



7 Night Pyongyang Marathon Tour from Beijing

TOUR

April 4 – 11, 2019
7 nights in the DPRK + Beijing-Pyongyang travel time

OVERVIEW

Take part in the amazing and unique Pyongyang Marathon and explore more of this fascinating country!

Koryo Tours is excited to offer the chance for amateur runners to take part in the Pyongyang Marathon 2019! 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 some elite foreign runners will be participating as well.

For the more adventurous traveler, this 7-night tour gets you to the lively city of Pyongsong where you will meet the incredibly talented students at one of the local schools. You will then head deeper into the country to Mt Myohyang – the mountain of sweet fragrance – where you can go hiking to experience the beautiful scenery. You will then tour the infamous International Friendship Exhibition where you can see the gifts given to each leader all housed in a massive mountain cave vault.

You'll also go south to Kaesong, down to the DMZ, where North and South Korea continue their face-off, and tour Pyongyang including the metro system and the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum featuring the captured spy ship – the USS Pueblo.

HIGHLIGHTS

- 2019 PYONGYANG MARATHON!
- Panmunjom & the DMZ
- Historic Kaesong
- Pyongyang City
- Beautiful Mt Myohyang
- 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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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. [+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]

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.

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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 3 – WEDNESDAY (BRIEFING 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 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.

AM

- Recommended latest arrival in Beijing.
- Briefings for those departing by train (exact times TBC)

PM

- Briefings for those departing by flight (exact times TBC)
- **17:00 // Train travellers 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 our office! Those travelling by train will spend the night on the train.

APRIL 4 – THURSDAY (ARRIVAL IN PYONGYANG)

AM

- **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.

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- **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 JS152** at 2:00 pm. *A 1.5-hour flight with basic lunch (no vegetarian option).*
- **Arrival to Pyongyang's Sunan International Airport (FNJ)** expected at 5:00pm. DPRK immigration and customs, meet your Korean guides and transfer to the city.
- **Train arrival to Pyongyang Railway Station** expected at 6:45pm.
- **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.

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 5 – FRIDAY (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).

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 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'.
- **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 6 – SATURDAY (PYONGYANG CITY TOUR)

AM

- **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.

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- **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. **Visitations are by special request only and decent dress is required (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.
- **Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum //** Tour this world-class museum led by a local museum guide. Renovated in 2012 and it exhibits the 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 captured equipment from the US military, including the **USS Pueblo**. Central to the understanding of the country today and highlight of the trip.
- **Monument to the Party Foundation //** Iconic stone hammer, sickle, writing brush representing the workers, farmers, and intellectuals which make up the Worker's Party of Korea.

PM

- **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.
- **Arch of Triumph //** A massive archway made for the 70th anniversary of the birth of President Kim Il Sung in 1982 and commemorating the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonial rule in 1945. Larger than its counterpart in Paris.
- **Kim Il 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.
- **Optional screening of *Comrade Kim Goes Flying* //** 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.

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APRIL 7 – SUNDAY (PYONGYANG MARATHON)

The big event! The Pyongyang Marathon 2019!

AM

- **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 Il 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.

PM

- **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 one of Pyongyang's local bars to wrap up an exciting day.

Overnight: Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang.

APRIL 8 – MONDAY (PYONGYANG)

AM

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

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PM

- **Mangyongdae Native House //** Birthplace of and childhood home of President Kim Il Sung. A traditional Korean house in a park-like setting.
- **Kwangbok Department Store //** Opportunity to use 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.
- **Maeri Shooting Range //** Shoot at targets with low caliber sports pistols and rifles in the facility that trained Olympic medalists. Pay by the bullet (*0.50 -1 EUR*) depending on the type of gun and target.
- Drive to Pyongsong. *A 45 minute to 1 hour drive.*

Overnight:

Jangsusan Hotel, Pyongsong // 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.

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 Il Sung during the Korean war. Tour the renovated buildings and learn about life there during the war.

PM

- **Drive to Mt Myohyang** (*approx. 2 hours drive north of Pyongsong*)
- **Manpok Valley Walk //** A gentle stroll passing waterfalls, interesting rocks, lovely wooded areas and viewing points.

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Overnight:

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

APRIL 10 – WEDNESDAY (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

- **Drive back to Pyongyang via Ryongmun Caves** // A subterranean complex of limestone caves and grottoes. Led by an experienced local guide, you will see weirdly (and suggestively) shaped rocks and stalactites/stalagmites and hear a wealth of stories and legends about each - some not appropriate for young audiences.
- **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).
- **Duck Barbecue Restaurant** // South Pyongyang's famous grilled duck restaurant that has seen many teary-eyed farewells.

Overnight: Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang.

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APRIL 11 – THURSDAY (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 JS151** with a scheduled arrival at Beijing Capital Airport (PEK) Terminal 2 at approximately 11:35 am.

OR

- Train departure by **local train to the Korean-Chinese border** at 10:25, transfer in **Dandong** and onward travel to Beijing with scheduled arrival to **Beijing Station** on Friday April 12th 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 (one-way or return)
- Optional single room supplement
- Tips for the local Korean guides and driver (70-105 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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