the-world ticket specialists who can include Korea. **www.cheapestflights.co.uk** Cheap worldwide flights from the UK.

www.cheapflight.com Excellent American site with fast access to fares to Korea.

www.expedia.com Microsoft's travel site with access to worldwide fares.

www.travelocity.com Search fares quickly and easily from virtually anywhere to anywhere.

Korean airport departure taxes are included in the ticket price.

Ticket prices have not been listed as they vary so much and change so quickly, depending on the airline, the season, the amount of competition, the level of demand and so on. Ever-increasing security, fuel and other surcharges add another element of uncertainty. Prices of flights from Korea can increase 50% in July and August, and special offers are less common during holiday periods. The peak of the peak for outbound flights is August, when it can be difficult or even impossible to find a seat.

INTERCONTINENTAL TICKETS & AIR PASSES

These round-the-world tickets can provide a good deal if you want to visit other countries besides Korea. A typical ticket could include India, Southeast Asia, Europe and America as well as Korea.

From America or Canada, the **Cathay Pacific All Asia Pass** (www.cathaypacific.com) is worth considering if your time is limited. The basic deal is up to 18 cities in Asia including Seoul, in three weeks (extendable to 30 or 90 days if you pay extra).

From Australia

For flights from Sydney, Melbourne or Brisbane to Incheon airport, try Cathay Pacific or Malaysian Airlines, which may have special deals.

Two of the best-known travel agents in Australia are **Flight Centre** (% 133 133; www.flightcentre.com.au) and **STA Travel** (% 1300 733 035; www.statravel.com.au), which have offices all round the country.

Off-season special offers can reduce the price of return flights from Incheon airport to Australia.

From Canada

Look out for special offers on return flights from Toronto or Vancouver to Incheon airport – try United Airlines or Air Canada for a start.

TravelCuts (% 1-866-2469762; www.travelcuts.com) is one of the largest student and discount travel

agents in Canada, with offices in cities right across the country.

Return flights from Incheon airport to Toronto and Vancouver can double in price in July and especially August. Prices to destinations like Winnipeg are expensive even in the low season.

From China

Keep an eye out for Air China specials (try www.easetravels.com) between Beijing and Incheon airport. These days Incheon airport is linked to more than 20 Chinese cities as tourism and trade between the two countries is booming. Some regional Korean airports, such as Busan, Daegu, Gwangju and Jeju, also have flights to Chinese cities.

Return flights from Incheon airport to China used to be very rarely discounted, but this began to change in 2006 with some price-war skirmishing among the airlines. Ferries from Incheon port provide an alternative to flying.

From Continental Europe

The cheapest return flights from different cities in Continental Europe to Incheon airport are usually similar, although ultra specials are sometimes available – for starters try Aeroflot, KLM or Lufthansa.

In Germany check out **STA Travel** (% 03-0311 0950; www.statravel.de) for up-to-date fare details.

In France contact **Usit Connect Voyages** (% 01-4329 6950; www.usitconnections.fr), **OTU Voyages** (% 08-9268 8363; www.vdm.com) and **Nouvelles Frontières** (% 08-2500 0825; www.nouvelles-frontieres.fr) for reliable travel agencies with branches nationwide.

In Holland call **NBBS Reizen** (% 020 620 5071; www.nbbs.nl) or **Holland International** (% 070 307 6307; www.hollandinternational.nl) for the latest flight information.

Special offers on return flights from Incheon airport to Continental Europe can save you up to W100,000. Book early (for instance on Thai Air or Singapore Airlines) for the best deals on summer trips to Europe. Taxes, surcharges and landing charges can be high, so check that quotes include them.

From Hong Kong

To book flights, contact **Phoenix Travel Services** (% 2722 7378; fax 2369 8884) in the Tsimshatsui district of Hong Kong, which receives good reviews from travellers. **Tiglion Travel** (www.tiglion.com) is another option, while **STA Travel** (% 852 2736 1618; www.hkstatravel.com) has six branches

in Hong Kong and Macau. Check the classifieds in the English-language newspapers for a guide to current prices and discount offers, although they may not tell the whole story.

Return flights from Incheon airport to Hong Kong are sometimes discounted.

From Japan

Japanese tourists make up the majority of foreign visitors to Korea, and increasing numbers of Koreans are flying to Japanese cities, sometimes just for the weekend. There are direct nonstop flights from 26 Japanese cities to Incheon, but flights from Tokyo are usually the cheapest – try United or Northwest Airlines. Fares go up and down with the seasons, and fares in Golden Week (April and May) and August cost up to twice the price of low-season fares. Flights are also available from Japan to airports in Busan, Daegu and Jeju. Fast ferry boats from Japan to Busan are another option.

Across Traveller's Bureau (☎ 03-5795 4727; www.across-travel.com) has three branches in Tokyo. **STA Travel** (☎ 03-5391 2922; www.statravel.co.jp) and **Just Travel** (☎ 03-3207 8311) have English-speaking staff who can help you find discounted fares. Also check classified advertisements in the *Japan Times* (www.japantimes.co.jp) or on its website, which operates an online travel service, as well as in the *Tokyo Journal* (www.tokyo.to), a monthly magazine for expats.

Special offers on return flights from Incheon airport to Tokyo and Osaka, usually on United Airlines, can save you some hard-earned money.

From New Zealand

Airlines seem to take it in turns to offer the lowest fare, but try Malaysian Airlines as a starting point. Korean Air may have a reasonable fare if you are continuing on to Europe.

Flight Centre (☎ 0800-243 544; www.flightcentre.co.nz) and **STA Travel** (☎ 0508-782 872; www.statravel.co.nz) are two of the largest travel agents with offices in the main cities.

Return flights from Incheon airport to New Zealand are rarely discounted (due to plenty of Koreans visiting, studying and even emigrating to NZ), but you can always ask.

From Singapore

Cut-price youth fares can slash the cost of return flights from Singapore to Incheon airport.

STA Travel (☎ 6737 7188; www.statravel.com.sg) and **Four Seas Travel** (☎ 2200 7848; www.fourseastravel.com) have offices in Singapore, and other travel agents advertise special offers in the classified columns of the *Straits Times*.

Return flights from Incheon airport to Singapore are rarely discounted.

From the UK

The UK has an endless number of worldwide discount flights, so it's always worthwhile to do a thorough check before buying a ticket. From Heathrow or Gatwick (both near London) try Emirates via Dubai or direct flights on Korean Air. Off-season specials are always likely.

London has hundreds of discount travel agents including **Traillfinders** (☎ 020-7938 3939; www.traillfinders.co.uk), which has offices in nine cities, and **STA Travel** (☎ 0870 160 0599; www.statravel.co.uk).

From Korea, buy tickets as early as you can or go via Southeast Asia to reduce the cost of flights. In July and August every flight can be booked out.

From the USA

From New York and Los Angeles, there are usually return-flight specials to Incheon airport – try United, NorthWest or Malaysian Airlines. Taxes, fuel, security surcharges and all the rest of it can add substantially to the fare.

Check out **STA Travel** (☎ 800-781 4040; www.statravel.com) for discounted fares. Prices of return flights from Incheon airport to New York and Los Angeles double in July and August, and you'll be lucky to find a ticket.

LAND

Having North Korea as a hostile neighbour for over 50 years has turned South Korea into a virtual island. However, if North Korea does ever relax its isolationist policies, the South could quickly be linked by road and rail through North Korea to China, Russia and beyond. It's an exciting prospect but unlikely to happen any time soon.

SEA

International ferries are worth considering if you're travelling around North Asia. You can catch a ferry to Incheon in South Korea from a number of Chinese ports, travel around South Korea, and then leave on a fast ferry from Busan to Japan. Another ferry option is travelling to or from Russia via Sokcho in Gang-won-do.

To/From China

Ferries link 10 Chinese ports with Incheon. Some are crowded with petty traders, but they provide a cheaper option than flying. The cheapest fares offer a thin mattress on a dormitory floor, while the more expensive fares give you a small cabin with a bunk bed and TV. Child fares are usually half the adult fare, and some ferry companies offer students a 20% discount. Prices listed are for one-way tickets and sailing times are subject to variation. Most ferries leave Incheon from Yeonan Pier, but the larger boats depart from International Terminal 2.

A ferry-and-train package is available from cities in Korea to Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou or Shenyang in China via the Incheon-Tianjin ferry – see www.korail.go.kr for details.

Ferries (☎ 063 2171 6411; W105,000-220,000) also leave Gusan in Jeollabuk-do for Qindao in China three times a week and take 18 hours. The international ferry terminal is a W7500 taxi ride from Gusan bus terminal.

Four Season Cruise (☎ 243 6633; W125,000) runs twice a week between Mokpo in Jeollanam-do and Shanghai in China.

To/From Japan

First-floor booths in the international ferry terminal near Jungang subway station in Busan sell tickets for overnight ferries to three Japanese cities: Fukuoka (round trip W152,000, departs 10.30pm, arrives 6am), Shimonoseki

(round trip W161,000 to W608,000, departs 8pm, arrives 8am) and Osaka (round trip W237,000, departs 4pm, arrives 10am).

For a quick trip to Fukuoka on the Kobe or Beetle hydrofoils, walk upstairs to the 2nd floor. There are five daily departures (round trip W171,000, three hours, departs 8.45am, 10am, 2pm, 3pm, 3.45pm) plus one additional departure on Friday morning (9.30am).

Other destinations are Hitakatsu (round trip W130,000, one hour 40 minutes) and Izuhara (round trip W130,000, two hours 40 minutes).

Add a W2600 departure tax for these international trips.

To/From Russia

Dongchun (☎ 033-639 2632) operates a ferry twice a week (Mondays and Thursdays) from Zarubino and Vladivostok in Russia to Sokcho in Gang-won-do. With the cheaper fares (Zarubino one way/return W144,000/244,800, Vladivostok one way/return W168,000/285,000), you sleep on the floor and share facilities. The more expensive fares entitle you to a cabin for two or four people with your own bed, TV and bathroom. You can connect to the Trans-Siberian railway, although most passengers are Korean and on a package tour to Paekdusan on the Chinese-North Korean border. These package tours cost from W549,000 for seven days (1 March to 31 May) or from W710,000 (1 June to 30 September).

KOREA-CHINA FERRIES FROM INCHEON

Ferries leaving from Incheon's **Yeonan Pier** (☎ 032 891 2030):

Destination	Phone	Price (W)	Departures	Duration
Dalian	032-891 7100	115,000-230,000	4.30pm Tue & Thu, 6pm Sat	17hr
Dandong	032-891 3322	115,000-210,000	6pm Mon, Wed & Fri	16hr
Qinhuangdao	032-891 9600	115,000-250,000	7pm Mon, noon Fri	23hr
Shidao	032-891 8877	105,000-200,000	6pm Mon, Wed & Fri	14hr
Yantai	032-891 8880	110,000-336,000	7pm Tue, Thu & Sat	14hr
Yingkou	032-891 5555	115,000-220,000	7pm Tue, noon Sat	24hr

Ferries leaving from Incheon's **International Terminal 2** (☎ 032 781 3068):

Destination	Phone	Price (W)	Departures	Duration
Lianyungang	032-770 3700	120,000-350,000	7pm Tue, 3pm Sat	24hr
Qingdao	032-777 0490	110,000-160,000	5pm Tue, Thu & Sat	15hr
Tianjin	032-777 8260	115,000-250,000	1pm Tue, 7pm Fri	24hr
Weihai	032-777 0490	110,000-200,000	7pm Mon, Wed & Sat	14hr

GETTING AROUND

South Korea is a public-transport dream come true with everything reasonably priced. Planes, trains and express buses link major cities, intercity buses link cities and towns large and small, while local buses provide a surprisingly good service to national and provincial parks and villages in outlying rural areas. Car ferries ply numerous routes to offshore islands. Local urban buses, subways and taxis make getting around cities and towns easy. All transport works on the Korean *ppallippalli* (hurry hurry) system, so buses and trains leave on time, and buses and taxis tend to be driven fast with little regard to road rules.

Comparing the three forms of transport, Seoul to Busan (444km) costs W19,300 by ordinary bus and W28,800 by deluxe bus, which take 5½ hours and run at least every 30 minutes. The train options are KTX (high-speed, W44,800, three hours, every 30 minutes), *Saemaul* (express W36,800, 4½ hours, every 45 minutes) and *Mugunghwa* (semi express, W24,800, 5½ hours, every 45 minutes), most of which are faster and more comfortable than the buses. Flying costs W58,000 and only takes an hour, but travelling to and from the airports takes another 1½ hours.

As in other countries, rising fuel prices are pushing up the price of transport, so in 2007 expect KTX train fares to rise 3%, *Saemaul* train prices to increase 12%, and bus fares to go up between 7% and 10%.

AIR

Airlines in Korea

South Korea has only two major domestic carriers – Korean Air (☎ 1588 2001; www.koreanair.com) and Asiana Airlines (☎ 1588 8000; www.flyasiana.com) – but a new low-cost operator, Jeju Air (www.jejuair.com), started up in June 2006. Initially flying between Jeju and Gimpo, Seoul (p274), and undercutting the prices of the other two airlines, the plan is to expand the number of routes.

Both the major domestic airlines provide flights to and from a dozen local airports, and charge virtually identical but very reasonable fares – less than US\$100 even for the longest domestic flights. Gimpo International Airport handles nearly all of Seoul's domestic flights, but Incheon International Airport handles a handful of domestic flights to Busan, Daegu

and Jeju. The longest flight time is just over an hour between Seoul Gimpo and Jeju. Fares are 15% cheaper from Monday to Thursday when seats are easier to obtain. Flights on public holidays have a surcharge and are often booked out. Students and children receive discounts, and foreigners should always carry their passports on domestic flights for ID purposes.

BICYCLE

Cycling around Korea is not recommended due to the local driving habits, but hiring a bike for short trips in areas with bike paths or little traffic is a good idea – see p73 and individual destination chapters for recommended cycling trips. Bicycle hire is usually W2000 an hour, but try for a discount for a day's hire. You'll have to leave your passport or negotiate some other ID or deposit. Helmets are not available and you may need your own padlock.

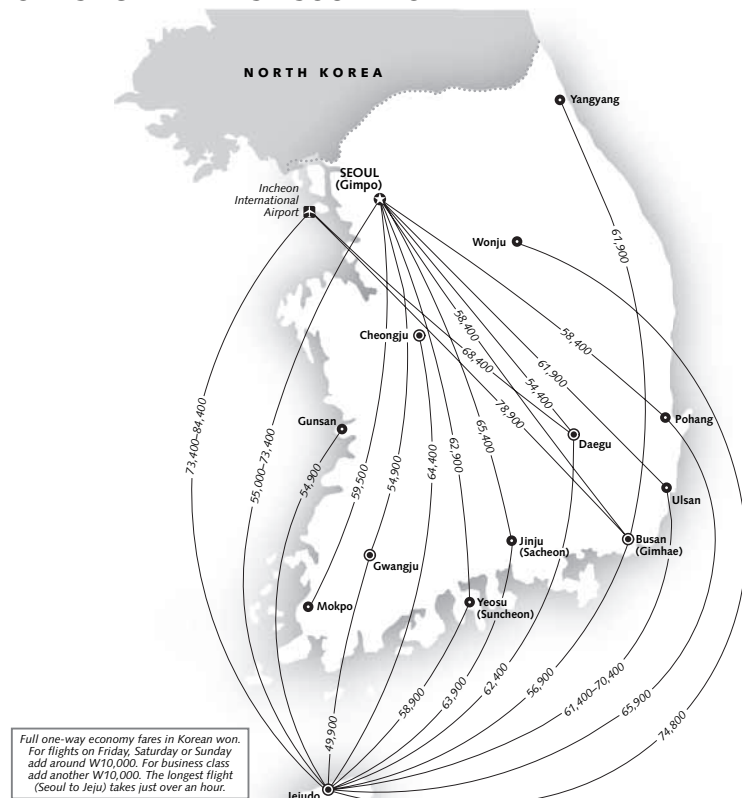
BOAT

Korea has a very extensive network of ferries that connects hundreds of offshore islands to each other and to the mainland. The large southern island of Jeju can be reached by ferry from Mokpo or Wando in Jeollanam-do or on longer boat trips from Busan and Incheon, although most people fly these days. On the west coast, ferries from Incheon's Yeonan Pier service a dozen nearby and more distant islands, while other west-coast islands further south can be reached from Daecheon harbour and Gunsan. Mokpo, Wando, Yeosu and Busan provide access to countless islands strung along the south coast. Remote Ulleungdo off the east coast can be reached by ferry from Pohang or Donghae. Inland ferries run along a couple of large scenic lakes – Soyang Lake in Gangwon-do and Chungju Lake in Chungcheongbuk-do. See the provincial chapters for details on all these floating excursions.

BUS

Thousands of long-distance buses whiz to every nook and cranny of the country, every 15 minutes between major cities and towns, and at least hourly to small towns, villages, temples and national and provincial parks. Only a selection of bus destinations are given in the transport sections of each city, town or tourist site covered. All the bus frequencies given are approximate, as buses don't usually run on a regular timetable and times vary

DOMESTIC AIR FARES – SOUTH KOREA



throughout the day. Bus terminals have staff on hand to ensure that everyone boards the right bus, so help is always available. Buses don't have toilets on board, but on long journeys drivers take a 10-minute rest at a refreshment stop every few hours.

Express buses link major cities, while intercity buses stop more often and serve smaller cities and towns. The buses are similar, but they use separate (often neighbouring) terminals. Expressways have a special bus lane that operates at weekends and reduces delays due to heavy traffic. Buses always leave on time (or even early!) and go to far more places than trains, but are not as comfortable or smooth, so for travelling long distances trains can be the better option.

Udeung (superior-class express buses) have three seats per row instead of four, but cost 50% more than *ilban* (standard buses). Buses that travel after 10pm have a 10% surcharge and are generally superior class.

Expect to pay around W4000 for an hour-long journey on a standard bus.

Buses are so frequent that it's not necessary to buy a ticket in advance except perhaps on holidays and weekends. Buy tickets at the bus terminals.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Bring Your Own Vehicle

Contact customs (www.customs.go.kr) for information on regulations concerning importing your own car. The vast majority of cars running in

the country are Korean-made, although a few luxury cars are imported. Repairs and spare parts are not generally available for most imported cars, but finding petrol is no problem.

Driving Licence

Drivers must have an international driving licence, which should be obtained before arrival as they are not available in Korea. After one year, a Korean driving licence must be obtained.

Hire

Driving in Korea is not recommended for first-time visitors, but travellers who wish to hire a car must be 21 years or over and must by law have an international driving licence (a driving licence from your own country is not acceptable). Official prices are usually discounted by 65% and start at around W46,000 for a small car. Insurance costs around W10,000 a day, but depends on the level of the excess you choose. A better option than driving yourself is to hire a car and a driver at W145,000 per day (10 hours).

There are a few car-hire desks at Incheon International Airport. View www.kumhorent.com to see what Kumho-Hertz has to offer.

Insurance

Insurance is compulsory for all drivers. Since the chance of having an accident is higher than in nearly all other developed countries obtain as much cover as you can, with a low excess.

Road Conditions

Korea has about the worst road-accident record among the 29 OECD countries, and foreign drivers in large cities are likely to spend most of their time lost, stuck in traffic jams, looking for a parking space or taking evasive action. Impatient and careless drivers are a major hazard and traffic rules are frequently ignored. Driving in rural areas or on Jeju is more feasible, but public transport is so good that few visitors feel the urge to sit down behind a steering wheel.

Speed cameras are ubiquitous, and your credit card may be debited for a speeding fine even after you've handed the car back.

Road Rules

Vehicles drive on the right side of the road. The driver and front-seat passengers must wear seatbelts, drunk drivers receive heavy fines and

victims of road accidents are often paid a big sum by drivers wanting to avoid a court case.

HITCHING

Hitching is not a local custom and there is no particular signal for it, but the country is relatively crime-free, so if you get stuck in a rural area, stick out your thumb and the chances are that some kind person will give you a lift. Drivers often go out of their way to help foreigners. Normally bus services are frequent and cheap enough, even in the countryside, to make hitching unnecessary. Accepting a lift anywhere always has an element of risk.

LOCAL TRANSPORT Bus

Local city buses provide a frequent and inexpensive service (around W850 a trip, irrespective of how far you travel), and although rural buses provide a less-frequent service, many run on an hourly or half-hourly basis, so you don't usually have to wait long. Put the fare in the glass box next to the driver – make sure you have plenty of W1000 notes because the machines only give coins in change.

The main problem with local buses is finding and getting on the right bus – bus timetables, bus-stop names and destination signs on buses are rarely in English, and bus drivers don't speak English. Writing your destination in big *Han-geul* (Korean phonetic alphabet) letters on a piece of card can be helpful. Local tourist information centres usually have English-speaking staff, and are the best places to find out which local bus number goes where, and where to pick it up.

Subway

Six cities now have a subway system: Seoul, Busan, Daejeon, Daegu, Gwangju and Incheon. The subway is a cheap and convenient way of getting around these major cities, and since signs and station names are in English as well as Korean, the systems are foreigner-friendly and easy to use.

Taxi

Taxis are numerous almost everywhere and are so cheap that even high-school students use them. Fares vary only slightly in different areas. Every taxi has a meter that works on a distance basis but switches to a time basis when the vehicle is stuck in a traffic jam. Tipping is not a local custom and is not expected or necessary.

Ilban (regular taxis) cost around W1800 for the first 2km, while the *mobeom* (deluxe taxis) that exist in some cities cost around W4000 for the first 3km.

Since very few taxi drivers speak any English, plan beforehand how to communicate your destination to the driver. Ask to be dropped off at a nearby landmark if the driver doesn't understand what you're saying or doesn't know where it is. It can be useful to write down your destination or a nearby landmark in *Han-geul* letters on a piece of paper.

Any expressway tolls are added to the fare. In the countryside check the fare first as there are local quirks, such as surcharges or a fixed rate to out-of-the-way places with little prospect of a return fare.

TRAIN

South Korea has an excellent but not comprehensive train network operated by Korea National Railroad (☎ 1544 7788; www.korail.co.kr), connecting most major cities and the towns along the way. Trains are clean, comfortable and punctual, and just about every station has a sign in Korean and English. Trains are the best option for long-distance travel, although buying a ticket in advance is a good idea, especially at the weekends. Go to the website, click on 'online reservation' and then 'inquiry/reservation' to access all the train schedules and fares.

Talks about reopening rail links between North and South Korea are continuing, but this depends on the agreement of the North Korean government. If the rail link ever started running, it would open the way to the development of a Seoul-London and even a Seoul-Singapore rail link, but this is probably a very distant dream.

Classes

There are four classes of trains. Developed in Korea, the new high-speed KTX trains, introduced in 2004, can travel at over 300km/h. At present the high-speed track extends from Seoul to Daejeon, which KTX trains reach in an hour or less, and is being extended to Busan on the east coast. The next fastest and most luxurious are *Saemaul* trains, which also stop only in major cities. *Mugunghwa* trains stop more often and are almost as comfortable and fast as *Saemaul* trains. *Tonggeun*

(commuter) trains are the cheapest and stop at every station, but only run infrequently on certain routes and are a dying breed. Some trains have a dining car, while others have *gimbap* (Korean sushi) lunch boxes and a snack trolley.

Costs

KTX trains are 40% more expensive than *Saemaul* trains (and KTX 1st class is another 40%). *Saemaul* 1st class is 22% more than the standard *Saemaul* fare. *Saemaul* standard fares are 50% more than *Mugunghwa* class, which is 80% more expensive than *tonggeun* (commuter) class. KTX tickets are discounted 7% to 20% if you buy seven to 60 days before departure. Tickets are discounted 15% from Tuesday to Thursday, and *ipseokpyo* (standing tickets) are discounted 15% to 30% depending on the length of the journey; with a standing ticket, you are allowed to sit on any unoccupied seats. Children travel for half price and seniors receive a 25% discount. The full range of discounts is complicated and confusing. For fares and schedules see the website.

Reservations

The railway ticketing system is computerised and you can buy tickets up to two months in advance at railway stations and some travel agents including *Hanjin Travel Service* (☎ 02 729 2680), inside the KTO tourist information centre (Map pp88–9) in Seoul. There are far fewer trains than buses, so seat reservations are sensible and necessary on weekends, holidays and other busy times.

Train Passes

Foreigners can buy a KR Pass at overseas travel agents or from the website of Korea National Railroad (www.korail.co.kr). The KR Pass offers unlimited rail travel (including KTX services) for three/five/seven/10 consecutive days at a cost of US\$76/114/144/166. Children (four to 12 years) receive a 50% discount, and youths (13 to 25 years old) receive a 20% discount.

Are they worth it? The problem is that distances in Korea are not great, trains don't go everywhere, and the pass is unlikely to save you much if any money. Using a flexible combination of buses, trains and planes is the best way to see the country.

Health

CONTENTS

Before You Go	404
Insurance	404
Recommended Vaccinations	405
Internet Resources	405
Further Reading	405
Medical Checklist	405
In Transit	406
Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)	406
Jet Lag & Motion Sickness	406
In Korea	406
Availability & Cost of Health Care	406
Infectious Diseases	406
Travellers' Diarrhoea	407
Environmental Hazards	408
Women's Health	408
Traditional & Folk Medicine	409

Health issues and the quality of medical care vary significantly depending on whether you stay in cities or venture further out into rural areas.

Travellers tend to worry about contracting infectious diseases while abroad, but infections are a rare cause of serious illness or death while overseas. Accidental injury (especially traffic accidents) and pre-existing medical conditions such as heart disease account for most life-threatening problems. Becoming ill in some way, however, is relatively common. Fortunately most common illnesses can either be prevented with some common-sense behaviour or be treated easily with a well-stocked traveller's medical kit.

HEALTH ADVISORIES

It's usually a good idea to consult your government's travel-health website before departure, if one is available:

- Australia** (www.dfat.gov.au/travel)
- Canada** (www.travelhealth.gc.ca)
- New Zealand** (mfat.govt.nz/travel)
- South Africa** (www.dfa.gov.za/travelling)
- UK** (www.doh.gov.uk/traveladvice)
- US** (www.cdc.gov/travel)

The following advice is a general guide only and does not replace the advice of a doctor trained in travel medicine.

BEFORE YOU GO

Pack medications in their original, clearly labelled containers. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and regular medications (use generic names) is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity. If you have a heart condition bring a copy of your ECG taken just prior to travelling.

If you take any regular medication, bring double your needs in case of loss. In Korea you need a local doctor's prescription to buy medication, and it may be difficult to obtain particular branded medications available in Western countries.

INSURANCE

Even if you are fit and healthy, don't travel without health insurance – accidents do happen. Declare any existing medical conditions you have; the insurance company will check if your problem is pre-existing and will not cover you if it is undeclared. You may require extra cover for adventure activities. If your health insurance doesn't cover you for medical expenses abroad, consider getting extra insurance. If you're uninsured, emergency evacuation is expensive; bills of over US\$100,000 are not uncommon.

Find out in advance if your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or reimburse you later for overseas health expenses; in many countries doctors expect payment in cash. Some policies offer lower and higher medical-expense options; the higher ones are chiefly for countries that have extremely high medical costs, such as the USA. You may prefer a policy that pays doctors or hospitals directly, rather than you having to pay on the spot and claim later. If you have to claim later, make sure you keep all documentation.

Some policies ask you to call back (reverse charges) to a centre in your home country where an immediate assessment of your problem is made.

RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

No special vaccinations are required or recommended for South Korea, but check the latest situation with your tour company before visiting the North.

INTERNET RESOURCES

There is a wealth of travel health advice on the internet. For further information, **Lonely Planet** (www.lonelyplanet.com) is a good place to start. The **World Health Organization** (WHO; www.who.int/ith)

publishes a superb book called *International Travel & Health*, revised annually and available online at no cost. Another website of general interest is **MD Travel Health** (www.mdtravelhealth.com), which provides complete travel-health recommendations for every country and is updated daily. The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC; www.cdc.gov) website also has good general information.

FURTHER READING

Pick up a copy of Lonely Planet's *Healthy Travel Asia & India*. Other recommended references include *Traveller's Health* by Dr Richard Dawood and *Travelling Well* by Dr Deborah Mills (www.travellingwell.com.au).

MEDICAL CHECKLIST

The following are recommended items for personal medical kits:

- antifungal cream (eg Clotrimazole)
- antibacterial cream (eg Muciprocin)
- antibiotics if you are planning on visiting rural areas: one for skin infections (eg Amoxicillin/Clavulanate or Cephalexin) and another for diarrhoea (eg Norfloxacin or Ciprofloxacin)
- antihistamine – there are many options (eg Cetirizine for daytime and Promethazine for night)
- antiseptic (eg Betadine)
- anti-spasmodic for stomach cramps (eg Buscopan)
- contraceptives
- decongestant (eg Pseudoephedrine)
- DEET-based insect repellent
- anti-diarrhoeal treatments – consider an oral-rehydration solution (eg Gastrolyte), diarrhoea 'stopper' (eg Loperamide) and anti-nausea medication (eg Prochlorperazine)
- first-aid items such as scissors, elastoplasts, bandages, gauze, thermometer (but not mercury), sterile needles and syringes, safety pins and tweezers
- anti-inflammatory (eg Ibuprofen)
- indigestion tablets (eg Quick Eze or Mylanta)
- iodine tablets (unless you are pregnant or have a thyroid problem) to purify water
- Laxative (eg Coloxyl)
- migraine medicine – sufferers should take their personal medicine
- paracetamol
- Permethrin for clothing and mosquito nets
- steroid cream for allergic/itchy rashes (eg 1% to 2% hydrocortisone)
- sunscreen and hat
- throat lozenges
- thrush (vaginal yeast infection) treatment (eg Clotrimazole pessaries or Diflucan tablet)
- Ural or equivalent if you're prone to urine infections

IN TRANSIT

DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

Deep vein thrombosis occurs when blood clots form in the legs during plane flights, chiefly because of prolonged immobility. The longer the flight, the greater the risk. Though most blood clots are reabsorbed uneventfully, some may break off and travel through the blood vessels to the lungs, where they may cause life-threatening complications.

The chief symptom of DVT is swelling or pain of the foot, ankle, or calf, usually but not always on just one side. When a blood clot travels to the lungs, it may cause chest pain and difficulty in breathing. Travellers who find that they have any of these symptoms should immediately seek medical attention.

To prevent the development of DVT on long flights, you should walk about the cabin, perform isometric compressions of the leg muscles (ie contract the leg muscles while sitting), drink plenty of fluids, and avoid alcohol and tobacco.

JET LAG & MOTION SICKNESS

Jet lag is common when crossing more than five time zones; it results in insomnia, fatigue, malaise or nausea. To avoid jet lag, try drinking plenty of fluids (nonalcoholic) and eating light meals. Upon arrival, seek exposure to natural sunlight and readjust your schedule (for meals, sleep etc) as soon as possible.

Antihistamines such as dimenhydrinate (Dramamine), prochlorperazine (Phenergan) and meclizine (Antivert, Bonine) are generally the first choice for the treatment of motion sickness. Their major side effect is drowsiness. A herbal alternative is ginger, which works like a charm for some people.

IN KOREA

AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

South Korea is a well-developed country, and the quality of medical care reflects this. Standards of medical care are higher in Seoul and other cities than in rural areas, although making yourself understood can be a problem anywhere.

North Korea is poverty-stricken and medical care is completely inadequate throughout

the country including Pyongyang. Shortages of routine medications and supplies are a common problem.

A recommended hospital in Seoul is the government-run **Samsung Medical Center & International Health Service** (Map pp84-5; ☎ 02-3410 0200; 50 Ilwon-Dong, Gangnam-gu).

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Filariasis

A mosquito-borne disease that is very rare in travellers; mosquito-avoidance measures are the best way to prevent this disease. It's widespread in rice-growing areas in southwest Korea.

Hepatitis A

A problem throughout the country, this food- and water-borne virus infects the liver, causing jaundice (yellow skin and eyes), nausea and lethargy. There is no specific treatment for hepatitis A; you just need to allow time for the liver to heal. All travellers to Korea should be vaccinated against hepatitis A.

Hepatitis B

The only sexually transmitted disease that can be prevented by vaccination, hepatitis B is spread by body fluids, including sexual contact. Up to 10% of the population are carriers of hepatitis B, and usually are unaware of this. The long-term consequences can include liver cancer and cirrhosis.

HIV

HIV is also spread by body fluids. Avoid unsafe sex, sharing needles, invasive cosmetic procedures such as tattooing, and needles that have not been sterilised in a medical setting.

Influenza

Influenza (flu) symptoms include high fever, muscle aches, runny nose, cough and sore throat. It can be very severe in people over the age of 65 or in those with underlying medical conditions such as heart disease or diabetes – vaccination is recommended for these individuals. There is no specific treatment, just rest and paracetamol.

Japanese B Encephalitis

This viral disease is transmitted by mosquitoes, but is very rare in travellers. Most cases occur in rural areas, and vaccination is recommended for travellers spending more than one month outside cities. There is no treatment,

and a third of infected people will die, while another third will suffer permanent brain damage. The highest risk is in the southwest rice-growing areas.

Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis is contracted after exposure to contaminated fresh water (eg rivers). Early symptoms are very similar to the 'flu' and include headache and fever. It can vary from a very mild to a fatal disease. Diagnosis is through blood tests, and it is easily treated with Doxycycline.

Lyme Disease

This tick-borne disease occurs in the summer months. Symptoms include an early rash and general viral symptoms, followed weeks to months later by joint, heart or neurological problems. Prevention is by using general insect-avoidance measures and checking yourself for ticks after walking in forest areas. Treatment is with Doxycycline.

Rabies

This sometimes fatal disease is spread by the bite or lick of an infected animal – most commonly a dog. You should seek medical advice immediately after any animal bite and commence post-exposure treatment. If an animal bites you, gently wash the wound with soap and water, and apply iodine-based antiseptic. If you are not pre-vaccinated, you will need to receive rabies immunoglobulin as soon as possible.

STDs

Sexually transmitted diseases are common throughout the world and the most common include herpes, warts, syphilis, gonorrhoea and chlamydia. People carrying these diseases often have no signs of infection. Condoms will prevent gonorrhoea and chlamydia but not warts or herpes. If after a sexual encounter you develop any rash, lumps, discharge or pain when passing urine, seek immediate medical attention. If you have been sexually active during your travels, have an STD check on your return home.

Tuberculosis

Only North Korea has significant risk. While tuberculosis is rare, travellers, medical and aid workers, and long-term travellers who have significant contact with the local population,

should take precautions. Vaccination is usually only given to children under the age of five, but adults at risk are recommended to undertake pre- and post-travel TB testing. The main symptoms are fever, cough, weight loss, night sweats and tiredness.

Typhoid

This serious bacterial infection is spread via food and water. It gives a high and slowly worsening fever and headache, and may be accompanied by a dry cough and stomach pain. It is diagnosed by blood tests and treated with antibiotics. Vaccination is recommended for all travellers spending more than a week in Korea and travelling outside Seoul. Be aware that vaccination is not 100% effective, so you must still be careful with what you eat and drink.

Typhus

Scrub typhus is present in the scrub areas of Korea. This is spread by a mite and is very rare in travellers. Symptoms include fever, muscle pains and a rash. Following general insect-avoidance measures when walking in the scrub will help you avoid this disease. Doxycycline works as a prevention and treatment for typhus.

TRAVELLERS' DIARRHOEA

Travellers' diarrhoea is the most common problem which affects travellers – between 10% and 20% of people visiting South Korea will suffer from it. The risk in North Korea is more like 40% to 60%. In the majority of cases, travellers' diarrhoea is triggered by a bacteria (there are numerous potential culprits), and therefore responds promptly to treatment with antibiotics, which will depend on your circumstances: how sick you are, how quickly you need to get better, where you are etc.

Travellers' diarrhoea is defined as the passage of more than three watery bowel actions within 24 hours, plus at least one other symptom such as fever, cramps, nausea, vomiting or feeling generally unwell. Treatment consists of staying well hydrated; rehydration solutions like Gastrolyte are the best for this. Antibiotics such as Norfloxacin, Ciprofloxacin or Azithromycin will kill the bacteria quickly.

Loperamide is just a 'stopper' and doesn't get to the cause of the problem. It can be helpful, for example, if you have to go on a long bus ride. Don't take Loperamide if you have

DRINKING WATER

- never drink tap water
- bottled water is generally safe – check the seal is intact at purchase
- check ice has not been made with tap water
- boiling water is the most efficient method of purifying it
- the best chemical purifier is iodine, but it should not be used by pregnant women or those with thyroid problems
- water filters should also filter out viruses; ensure your filter has a chemical barrier such as iodine and a small pore size (eg less than four microns)

a fever, or blood in your stools. Seek medical attention quickly if you do not respond to an appropriate antibiotic.

Giardiasis

Giardia is a parasite that is relatively common in travellers. Symptoms include nausea, bloating, excess gas, fatigue and intermittent diarrhoea. 'Eggy' burps are often attributed solely to Giardia, but work in Nepal has shown that they are not specific to Giardia. The parasite will eventually go away if left untreated but this can take months. The treatment of choice is Tinidazole, with Metronidazole being a second-line option. Giardia is not common in South Korea.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS**Air Pollution**

Air pollution, particularly from vehicles, is an increasing problem in Seoul. If you have severe respiratory problems, speak with your doctor before travelling to any heavily polluted urban centres. This pollution also causes minor respiratory problems such as sinusitis, dry throat and irritated eyes. If troubled by the pollution, leave the city for a few days and get some fresh air.

Food

Eating in restaurants is the biggest risk factor for contracting travellers' diarrhoea. Ways to avoid it include eating only freshly cooked food and avoiding shellfish and food that has been sitting around in buffets. Peel all fruit

and cook vegetables. Eat in busy restaurants with a high turnover of customers.

Insect Bites & Stings

Insects are not a major issue in Korea; however, there are some insect-borne diseases present.

Ticks are contracted after walking in rural areas. Ticks are commonly found behind the ears, on the belly and in armpits. If you have had a tick bite and experience symptoms such as a rash at the site of the bite or elsewhere, fever or muscle aches, you should see a doctor. Doxycycline prevents and treats tick-borne diseases.

Bee and wasp stings mainly cause problems for people who are allergic to them. Anyone with a serious bee or wasp allergy should carry an injection of adrenaline (eg an EpiPen) for emergency treatment. For others pain is the main problem – apply ice to the sting and take painkillers.

Parasites

The most common parasite in Korea is Clonorchis. Infection occurs after eating infected fresh-water fish – these may be raw, pickled, smoked or dried. Light infections usually cause no symptoms; however, heavy infections can cause liver problems. In some areas up to 20% of the local population are infected.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

In most well-developed areas of Korea, supplies of sanitary products are readily available. Birth-control options may be limited, so bring adequate supplies of your own form of contraception. Heat, humidity and antibiotics can all contribute to thrush. Treatment is with antifungal creams and pessaries such as Clotrimazole. A practical alternative is a single tablet of Fluconazole (Diflucan). Urinary tract infections can be precipitated by dehydration or long bus journeys without toilet stops; bring suitable antibiotics.

Pregnant women should receive specialised advice before travelling. The ideal time to travel is in the second trimester (between 16 and 28 weeks), when the risk of pregnancy-related problems are at their lowest and pregnant women generally feel at their best. During the first trimester there is a risk of miscarriage and in the third trimester complications such as premature labour and high blood pressure are possible. It's wise to travel with a companion. Always carry a list of quality medical fa-

cilities available at your destination and ensure you continue your standard antenatal care at these facilities. Avoid rural travel in areas with poor transportation and medical facilities. Most of all, ensure travel insurance covers all pregnancy-related possibilities, including premature labour.

Travellers' diarrhoea can quickly lead to dehydration and result in inadequate blood flow to the placenta. Many of the drugs used to treat various diarrhoea bugs are not recommended in pregnancy. Azithromycin is considered safe.

TRADITIONAL & FOLK MEDICINE

Traditional medicine in Korea is known as Oriental medicine and is based on traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). Although Korean traditional medicine is heavily influenced by TCM, it has developed its own unique methods

of diagnosis and treatment. Acupuncture techniques and herbal medicines are widely used.

Unique to Korean traditional medicine is Sasang Constitutional Medicine, which classifies people into four types (Taeyangin, Taeumin, Soyangin and Soeumin) based on their body type, and treats each differently according to their constitution. In Korea 'fusion medicine', which combines both traditional and Western medical systems, is increasingly popular. The World Health Organization has more than one research facility looking into traditional medicine in Seoul.

Be aware that 'natural' doesn't always mean 'safe', and there can be drug interactions between herbal medicines and Western medicines. If you are utilising both systems, ensure you inform both practitioners what the other has prescribed.

Language

CONTENTS

Romanisation	410
Pronunciation	410
Polite Korean	411
Accommodation	411
Conversation & Essentials	412
Directions	412
Emergencies	413
Health	413
Language Difficulties	414
Numbers	414
Paperwork	414
Question Words	414
Shopping & Services	414
Time & Dates	415
Transport	415
Travel With Children	417

Korean is a knotty problem for linguists. Various theories have been proposed to explain its origins, but the most widely accepted is that it is a member of the Ural-Altaic family of languages. Other members of the same linguistic branch are Turkish and Mongolian. In reality Korean grammar shares much more with Japanese than it does with either Turkish or Mongolian. Furthermore, the Koreans have borrowed nearly 70% of their vocabulary from neighbouring China, and now many English words have penetrated their language.

Chinese characters (*hanja*) are usually restricted to use in maps, government documents, the written names of businesses and in newspapers. For the most part Korean is written in *Han-geul*, the alphabet developed under King Sejong's reign in the 15th century. Many linguists argue that the Korean script is one of the most intelligently designed and phonetically consistent alphabets used today.

Han-geul consists of only 24 characters and isn't that difficult to learn. However, the formation of words using *Han-geul* is very different from the way that Western alphabets are used to form words. The emphasis is on the formation of a syllable, and

the end result bears some resemblance to a Chinese character. For example, the first syllable of the word *Han-geul* (한) is formed by an 'h' (ㅎ) in the top left corner, an 'a' (ㅏ) in the top right corner and an 'n' (ㄴ) at the bottom, the whole syllabic grouping forming a syllabic 'box'. These syllabic 'boxes' are strung together to form words.

ROMANISATION

In July 2000, the Korean government adopted a new method of Romanising the Korean language. Most of the old Romanisation system was retained, but a few changes were introduced to ensure a more consistent spelling throughout Korea and overseas. The new system has been energetically pushed throughout the government and tourist bureaux, but some corporations, individuals, academics and news outlets are reluctant to adopt it.

We use the new Romanisation style throughout this book, but you'll come across many spelling variations. To avoid confusion it's always best to go back to the original Korean script. In fact, it's well worth the few hours required to learn the Korean alphabet, even though we've provided Korean script throughout this book for map references and points of interest.

PRONUNCIATION

In the words and phrases in this chapter, the use of the variants *ga/i*, *reul/eul* and *ro/euro* depends on whether the preceding letter is a vowel or a consonant respectively.

Vowels & Vowel Combinations

ㅏ	a	as in 'are'
ㅑ	ya	as in 'yard'
ㅓ	eo	as the 'o' in 'of'
ㅕ	yeo	as the 'you' in 'young'
ㅗ	o	as in 'go'
ㅛ	yo	as in 'yoke'
ㅜ	u	as in 'flute'
ㅠ	yu	as the word 'you'
ㅡ	eu	as the 'oo' in 'look'
ㅣ	i	as the 'ee' in 'beet'
ㅞ	ae	as the 'a' in 'hat'
ㅟ	yae	as the 'ya' in 'yam'
ㅚ	e	as in 'ten'

ㅋ	ye	as in 'yes'
ㄲ	wa	as in 'waffle'
ㅝ	wae	as the 'wa' in 'wax'
ㅞ	oe	as the 'wa' in 'way'
ㄹ	wo	as in 'won'
ㅜ	we	as in 'wet'
ㅟ	wi	as the word 'we'
ㅡ	ui	as 'u' plus 'i'

Consonants

Unaspirated consonants are generally difficult for English speakers to render. To those unfamiliar with Korean, an unaspirated k will sound like 'g', an unaspirated t like 'd', and an unaspirated p like 'b'.

Whether consonants in Korean are voiced or unvoiced depends on where they fall within a word. The rules governing this are too complex to cover here – the following tables show the various alternative pronunciations you may hear.

Single Consonants

The letter ㅅ is pronounced 'sh' if followed by the vowel ㅣ, even though it is transliterated as si.

In the middle of a word, ㅇ is pronounced 'n' if it follows ㅁ (m) or ㅇ (ng), but when it follows ㄴ (n) it becomes a double 'l' sound (ll); when a single ㅇ is followed by a vowel it is transliterated as r.

ㄱ	g/k
ㄴ	n
ㄷ	d/t
ㄹ	r/l/n
ㅁ	m
ㅂ	b/p
ㅅ	s/t
ㅇ	–/ng
ㅈ	j/t
ㅊ	ch/t
ㅋ	k
ㆁ	t
ㅍ	p
ㅎ	h/ng

Double Consonants

Double consonants are pronounced with more stress than their single consonants counterparts.

ㄲ	kk
ㄸ	tt
ㅃ	pp

ㅆ	ss/t
ㅉ	jj

Complex Consonants

These occur only in the middle or at the end of a word.

ㄱㅅ	–/ksk/–
ㄴㅆ	–/nj/n
ㄴㅎ	–/nh/n
ㄹㄱ	–/lg/k
ㄹㅁ	–/lm/m
ㄹㅂ	–/lb/p
ㄹㅅ	–/ls/l
ㄹㅌ	–/lt/l
ㄹㅍ	–/lp/p
ㄹㅎ	–/lh/l
ㅃㅅ	–/ps/p

POLITE KOREAN

Korea's pervasive social hierarchy means that varying degrees of politeness are codified into the grammar. Young Koreans tend to use the very polite forms a lot less than the older generation, but it's always best to use the polite form if you're unsure. The sentences in this section use polite forms.

ACCOMMODATION

I'm looking for a ...

... reul/eul chatgo isseoyo	...를/을 찾고 있어요
guesthouse	
yeogwan/minbak jip	여관/민박집
hotel	
hotel	호텔
youth hostel	
yuseu hoseutel	유스호스텔

Where is a cheap hotel?

ssan hoteri eodi isseoyo?
싼 호텔이 어디 있어요?

What is the address?

jusoga eotteoke dwaeyo?
주소가 어떻게 돼요?

Could you write the address, please?

juso jam jeogeo juseyo?
주소 좀 적어 주세요?

Do you have any rooms available?

bang isseoyo?
방 있어요?

I'd like (a) ...

... ro/euro juseyo	...로/으로 주세요
bed	
chimdæ	침대

single bed <i>singgeul chimdae</i>	싱글 침대
double bed <i>deobeul chimdae</i>	더블 침대
twin beds <i>chimdae dugae</i>	침대 두개
room with a bathroom <i>yoksil inneun bang juseyo</i>	욕실있는 방 주세요
to share a room <i>gachi sseuneun bang</i>	같이 쓰는 방
Western-style room <i>chimdae bang juseyo</i>	침대 방 주세요
a room with sleeping mats <i>ondol bang juseyo</i>	온돌 방 주세요

How much is it ...?
e... eolma eyo? 에...얼마예요?
per night
harutbam 하룻밤
per person
han saram 한사람

May I see it?
bang jom bolsu isseoyo? 방 좀 볼수 있어요?
Where is the bathroom?
yoksiri eodi-e isseoyo? 욕실이 어디에 있어요?

I'm/We're leaving now.
jigeum tteonayo 지금 떠나요

Making a reservation
(for written or phone requests)

To/From ...	<i>e-ge/buteo...</i>	에게/부터...
Date	<i>nalja</i>	날짜

I'd like to book ...
(see the list on this page for bed and room options)
... yeyak haryeogo haneundeoyo...
예약 하려고 하는데요...

in the name of ...
ireum euro... 이름으로...

for the night/s of ...
naljalro... 날짜로...

credit card ...
sinyong kadeu... 신용카드...

number
beonho 번호

expiry date
manyo il 만료일

Please confirm availability and price.
sayonghal su inneunji wa gagyek hwaginhae juseyo
사용할 수 있는지 와 가격 확인해 주세요

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello. (polite)
annyeong hasimnikka
안녕 하십니까

Hello. (informal)
annyeong haseyo
안녕 하세요

Goodbye. (to person leaving)
annyeong-hi gaseyo
안녕히 가세요

Goodbye. (to person staying)
annyeong-hi gyeseyo
안녕히 계세요

Yes.
ye/ne 예/네

No.
aniyo 아니요

Please.
juseyo 주세요

Thank you.
gamsa hamnida 감사 합니다

That's fine/You're welcome.
gwaenchan seumnida 괜찮습니다

Excuse me.
sillye hamnida 실례 합니다

Sorry (forgive me).
mian hamnida 미안 합니다

See you soon.
tto mannayo/najung-e buteobwayo 또 만나요/나중에 봐요

How are you?
annyeong haseyo? 안녕 하세요?

I'm fine, thanks.
ne, jo-ayo 네 좋아요

May I ask your name?
ireumeul yeojjwobwado doelkkayo 이름을 여쭙봐도 될까요?

My name is ...
je ireumeun... imnida 제 이름은...입니다

Where are you from?
eodiseo oseosseoyo? 어디서 오셨어요?

I'm from ...
jeoneun... e-seo wasseumnida 저는...에서 왔습니다

I (don't) like ...
jeoneun... jo-a hey/... jo-a haji anhayo 저는... 좋아해요/... 좋아하지 않아요

Just a minute.
jamkkan manyo 잠깐만요

DIRECTIONS

Where is ...?
... i/ga eodi isseoyo? ...이/가 어디 있어요?

SIGNS

입구 <i>ipgu</i>	Entrance
출구 <i>chulgu</i>	Exit
안내 <i>anna</i>	Information
영업중 <i>yeong eop jung</i>	Open
휴업중 <i>hyu eop jung</i>	Closed
금지 <i>gumji</i>	Prohibited
방있음 <i>bang isseum</i>	Rooms Available
방없음 <i>bang eopseum</i>	Full/No Vacancies
경찰서 <i>gyeongchalseo</i>	Police Station
화장실 <i>hwajangsil</i>	Toilets
신사용 <i>sinsayong</i>	Men
숙녀용 <i>sungnyeoyong</i>	Women

Go straight ahead.
ttokbaro gaseyo 똑바로 가세요

Turn left.
oenjogeuro gaseyo 왼쪽으로 가세요

Turn right.
oreunjojeuro gaseyo 오른쪽으로 가세요

at the next corner
da eum motungi e-seo 다음 모퉁이에서

at the traffic lights
sinhodeung e-seo 신호등에서

behind *dwi-e* ...뒤에
in front of *ap-e* ...앞에
far *meolli* 멀리
near *gakka-i* 가까이
opposite *bandae pyeon-e* 반대편에
beach *haesu yokjang* 해수욕장
haebyeon 해변

bridge *dari* 다리
castle *seong* 성
cathedral *seongdang* 성당
island *do* 도
(when used in place names)
seom 섬
(when used as a generic noun)

EMERGENCIES

Help!
saram sallyeot 사람살려!

There's been an accident.
sago nasseoyo 사고 났어요

I'm lost.
gireul ireosseoyo 길을 잃었어요

Go away!
jeori ga! 저리가!

Call ...!
... bulleo juseyo!
... 불러 주세요!
a doctor *ui-sareul* 의사를
the police *gyeongchareul* 경찰을
an ambulance *gugeupcha jom* 구급차를

market	<i>sijang</i>	시장
palace	<i>gung</i>	궁
ruins	<i>yetteo</i>	옛터
sea	<i>bada</i>	바다
tower	<i>ta-wo/tap</i>	타워 / 탑

HEALTH

I'm ill.
jeon apayo 저 아파요

It hurts here.
yeogiga apayo 여기가 아파요

I'm *isseoyo* ...있어요
asthmatic *cheonsik* 천식
diabetic *dangnyo byeong-i* 당뇨병이
epileptic *ganjil byeong-i* 간질병이

I'm allergic to ...
... allereugiga isseoyo
...알레르기 가있어요
antibiotics *hangsaengje* 항생제
aspirin *aseupirin* 아스피린
penicillin *penisillin* 페니실린
bees *beol* 벌
nuts *ttang kkong* 땅콩

antiseptic *sodong yak* 소독약
condoms *kondom* 콘돔
contraceptive *pi imyak* 피임약
diarrhoea *seolsa* 설사
hospital *byeongwon* 병원
medicine *yak* 약
sunblock cream *seon keurim* 선크림
tampons *tampun* тампон

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

Do you speak English?

yeong-eo haseyo?
영어 하세요?

Does anyone here speak English?

yeong-eo hasineunbun gyeseyo?
영어 하시는 분계세요?

How do you say ... in Korean?

... eul/reul hangug-euro eotteoke malhaeyo?
...을 한국어로 어떻게 말해요?

What does ... mean?

... ga/i museum ...가/이 무슨 뜻 이에요?
tteusieyo?

I understand.

algeseoyo 알겠어요

I don't understand.

jalmoreugenneun deyo 잘 모르겠는데요

Please write it down.

jeogeo jusillaeyo 적어 주실래요

Can you show me (on the map)?

boyeo jusillaeyo 보여 주실래요?

NUMBERS

Korean has two counting systems. One is of Chinese origin, with Korean pronunciation, and the other is a native Korean system – the latter only goes up to 99 and is used for counting objects, expressing your age and for the hours when telling the time. They're always written in *Han-geul* or digits, but never in Chinese characters. Sino-Korean numbers are used to express minutes when telling the time, as well as dates, months, kilometres, money, floors of buildings; numbers above 99 and can also be written in Chinese characters. Either Chinese or Korean numbers can be used to count days.

	Sino-Korean		Korean	
1	<i>il</i>	일	<i>hana</i>	하나
2	<i>i</i>	이	<i>dul</i>	둘
3	<i>sam</i>	삼	<i>set</i>	셋
4	<i>sa</i>	사	<i>net</i>	넷
5	<i>o</i>	오	<i>daseot</i>	다섯
6	<i>yuk</i>	육	<i>yeoseot</i>	여섯
7	<i>chil</i>	칠	<i>ilgop</i>	일곱
8	<i>pal</i>	팔	<i>yeodeol</i>	여덟
9	<i>gu</i>	구	<i>ahop</i>	아홉
10	<i>sip</i>	십	<i>yeol</i>	열

Combination

11	<i>sibil</i>	십일
12	<i>sibi</i>	십이
13	<i>sipsam</i>	십삼

14	<i>sipsa</i>	십사
15	<i>sibo</i>	십오
16	<i>simnyuk</i>	십육
17	<i>sipchil</i>	십칠
18	<i>sippal</i>	십팔
19	<i>sipgu</i>	십구
20	<i>isip</i>	이십
21	<i>isibil</i>	이십일
22	<i>isibi</i>	이십이
30	<i>samsip</i>	삼십
40	<i>sasip</i>	사십
50	<i>osip</i>	오십
60	<i>yuksip</i>	육십
70	<i>chilsip</i>	칠십
80	<i>palsip</i>	팔십
90	<i>gusip</i>	구십
100	<i>baek</i>	백
1000	<i>cheon</i>	천

PAPERWORK

name	<i>ireum/ seongmyeong</i>	이름/ 성명
nationality	<i>guk jeok</i>	국적
date of birth	<i>saengnyeon woril/ saeng-il</i>	생년 월일/ 생일
place of birth	<i>chulsaengji</i>	출생지
sex (gender)	<i>seongbyeol</i>	성별
passport	<i>yeogwon</i>	여권
visa	<i>biya</i>	비자

QUESTION WORDS

Who? (as subject)	<i>nugu</i>	누구
What? (as subject)	<i>mu-eot</i>	무엇
When?	<i>eonje</i>	언제
Where?	<i>eodi</i>	어디
How?	<i>eotteoke</i>	어떻게

SHOPPING & SERVICES

I'd like to buy ...	<i>... reul/eul sago sipeoyo</i>	...를/을 사고 싶어요
How much is it?	<i>eolma yeyo?</i>	얼마예요?
I don't like it.	<i>byeollo mam-e andeuneyo</i>	별로 맘에 안드네요
May I look at it?	<i>boyeo jusillaeyo?</i>	보여 주실래요?
I'm just looking.	<i>geumyang gugyeong haneungeo-eyo</i>	그냥 구경 하는 거예요
It's cheap.	<i>ssa-neyo</i>	싸네요
It's too expensive.	<i>neomu bissayo</i>	너무 비싸요

I'll take it.

igeoro haraeyo 이걸로 할래요

Do you accept ...?

... jibul haedo dwaeyo? ...지불해도 돼요?

credit cards

keureдитеu kadeu-ro 크레디트 카드로

travellers cheques

yeohaengja supyo 여행자 수표

more

deo 더

less

deol 덜

smaller

deo jageun 더작은

bigger

deo keun 더큰

I'm looking for ...

... reul/eul chatgo isseoyo ...를/을 찾고 있어요

a bank

eunhaeng 은행

a church

gyohoe 교회

the city centre

sinae jung simga 시내 중심가

the ... embassy

dae sigwan 대사관

the market

sijang 시장

the museum

bangmulgwan 박물관

the post office

uche-guk 우체국

a public toilet

hwajangsil 화장실

the telephone centre

jeonhwa guk 전화국

the tourist office

gwan gwang annaeso 관광 안내소

I want to change ...

... reul/eul bakku ryeogo haneun deyo

...를/을 바꾸려고 하는데요

money

don 돈

travellers cheques

yeohaengja supyo 여행자 수표

TIME & DATES

What time is it?

jigeum myeot si-eyo? 지금 몇시예요?

It's (10 o'clock).

(yeol) siyo (열)시요

in the morning *achim-e* 아침에

in the afternoon *ohu-e* 오후에

in the evening

jeonyeok-e 저녁에

When? *eonje* 언제

today *o-neul* 오늘

tomorrow *nae-il* 내일

yesterday *eo-je* 어제

Monday *waryoil* 월요일

Tuesday *hwayoil* 화요일

Wednesday *suyoil* 수요일

Thursday *mogyoil* 목요일

Friday *geumyoil* 금요일

Saturday *toyoil* 토요일

Sunday *iryoil* 일요일

January *irwol* 일월

February *iwol* 이월

March *samwol* 삼월

April *sawol* 사월

May *owol* 오월

June *yu-gwol* 육월

July *chirwol* 칠월

August *parwol* 팔월

September *guwol* 구월

October *siwol* 시월

November *sibirwol* 십이월

December *sibiwol* 십이월

TRANSPORT

Public Transport

What time does the ... leave/arrive?

... i/ga (eonje tteonayo/eonje dochak-haeyo)?
...이/가 언제 떠나요/언제 도착해요?

airport bus *gonghang beoseu* 공항버스

boat (ferry) *yeogaekseon* 여객선

bus *beoseu* 버스

city bus *sinae beoseu* 시내버스

intercity bus *si-oe beoseu* 시외버스

plane *bihaeng-gi* 비행기

train *gicha* 기차

Two other types of intercity bus are:

gosok beoseu 고속 버스

(high frequency express bus)

u-deung beoseu 우등 버스

(less frequent, more comfortable and a little more expensive)

I'd like a ... ticket.

... hanjang juseyo ...한장 주세요

one-way *pyeondo pyo* 편도표

return *wangbok pyo* 왕복표

1st class *il-deung seok* 일등석

2nd class *i-deung seok* 이등석

I want to go to ...

... e gago sipseumnida

...에 가고 싶습니다

The train has been (delayed).

gichaga (yeonchak) doe-eosseumnida

기차가(연착)되었습니다.

The train has been (cancelled).

gichaga (chwiso) doe-eosseumnida

기차가(취소)되었습니다

the first

cheot 첫

the last

maji mak 마지막

bus station

beoseu jeongnyu jang 버스정류장

platform number

peuraetpom beonho 플랫폼번호

subway station

jihacheol yeok 지하철역

ticket office

pyo paneun got 표 파는곳

ticket vending machine

pyo japangi 표 자판기

timetable

sigan pyo 시간표

train station

gicha yeok 기차역

Private Transport**I'd like to hire a/an ...**

... reul/eul billi-go sipeoyo

...를/을 빌리고 싶어요

car

jadongcha 자동차

(or simply cha, 차)

4WD

jipeu cha 지프차

motorbike

otoba-i/moteo sai-keul 오토바이/모터사이클

bicycle

jajeongeong 자전거

Is this the road to ...?

i-gil daragamyeon ... e galsu isseoyo?

이길 따라가면...에갈수 있어요?

Where's a service station?

annae soga eodi isseoyo?

안내소가 어디있어요?

Please fill it up.

gadeuk chaewo juseyo

가득 채워 주세요

I'd like (30) litres.

(samsip) liteo neo-eo juseyo

(삼십)리터 넣어 주세요

ROAD SIGNS

우회로 Detour

uhwoe-ro

길없음 No Entry

gil-eupseum

추월금지 No Overtaking

chuwol geumji

주차금지 No Parking

jucha geumji

입구 Entrance

ipgu

접근금지 Keep Clear

jeopgeun geumji

통행료 Toll

tonghaeng-ryo

톨게이트 Toll Gate

tol geiteu

위험 Danger

wi heom

서행 Slow Down

seo haeng

일방통행 One Way

il-bang tonghaeng

나가는길 Freeway Exit

naganeun gil

diesel

dijel

디젤

petrol/gas

hwi baryu

휘발유

(How long) Can I park here?

(eolmana) jucha halsu isseoyo?

(얼마나) 주차 할수 있어요?

Where do I pay?

eodiseo jibul hamnikka?

어디서 지불합니까?

I need a mechanic.

jeongbi gong-i biryo haeyo

정비공이 필요해요

The car/motorbike has broken down at ...

... eseo chaga/otoba-i ga gojang nasseoyo

...에서 차가/오토바이가 고장 났어요

The car/motorbike won't start.

chaga/otoba-i ga sidong-i geolli-ji annayo

차가/오토바이가 시동이 걸리지

않아요

I have a flat tyre.

taieo-e peongkeu nasseoyo

타이어에 펑크났어요

I've run out of petrol.

gireumi tteoreo jeosseoyo

기름이 떨어졌어요

I've had an accident.

sago nasseoyo

사고 났어요

TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN**Is there (a/an) ...**

... isseoyo?

...있어요?

I need (a/an) ...

piryo haeyo

...필요해요

baby change room

gijeogwi galgosi

baby car seat

yu-a jadongcha

anjeon uija

기저귀 갈 곳

유아자동차안전의자

child-minding service

agi bwajuneun seobiseu

children's menu

eorini menyu

(disposable) nappies/diapers

ilhoeyong gijeogwi

아기봐주는 서비스

어린이 메뉴

일회용 기저귀

infant milk formula

bunyu

분유

(English-speaking) babysitter

agi bwajuneun saram

highchair

agi uija

potty

agi byeon-gi

stroller/pusher

yu-mocha

아기 봐주는 사람

아기의자

아기변기

유모차

Do you mind if I breastfeed here?

yeogi-seo agi jeotmeok yeodo doenayo?

여기서 아기 젖먹어도 되나요?

Are children allowed?

eorinido doennikka?

어린이도 됩니까?

Glossary

For more food and drink terms, see the Menu Decoder (p69); for general terms see the Language chapter (p410).

ajumma – a married or older woman
~**am** – hermitage
anju – snacks eaten when drinking alcohol

bang – room
bawi – large rock
~**bong** – peak
buk~ – north
buncheong – Joseon-era pottery with simple folk designs

celadon – green-tinged pottery from the early-12th century
cha – tea
~**cheon** – small stream
Chuseok – Thanksgiving Day

dae~ – great, large
dancheong – ornate, multicoloured eaves that adorn Buddhist temples and other buildings
Dan-gun – mythical founder of Korea
DMZ – the Demilitarized Zone that runs along the 38th parallel of the Korean peninsula, separating North and South
~**do** – province
~**do** – island
~**dong** – neighbourhood or village
dong~ – east
donggul – cave
DPRK – Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)
DVD bang – room for watching DVDs

~**eup** – town

~**ga** – section of a long street
~**gang** – river
geobukseon – 'turtle ships'; iron-clad warships of the late 16th century
gil – small street
~**gu** – urban district
gugak – traditional Korean music
~**gul** – cave
~**gun** – county
~**gung** – palace
gwageo – Joseon government service exam

hae – sea
haenyeo – traditional female divers of Jeju do
hagwon – private language school where students study after school or work
hallyu – (Korean Wave) increasing interest in Korean pop culture from other parts of Asia
hanbok – traditional Korean clothing
hang – harbour
Han-geul – Korean phonetic alphabet
hanja – Chinese characters
hanji – traditional Korean handmade paper
hanok – traditional Korean one-storey wooden house with a tiled roof
harubang – lava-rock statues found only on Jeju do
~**ho** – lake
hof – local pub

insam – ginseng

jaebeol – huge family-run corporate conglomerate
~**jeon** – hall of a temple
~**jeong** – pavilion
jjimjilbang – upmarket spa and sauna
Juche – North Korean ideology of economic self-reliance

KTO – Korea Tourism Organisation
KTX – Korea Train Express; fast 300km/h train service

minbak – private homes with rooms for rent
mudang – female shaman
Mugunghwa – semi-express train
~**mun** – gate
~**myeon** – township
~**myo** – shrine

nam~ – south
~**neung** – tomb
~**no** – street
noraebang – karaoke room
~**nyeong** – mountain pass

oncheon – hot-spring bath
ondol – underfloor heating system

pansori – traditional Korean solo opera
PC bang – internet café
pension – upmarket accommodation in the countryside or near beaches
pocketball – pool
pokpo – waterfall

pyeong – a unit of real estate measurement equal to 3.3 sq metres

~**reung** – tomb
~**ri** – village
~**ro** – street
ROK – Republic of Korea (South Korea)
~**ryeong** – mountain pass

~**sa** – temple
Saemaul – luxury express train
samul-nori – drum-and-gong dance
~**san** – mountain
sanjang – mountain hut
sanseong – mountain fortress
seo~ – west
Seon – Korean version of Zen Buddhism
~**seong** – fortress
seowon – Confucian academy

shamanism – set of traditional beliefs; communication with spirits is done through a mudang
~**si** – city
sijang – market
sijo – short poems about nature and life; popular in the Joseon period
soju – the local firewater; often likened to vodka
ssireum – Korean-style wrestling

taekwondo – Korean martial art
tap – pagoda
tonggeun – commuter-class train

yangban – aristocrat
yeogwan – motel with small en suite
yeoinsuk – small, family-run budget accommodation with shared bathroom
yo – padded quilt that serves as a mattress or futon for sleeping on the floor

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