



Kim Jong II Birthday Long Tour

TOUR

February 14 – 22/23, 2017
7 nights in the DPRK + 1 on the train

OVERVIEW

Visit the DPRK during one of the largest holidays of the year - Kim Jong II's 75th birthday!

Join in the celebrations over one of the biggest holidays in the DPRK's calendar – the birthday of Kim Jong II 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.

Apart from the birthday celebrations, our Kim Jong II Birthday Long Tour includes a comprehensive city tour of Pyongyang, getting you down to the DMZ, where North and South Korea continue their decades-old face-off, as well as the chance to venture into the beautiful countryside of Mt Myohyang visiting the International Friendship Exhibition. You'll also be going to the town of Pyongsong, where you can jump in on an English Language class at Kim Jong Suk Middle School and see a performance by talented young pupils at Pyongsong Conservatory of Performing Arts.

It is possible to add a 2-night skiing extension to this tour- come and join us on 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.

Prefer to take the Pyongyang city tour from the air? On this tour you will have the opportunity to tour the skies in a 40 minute helicopter trip aboard an Air Koryo Mil-17 Chopper. This aircraft seats 12 people and offers an unrivalled view from above as it flies around over the city, great opportunities for photos and videos from an angle never-before-possible. Our helicopter city tour costs 180 EUR, please inform your tour manager when booking if you would like to add this to your itinerary.

HIGHLIGHTS

- 75th 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
- Kim Jong Suk Middle School and other Pyongsong highlights

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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.

DAILY ITINERARY

FEBRUARY 13 – 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 travelers. *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 14 - 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 12:55. *A 1.5 hour flight with basic lunch (no vegetarian option).*
- **Arrival to Pyongyang's Sunan International Airport (FNJ)** at 15:25. 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.

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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). 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.

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.

FEBRUARY 15 - WEDNESDAY (KAESONG & DMZ TOUR)

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 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).

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PM

- **Old City Walk and South Gate** - A morning stroll through Kaesong's historic district lined with homes dating back to the late Ri Dynasty to the city's historic South Gate.
- Return to Pyongyang. *A 2.5 hour drive.*
- **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.

FEBRUARY 16 - THURSDAY (DPRK NATIONAL HOLIDAY)

DPRK Holiday - Birthday of General Kim Jong Il

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.

PM

- **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.

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- **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*).
- 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 in various public spots around Pyongyang (a great time for young couples to meet for the first time) - an impressive spectacle indeed! Join in the fun! (*weather dependent*)

OVERNIGHT

Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang.

FEBRUARY 17 - FRIDAY (PYONGYANG CITY TOUR)

AM

- **Walk in Central District** - A walk through downtown Pyongyang from the Pyongyang Grand Theatre to Kim Il Sung Square.
- **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.
- **Grand People's Study House** - National library and public university in neo-traditional Korean style building overlooking Kim Il Sung Square. Gain insight into higher education and research in the DPRK and great views of Pyongyang.

PM

- **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.
- **Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum** - We'll 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,

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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 USS Pueblo. Central to the understanding of the country today and highlight of the trip.

- **Mangyongdae Native House** - Birthplace and childhood home of President Kim Il Sung. A traditional Korean house in beautiful natural surroundings.
- Drive north passing rivers 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 18 - SATURDAY (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.
- Drive back to Pyongyang. 2.5 to 3 hour drive.

PM

- **Walk on Future Street** - A walk through newly built residential apartments for scientists and academics with its unique architecture.
- **Pizza Restaurant** - Dinner at one of Pyongyang's Italian eateries (there are three). *Pizzas range between 5-12 EUR each.*

OVERNIGHT

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FEBRUARY 19 - SUNDAY (PYONGYANG CITY TOUR)

AM

- **Pyonghwa Motors Showroom** - Car dealership of the locally made 'Peace Motors'.
- **Kwangbok Department Store** - An 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.
- **Walk along the Taedong River** - A walk along the west bank of Taedong River.
- Lunch at **Okryugwan** - Pyongyang Cold Noodles at Pyongyang's most famous restaurant. Housed in a huge traditional building on the banks of the Taedong River.

PM

- **Jangchon Vegetable Farm** - A taste of modern DPRK farming life just outside of the capital. Tour the farm's cultural centre, kindergarten, home, and research laboratory.
- **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*)
- Drive north to **Pyongsong**, a satellite city of Pyongyang and centre of scientific research. *A 45 minute to 1 hour drive.*

OVERNIGHT

Jangsusan Hotel - The only hotel in Pyongsong open for tourists, the excellent bar with one of the best bartenders in the country 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 20 - MONDAY (PYONGSONG CITY TOUR)

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.

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- **Pyongsong Arts School** - local school focusing on talents in the performing and visual arts, see an excellent performance here.
- **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.
- **Konji-Ri Revolutionary Site** - Headquarters of the Korean People's Army during the Korean War in the hills north of Pyongyang. Preserved traditional homes which served as army offices during the war, bunkers, as well as burnt trees and bomb casing from American aerial attacks set among a bucolic landscape. The on-site museum compliments the War Museum in Pyongyang.
- **Science and Technology Centre** - Newly built atom-shaped educational facility, library, computer lab, and exhibition of the latest developments in science and technology.
- **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).
- Farewell dinner

OVERNIGHT

Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang.

FEBRUARY 21 - TUESDAY (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 JS 151** at 08:25 with scheduled arrival at Beijing Capital Airport (PEK) Terminal 2 at 09:55. *Please note there is a 50 EUR surcharge for flight return.*

OR

- Train departure by **international train** at 10:10 with scheduled arrival to Beijing Station on Wednesday February 22nd at 08:30. *We typically book soft sleeper (four beds per cabin) for the return journey. Please note that in some*

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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 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 flight back to Beijing at end of the tour
- 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

- 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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