



Kim Il Sung Birthday Tour

TOUR

April 13 – 18/19, 2017
5 nights in the DPRK + 1 on the train

OVERVIEW

Soak up the atmosphere and join in the celebrations on President Kim Il Sung's 105th birthday!

April 15th is one of the biggest holidays in the DPRK calendar – the 105th birthday of President Kim Il Sung. We'll make sure that we're in Pyongyang this day, soaking up the atmosphere and joining in the birthday celebrations with the locals! As well as the birthday celebrations in Pyongyang, this tour also gets you down to the DMZ, where North and South Korea continue their decades-old face-off. You'll also have the chance to venture into the beautiful countryside of Mt Myohyang when visiting the International Friendship Exhibition and hiking in Manpok Valley.

HIGHLIGHTS

- 105th Birthday Celebrations on April 15th!
- Kumsusan Memorial Palace (Mausoleum of leaders), captured spy ship USS Pueblo and other Pyongyang highlights
- Panmunjom/DMZ – the border with South Korea
- The beautiful Mt Myohyang and International Friendship Exhibition

Please note that the itinerary may differ slightly to what is below but your tour leader will do their best to ensure that as much is covered as possible and will also add in extras when there is time such as a visit to a local bar or a funfair. We visit the DPRK regularly and know all the best places to go to make your trip even more unique. We will make the most of your time in the DPRK to guarantee the experience of a lifetime.

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DAILY ITINERARY

APRIL 12 – WEDNESDAY (BRIEFING DAY)

AM

- *Recommended latest arrival in Beijing.*

PM

- **16:00: Our group assembles for a pre-tour group briefing at the Koryo Tours office in Beijing.** This briefing will last approximately one hour and designed so that you will get the most out of your tour. It will cover travel etiquette, safety, and practicalities for travel in the DPRK. Have your last minute questions answered and meet your fellow travelers. *Please be punctual - you can come early, pay any outstanding tour fees and browse our collection of Korean art.*

Overnight: *Hotel in Beijing not included in the tour. Contact us for recommendations near our office!*

APRIL 13 – THURSDAY (ARRIVAL IN PYONGYANG)

AM

- **Free bus** from the Koryo Tours office to Beijing Capital Airport Terminal 2. *Exact time TBC at the pre-tour briefing. Alternatively meet the group at the Air Koryo check-in counter.*

PM

- Flight departure from Beijing on **Air Koryo flight JS 252** at 14:05. *A 1.5 hour flight with basic lunch (no vegetarian option).*
- **Arrival to Pyongyang's Sunan International Airport (FNJ)** at 16:35. DPRK immigration and customs, meet your Korean guides, and transfer to the city.
- **Arch of Triumph** - Massive archway commemorating the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonial rule. Made for the 70th anniversary of President Kim Il Sung in 1982.

OVERNIGHT

Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang - home away from home for most (but not all!) foreign visitors to Pyongyang, this 47-story hotel is located on an island in the middle of the Taedong River and offers great views of the city. Comfortable rooms and comprehensive leisure facilities: swimming pool, spa, billiards, bowling, gift shops, tea houses, beer brewed on-site, and a Chinese-run casino.

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APRIL 14 – FRIDAY (KAESONG & DMZ TOUR)

AM

- Drive south along the 'Reunification Highway' to **Kaesong**, historic capital of the Koryo Dynasty (918-1392) and today located near the Korean Demilitarised Zone. A *2.5 hour drive*.
- **Panmunjom Armistice Village and DMZ** - The site of the signing of the 1953 armistice that ended the Korean War and demarcation line between north and south. On some days it is possible to visit the hut straddling the line, where negotiations between both sides once took place. Here we will be accompanied by military guides from the Korean People's Army.
- **Kaesong Koryo Museum** - Once the Songgyung Academy, a Confucian school, and now a museum on the Koryo Dynasty exhibiting historical objects, statues, pagodas, and porcelain from that era. A UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- **Kaesong Korean Stamp Exhibition Hall** - Store selling stamps, postcards, local *ginseng*, souvenirs, art, and more! One of the best postcard collections in the country and friendly staff.
- **Traditional Royal Korean Lunch (*pangsanggi*)** - A meal made of 12 dishes served in brass bowls fit for the kings of old. The more dishes, the more distinguished the guest! Traditional Korean 'sweet meat soup' is an option here (*5 EUR*).

PM

- **Concrete Wall and view of DMZ** - View of a complex fortification system erected on the southern boundary of the DMZ accompanied by a military guide. The wall is seen as evidence of intent to permanently divide the nation. A 45 minute drive each way from Kaesong through scenic countryside.
- Drive back to **Pyongyang** with a stop at the **Monument to the Three Charters of Reunification**, a large stone archway over the highway memorializing joint agreements between north and south. *2.5 hour drive*.

OVERNIGHT

Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang.

APRIL 15 – SATURDAY (DPRK NATIONAL HOLIDAY)

The Day of the Sun, one of the DPRK's largest holidays. April 15, 2017 is the 105th anniversary of the birthday of President Kim Il Sung.

AM

- **Mansudae Fountain Park** - The historic centre of Pyongyang popular with local citizens after school and on weekends. Flanked by examples of ancient and modern architecture from different eras.
- **Mansudae Grand Monument** - Enormous bronze statues of President Kim Il Sung and Leader Kim Jong Il overlooking the centre of Pyongyang. A presentation of flowers and bow by the group is customary here. See the nearby **Chollima Monument** of a mythical horse said to be able to run a 'thousand *li* (400 km or 250 miles)'. The Chollima was symbol of the movement to rebuild the country following the devastation of the Korean War and today has come to represent speed and quality.
- **Kimilsungia and Kimjongillia Flower Exhibition** – Exhibit of the two flowers named after the DPRK's leaders and held on the occasion of their respective birthday anniversaries in February and April. See organisations and groups from across society compete to put on the best floral display.
- **Picnic lunch in Moranbong Park** – We'll take a stroll in Pyongyang's central park popular with locals for picnics, dances, and sports. The park is filled with historic pavilions, walls, and monuments- modern and ancient, a few of which are among the traditional 'Eight Great Sights of Pyongyang'.

PM

- **Mangyongdae Native House** - Birthplace and childhood home of President Kim Il Sung. A traditional Korean house in beautiful natural surroundings.
- **Pyongyang Circus** – A one hour circus show including clowns, trapeze artists, jugglers, and much more (*optional; 20 EUR entry fee*) **OR Symphony Orchestra.**
- **Mass Dance** – As it's a national holiday, we expect to see large student organised dances held around Pyongyang on major holidays (*weather dependent*). Join in the fun!
- **Kaeson Funfair** – We'll take on the rides of Pyongyang's newest funfair with the locals: pirate ship, vominator, rollercoaster, bumper cars, arcades, and more. Tickets purchased on the spot (*1 EUR entry, 2-7 EUR for rides*).

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OVERNIGHT

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APRIL 16 – SUNDAY (PYONGYANG CITY TOUR)

AM

- **Kumsusan Palace of the Sun** - Mausoleum of the DPRK leadership where President Kim Il Sung and Leader Kim Jong Il lie in state and the most solemn location on the itinerary. *Please note formal dress is required. Men require collared shirt with tie, dark non-jean pants, and dark shoes. Women require covered shoulders, knee-length dress or pants, and closed toed shoes. The visit will take most of the morning and visitors are asked to bow a number of times inside. This is a state administered site and visits are subject to local conditions. Cancellations are rare but possible.*
- **Revolutionary Martyrs' Cemetery** - Hilltop cemetery with dozens of bronze busts of those who took part in the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonial rule. It is customary to present flowers here.
- **Kim Il Sung Square** - Pyongyang's central square lined with government ministries, museums, and The Grand People's Study House.
- **Foreign Languages Bookshop** - Store selling Korean publications translated into English, German, French, Russian, Chinese, and Spanish. Also pick up DVDs, postcards, and small works of art

PM

- **Tower of the Juche Idea** - Iconic tower dedicated to the DPRK's guiding philosophy on the Taedong River. Take the elevator to the top for great views of the city (*elevator ticket is 5 EUR*).
- **Monument to the Party Foundation** - Iconic structure featuring the hammer, sickle, writing brush which represent the workers, farmers, and intellectuals that make up the Worker's Party of Korea.
- **Trolleybus Ride** - A ride through Pyongyang on one of the city's famous trolleybuses.
- **Pyongyang Metro Tour** - One of the deepest metro systems in the world with stunning artwork reflecting the name of each station. Ride six stations on the Chollima Line.
- Drive north passing rivers valleys and hills to **Mt. Myohyang**, the 'mountain of mysterious fragrance'. *A 2.5 hour to 3 hour drive.*

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OVERNIGHT

Chongchon Hotel - Basic but clean hotel at Mt. Myohyang. Book and souvenir shop, billiards, ping-pong, and karaoke.

APRIL 17 – MONDAY (MT MYOHYANG)

AM

- **International Friendship Exhibition** - A subterranean exhibition hall displaying gifts of all kinds given to the DPRK leaders by foreign states, leaders, and organizations. The exhibition is a fascinating look into material culture in the second half of the 20th century. Highlights include a plane given by the Soviet Union, basketball signed by Michael Jordan from the US State Department, and vodka given by Dennis Rodman. The visit takes most of the morning.
- **Pohyon Buddhist Temple** - A peaceful temple dating back to 1042 with stone pagoda and repository of a print blocks and historic text of the *Tripitaka Koreana*, Buddhist scriptures first produced to invoke divine assistance from foreign invasion during the Koryo Dynasty.

PM

- **Manpok Valley Walk** - A gentle stroll passing waterfalls, interesting rocks, lovely wooded areas and viewing points.
- Drive back to Pyongyang. *2.5 - 3 hour drive.*
- **Taedonggang Bar No. 3** - Upscale bar across the street from the Tower of the Juche Idea. There are a variety of beers on tap produced at Pyongyang's Taedonggang Brewery outside of town (*2-2.5 EUR per glass*).
- Farewell group dinner at South Pyongyang's famous **Duck Barbecue Restaurant**, where you can grill your own meats. The site of many teary eyed farewells.

OVERNIGHT

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APRIL 18 – TUESDAY (DEPARTURE DAY)

*Departure Day from Pyongyang and Return to Beijing by flight or train. Please indicate your preferred exit method upon booking**

AM

- Flight departure from Pyongyang on **Air Koryo Flight JS 151** at 08:25 with scheduled arrival at Beijing Capital Airport (PEK) Terminal 2 at 09:55. *Please note there is a 50 EUR surcharge for flight return.*

OR

- Train departure by **local train to the Korean-Chinese border** at 10:10, transfer in **Dandong** and onward travel to Beijing with scheduled arrival to **Beijing Station** on Wednesday April 19th at 08:30. *We typically book soft sleeper (four beds per cabin) for the return journey. Please note that in some rare instances, soft sleeper tickets may sell out and we will book hard sleeper (six beds per cabin) instead.*

End of Tour

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TOUR PACKAGE

INCLUDED

- Flight Beijing - Pyongyang
- Train Pyongyang - Beijing
- All meals on the tour (apart from on the train back to Beijing)
- Hotel accommodation in the DPRK
- A Koryo Tours tour leader, two local Korean guides, and a driver per group
- All transportation in the DPRK

NOT INCLUDED

- DPRK visa fee
- Optional flight back to Beijing at end of the tour
- Optional single room supplement
- Tips for the local Korean guides and driver
- Optional activities such as the lift up the Juche Tower (5 EUR) or a visit to the funfair (approx. 2 EUR entrance fee per person)
- Entry tickets for special events if applicable – for example Pyongyang Circus (approx. 20 EUR per person)
- Meals include a complimentary beer and water, but you will need to purchase extra drinks if needed
- Spending money for souvenirs
- SINUIJU EXTENSION: RMB 50 for the bus across the bridge to Dandong to be paid on the spot to the local guides

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ADDITIONAL NOTES

- Please note that when on tour your day-to-day itinerary may differ to what is advertised above. Your tour leader will ensure, however, that everything available at the time is covered, and replacement options are provided where needed. We will also add in extras when there is time (such as a visit to a local bar or amusement park).
- We visit the DPRK regularly so know all the best places to go, and how to make the most of your days there to guarantee the experience of a lifetime.
- After the tour, we will send out a list of all participants' emails so you can keep in touch, swap photos etc. If you do not wish to be on this list then please let us know.

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