



HOMESTAY GUIDE

For Guests

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I. HOMESTAY

1. What is Homestay

Homestay is living with a local family. The primary aim of Homestay is to let you experience and understand other cultures. Our program provides a great opportunity to learn about Korea, to get to know the people, their traditions, the lifestyle that often remains hidden from foreign eyes. Homestay in Korea is an excellent form of both short-term and long-term accommodation convenient for students and tourists alike.

Homestay is done for non-commercial purposes, unlike hotels and guesthouses. We guarantee a safe living environment and a unique chance to practice the language on a daily basis. Get a first-hand experience of Korean culture, cook Korean food, and participate in the authentic rituals of a normal Korean family! We will be very happy to help you find the best host family so that you could see the real Korea and the everyday life of the Korean people. Located in very convenient places our hosts are waiting for you to become a member of their family!

2. Advantages of Homestay

The best way to learn about Korea

Koreans are very hospitable people. They will accept you in their home as a member of their family and will be happy to teach you their ways. In Korea you will never feel a stranger at a host's home. The hosts will take you sightseeing and shopping and they will help you adapt to life here in the shortest time possible.

Secure living environment

Homestay is probably the safest form of accommodation. Since you live as a part of the family, you will be required to inform your hosts if you intend to come back late or spend the night out. They will know your usual schedule and check if everything is alright with you whenever they feel worried, just as your own family would do. They will also always be there for you in emergencies.

Language practice

What better way to improve your Korean than living in a Korean home. Actually using the language on a daily basis will improve your communication skills much faster than learning from books. Practice the grammar you learned at school by talking to your host family and ask them whenever you do not understand certain phrases or slang.

Lower cost

The fee for Homestay is considerably lower than for most other forms of accommodation. There is no key money, no extra payment for household bills, television, or internet, and breakfast is included in the price. What hosts accept basically covers their expenses for

supporting you as another member of the family. The only cheaper form of accommodation in Korea is the so-called *koshiwon* – very small rooms, which are generally neither neat, nor safe.

Making friends

Staying in a foreign country is always a difficult and lonely endeavor. Many foreigners in Korea suffer from depression when living by themselves. Your hosts will give you the feeling that you are not alone this far from home. They will be there to hear you out whenever you feel upset. They will help you with all the frustrating little problems a foreigner encounters in Korea and usually needs a lot of time and effort to solve on one's own. In addition, while Koreans tend to socialize primarily with people they have known for a long time, such as family and alumni groups, many the hosts will have children your own age, so you will have very close friends in Korea in an instant.

II. HOMESTAY PROCEDURE

1. Who can apply

Every foreigner visiting or living in Korea can apply for our program. You need to hold a valid passport and an appropriate visa status for your purpose of stay. An open mind and willingness to cooperate with the host family is always welcome.

2. How to book

Sign up at our website. Fill in a basic profile and any specific information you like that can help us find an appropriate host for you. As soon as you register, you will automatically be on the guest list.

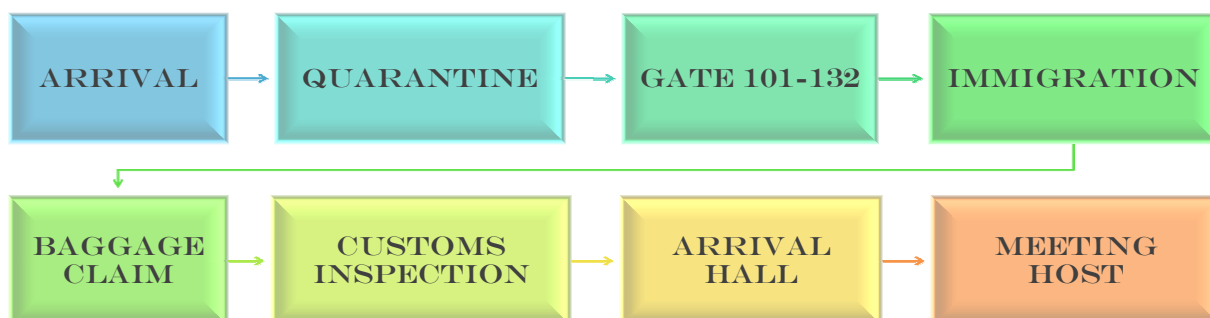
After receiving your application, we can recommend you hosts to choose from. If you approve of any of them, we will organize a meeting and you will then sign a contract with the host. If you do not like any of our recommendations, let us know, and we will recommend more hosts.

You can also pick your own host on our website. Browse through our Hostlist for detailed information and apply for any host you like by choosing [WISH] from the menu. Hosts are also able to pick their own guests. If the host chooses you for guest, you can either approve or decline the offer at “My Page”.

3. Arrival

Please let us know the exact date of your arrival if you are not currently residing in Korea. If you have applied for pickup service the host will be waiting for you at the airport.

Arrival at Incheon International Airport



Make sure to have your host's mobile phone number and our contact information with you. Call your host if you cannot find him/her. Call Korea Homestay immediately if you cannot get in touch with your host.

Airport Information: 1577-2600
www.airport.kr

From Incheon to Seoul

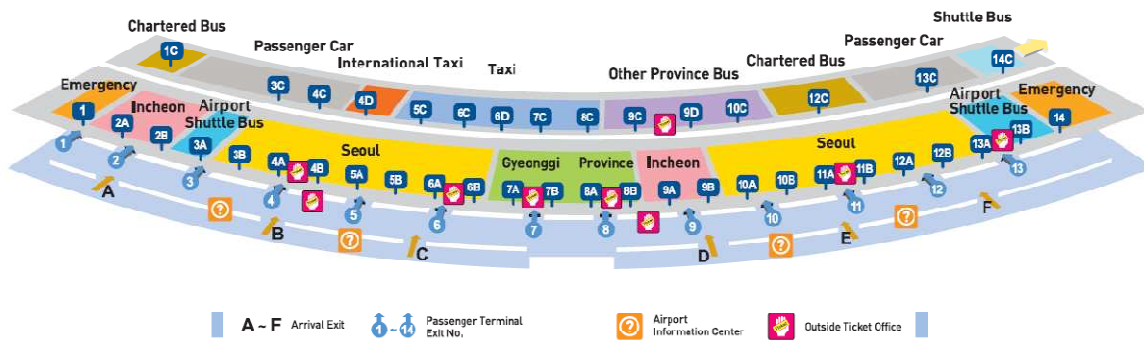
There are three ways to get to Seoul from the airport. Whichever way you choose it takes approximately one hour and a half to get from Incheon International Airport to Seoul. If you choose to arrive by yourself we will provide you detailed information and exact address to go to.



Airport Limousine

Buses leave in every direction from the Passenger Terminal arrival floor of Incheon International Airport at 10-25 minute intervals. Tickets can be bought at the Transportation Information Centre near exits 4 and 9 at the Arrival Floor. The fare is 7,000 – 15,000 won depending on class and destination.

There is also a late night bus leaving from 5A at 00:00 and 03:50 for Seoul Station, 01:20 for Gangnam Terminal, and at 02:40 for Yeongdeungpo Station.



Information on buses: (032) 741-6400
(02) 2664-9898

Airport Railway

The Airport Line is conveniently connected to Seoul's subway network. Transfer is easy and the overall fare is about 4,500 won, so if you do not have much luggage, using the subway is a good idea. The first train leaves at 05:27 and the last at 23:46. If this is your first visit to Korea, however, you might do better to take a bus or taxi.

To get there from the 1st floor of the passenger terminal go one floor down to B1 and follow the signs to Incheon International Airport Station.



Airport Railway Map

Information on Airport Railway: (032) 745-7788
www.arex.or.kr (in Korean)

Taxi

Credit cards and transportation cards are accepted in most taxis, but if you intend to pay with a card make sure to check there is a yellow [카드 택시] (CARD TAXI) sign at the right end of the roof of the car. To get from Incheon International Airport to downtown Seoul you will usually pay between 50,000 won and 80,000 (including toll) depending on distance, if the traffic is not too congested. If you take a deluxe taxi (black with a golden stripe on the side) the usual fare between Incheon International Airport and downtown Seoul starts at 80,000 won and goes up to around 110,000 (including toll). Although many drivers speak some English or Japanese, some Korean syllables sound very much alike when pronounced by foreigners, so make sure to write down locations in Korean if you are not 100% confident in your enunciation.

International taxi: www.intltaxi.co.kr

Other destinations

For locations other than Seoul, take a bus or the express railway KTX (the desk is next to Exit No. 7 on the 1st floor) from the airport heading directly to your destination, or contact us for further information.

In case you are already in the country we will provide you with detailed information on the location of your host's house and ways to get there. Contact us immediately if you have problems finding the location.

4. Moving in

Greet your host by bowing and saying “*Annyeong-haseyo*” – “hello” in Korean. Here handshaking is not very popular and you can make a nice first impression. The host will show you around the house and explain how to use all the facilities. He or she will introduce you to the family. Ask about everything you are not sure about. This will help you avoid

misunderstanding and bond with the host. If you do not understand each other, call Korea Homestay and we will assist you.

Before moving in you are required to submit a copy of your passport for identification purposes only. The copy will be destroyed after 90 days. Students need to bring a document certifying the fact that they are currently enrolled at a university or a language school in Korea.

The host and the guest sign an agreement for the intended term of stay if the period exceeds one week. The form of the contract is standard, but if you have specific requirements, they will be included. The contract is a legal agreement between the host and the guest. Korea Homestay is not responsible in terms of law for any breaches or other damages caused by any of the sides.

Once you move in, Korea Homestay will contact you approximately twice a month to make sure you are comfortable living with your hosts. Please, give us and your host your mobile number as soon as you get a phone so that we could reach you in cases of emergency. You too can call us any time with any problems or questions you might have.

Please try to be on time and move in on the agreed date. Unlike other types of accommodation, Homestay is based on a personal relationship of trust and amity between the host and the guest.

Write down the exact address and phone number of the host and keep it with you in case you have trouble finding the house when you go out by yourself for the first time. Call us immediately if you get lost.

If you feel uncomfortable at the host's home or just do not like the host, we will find you a new place to stay immediately.

III. Homestay Manners

The younger generation in Korea is extremely progressive and open-minded. The fact remains, however, that Korean society in general is still very conservative and good manners matter more than you imagine. This is an inseparable part of the Korean culture, so try and do your best to understand and appreciate this peculiarity as this will help you get a better view of the real Korea. While in public many people will act differently in front of foreigners and you will be forgiven many breaches of etiquette, at home it would be nice to follow the traditional ways just as Koreans do. Remember also that Koreans are very polite people. They will probably never let you know that you have made a mistake, but your behavior will still have some impact on their opinion about you, even though they may not realize it themselves.

1. Greeting

Once in Korea you will be bowing a lot. Whether you meet someone for the first time or not, unless you are close friends, you should bow to each other. People older than you might stop bowing after only a few encounters, but this does not mean that you too should not bow. You do not need to bow only to people that are much younger than yourself. The higher the rank (defined either by social status or age), the deeper the bow should be. It is usual to bow up to 90 degrees when you meet a school professor, for instance. Bow also when you leave, when you receive something, also in sign of gratitude or apology. In fact, many people will make a judgment about you based on the way you did (or did not) bow.

Handshaking is not generally practiced in Korea, although some people may offer their hand, most often, because they want to greet you in a customary for you way. Do not initiate a handshake if you are the younger party. Wait for a woman to extend her hand, if you are male, but keep in mind that will almost never happen in Korea.

2. Confucianism and age

Korea has a strong tradition of Confucianism, developed to a level higher even of that in China. Age is the most important factor indicating one's position in a social group. If you speak Korean, always use honorific expressions when talking to people older than you. It is extremely rude to object to or argue with an older person, but Koreans have developed subtle ways to express their opinion. You can learn all that and lots more at your host's home.





Your hosts may sometimes ask you to call them *omoni* – mother and *aboji* – father. This indicates their position in the household and has nothing to do with them wanting to replace your own parents. It is usual for Koreans to call their friends' parents in this way, referring to their status, not the relationship.

Older females, or “older sisters”, are called *onni* if you are a girl and *nuna* if you are a guy even if the age difference between you is less than a year. Older males, “big brothers”, are called *oppa* by girls, and *hyung* by guys. This is just one example of the many age-based relationships in Korea. Such ties are very important as through them people find their place in the society.










3. General manners

- 🏠 Using someone's personal name is accepted only between close friends or when referring to much younger people. Address people by their social title or family status and always add an honorific particle. Married women and men are often



referred to as “_____’s mom” or “_____’s dad”, i.e. Minsoo’s mom, Sumi’s dad. To avoid confusion ask your hosts how would they prefer you to call them.

-  When handing something to an older person, or to someone you are not close with, use your both hands. The same goes when you accept something. Hold your glass with two hands when you are being poured alcohol and bow slightly as a way of saying “thank you”.
-  Avoid touching people or putting your hand around their shoulder, especially if they are older than you or of the opposite sex. This will save you a lot of confusion and embarrassment.
-  Whether you are allowed to smoke in the house depends on your agreement with the host. Remember, however, that smoking in front of older people is considered extremely rude, so avoid doing it. Even when they say it is alright, Koreans do not usually mean it.
-  Take off your shoes before going into the house.






4. Table manners

-  Before eating it is polite to say thank you for the food: “*Chal mok-ke-sumnida*” or, literally, “I will eat well”.
-  Use spoon for rice and soups and chopsticks for other food. You may ask your hosts for fork if you are not comfortable using chopsticks, but come on, chopsticks are much more fun and people are always willing to teach you how to use them.
-  Keep your bowl on the table at all times. Koreans consider it improper to lift the bowl to eat out of it. The rice bowl is kept on the left side and the soup bowl on the right side.
-  Do not stick your chopsticks into the rice. This is done on funerals and is thought to bring bad luck.
-  Traditionally you should wait for the head of the family or the older members present to have the first bite before starting to eat yourself. When eating try to match the pace of the other family members. It is not polite to stand up in the middle of the meal, so if you eat too slowly they will feel obliged to wait for you to finish before leaving the table.
-  In Korea, as everywhere else, it is rude to watch television, read a book or newspaper, or talk on the phone/text during meals.
-  Do not blow your nose at the table. As Korean dishes are usually quite spicy, this may be hard to do. If there is really no other way, turn away from the table and just wipe your nose without making any sound. Even if you do not handle it quite well, the effort will be appreciated.
-  Even if you do not drink, it is not polite to decline when an elder offers to pour you alcohol. Remember to hold your glass with two hands and just touch its rim with your lips, if you do not want to even take a sip. Normally Koreans would even switch to kneeling position to accept a drink, but that is not going to be expected from a foreigner. Although your seniors at school may sometimes be too persistent in their efforts to get you drunk, no one will ever force you to drink at home.
-  When offering alcohol start with the person with the highest status, then the next one and so on. Hold the bottle with your right hand and touch your right elbow slightly with your left hand like you would do if you were holding a wide sleeve

up. This gesture originated from the times when people used to wear wide-sleeved clothes and actually had to hold them in this way to avoid soaking them in the food. Never pour yourself a drink. When done filling the other members' glasses hand the bottle to someone else to fill your own.

-  When drinking in front of older people turn away from them to take a sip and cover the glass with your left hand so that they “do not see” you drinking. There is no rule telling in which direction to turn, but in general turn away from the oldest person present at the table.
-  Sometimes an elder may offer you their glass. Hold it with two hands while he or she (highly unlikely) pours you a drink, drink it and then return the glass and fill it up for them to drink.

5. Homestay guidelines

-  Please inform your hosts if you intend to spend the night out or take a short trip for a few days. Give them your contact number for cases of emergency. This is done for your own safety and with consideration that this is a one-on-one relationship. The hosts will feel responsible and will genuinely care for you, so informing them in such cases is not only a matter of etiquette. Please be assured that they will never disturb you without a reason.
-  If you are residing long-term and leave for more than a week, you do not need to pay the fee for that period.
-  Your host may take you sightseeing just a few times or once every week. This depends on yours and the host's schedules and interests. It is okay to just go out together a couple of times and the host may not ask for an additional fee when guiding you, but considering that he or she is investing time and probably money, you could offer a small fee to cover the expenses. Normally, that would start at around 10,000 won per day. Arrange this beforehand when moving in, because as you get closer later it may feel awkward to discuss the matter. Keep in mind that Koreans are as polite as to refuse two or three times before accepting the offer, so ask more than once. There are other ways to repay the favor – you can buy your host lunch or at least offer to pay his or hers entrance fee.
-  Lunch and dinner are not included in the Homestay fee. Some houses may have defined prices for all additional meals. If not, the price for a meal is between 5,000 won and 10,000 won.
-  Try to keep an open mind and feel free to contact us whenever you feel uncomfortable at the host's home.

IV. Cultural Experience

While staying with your host family you will practice the language, try home-made Korean cuisine, join the family in their traditional celebrations, visit tourist sites, play traditional games, and do many other things together.

Korean language

One of the best ways to learn Korean is to practice it with native speakers. Koreans are friendly and talkative people. They find it interesting to teach foreigners their language.

The Korean language is called *Hanguo*. *Hangul* is the native alphabet of the Korean language, as distinguished from the logographic Sino-Korean *hanja* system. It was created in the mid-15th century, and is now the official script of both North Korea and South Korea, being co-official in the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture of China.

Hangul is a phonemic alphabet organized into syllabic blocks. Each block consists of at least two of the 24 Hangul letters, with at least one each of the 14 consonants and 10 vowels. These syllabic blocks can be written horizontally from left to right as well as vertically from top to bottom in columns from right to left.

Vowels and diphthongs

ㅏ	ㅑ	ㅓ	ㅕ	ㅗ	ㅛ	ㅜ	ㅠ	ㅡ	ㅣ	ㅝ	ㅞ	ㅟ	ㅠ
a	eo	o	u	eu	i	ae	e	oe	w				
ㅓ	ㅕ	ㅗ	ㅛ	ㅜ	ㅠ	ㅡ	ㅣ	ㅝ	ㅞ	ㅟ	ㅠ		
ya	yeo	yo	yu	yae	ye	wa	wae	wo	we				
ㅟ													
ui													

Consonants

ㄱ	ㅋ	ㄴ	ㄷ	ㅌ	ㄹ	ㅁ	ㅂ	ㅍ	ㅅ
g, k	kk	n	d, t	tt	r, l	m	b, p	pp	s
ㅆ	ㅇ	ㅈ	ㅊ	ㅌ	ㅋ	ㅍ	ㅍ	ㅎ	
ss	ng	j	jj	ch	k	t	p	h	

Essential Korean phrases:

안녕하세요?	Annyeong-haseyo	Hello.
저는 _____입니다.	Jeoneun _____ imnida	I am John.
반갑습니다.	Ban-gapseumnida.	It's nice to meet you.
감사합니다.	Gamsa-hamnida	Thank you.
천천히 말씀 해 주세요.	Chonchon-hee malssum hae juseyo.	Speak a little bit more slowly, please.
얼마예요?	Eolma-yeyo?	How much is it?
네	Ne	Yes.
예	Ye	Yes.
아니오	Ani-yo	No.
안녕히 계세요	An-nyeoung-hi gyeseyo	Goodbye (to a person who is staying at the same place)
안녕히 가세요	An-nyeoung-hi gaseyo	Goodbye (to a person who is leaving)
이 주소로 가 주세요.	I jusoro ga juseyo.	Please take me to this address.
화장실이 어디에 있어요?	Hwajangshiri eodie isseoyo	Where is the bathroom?
지하철역이 어디에 있어요?	Jihacheollyeogi eodie isseoyo	Where is the subway station?
배가 고파요.	Baega kophayo	I'm hungry.
죄송합니다.	Jweson hamnida	I apologize.
좋아요.	Joayo	Okay. / I like it.
싫어요.	Sireoyo	I don't want to. / I don't like it.
괜찮아요.	Gwaenchanayo	It's okay.
잘 먹겠습니다.	Jal mok-ke-sumnida	Thank you (for the food, lit. I will eat well).
맛있어요.	Mashissoyo	It's delicious.
여보세요?	Yeoboseyo	Hello (on the phone).
안녕히 주무세요.	Annyong-hee chumuseyo	Good night.
머리가 아파요.	Moriga apayo	I have a headache.
배가 아파요.	Baega apayo	My stomach hurts.
몸이 안 좋아요.	Momi an joayo.	I don't feel very well.
열이 나요.	Yeori nayo.	I have fever.
감기에 걸렸어요.	Gamgie geollyeosseoyo.	I have a cold.
알겠습니다.	Algessumnida.	I understand. / I see.
모르겠습니다.	Morugessumnida.	I don't understand.
무슨 뜻입니까?	Museun tteushimnikka?	What does it mean?
다시 말씀해 주세요.	Dasi malsseumhae juseyo	Could you repeat that?

The national institute of the Korean language: www.korean.go.kr

A list of Korean language schools can be found here: studyinkorea.go.kr

Korean Cuisine

Korean cuisine originated from ancient agricultural and nomadic traditions in the Korean peninsula and southern Manchuria. It is largely based on rice, noodles, tofu, vegetables, and meats. Korean meals almost always include any number of side dishes *banchan* that accompany the main entree. *Kimchi* is usually served at every meal. Many Korean *banchan* rely on fermentation for flavor and preservation, resulting in a tangy, salty, and spicy taste. Commonly used ingredients include sesame oil, *doenjang* (fermented bean paste), soy sauce, salt, garlic, ginger, pepper flakes and *gochujang* (fermented red chili paste).

Traditionally, all dishes at the Korean table are served at the same time. Every person has a separate rice and soup bowl, but the *banchan* are put in the center of the table and shared by everyone. The main dish is also usually placed in the middle, although every guest has a small personal plate to put some of it in.

Main dishes

Bap (steamed rice) Rice is always present at the table. It can be just plain steamed rice, or sticky rice with beans, chestnuts, red beans, barley, peas, or cereals added for flavor and nutrition. Nowadays rice is cooked in electric rice steamers.

Juk (porridge) *Juk* can be made of rice, red beans, or pumpkin with vegetables, chicken, mushrooms, bean sprouts, pine nuts, ginseng, etc. added. *Juk* is very easily digested and that is why it is recommended even for sick people.

Guk (soup) Soup is also always present in one or another form at the table. Soups are often made with meats, shellfish and vegetables. Soups can be made into more formal soups known as *tang*, often served as the main dish of the meal.

Jjigae (stew) *Jjigae* is a thicker, heavier seasoned soup or stew. The most famous one, *doenjang jjigae* is made from fermented soy bean paste and in addition to being delicious is also extremely good for the health.

Mandu (dumplings) They can be stuffed with beef, mushrooms, mung bean sprouts, chicken, fish, or even *kimchi*. Boiled, steamed, or fired they taste just as great and even better when dipped into soy sauce.

Guksu (noodles) Korea offers a wide variety of noodles made from different ingredients. *Memil guksu* (buckwheat noodles) and *milguksu* (wheat noodles) used to be eaten only on birthdays, weddings or auspicious occasions because the long and continued shape were thought to be associated with the bliss for longevity and long-lasting marriage. Other traditional noodles are *onmyeon* or *guksu jangguk* (noodles with a hot clear broth), *naengmyeon* (cold buckwheat noodles served with ice cubes) enjoyed often in the hot summer months, *bibim guksu* (spicy cold noodle dish mixed with vegetables), *kalguksu* (knife-cut noodles), and *kongguksu* (noodles with a cold soybean broth). In the royal court, *baekmyeon* (white noodles) made of buckwheat noodles with pheasant broth, was regarded as the highest quality noodle dish.

Jajangmyeon, a staple Koreanized Chinese noodle dish, is extremely popular in Korea as fast, take-out food. It is made with a black bean sauce usually fried with diced pork or

seafood and a variety of vegetables, including zucchini and potatoes. This is what you would most often order if you do not feel like cooking at home in Korea.

Ramyeon are Korean instant noodles. They come in countless tastes and sizes and are probably the most consumed most favorite snack of the majority of Koreans and foreigners too.

Banchan

Kimchi Koreans often say they cannot eat if there is no *kimchi* at the table. *Kimchi* is a fermented vegetable dish usually made out of cabbage, daikon, or sometimes cucumber, commonly fermented in a brine of ginger, garlic, scallions, and chili pepper. There are endless varieties, and it is served as a side dish or cooked into soups and rice dishes. Koreans traditionally make enough *kimchi* to last for the entire winter season, although with refrigerators and commercially produced *kimchi*, this practice has become less common. Although it may be a little bit too spicy for most foreigners in the beginning, it is actually really addictive. You know you are Korean when you start missing the *kimchi* when it is not on the table.

Jjim and jorim (simmered meat or fish) Both are made by soaking the main ingredient in soy bean sauce and then slowly boiling it over a low flame.

Namul (vegetables or wild greens) are slightly boiled or fried vegetables seasoned with salt, soy sauce sesame salt, sesame oil, garlic, onions, etc. They can be served separately as a side dish or mixed together with rice and hot pepper paste *gochujang*.

Jeotgal (matured salted seafood) is a very salty dish made of fermented fish, shellfish, shrimp, oysters, fish roe, and other ingredients.

Jeon (pan-fried side dishes) is a kind of a thick pancake that can be made from potatoes, *kimchi*, mung beans paste, or green onions with seafood, unripe red peppers, meat, or other ingredients. This dish tastes best when it is dipped in a mixture of soy sauce, vinegar, and red pepper powder.

Gui (grilled dishes) are usually made of meat or fish and may, in some cases, comprise grilled vegetables or other vegetable ingredients. The suffix *gui* is often omitted in the names of meat-based *gui* such as *galbi* (ribs), the name of which was originally *galbi gui*. Another popular type is the famous *bulgogi* – one of the favorite dishes of most foreigners in Korea. At traditional restaurants *bulgogi* is cooked at the center of the table over a charcoal grill, surrounded by various *banchan* and individual rice bowls. The cooked meat is then cut into small pieces and wrapped with fresh lettuce leaves, with rice, thinly sliced garlic, *ssamjang* (a mixture of red pepper paste *gochujang* and soy bean paste *dwenjang*), and other seasonings.

Deserts

Tteok Traditional rice cakes are made from either pounded rice, pounded glutinous rice, or glutinous rice left whole, without pounding. They are served either filled or covered with sweetened mung bean paste, red bean paste, mashed red beans, raisins, a sweetened filling made with sesame seeds, sweet pumpkin, beans, jujubes, pine nuts, or honey. Pine needles can be used for imparting flavor during the steaming process.

Hangwa is a general term referring to all types of Korean traditional confectionery. The ingredients of hahngwa could be grain flour, honey, *yeot*, sugar, or fruit and edible roots. *Hangwa* is largely divided into *yumilgwa* (fried confectionery), *suksilgwa*, *jeonggwa*, *gwapyeon*, *dasik* (tea food) and *yeot*. *Yumilgwa* is made by stir-frying or frying pieces of dough, such as *maejakgwa* and *yakgwa*. *Maejakgwa* is a ring-shaped confection made of wheat flour, vegetable oil, cinnamon, ginger juice, *jocheong*, and pine nuts, while *yakgwa*, literally "medicinal confectionery", is a flower-shaped biscuit made of honey, sesame oil and wheat flour. *Suksilgwa* is made by boiling fruits, ginger, or nuts in water, and then forming the mix into the original fruit's shape, or other shapes. *Gwapyeon* is a jelly-like confection made by boiling sour fruits, starch, and sugar. *Dasik*, literally "eatery for tea", is made by kneading rice flour, honey, and various types of flour from nuts, herbs, sesame, or jujubes. *Jeonggwa* is made by boiling fruits, plant roots and seeds in honey, *mulyeot* (liquid candy) or sugar. It is similar to marmalade or jam. *Yeot* is a Korean traditional candy in liquid or solid form made from steamed rice, glutinous rice, glutinous kaoliang, corn, sweet potatoes or mixed grains. The steamed ingredients are lightly fermented and boiled in a large pot called *sot* for a long time.

Alcohol

Makgeolli is a very specific rice wine native to Korea. It is made by fermenting a mixture of wheat and rice which gives it a milky, off-white color, and sweetness. It is about 6.5–7% alcohol by volume. Most *makgeolli* contains more wheat than rice these days; a few brands contain no rice at all. It was originally quite popular among farmers, earning it the name *nongju* (farmer's liquor). However, it has recently started to become more popular in cities, especially with the younger generations mostly due to its low alcohol content and reasonable price. *Dongdongju* is a drink very similar to *makgeolli*, and both usually require *pajeon* (onion pancakes) as a side dish. Traditionally, it is served in a large metal or wooden bowl from which individual cups and bowls are filled using a ladle. As it is an unfiltered beverage, *makgeolli* is generally shaken or stirred before being consumed, as the cloudy white portion tends to settle to the bottom, leaving a pale yellow-clear liquid on top.

Soju is a distilled beverage native to Korea. Though traditionally made from rice, most major brands supplement or even replace the rice with other starches such as potato, wheat, barley, sweet potato, or tapioca (called *dangmil* in Korean). Soju is clear in color and typically varies in alcohol content from about 20% to about 45% alcohol in volume. It is the most widely consumed alcohol in Korea.

Maekju is simply beer. Korean beer is similar in taste and also in price. Imported brands tend to be more expensive and they are often suited to the taste of the Korean consumer.

You can also try various fruit wines made from plums, grapes, black raspberries, cherries, pine fruits, pomegranates, and many others. There are mushroom flavored alcoholic beverages and such with whole ginseng roots floating in the bottle.

Try cooking some of the dishes together with your host. Find useful recopies in English here:

koreanrecipes.org

www.maangchi.com

Traditional Clothes

Korea is one of the few highly developed economies in the world where you can still see people in traditional clothes mingled with the crowd in the streets. There are hardly any Korean homes where you will not find at least one *hanbok* hanging in the closet. Be it a wedding, a national holiday, or simply a big family meeting many Koreans put on the colorful dresses and thus often add a sense of tradition to an otherwise ordinary occasion. Some palaces even offer free entrance on big holidays if you are dressed in *hanbok*.

The *hanbok* (literally, Korean clothing) is simple and beautiful with its vibrant colors and clean lines. Today *hanbok* often refers specifically to the clothes worn throughout the Joseon Dynasty and is worn as semi-formal or formal wear during traditional festivals and celebrations. Women's *hanbok* is characterized by tight and short *jeogori* (upper part) and wide and loose skirt, *chima*. Men wear longer upper part with wide baggy pants. In the past, commoners used to wear white clothes, while the nobles' brightly colored dresses indicated their social status.

Modern *hanbok* does not exactly follow the actual style as worn in Joseon dynasty since it went through some major changes during the 20th century. Today's *hanboks* are more comfortable and the designs can sometimes be much more complicated and often influenced by modern fashion trends.

Traditional Arts

You and your host can take a day to enjoy traditional performances or dive in the simple beauty of the old style Korean paintings.

Traditional Dance

Traditional dance in Korea originated in early shamanistic rituals thousands of years ago. Other ritual dances that can be seen today include Confucian ritual ceremonies and Buddhist dance.

Court dances, called *jeongjae*, used to be performed in front of the royal family, court officials, and foreign envoys. With their slow and gracious movements reveal the beauty of moderation and the emotions that had to be subdued as a result of the strong influence of Confucian philosophy.

In contrast, folk dances mirror life with all its joy and sadness. They are exciting and romantic and show the true colors of the spontaneous Korean people. There are numerous variations of the folk dance, some lively, some very tense, but all invariably extremely emotional.

New traditional dance is what is generally seen in many performances today. Those include the famous fan dance *buchaechum* and dances with various kinds of drums.

Traditional Music

Korean traditional music is generally divided into court music, *jongak*, and folk music, *minsogak*. *Jeongak* has a slow, solemn and complicated melody, while *minsogak* is fast and vigorous. The popular folk genre *pansori* resembles opera with long vocals and percussive music played by one singer and one drummer. The lyrics tell one of five different stories, but are individualized by each performer, often with updated jokes and audience participation.

Korean court music preserved to date can be traced to the beginning of the Joseon Dynasty in 1392. It is now rare, except for government-sponsored organizations like The National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts. There are three types of court music. One is called *aak*, and is an imported form of Chinese ritual music, and another is a pure Korean form called *hyang-ak*; the last is a combination of Chinese and Korean influences, and is called *dang-ak*.

Traditional Paintings

Korean artists have an inclination towards naturalism, where landscapes, flowers, and animals are rendered in ink and colored pigments of paper. Throughout the history of Korean painting, there has been a constant separation of monochromatic works of black brushwork on mulberry paper or silk and the colorful folk art or *minhwa*, ritual arts, tomb paintings, and festival arts which had extensive use of color. This distinction was often class-based: scholars, particularly in Confucian art felt that one could see color in monochromatic paintings within the gradations and felt that the actual use of color coarsened the paintings, and restricted the imagination. Korean folk art and painting of architectural frames was seen as brightening certain outside wood frames, and again within the tradition of Chinese architecture, and the early Buddhist influences of profuse rich *thalo* and primary colors inspired by the art of India.

Traditional Holidays

Participate in traditional celebrations with your host family. Koreans are very hospitable, so expect to be included in all of their family meetings and rituals. Holidays may be very lonely for foreigners living in Korea, because usually all of their Korean friends go back to their home towns for as long as a week. When you live with a Korean family, however, you can get a taste of the holiday that no other tourist-oriented program can offer.

Korean New Year

Sseollal is the first day of the lunar calendar. It is one of the two most important traditional holidays in Korea and is celebrated for whole three days. Korean New Year generally falls on the day of the second new moon after winter solstice, unless there is a very rare intercalary eleventh or twelfth month in the lead-up to the New Year.

Korean New Year is a family-oriented holiday. Most Koreans head back to their home towns to visit their parents and other relatives where they perform the ancestral ritual known as *charye*. Many Koreans dress up in colorful *hanbok*. Many Koreans greet the New Year by visiting East coast locations such as Gangneung and Donghae in Gangwon province, where they are most likely to see the first rays of the New Year's sun

The most commonly served dish on *sseollal* is *tteokguk* (soup with rice cakes) and people say that by eating it you “eat” one more year. In Korea age is determined not by the exact date of birth, but by the year, so everyone grows a year older on the first day of the year.

On *sseollal* children wish their elders (grandparents, aunts and uncles, parents) a happy new year by performing one deep traditional bow and the words *saehae bok manhi badeuseyo*, or wish you be blessed in the New Year. Parents typically reward this gesture by giving their children New Year money and offering words of wisdom.

Harvest Festival

Chuseok is the other big Korean holiday. It is a major harvest festival and a three-day holiday celebrated on the 15th day of the 8th month of the lunar calendar, around the Autumn Equinox. As a celebration of the good harvest, Koreans visit their ancestral hometowns and share a feast of Korean traditional food such as *songpyeon* – a crescent-shaped rice cake steamed upon pine needles. On the eve of *chuseok*, the entire family gathers together to make *songpyeon* under the bright moon. There is an old Korean saying that says that the person who makes the most beautiful *songpyeon* will meet a good-looking spouse so, all the single of the single members of the family try their best to make the finest looking *songpyeon*. Other foods commonly prepared for *chuseok* are *japchae*, *bulgogi* and lots of *jeon*. Another important thing on the *chuseok* table is the traditional liquor, called *baekju* (white wine).

On *chuseok* morning, as on *sseollal*, family members gather together to hold memorial services *charye* in honor of their ancestors. After the service, the family members sit down together at the table to enjoy the food that symbolizes the richness of the harvest. To celebrate the coming of the fall villagers dress themselves as cows or turtles, and go from house to house along with a band playing folk music.

Keep in mind that most shops, including restaurants and even the biggest retail chains, will be closed on both *chuseok* and *sseollal*.

Buddha's birthday

In Korea the birthday of Buddha is celebrated according to the Lunar calendar. This day is called *Seokga tansinil*, "the day Buddha was born" or *Bucheonim osin nal*, meaning "the day when Buddha arrived". Colorful lotus lanterns are hung in Buddhist temples and all over the streets leading to them throughout the entire month. On the day of Buddha's birth, many temples provide free meals, usually *sanchae bibimbap* and tea to all visitors.

Lotus lantern festival is held every year in Seoul for Buddha's birthday. The streets come alive with shining lanterns of all colors, shapes and sizes. The central area of Seoul is closed for a lantern parade where representatives from all major Buddhist temples in Korea exhibit the fruits of one year long process of creation. Check the schedule for the festival at www.llf.or.kr.

Folk games

Many traditional games are associated with *sseollal* and *chuseok*, but you do not need a holiday to play!

The traditional family board game *yutnori* is still a popular pastime. The game is played between two partners or two teams who play in turns, but it is possible to have more teams. Instead of dice, the *yut* sticks are used. Each team casts the sticks in turn, then moves a mal according to the score achieved. When played with large groups it is not uncommon for some group members never to cast the sticks: they still participate discussing the strategy.

In Korea men and boys would fly kites or play *jegi chagi* – a game where a light object is wrapped in paper or cloth, and then kicked in a footbag like manner.

Korean women and girls traditionally played *neolttwigi*, a game of jumping on a seesaw, while children spun *paengi*. Other common folk games are tug of war, wrestling or *ssireum*, and archery.

V. Useful Tips

Rent-a-Phone

If you intend to stay in Korea for a short period, instead of buying a mobile phone, you can borrow one at the airport. Look for SK Telecom, SHOW, or LG Telecom's Rent-a-Phone Service centers at Floors 1 and 3 on Incheon International Airport.

Once you are issued an alien registration card, you can get a normal mobile phone at any mobile shop around the country, although there are some limitations on usage for foreigners and some providers may require for you to deposit 200,000 won that will be returned to you upon departure.

Currency Exchange

Korean currency is the "won" (₩/KRW)



You might find it useful to exchange some currency at the airport. The exchange rates vary slightly across banks and exchange service shops. Banks are open from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on weekdays. Exchange shops are hard to come by, except for in some popular shopping districts.

Alien Registration

Foreigners eligible for registration are required to apply for the issuance of Foreigner Registration Card within 90 days from the arrival date, if they intend to stay in Korea for more than 90 days. Check our homepage for details.

Climate

Korea has a temperate continental climate with four distinct seasons.

Spring

Spring lasts from late March to May and is especially beautiful in Korea with cherry trees and magnolias blooming in every street in the cities and all around the countryside. It is probably the shortest season of all as, once the cold months are over, temperatures tend to rise rather quickly.

The spring is the time of the yellow sands, originating in the Mongolian desert. The yellow sands may cause mild irritation to the eyes, but it is basically just dust originating from the soil and thus is not particularly harmful for the health. Koreans solve the problem easily by wearing sanitary masks for the couple of days when the concentration of sand in the air is the highest.

Summer

Korean summers are hot and humid and last from June to the end of September. During the early summer there is a rainy period of about two weeks with marked concentration of rainfall. In late summer typhoons tend to pass over South Korea, but they usually do not cause substantial damage. In July the mean temperature is between 22 and 25°C (72 to 77°F). The high humidity, however, creates the illusion of temperatures being much higher. Early summer is a great time to travel to Korea.

Autumn

Fantastic weather and picturesque landscapes is what to expect from the autumn in Korea. Lasting from September to November for most of the time it is still warm, but not hot. It is the best season for visiting Korea. The trees change into bright colors that can rarely be seen in most other countries.

Autumn is the season of Korea's favorite holiday – the harvest festival Chuseok. Traditional celebrations bring people dressed in traditional clothes out to the streets. Celebrations take place all around the country.

Winter

Winters in Korea are dry and relatively cold. Starting from December occasional snowfalls create beautiful winter scenes and excellent conditions for winter sports. Mean temperature in January is a little bit under 0°C (around 28°F). Make sure to bring warm clothes if you plan on visiting Korea during the winter. Many provinces organize winter festivals with snow sculpture exhibitions and cultural events.

VI. Important Numbers

Emergency

Police: 112

Fire and Ambulance: 119 (Translation Available by Dialing 1330)

Emergency Medical Information Center: 1339 (English, Japanese and Chinese available)

Calling Assistance

International Telephone Information: 00794

International Calls Using Dialing Assistance: 00799

Local Directory Assistance: 114

Long Distance Directory Assistance: Area Code + 114

VII. Information

Immigration

www.immigration.go.kr

www.mofat.go.kr (list of Diplomatic Missions in Korea)

General information

www.visitkorea.or.kr

www.hikorea.go.kr

wiki.galbijim.com

www.worknplay.co.kr

Subway

Busan: www.humetro.busan.kr

Daegu: www.dtro.or.kr

Daejeon: www.djet.co.kr

Gwangju: www.gwangj subway.co.kr

Seoul Lines 1 – 4: www.seoulmetro.co.kr

Lines 5 – 8: www.smrt.co.kr

Line 9: www.metro9.co.kr

Tourist sites

Museums

National Museum of Korea: www.museum.go.kr
National Folk Museum of Korea: www.nfm.go.kr
War Memorial of Korea: www.warmemo.or.kr
Seoul Museum of History: www.museum.seoul.kr
National Museum of Contemporary Art: www.moca.go.kr

Palaces

Gyeongbokgung: www.royalpalace.go.kr
Changdeokgung: www.cdg.go.kr
Deoksogung: www.deoksogung.go.kr
Changgyeonggung: cgg.cha.go.kr
Gyeonghuigung: jikimi.cha.go.kr

Folk Villages

Korean Folk Village: www.koreanfolk.co.kr
Namsangol Hanok Village: hanokmaeul.seoul.go.kr

Parks

Parks of Seoul: parks.seoul.go.kr
Hangang Park: hangang.seoul.go.kr

Tours

Seoul City Bus Tour: www.seoulcitybus.com

Festivals

Yeongdeungpo Festivals: www.ydp.go.kr
Hanwha Fireworks: www.bulnori.com
High Seoul Festival: www.hiseoulfest.org
Lotus Lantern Festival: www.llf.or.kr
Seoul International Family Film Festival: www.siff.org

Amusement Parks and Zoos

Seoul Land: www.seoul.land.co.kr
Lotte World: www.lotteworld.com

Everland, Zootopia, Caribbean Bay: www.everland.com
Seoul Zoo: grandpark.seoul.go.kr
Children's Grand Park: www.sisul.or.kr/global/eng/park/park03.jsp

VIII. FAQs

Q. What is the difference between Homestay and Boarding House (hasuk)?

A. A Boarding House is much like a hotel. The owners simply provide rooms and meals for many guests at the same time. Homestay, on the other hand, is a personal one-on-one relationship. You live together with the hosts, experiencing their culture and practicing the language. The hosts will treat you like a member of the family, they will teach you how to cook, play traditional games, how to behave in Korea. You will have the opportunity to participate in many family events and celebrations.

Q. I am worried about who will be the host.

A. Our hosts have been carefully selected by the Korea Homestay team. We only approve of people who are genuinely interested in culture exchange and have an open mind. They are absolutely friendly to foreigners. In addition, we review all applications and only recommend hosts that match the criteria listed in your application.

Q. What if the hosts exploit me as a free language tutor?

A. The aim of the program is to learn about each other's cultures, but free language lessons are not part of the deal. In some cases you may get a discount if you agree to tutor the host's children, but it is totally up to you to decide.

Q. Is Homestay safe?

A. Homestay means that you live in an actual family environment. You are required to inform your hosts if you intend to spend nights out or travel, just like you would do at your own home. This way, you are probably safer than anyone living on their own.

Q. Will they respect my privacy?

A. Yes. Our hosts receive training where they are informed about different cultures. They are taught that foreigners need their privacy and they will do their best not to intrude it.

Q. What if I don't like the food?

A. The hosts know that foreigners sometimes might have trouble eating spicy Korean cuisine. They will match the dishes to your taste. You are not required to eat at home, if you do not want to. You can learn how to cook Korean food from your hosts.

www.korea-homestay.com
[facebook/koreahomestay](https://facebook.com/koreahomestay)
[twitter/goodhomestay](https://twitter.com/goodhomestay)
+82-70-7807-6888.