



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY LONG TOUR

TOUR

February 15 - 22/23 2018
7 nights in the DPRK + 1 on the train

OVERVIEW

Here's your chance to escape the chaos of Beijing for a mini-break over the Chinese New Year holiday and experience a city tour of Pyongyang combined with joining in for the celebrations for one of the DPRK's biggest holidays - the 76th birthday of General Kim Jong Il on February 16th.

Many special events are expected to take place in Pyongyang over this time such as the Kimjongilia Flower Exhibition, a performance of the Pyongyang Circus and a Mass Dance - come along and join in!

It is also possible to add a 2-night skiing extension to this tour - try out the slopes of North Korea's only ski resort; Masik Pass. Note that this is only possible if exiting the DPRK by train. Please let your tour manager know should you be interested in adding the ski extension.

HIGHLIGHTS

- 76th Birthday Celebrations on February 16th
- Kumsusan Memorial Palace (Mausoleum of the 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
- Explore the satellite city of Pyongsong

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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27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China

DAILY ITINERARY

FEBRUARY 14 – 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 travellers. *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!*

FEBRUARY 15 – 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.
- **Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum and USS Pueblo** - We'll tour this world-class museum led by a local museum guide. Renovated in 2012 and its exhibits of Korean War from the DPRK perspective containing artifacts, documents, photos, and lifelike dioramas. The exterior grounds house the War Victory Monument and displays of Korean People's Army Hero Equipment and captures equipment from the US military, including the spyship USS Pueblo. Central to the understanding of the country today and highlight of the trip.

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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FEBRUARY 16 – FRIDAY (DPRK HOLIDAY - BIRTHDAY OF GENERAL KIM JONG IL)

AM

- **Mansudae Grand Monument** - Enormous bronze statues of President Kim Il Sung and Leader Kim Jong Il overlooking downtown Pyongyang. A presentation of flowers and bow by the group is customary here (5 EUR). *Please note this is a government-administered sight and visits are subject to cancellation. Visits are optional and require a certain dress code (close-toed shoes and covered legs and shoulders).* Here we will also see the **Chollima Monument**, or 'thousand ri (400 km or 250 mile) horse' - a symbol of speed - commemorating the quick rebuilding of the country in the 1950's following the Korean War.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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).
- **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.
- **Arch of Triumph** - Massive archway made for the 70th anniversary of President Kim Il Sung in 1982 and commemorating the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonial rule. Larger than its counterpart in Paris.

PM

- **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.
- This afternoon we will have the chance to attend one or more special performances held specially to commemorate the birthday of Kim Jong Il, ranging from the **Paekdusan International Figure Skating Competition** to a **Synchronised Swimming Display, the Symphony Orchestra or the State Circus** - all of these performances are stunning and usually involve an entrance fee of approx. 20 EUR each.
- **Mass Dance** - As it's a national holiday, we also expect to see large student organised dances held around Pyongyang on major holidays (weather dependent). Join in the fun!

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- **Kwangbok Department Store** - Exchange for Korean currency and shop with the citizens of Pyongyang! Try the snack stand on the first floor for some of Pyongyang's best local eats.
- Drive north passing river valleys and hills to **Mt. Myohyang**, the 'mountain of mysterious fragrance'. A 2.5 hour to 3 hour drive.

Overnight:

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

FEBRUARY 17 – SATURDAY (Mt. Myohyang)

AM

- **International Friendship Exhibition** - An 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.
- **Mansugyo Beer Bar** - A new standing bar serving seven type of beer (50 cents a pint). Popular with locals after work and on weekends!

Overnight: Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang

FEBRUARY 18 – SUNDAY (PYONGYANG AND SARIWON)

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.

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PM

- We'll drive around one hour to **Sariwon City and Folk village** - recently built mock-up of a traditional Korean walled city that includes a history museum, food street and pavilions. Make sure to try the homemade makkolli here!
- **Migok Co-Operative Farm** - Learn about rural life in the DPRK at this farming community on the bucolic plains of Sariwon. Visit the farm's museum, viewpoint, and a local home.
- Drive onward to Kaesong, around 90 minutes drive.

Overnight:

Janamsan Hotel - A basic hotel similar to those found in the DPRK's smaller cities. Friendly staff, cool decorations, great local dessert and within walking distance of Sonjuk Bridge.

FEBRUARY 19 - MONDAY (KAESONG AND DMZ TOUR)

AM

- **Panmunjom Truce Village** - Located in the middle of the 4 km wide Demilitarised Zone, Panmunjom is the site of the signing of the 1953 armistice at the end of the Korean War. This is the only location where visitors can directly view soldiers from both sides and the demarcation line dividing Korea. On some days it is possible to enter the hut straddling both Koreas and there cross temporarily into the south.
- **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

- **Janam Hill** - Statues of the DPRK leadership on a hill overlooking Kaesong city and historic pavilion used for archery demonstrations in days of yore.
- Return to Pyongyang. A 2.5 hour drive.
- **Future Street** - Walk in the newly built residential district for scientists and academics to view its unique modern architecture.
- **Pizza Restaurant** - Dinner at one of Pyongyang's Italian eateries (there are three). Pizzas range between 5-12 EUR each.

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Overnight: Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang.

FEBRUARY 20 – TUESDAY (PYONGYANG AND PYONGSONG)

AM

- **Jongsung Revolutionary Site** – A system of underground tunnels and bunkers used by Korean government’s cabinet during the 1950’s. Learn about life underground during the years of American bombing.
- **Mansudae Art Studio** – The DPRK’s centre of artistic excellence, where the majority of sculptures, mosaics, and paintings around the country are made. Visit workshops to see artists at work and an exhibition where pieces are sold.

PM

- **Pyongyang Schoolchildren’s Palace** – Tour one of Pyongyang’s centres of extracurricular excellence with study rooms for fine arts, dance, sports, and music, then watch a spectacular performance put on by the students.
- **Mangyondae Native House** – Birthplace and childhood home of President Kim Il Sung. A traditional Korean house in a beautiful natural surrounding.
- **Science and Technology Centre** – Newly built atom-shaped educational facility, library, computer lab, and exhibition of the latest developments in science and technology for students of all ages, educators, and researchers alike.
- **Moran Beer Bar** – A recently renovated local bar with cheap brews (0.50-1 EUR beers).
- Drive north to **Pyongsong**, a satellite city of Pyongyang and centre of scientific research. A 45 minute to 1 hour drive.

Overnight:

Jangjusan Hotel - The only hotel in Pyongsong open for tourists, an excellent bar with one of the best bartenders in the DPRK makes this hotel one of the most fun in the whole country! Basic facilities with fairly reliable electricity and hot water. Billiards, karaoke, haircut, and outdoor eateries in summer.

FEBRUARY 21 - WEDNESDAY (PYONGSONG AND BACK TO PYONGYANG)

AM

- **Pyongsong City Square** - Central square of Pyongsong City with statues of the DPRK leadership and flanked by the provincial revolutionary museum. Presentation of flowers customary.
- **Kim Jong Suk Higher Middle School** - One of the DPRK's top middle schools for gifted students, tourists are encouraged to help teach an English class!

PM

- Drive back to **Pyongyang**. 45 minute - 1 hour drive.
- **Grand People's Study House** - National library and public university in traditional Korean style with great views of Kim Il Sung Square. Learn about education in the DPRK.
- **Golden Lanes Bowling Centre** - Where Pyongyang locals go for their ten-pin fix. Also has billiards and arcade games. Non-bowlers can head next door to the **Kumrung Leisure Centre** for an airgun shooting range and some of the best coffee in Pyongyang.
- Farewell group dinner at the **Bowling Centre's bulgogi BBQ restaurant**.

Overnight: Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang.

JANUARY 22 - THURSDAY (DEPARTURE DAY)

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

AM

- Flight departure from Pyongyang on **Air Koryo Flight JS251** at 10:05 with scheduled arrival at Beijing Capital Airport (PEK) Terminal 2 at 11:35. *Please note there is a 50 EUR surcharge for flight return.*

OR

- Train departure by **international sleeper train to Beijing** at 10:10 with scheduled arrival to **Beijing Station** on Friday January 23 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

TOUR PACKAGE

INCLUDED

- Flight Beijing - Pyongyang
- Train Pyongyang - Beijing
- All meals on the tour apart from the meals on the train back to Beijing
- Hotel accommodation
- Two local Korean guides, and a driver per group
- For groups of 10 or more, a Koryo Tours tour leader
- All transportation in the DPRK

NOT INCLUDED

- DPRK visa fee
- Optional flight back to Beijing at end of the tour
- Skiing extension
- 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

- Groups will be in the experienced hands of two or three local Korean guides. Furthermore, for groups of 10 or more, a member of the Koryo Tours team will accompany the trip.
- 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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