

10 Night Pyongyang Marathon & Kim II Sung Birthday Tour from Beijing

TOUR

April 6 – 16, 2019 10 nights in the DPRK + Beijing-Pyongyang travel time

OVERVIEW

The Ultimate Spring tour of North Korea is here - take part in the unique Pyongyang Marathon, join the locals celebrating the Day of the Sun and get out to Korea's stunning east coast!

An amazing spring tour of North Korea! Take part in the amazing and unique Pyongyang Marathon, join the locals celebrating the birthday of Kim II Sung and get to parts of the country not often visited by foreigners.

Koryo Tours is excited to offer the chance for amateur runners to take part in the 2019 Pyongyang Marathon. This race can be run either as a full marathon or as a half marathon, and there are also 10km and 5km races. In addition to the foreign amateur runners, hundreds of local runners and elite foreign runners will be participating as well.

For the truly adventurous traveler, this 10-night tour will get you across to the east coast where you'll tour the seaside city Wonsan and then go hiking on Mt. Kumgang – also known as the diamond of Korea.

April 15th is one of the biggest holidays in the DPRK calendar – the 107th birthday of President Kim II Sung, also known as the Day of the Sun. We'll make sure that we're in Pyongyang this day, soaking up the atmosphere and joining in the birthday celebrations with the locals!

You'll also go south to Kaesong, down to the DMZ, where North and South Korea continue their face-off. This tour also visits the lively city of Pyongsong, where you will meet the incredibly talented students at a local school and see a performance at the Pyongsong Conservatory of Performing Arts.

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 2019 PYONGYANG MARATHON!
- Port City of Wonsan on the East Coast
- The beautiful mountains of Kumgangsan
- Historic Kaesong
- Panmunjom & the DMZ
- Pyongyang City
- 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.

TRANSPORT OPTIONS

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.

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. [+239 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. [+239 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. [+439 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.

DAILY ITINERARY

APRIL 5 - FRIDAY (BRIEFING DAY)

***Pre-Tour Briefing** // we require all travelers 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 travelers, 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 Pyongyang Marathon tours, we will hold several briefings - in the morning for those departing by train in the afternoon, and in the afternoon for those departing by flight the next day.

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- Recommended latest arrival in Beijing.
- Briefings for those departing by train, expected time is 10:00am (*to be confirmed*)

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- Briefings for those departing by flight, expected times are 2pm, 4pm and 6pm (*to be confirmed*)
- **17:00** // **Train travelers depart Beijing Station** by domestic sleeper train to Dandong, the Chinese city on the border with the DPRK. 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 out office! Those travelling by train will spend the night on the train.

APRIL 6 - SATURDAY (ARRIVAL IN PYONGYANG)

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- Train transfer at Dandong Station from overnight sleeper train to the Dandong-Pyongyang local train. 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. *Exact time TBC at the pre-tour briefing. Alternatively, meet the group at the Air Koryo check-in counter.*

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- Flight departure from Beijing on Air Koryo flight JS152 flight times are TBC and subject to change. Currently expected to depart at 1:05 pm. A 1.5-hour flight with basic lunch.
- Arrival to Pyongyang's Sunan International Airport (FNJ). DPRK immigration and customs, meet your Korean guides and transfer to the city.
- Train arrival to Pyongyang Railway Station expected at 6:45pm.
- Arch of Triumph // A massive archway made for the 70th anniversary of the birth of President Kim II Sung in 1982 and commemorating the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonial rule in 1945. Larger than its counterpart in Paris.
- Kim II Sung Stadium & Marathon Route Preview // Visit the stadium where you will start and finish your race, and then drive the marathon route to familiarise yourself with the roads, turning points and toilet stops.

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• Optional screening of *Comrade Kim Goes Flying II* a DPRK film about a young rural coal miner, Kim Yong Mi, who dreams of becoming a trapeze artist at the Pyongyang Circus. Her plans are complicated by the arrogant trapeze star Pak Jang Phil who believes miners belong underground and not in the air. North Korea's first "girl power" movie about a young woman achieving her dreams. Produced and directed by a British, Belgian, and Korean team. The film is 78 minutes long and will be shown at the **Pyongyang International House of Cinema**, a short distance from our hotel. (100 RMB entry fee). A Koryo Tours Exclusive!

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 and beer brewed on-site.

APRIL 7 – SUNDAY(PYONGYANG MARATHON)

The big event! The Pyongyang Marathon 2019!

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• The 2019 Pyongyang Marathon // this is your chance to run the streets of Pyongyang in the DPRK's largest annual sports event!

Join the Full Marathon, Half Marathon, 10km or 5km race — all of which follow a return course that starts and ends in Kim II Sung Stadium in front of a 50-000-strong capacity crowd of local Koreans.

The full route, which has been certified by both the IAAF and AIMS, leads right through the city centre, past a number of iconic landmarks, and then out into Pyongyang's less urban districts. Don't miss this incredible opportunity to see more of the capital and interact with people along the course.

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- **Shower, resting time and lunch //** After the marathon's closing ceremony, we'll be heading back to the hotel to recharge, shower and rest
- **Munsu Water Park //** We'll take a break at this outdoor and indoor water park with water slides, lap pools, and hot tubs. Bar, coffee shop, and shops for non-swimmers (*Entry fee 2 EUR; swimming fee- 10 EUR with suit rental; tennis- 5 EUR*).
- Local Beer Bar // Relax at a local bar to wrap up an exciting day.

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Overnight: Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang.

APRIL 8 - MONDAY (PYONGYANG CITY TOUR)

AM

- **Mangyongdae Native House //** Birthplace and childhood home of President Kim II Sung. A traditional Korean house in what is today a quiet suburban park.
- **Tower of the Juche Idea //** The tallest stone monument in the world and dedicated to the DPRK's guiding philosophy. Take the elevator to the top (5 *EUR ticket*) for a panoramic view of Pyongyang.
- Kim II Sung Square // Pyongyang's central square lined with government ministries, museum and The Grand People's Study House.
- Foreign Languages Bookshop // Store selling Korean publications translated into English, German, French, Russian, Chinese, Spanish, and Arabic.

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- **Pyongyang Metro Tour //** One of the deepest metro systems in the world with artwork reflecting the name of each station. Ride six stations on the Chollima Line.
- Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum // World-class museum exhibiting the DPRK perspective of the Korean War with artifacts, documents, photos, and lifelike dioramas. The exterior grounds house the War Victory Monument and captured equipment from the US military, including the USS Pueblo. Central to understanding the country today.
- Drive to Pyongsong. A 45 minute to 1 hour drive.

Overnight:

Jangsusan Hotel, Pyongsong *II* The only hotel in Pyongsong open for tourists and one of the most fun in the whole country! Basic facilities with fairly reliable electricity and hot water. One of best bartenders in the country mans the bar. Billiards, karaoke, hair dresser, and outdoor eateries in summer.

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APRIL 9 – TUESDAY (PYONGSONG)

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.
- Tok Song Primary School // the area's top primary school for gifted students. Tour the school's classrooms & facilities, watch music & dance performances by the students, and test your ping pong skills against them in the gymnasium.
- Konji-ri Revolutionary Site // Location of the headquarters of the Korean People's Army & home of Kim II Sung during the Korean war. Tour the renovated buildings and learn about life & dangers there during the war.

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- **Pyongsong Conservatory of Performing Arts //** Local school focusing on talents in the performing and visual arts, see an excellent performance here.
- **Pyongsong Foodstuffs Factory //** tour one of the area's local factories to learn about what they make, sample their products and purchase some unique souvenirs.
- Drive to Pyongyang. A 45 minute to 1 hour drive.
- **Kwangbok Supermarket** *II* Large department store selling Korean-made and foreign goods. Here it is possible to exchange foreign currency for Korean *won* to shop with the locals.

Overnight: Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang

APRIL 10 - WEDNESDAY (HISTORIC KAESONG & THE DMZ)

AM

- Drive 160 km south the 'Reunification Highway' to **Kaesong**, the historic capital of the Koryo Dynasty (918-1392) and today located near the Korean Demilitarised Zone. 3 *hour drive*.
- **Panmunjom Armistice Village and DMZ //** the site of the signing of the 1953 armistice that ended the Korean War and the 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).

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- **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 via **Sariwon Folk Village and City View //** Mock-up of a traditional Korean town which includes a history museum, food street, and pavilions. There is a small tavern selling *Makkoli*, traditional rice wine. Climb a nearby hill for a view of Sariwon City and the surrounding plains.
- **Monument to the Three-Charters of the Reunification //** Iconic arch over the Pyongyang-Kaesong Highway dedicated to joint meeting between Koreas, north and south. Also known as the 'Arch of Reunification'.

Overnight: Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang.

APRIL 11 - THURSDAY (WONSAN & KOREA'S EAST COAST)

AM

- Drive east across the width of the peninsula to **Wonsan**, a major port city, stopping at scenic spots along the way. *A 4 hour drive.*
- **Sinpyong Lake Rest Stop //** Known as 'Little Kumgang' this scenic lakeside rest stop is a preview of the scenery to come.
- Ulim Waterfall // Hidden amongst the mountains on the road to Wonsan, 'Echo' Waterfall is a scenic stopover to enjoy lunch, stretch your legs, or go for a dip in the pool beneath.

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- Wonsan Agricultural University // The DPRK's premier agricultural university set among beautiful hillside scenery. Tour the grounds and the neo-Romanesque teaching hall, originally built by Germans living in the area in the early 20th century.
- Songdowon International Schoolchildren's Camp // A classic socialist summer camp where Korean and international children can spend two weeks learning socialist values and teamwork. Tour the recently renovated dormitories, aquarium, bird house, gymnasium, and more!
- Kangwon Province Art Gallery // Small art exhibition selling artwork by local artists.
- Jangdok Island and Lighthouse // Take a stroll on the breakwater to a small island in the middle of Wonsan harbor (1 EUR/USD entry fee).

Overnight:

Dongmyong Hotel, Wonsan // Waterfront hotel with stunning seaside views of Wonsan Harbor. Limited hours of hot water, bar, billiards, ping-pong, barber shop, beauty salon, dry-sauna, and indoor seawater swimming pool.

APRIL 12 – FRIDAY (MT KUMGANG)

AM

- Drive along the East Sea to the **Mt. Kumgang**, the 'Diamond Mountain' noted in East Asian history and famous in Korean legend. Home of some of Korea's most spectacular natural landscapes and best hiking. *A 2.5 hour drive.*
- **Samil Lagoon //** A charming green-water coastal lagoon lined by pine forests. Named for the 'three-day' stay (*sam-il*) of a king in days gone-by to take in the full beauty of the area

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• **Hiking at Kuryong Waterfall //** An 8 km (round-trip) hike to a scenic waterfall through forests, along mountain streams and by emerald pools. A beautiful place to sit, relax and spend a few hours in nature.

Overnight:

Kumgangsan Hotel, Mt. Kumgang // A comfortable hotel with good hot water supply and clean rooms. Top floor bar and karaoke, outdoor balcony barbeque, billiards, gift shops, and small sauna facilities.

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APRIL 13 – SATURDAY (RETURN TO PYONGYANG)

AM

- Start back to Pyongyang (full day drive) making rest stops along the way.
- **Sijung Lake Beach //** Take a break at this beachside facility on the East Sea. Take a stroll in the sand or go for a swim (2 EUR entry fee includes shower).

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- Continue drive back to Pyongyang
- **Golden Lane Bowling Centre //** Where Pyongyang locals go for their ten-pin fix (2.5 EUR per person per game). Also has billiards and arcade games. Non-bowlers can head next door to the **Kumrung Leisure Centre** for an air gun shooting range (approximately 6 EUR per 20 round cartridge) and some of the best coffee in Pyongyang.

Overnight: Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang.

APRIL 14 – SUNDAY (PYONGYANG)

AM

- Kumsusan Palace of the Sun // Mausoleum of the DPRK leadership where President Kim II Sung and Leader Kim Jong II 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 a number of times inside. This is a state administered site and visits are subject to 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.
- **Revolutionary Martyrs' Cemetery** // Hilltop cemetery with dozens of bronze busts of those who took part in the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonial rule.

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• **Grand People's Study House** *II* Huge national library and public university housed in a large neo-traditional Korean building overlooking Kim II Sung Square and the downtown Pyongyang.

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- **City Tram Ride //** A ride through Pyongyang on one of city's trams from Kwangbok Street.
- **Future Street //** Walk in the newly built residential district for scientists and academics to view its unique modern architecture.
- Kaeson Funfair // Take on the rides of Pyongyang's small but excellently located central funfair with the locals: pirate ship, 'vominator', rollercoaster, bumper cars, arcades, and more. Entry and ride tickets purchased on the spot. *Ride tickets between 2-7 EUR*.

Overnight: Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang

APRIL 15 - MONDAY (DAY OF THE SUN CELEBRATIONS)

The Day of the Sun, one of the DPRK's largest holidays. April 15, 2019, is the 107th anniversary of the birthday of President Kim II Sung.

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- **Mansudae Fountain Park //** The historic center 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 II Sung and Leader Kim Jong II 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 dresscode (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 organizations and groups from across society compete to put on the best floral display.

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• **Moranbong Park** *II* 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'.

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- **The Pyongyang Circus** *II* A circus show including clowns, trapeze artists, jugglers, and much more. The shows here are especially popular with locals on national holidays and will leave you amazed at the skill of the performers (approx. 20 EUR per person).
- **Mass Dance //** Large student organised dances held around Pyongyang on major holidays (*weather dependent*). Join in the fun!
- **Party Foundation Monument //** Iconic structure featuring the hammer, sickle & writing brush which make up the emblem of the Worker's Party of Korea and represent workers, farmers, and intellectuals.
- Fireworks over the Taedong River // watch with thousands of locals in Kim II Sung Square as this holiday comes to an end. Wonderful mingling opportunities in a festive atmosphere

Overnight: Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang

APRIL 16 - TUESDAY (DEPARTURE DAY)

Departure Day from Pyongyang and Return to Beijing by flight or train.

AM

• Flight departure from Pyongyang on **Air Koryo Flight JS151** with scheduled arrival at Beijing Capital Airport (PEK) Terminal 2 at 10:00am.

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 17th at 08:30. For this tour the default option is hard sleeper (six beds per berth).

End of Tour

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TOUR PACKAGE

INCLUDED

- Train Beijing Pyongyang with transfer at Dandong
- Train Pyongyang Beijing with transfer at Dandong
- All meals on the tour apart from the meals on the train between Beijing-Pyongyang
- Hotel accommodation in the DPRK
- A Koryo Tours tour leader, two local Korean guides, and a driver per group
- All transportation in the DPRK
- Official running shirt, finisher's medal and race certificate

NOT INCLUDED

- Marathon registration fees to be paid in cash (clean USD notes only) before the race in Pyongyang, amounts are 5 km or 10 km: \$70 USD / Half Marathon: \$100 USD / Full Marathon: \$150 USD
- DPRK visa fee
- Optional Air Koryo flights (oneway or return)
- Optional single room supplement
- Tips for the local Korean guides and driver (100-150 EUR total per tourist, recommended)
- 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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