



DPRK National Day 70th Anniversary Minibreak

September 8 – September 11/12

3 nights in North Korea + Beijing-Pyongyang travel time

OVERVIEW

This short tour will get you to Pyongyang for what we expect to be the most fascinating and festive time of the year!

September 9th is National Day and in 2018 will mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in 1948. On this occasion we expect large-scale celebrations in the capital Pyongyang in the form of mass dances, performances, and/or fireworks.

After a five-year hiatus the Mass Games are now confirmed to take place from September 9 to September 30, 2018. This is an event not to be missed! Witness the largest event of its kind in the world as up to 100,000 people coordinate dance, gymnastics and more. This is an exciting time to be in the DPRK!

Please read the following for important information about your transport options for this tour, and how each one relates to the visa requirements for China. The default option is round-trip train travel from Beijing to Pyongyang, and back again. Flight upgrades are available. See below for more details.

Transport Options

Option 1 // Round-trip train (Beijing-Pyongyang-Beijing): A 24-hour train journey each way in hard-sleeper class (six bunks per berth) with a transfer in Dandong, China. The train arrives in Pyongyang approximately three hours after the flight so train arrivals will miss one or two activities in the city. This option is for those travelling on a budget with time to spare (and train enthusiasts, of course). [+0 EUR]

Option 2 // Flight departure (Beijing-Pyongyang // 90 minutes) + train return (Pyongyang-Beijing // 24 hours): In our view, this is the most comprehensive way to visit the DPRK. We highly recommend this option: it maximizes your time and sightseeing opportunities; lets you experience both Air Koryo and the international train; plus allows you to start the trip rested, while taking the leisurely route home. [+199 EUR]

Option 3 // Train departure (Beijing-Pyongyang // 24 hours) + flight return (Pyongyang-Beijing // 90 minutes): An alternative to Option 2. This option is ideal for those wishing to take the train one-way of the journey, but need to transit through Beijing by flight on their return. Please note the train arrives in Pyongyang approximately three hours after the flight so train arrivals will miss one or two activities in the city. [+199 EUR]

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Option 4 // Round-trip flight (Beijing-Pyongyang-Beijing): Choosing the round-trip flight option gets you between Beijing and Pyongyang in 1.5 hours (each way), and lets you experience the infamous Air Koryo 'burger' twice! For many nationalities, this also allows for the possibility of transiting in Beijing, rather than having to get a Chinese visa (please see below). This option is for those with little time to spare, travellers wanting simply to transit through China, or aviation enthusiasts. [+299 EUR]

Visa Information

We arrange your North Korean visa as part of your tour package [+50 EUR]. However, given the tour starts and finishes in China you may also need to consider entry and exit procedures in China for your trip. This can be obtained at a Chinese embassy abroad. We recommend obtaining at least a double-entry Chinese visa for your trip.

Over 50 nationalities can obtain a visa-waiver for up to 144 hours when in transit through Beijing Capital Airport (PEK) using direct international flights. Most other nationalities can transit for up to 24 hours. If you don't want to visit China as part of your trip, this could be the easiest option for you. It is not possible to obtain a transit-waiver when using a train for entry or exit from China.

Please be sure to check your visa status for travel through China while planning your trip. We are unable to arrange Chinese visas, but can provide documentation in support of visa applications upon payment of a tour deposit.

See below for an overview of all tour options and extras.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **See the Mass Games - one of the greatest shows on earth!**
- **National Day Celebrations** with an expected parade
- **Pyongyang highlights** (Kumsusan Memorial Palace, Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum, Pyongyang Metro and more)
- See historic **Kaesong, Panmunjom, and the Korean Demilitarised Zone** up close.

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

SEPTEMBER 7 – FRIDAY

Briefing Day and Train Departure Day

***Pre-Tour Briefing** // We require all travellers to attend a pre-tour briefing that covers regulations, etiquette, safety, and practicalities for travel in North Korea. The briefing lasts approximately one hour followed by a question and answer session. Please be punctual for the briefing. You can come early, meet your fellow travellers, pay any outstanding tour fees and browse our collection of Korean art. A proper briefing is an essential part of travel to North Korea.

For this tour, we will hold two briefings. One in the morning for those departing by train this afternoon and the other in the afternoon for those departing by flight the next day.

AM

- Recommended latest arrival in Beijing.
- **10:00 // Briefing for those departing by train.**

PM

- **16:00 // Briefing for those departing by flight.**
- **17:00 // Train travellers depart Beijing Station** by domestic sleeper train to Dandong, the Chinese city on the border with North Korea. Please arrange independent travel to the train station and arrive at least an hour and a half early for the train departure.

Overnight:

Hotel in Beijing not included in the tour for those taking the flight the next day. Contact us for recommendations near our office! Those travelling by train will spend the night on the train.

SEPTEMBER 8 – SATURDAY

Arrival in Pyongyang

AM

- **Train transfer at Dandong Station** from overnight sleeper train to Dandong-Pyongyang local. Our local representative in Dandong will assist with the transfer. Train crosses the China-North Korea border followed by North Korean customs and immigration.
- **Free bus** from the Koryo Tours office to Beijing Capital Airport Terminal 2 for those taking the flight. Exact time TBC at the pre-tour briefing. Alternatively meet the group at the Air Koryo check-in counter.

PM

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- Flight departure from Beijing on **Air Koryo flight JS 152** at 13:05. A 1.5 hour flight with basic lunch.
- **Flight arrival to Pyongyang's Sunan International Airport (FNJ)** at 15:35. DPRK immigration and customs, meet your Korean guides, and transfer to the city.
- **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.
- Train arrival to Pyongyang Railway Station.
- **Walk on Future Scientists' Street //** An evening stroll through one of Pyongyang's newest neighborhoods.

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.

SEPTEMBER 9 – SUNDAY

North Korea's National Day – the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the DPRK

On September 9th there will be large-scale celebrations in Pyongyang. A military parade is expected (pending the weather), in which case the itinerary for the day will be subject to change. Foreign travellers are typically allowed to view military units as they exit the city from the parade course and the city's residents come out en masse to greet them. Be prepared to potentially wait around for a few hours, but it will be well worth it. It's not everyday that you see a column of T-34 tanks or Katyusha rocket launchers rumble down the street.

For National Day, we also expect student-organised mass dances at prominent locations throughout the city and the possibility of evening fireworks. Whatever happens this holiday, it will be impressive and unforgettable. Not to be missed!

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 in the country. **Visitations are by special request only and 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 several times inside. This is a state administered site and visits are subject to

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local conditions. The Palace closes for maintenance between late April / early May to July. The exact dates will be confirmed closer to the tour. Should the Palace not be accessible to the group, this visit will be substituted with an alternative location.

- **Mansudae Grand Monument** // Enormous bronze statues of the DPRK leadership overlooking downtown Pyongyang. A presentation of flowers and bow by the group is customary here. Visitations are by special request only and decent dress is required. No shorts or flip-flop sandals allowed here.

PM

- **Moranbong Park** // We'll take a stroll in Pyongyang's central park popular with locals for picnics, dances, and sports, especially on national holidays. 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'.
- **Mass Dance** // As it's a national holiday, we expect to see one of these - Large student organised dances held around Pyongyang on major holidays (weather dependent). Join in the fun!
- **Kaesong 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). This visit is weather-dependent.

Overnight:

Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang.

SEPTEMBER 10 – MONDAY

The Glorious Country Mass Games – the largest performance on Earth

We expect September 10th to be the first performance of the 'Glorious Country Mass Games' at Pyongyang's May Day Stadium open to foreign travellers. This massive performance incorporates choreographed acrobatics, dancing, music, floats, and a moving backdrop of tens of thousands of students holding colored cards. In previous years, there have been four classes of seating with tickets arranged and purchased on the spot in-country. We have been informed that tickets will start from 80 EUR.

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.

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- **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

- Drive back to Pyongyang. 2.5 hour drive.
- **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 back to Pyongyang. 2.5 hour drive.
- **Mass Games!** // The Mass Games are an art form in North Korea, developed over decades, which can involve up to 100,000 performers in massive synchronised displays of gymnastics and dance. Not to be missed! Tickets from 80 EUR.

Overnight:

Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang.

September 11 – Tuesday

Departure Day

*Departure Day from Pyongyang and Return to Beijing by flight or train. Please confirm your preferred transport 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 10:00.

OR

- Train departure by **train to Beijing** at 10:10 with transfer in Dandong. The scheduled arrival is to **Beijing Station** on Wednesday September 12 at 08:30. *For this tour the default option is hard sleeper (six beds per berth).*

End of Tour

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EXTRAS

Entry and Exit Method

This tour travels between Beijing-Pyongyang train each way in a hard-sleeper carriage (6 bunks per compartment). The train journey takes 24 hours with a transfer at the city of Dandong. One-way or round-trip flights are also available. The flight takes around 90 minutes. For an extra 199 EUR you can upgrade to a one-way flight. A round-trip ticket costs an additional 299 EUR.

Visit the DPRK border town of Sinuiju

If you're heading back to Beijing by train this option lets you get off for an overnight in Dongrim before the next day's tour of Sinuiju – the border city with China. Spend an extra 24 hours in the DPRK seeing the sites of North Pyongan province. You will then continue on through to Beijing.

Visit Dandong – the Chinese gateway to the DPRK

Instead of immediately returning to Beijing when your tour ends you can take some extra time to visit this fascinating border city, which directly faces the DPRK town of Sinuiju, but lies on the Chinese side of the Yalu River. We offer both one-night and two-night fully guided extensions that take in all the sights of Dandong, with a special North Korea theme.

Upgrade to your own room

All hotel rooms on our all-inclusive group tours feature twin beds, and will be shared. If you'd like a room to yourself then you can upgrade for an extra 40 EUR per night.

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WHAT'S INCLUDED?

INCLUDED

- Train 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 Air Koryo flights (one-way: 199 EUR; round-trip: 299 EUR)
- Optional single room supplement
- Tips for the local Korean guides and driver (10-15 EUR per traveller per day)
- 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) or the Mass Games (from 80 EUR)
- Meals include a complimentary beer and water, but you will need to purchase extra drinks if needed
- Spending money for souvenirs
- Sinuiju Extension // See the DPRK's main border city involved in trade with China (210 EUR). *Please note that this extension adds one-extra night to the tour. There is a RMB 50 for the bus across the bridge to Dandong*

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to be paid on the spot to the local guides. Tip for guides and driver recommended.

- Dandong Extension // Visit the Chinese gateway to the DPRK and the Great Wall (180 EUR for one-night, 350 EUR for two-nights). Please note that this extension adds one or two nights to the tour. Tip for guides and driver recommended.

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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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