

## **TOURISM IN THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF KOREA – INTRODUCTION**

This introduction of the development of the tourist industry in the DPR Korea is taken from the official tourism website of the Government of DPR Korea, for more information, please see <http://www.tourismdprk.gov.kp>

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Korea is not so big in territorial size. It has been called the “silk-embroidered land of three thousand ri” or the “land of morning calm” for its beautiful and picturesque landscape, and the “eastern country of good manners” for the kindness of its people.

From the first day of its founding the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea has pursued an active policy for development of tourism under the ideal of independence, peace and friendship, regarding the international tourist industry as an important work which would contribute to promoting mutual understanding and cultural bond between peoples around the world and developing the national economy.

On August 24, Juche 42 (1953), less than a month after the ceasefire of the Korean war, the DPRK government founded the Korea International Travel Company for the purpose of developing international tourism.

Between the 1960s and the 1980s, the world-famous Mts. Kumgang and Myohyang and other celebrated mountains and scenic spots were developed into tourist destinations, tourist highways from Pyongyang via Wonsan to Mt. Kumgang, from Pyongyang to Hyangsan and from Pyongyang to Kaesong opened to traffic, and such service facilities as Pyongyang Koryo Hotel and Hyangsan Hotel built in a modern way.

Between the 1990s and the 2000s when an acute political and military standoff prevailed on the Korean peninsula due to the US hostile policy against the DPRK, the DPRK government promoted the work to develop tourism, with the result that the areas in Mts. Paektu, Chilbo, Kuwol and Jongbang were developed into wonderful tourist destinations and Yanggakdo International Hotel and other tourist service facilities newly built or renovated.

Today the tourist industry in the DPRK is developing afresh under the wise leadership of supreme leader Kim Jong Un.

In 2013 alone, the world-class Masikryong Ski Resort and Masikryong Hotel were built in the MasikPass area on the eastern coast of the country, and the Victorious Fatherland

Liberation War Museum, Munsu Water Park and Mirim Riding Club and other facilities for cultural and sports tourism.

Vigorous efforts are being made to spruce up such celebrated mountains as Paektu, Chilbo and Kumgang and the scenic spots in the eastern and western coasts and provincial tourist resorts into the world-class ones. New tour itineraries are being developed in a bid to link the tourist areas.

In order to fully ensure the traffic convenience of in-bound tourists from many countries and regions, efforts are now directed to opening new air and sea routes. The DPRK government welcomes foreign investment in developing the tourist attractions of the country and the construction of infrastructures for tourism. It is also taking positive measures to preferentially treat and protect foreign investment enterprises.

For the purpose of developing tourism in close cooperation with international bodies, the DPRK joined the UNWTO on September 22, Juche 76 (1987) and the PATA on May 14, Juche 84 (1995).

The main tourist attractions include several cities such as Pyongyang, the capital of the DPRK, Kaesong, Wonsan, Hamhung, Nampho, Sariwon, Sinuiju and Chongjin, and celebrated mountains and scenic spots such as Mts. Paektu, Myohyang, Kumgang, Chilbo and Kuwol, and Masikryong Ski Resort, Ullim Falls and Songdowon.

In Pyongyang, tourists visit President Kim Il Sung's birthplace in Mangyongdae, Kumsusan Palace of the Sun, the supreme sanctuary of Juche where President Kim Il Sung and Chairman Kim Jong Il lie in state, Grand Monument on Mansu Hill, Tower of the Juche Idea, Arch of Triumph, Grand People's Study House, Mangyongdae Schoolchildren's Palace, the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum and Pyongyang Metro, which can be seen in the DPRK, witnessing the real looks of socialist Korea.

Through colourful recreation activities including the walking on beautiful Moran Hill, one of the eight scenes of Korea, visits to mausoleums of King Tangun and King Tongmyong and other historical relics, People's Theatre, Pyongyang Grand Theatre, Korean Art Gallery and other theatres and museums, and enjoyment at the Central Zoo and Nature Museum, Munsu Water Park, Rungna People's Recreation Ground and Kaeson Youth Park, they can see the beautiful sceneries of Pyongyang, understand the long history and the developed culture and art, and experience the cheerful life of the Korean people. In the Mt. Paektu area they enjoy such natural wonders as the sublime landscape of the world-famous Mt. Paektu and visit Chairman Kim Jong Il's native home in the Paektusan Secret Camp and

other revolutionary battle sites and revolutionary sites, which vividly showcase the 20-year-old-long history of the arduous anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle commanded by President Kim Il Sung.

In Kaesong, a city of historical culture, they visit the Koryo Museum, and the mausoleums of King Wang Kon and King Kyonghyo (Kongmin), Ryongthong Temple and other historical relics, which have been registered as the World Cultural Heritages, to have a rich knowledge of the time-honoured history and splendid culture of the Korean nation that made great contributions to the development of the world culture and history.

Through the visit to Panmunjom and the Concrete Wall they will keenly feel the sufferings experienced by the Korean people due to the national division forced by outside forces. In the Mt. Myohyang area, they visit the International Friendship Exhibition House, which preserves the gifts presented to President Kim Il Sung, Chairman Kim Jong Il, supreme leader Kim Jong Un and anti-Japanese war heroine Kim Jong Suk by the world people on the five continents, and Pohyon Temple, a typical Buddhist temple of Korea built in the early 11th century, and Ryongmun Cavern which presents mysterious underground sceneries. And they may go mountaineering to Manphok Valley and Sangwon Hermitage in Mt. Myohyang.

In the Wonsan area, they enjoy the sightseeing of Ullim Falls, go skiing at the world-class Masikryong Ski Resort, go sea-bathing in Songdowon, Myongsasimni and other beautiful sand beaches on the East Sea of Korea and visit some places of historical and cultural importance in the city of Wonsan.

In Mt. Kumgang, they can go mountaineering and sightseeing to Kuryong Pond, Manmulsang, Lagoon Samil and other scenic places, feasting their eyes on the beautiful natural sceneries to their heart's content. In the Mt. Chilbo-Chongjin area, they can relish the beauty of valleys and peaks of Mt. Chilbo, enjoy at the seashore and go spa-bathing, and visit several places of culture in the city of Chongjin.

In the areas of Nampho, Sariwon and Mt. Kuwol, they tour the West Sea Barrage, an epitome of the DPRK's economic power, and the places of historical and cultural importance such as the Three Tombs in Kangso and Tokhung-ri Mural Tomb registered as the World Cultural Heritages, and enjoy the beautiful sceneries of Mt. Kuwol.

In the Sinuiju area, they visit several historical relics and educational and cultural establishments in the city.

The tour of the DPRK varies in tour itineraries from one day to over 15 nights. In recent years, the demand for tour of the DPRK is on the rapid increase. Various thematic tourism such as cultural tour, sports tour, tour for aircraft enthusiasts and cycling tour, in particular, are popular among tourists. A variety of itineraries in the cultural tour include the enjoyment of performances given by the State Symphony Orchestra and the art squads of schoolchildren, revolutionary operas and acrobatics; the visits to history museums and historical relics, Mansudae Art Studio, and Korean Art Gallery; and trying of the Korean traditional food and the national customs.

Such itineraries appeal to the tourists who are deeply interested in the culture and history of Korea. Mountaineering in Mts. Paektu, Myohyang, Kumgang and Chilbo; enjoyment and participating in several international sports games in the

DPRK; playing of friendly matches with local sports amateurs; visit to several kinds of aircrafts, taking photographs and getting flights by aviation enthusiasts; and cycling in different parts of the DPRK while feasting their eyes on the picturesque mountains and rivers—these itineraries of the sports tour help tourists enjoy the natural sceneries and satisfy their own tastes in sports. While visiting cooperative farms, stock-breeding farms and factories, they can witness the efforts of the

Korean people who have turned out in the drive to build a Socialist thriving nation. This is also popular among tourists.

The tourists are offered a high level of guiding service in English, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, German, Spanish and French as well as good traffic service. The National Tourism Administration of the DPRK is making active efforts to provide excellent services for all people who hope to visit the country with a friendly feeling. It will, in future, too, continue to make persevering efforts so that more and more tourists can have a pleasant time during their stay in the DPRK.