



TRAIN TOUR

TOUR

Feb 27 – March 7 2018
8 nights (5 in the DPRK, 3 in Russia)

OVERVIEW

A new and unique tour package from Koryo Tours - the only experts in DPRK travel! We take you on a local train from Pyongyang across to the DPRK's East Coast and then onwards up to the extreme North of the country; the Rason Special Economic Zone. See how locals travel by train, mingle with fellow-passengers, and get amazing access to parts of the country no tourist has ever seen.

We will explore Rason and then cross into Russia by rail and make our way to Vladivostok: capital of the Russian Far East and closed to all foreigners during the USSR years.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Pyongyang - DPRK's capital and centre of power
- TRAIN TRIP - travelling across the country on a train with local people - as far as the train can go!
- Travelling through unseen areas and off-limits cities and towns - a unique chance to see more than ever of the country
- Rason - free trade zone in the remote north. Little-visited and very different to the rest of North Korea
- Cross into Russia - a tiny and little-used border crossing across a rail bridge. the one land link between the two countries
- Vladivostok - Russia's most important far eastern city: modern and historical all at once. Culture shock awaits those who travel from DPRK to here!
- Abandoned underground bases, military sites, and some of the hidden side of Vladivostok we are able to show you - unexpected and unforgettable!

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 & Russia regularly and know all the best places to go to make your trip even more unique. We will make the most of your time on the tour to guarantee the experience of a lifetime.

The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China



DAILY ITINERARY

FEBRUARY 26 – MONDAY (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 27 – TUESDAY (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 152** at 13:05. *A 1.5 hour flight with basic lunch (no vegetarian option).*
- **Arrival to Pyongyang's Sunan International Airport (FNJ)** at 15:35. 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.
- **Kim Il Sung Square** – the centre of Pyongyang and venue for the famous parades and rallies
- **Foreign Language Bookshop** – find material about the country, its Leaders, and some quirky souvenirs too

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.

The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China

FEBRUARY 28 – WEDNESDAY (PYONGYANG HIGHLIGHTS)

AM

- **Mansudae Grand Monument** – Giant bronze statues of the DPRK's Leaders, flanked by group sculptures showing significant events in the DPRK's early history
- **Mansudae Art Studio** – see where the iconic statues, mosaics, and propaganda material is made
- **Pyongyang Metro** – a ride into the heart of the city with the locals on this deep and intricately-decorated transit system
- **Ryomyong Street** – the newest and largest of the prestige neighbourhoods in Pyongyang. Incredible architecture and an explanation of how this kind of place has emerged

PM

- **Juche Tower** – the world's tallest stone tower We will ascend to the top for a panoramic view of Pyongyang and an explanation of the Juche Idea, the guiding philosophy of the country
- **Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum** – telling the history of the Korean War from the DPRK's perspective, the key event in the genesis of the current tensions
- **USS Pueblo** – American spy ship seized in 1968 and kept since then
- **Kwangbok Supermarket** – the main middle-class shopping centre in Pyongyang. Here we not only see commerce going on but can stock up on food and drink for the train ride ahead of us. A very unexpected kind of shop and a highlight of the tour surprisingly
- **Evening walk through the city** - finally we will visit a **local bar** to try what the locals drink and for a final briefing about the train journey to come tomorrow!
- **Overnight:** Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang.

MARCH 1 – THURSDAY (RIDING THE LOCAL TRAIN)

AM

- **Board the train at Pyongyang Station** – it departs at 07:50 but we will have time to find our bunks, say *annyonghasimnikka* to our fellow-travellers, and take some photos on the platform. Say goodbye to the Pyongyang guides and off we go!
- Most of the morning is spent travelling through relatively flat land. The first main stop is the city of Pyongsong which is visited on many tours, then the train sets off on a zigzagging path across the spine of the country heading for the East Coast

PM

- Through the afternoon we will go through valleys, over bridges and through tunnels, stopping at remote and unheard-of stations. Amazing views throughout!
- Into the evening the coast approaches. The tunnels become fewer as the mountains give way to a narrow strip of plains, and the city of Hamhung is reached. This is a major city and here the train will pause for a while before switching from an easterly course to a northerly one
- It will be dark by now, time for bed. Each person will have a comfortable bunk for the night and the train is slow and smooth. The Korean countryside is very dark so not much to see out of the windows until dawn
- **Overnight:** On the train - Comfortable soft sleeper beds with fresh bedding for each person

MARCH 2 – FRIDAY (ABOARD THE TRAIN/ARRIVAL IN RASON)

AM

- When we wake up we will be heading up the coast. Seaside views and fishing villages to the right, fields leading to hills to the left. The train doesn't totally follow the coast though as it passes on the inland side of the Chilbosan Mountain range
- We will pass Orang airport and the town of Kyongsong shortly before arriving in the major city of Chongjin. Another moderately long stop here before heading even further north. Our destination approaches but still some sights to be seen and stops to make
- Although the Rason zone is part of the DPRK it is administered in a different way, so there is a kind of internal customs to pass. The guards will board the train and check tickets and passports. They may be surprised to see foreigners on this train, but be friendly and they will be too

The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China

PM

- **Arrival at Rajin station** after the train journey from Pyongyang – get off the train and meet local guides
- **General intro to Rason area** – drive through Rajin city and check into the centrally located Namsan Hotel
- After freshening up (you've spent more than a day on the train after all!), visit the **Statues of the DPRK's Leaders** situated on a hill behind the hotel and offering a great view over the city and bay
- Have a walk through the **Hae'an Park** at the seaside. In good weather locals will gather here
- **Czech Beer Bar** – opened with foreign investment. Slake your thirst with a range of made-on-site brews before dinner and overnight in this part of the DPRK

Overnight: Namsan Hotel - Centrally located and locally-famous. Right in the heart of Rajin city

MARCH 3 – SATURDAY (RASON – SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE)

AM

- Drive from Rajin to the nationally-famous **Pipha Island Area**, a scenic spot known to all North Koreans for its beauty
- **Salmon and trout farm** – this is a seafood producing area after all – learn how they operate such places here
- **Emperor Hotel** – built with investment from Hong Kong this houses the first casino in the DPRK. Chinese tourists flock here for gambling and you can have a flutter yourself too, or enjoy a coffee and a look around this unexpected place!
- **Pipha Island** itself – a narrow road links it to the mainland. From here you can take an optional boat ride to see some seals who populate some rocks nearby, relax at the waterfront, or try some local seafood

PM

- After returning to Rajin city the next stop is the **Foreign Language School** – here local children learn English, Chinese, and other languages. Step in and help out with some lessons!
- **Rajin Port** – here you will see what kind of industry is going on; fishing, shipping goods in and out, and look out for some very non-Korean people; one of the three piers is operated by Russians who live on site!
- **Golden Triangle Bank** – here we will learn about the different economic system of Rason, change money into local won (yes, it is legal, not to be taken

The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China

out of the country though, you are supposed to spend it), and see actual banking going on, the only place you get to witness this in the DPRK

- **Rajin City Market** – the only local market open to tourists in the whole country. Spread out through several buildings find consumer goods, stationary, food, drinks, building material, bicycles, and everything else a person in Rason would need. You can buy things too if you like – spend local money or RMB. Worth it just for the people-watching opportunity as it can get very busy here indeed!
- In the evening spend some leisure time getting a massage if you like as one of Rajin's many health centres, or visit a park, or local bar near the hotel before dinner

Overnight: Namsan Hotel - Centrally located and locally-famous. Right in the heart of Rajin city

MARCH 4 –SUNDAY (RASON TO VLADIVOSTOK: DIFFERENT WORLDS

AM

- Drive to the nearby city of **Sonbong**, the smaller of the sister cities in this zone
- Stop for photos in the centre of town – here there is a theatre, some monuments and mosaics, and an immortality tower too
- **Sonbong Revolutionary Site** – associated with the end of Japanese rule over Korea. The guides will explain the whole story
- Drive on to **Tumangang Town**, right up on the Russian and Chinese borders, enjoy a packed lunch in this area

PM

- Visit the **Russia-DPRK Friendship house** – which exhibits photos of visits by key figures from the neighbouring countries
- **3 Countries Border Viewpoint** – a picturesque pavilion offering views into China and Russia. From here you can see how the river divides the nations and also hear about a historical naval battle that a famed Korean admiral directed from this very hilltop
- If you do not wish to join the Russia part of this tour then at this point you will wave an emotional goodbye to those heading into the land of the Bear. You'll then be transferred to Wonjong Bridge which crossed from the DPRK to PRC. Pass through customs, immigration, cross the bridge and your tour ends as you enter China. We can help arrange onward travel from here of course, just drop us a line to ask about it!
- **Tumangang Station** – here we board the train that takes us on the short journey across the bridge into the Russian Federation – a 30 minute stopping-and-starting trip between two very different cultures. On arrival

The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China



we pass through Russian customs, meet our local Russian guide and have a long evening drive (with rest stops) to **Vladivostok**, arriving late evening

- **Overnight:** Vladivostok.

MARCH 5 – MONDAY (VLADIVOSTOK – RULER OF THE EAST)

AM

- A leisurely start this morning after a long international journey yesterday
- We start our city tour on foot by heading for the **Eagle's Nest** – a hilltop viewpoint looking over the city and Golden Horn bay – great for orientation and to get a sense of where you are
- Ride a **Funicular Railway** down to the city streets, see how the 19th Century meets the 20th and 21st as we then walk into the heart of the city for lunch at a local café

PM

- **Heroes Square** – the centre of the city. Dominated by a statues depicting soviet fighters victorious in the long civil war which followed the October Revolution in 1917. Vladivostok was one of the last places 'liberated' in this war
- **C-56 Hero Submarine** - Step inside a WWII-era submarine for a history lesson of what it was like to spend time in such a cramped machine, plus the background to the Russian/Soviet/Russian Pacific fleet, Headquartered in Vladivostok
- Visit the **Pacific Fleet Shop** – get yourself kitted out in a stylish striped sailor's shirt here if you like!
- Visit the final stop on the mighty Trans-Siberian Railway. The marker positioned at the 9288th km of the route. A basic history of how the rails stretched from Europe to here will be explained, as well as what Ho Chi Minh was doing on this platform so many times in the 1920s
- **Free time** in the evening to explore – Russian cities are no longer simply full of vodka & violence, but have a thriving cocktail scene, interesting promenade areas, shops, and entertainment options. See what you can experience!

Overnight: Vladivostok

MARCH 6 – TUESDAY (VLADIVOSTOK – UNDERGROUND)

AM

- This morning we head underground – to an abandoned formerly top-secret **NKVD base and bomb shelter**. Vladivostok is full of tunnels and secret

The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China

areas and this is one of the very best. A guided trip through history and engineering, all taking place in tunnels under the city. Wear something warm and prepare to learn a lot about the psychology of living in such a society and preparing for action at all times

- When we emerge like moles back into the light we will make a stop at the **post office** (send cards if you like) and a statue of an unusual American lady who lived here pre-revolution, before lunch in the city

PM

- This afternoon we cross one of the brand new bridges built in Vladivostok for the 2012 APEC summit. To **Russkiy Island**. Much key infrastructure has been moved to this island in the last few years as it was previously only accessible by boat – now the bridge has made it much easier to access
- On Russkiy Island (it is big, bigger than the rest of the city) we will first visit the famous **Voroshilov Battery** – credited with saving the city from Japanese invasion (it's a long story, hear it all on the trip), as well as a new nearby tank & military equipment park (yes you can fire an AK-47 here)
- We'll see other **former military sites** on the island this afternoon as well as a look at some of the new constructions put here for the summit and see how island life is changed since connection to the rest of the city
- Finally we return to the main part of Vladivostok for a bit of free time before a final farewell dinner. Our guide and tour leader can recommend shops, bars, and so on of course so make the most of the evening in this amazing remote city!

Overnight: Vladivostok

MARCH 7 – WEDNESDAY (DEPARTURE DAY)

Our tour sadly ends today and we all bid each other a fond *da svedanya*! How you depart is up to you – there are trains, planes, buses, and boats. Koryo Tours can assist in planning onward travel to China, if you are staying in Russia we can make the Letter of Invitation for the visa last longer to cover onward travel which we can also advise on – drop us a line with how you plan to finish this trip and we'll help you out!

End of Tour

The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China

TOUR PACKAGE

INCLUDED

- Flight Beijing – Pyongyang
- Train Pyongyang – Rason
- Train Rason - Khasan (Russia)
- Transfer Khasan – Vladivostok
- All meals on the tour apart from those taken during free time in Russia
- Hotel accommodation & Overnight train accommodation
- Koryo Tours Tour Leader plus local guides/translators
- All transportation between sites visited in the DPRK and Russia
- Letter of Invitation (LOI) for Russian visa

NOT INCLUDED

- DPRK visa fee
- Russian visa fee (varies per nationality)
- Optional single room supplement of 40 EUR per night (not available on the train)
- Tips for the local guides and driver (approx 10-15 EUR 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)
- Meals include a complimentary beer and water, but you will need to purchase extra drinks if needed
- Spending money for souvenirs
- Onward travel from Vladivostok in Russia - we can advise and assist with options though

The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China



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.

The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China