



The May Day Tour

TOUR

April 30th – May 6th 2021

6 nights in North Korea + Beijing-Pyongyang travel time

OVERVIEW

[May Day](#) is one of the best times to visit North Korea during the calendar year for the fine weather and festivities. Also known as International Workers' Day, or Labour Day, May Day is a day off and locals take to the outdoors for picnics, dancing, and sports. Join in the celebrations as you experience North Korean culture like a local. In addition to the highlights of the North Korean capital [Pyongyang](#) and historic [Kaesong](#) on the [Demilitarised Zone](#) (the North/South border), we'll have time for walks in the city, dining at some of Pyongyang's most interesting restaurants, shopping at the [Kwangbok Department Store](#), a picnic lunch, On this May Day tour, we'll also get the chance to make a rare trip to [Haeju City](#), and to the mountains of the centre of North Korea with a visit to [Mt. Myohyang](#), with a top in [Anju City](#) - we will experience a great deal of the DPRK on this amazing tour over a major national holiday - come along with us!

If time isn't on your side, take a look at our [May Day Short Tour](#), or [May Day Long Weekend Tour](#) also available.

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DAILY ITINERARY

APRIL 29 – THURSDAY

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.
- **17:27** | 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 30 – FRIDAY

Arrival day 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

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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

- Flight departure from Beijing on **Air Koryo flight JS152** at 12:55. *A 1.5 hour flight with basic lunch (no vegetarian option).*
- **Flight arrival to [Pyongyang's Sunan International Airport](#)** (FNJ) at 15:55. DPRK immigration and customs, meet your Korean guides, and transfer to the city.
- Walk from [Kim Il Sung Square](#) to **Pyongyang Grand Theatre** and on to **Pyongyang Railway Station** to meet those arriving by train
- Train arrival to Pyongyang Railway Station at 18:45
- **Walk on [Future Scientists' Street](#)** | An evening stroll through one of Pyongyang's newest neighbourhoods.

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.

MAY 1 – SATURDAY

Pyongyang, National Holiday Celebrations, Kaesong

AM

- **[Mansudae Fountain Park](#)** | The historic centre of Pyongyang popular with local citizens after school and on weekends. Flanked by examples of ancient, socialist, and modern architecture.
- **[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. Visits are optional and require a certain dress code (close-toed shoes and covered legs and shoulders).*

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- [Pyongyang Metro Tour](#) | One of the deepest metro systems in the world with stunning artwork reflecting the name of each station. We'll ride six stations on the Chollima Line.
- [Taesongsan Folk Festival](#) | Large park/funfair at the edge of the city, locals flock here on May Day for games, picnics, and general celebrations. Join them and wander freely in the crowds. the single best time of the year for mingling with the Pyongyang populace and an unforgettable experience!

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- [Kim Il Sung Square](#) | Pyongyang's central square lined with government ministries, museum and The Grand People's Study House, Korea's national library. See the centre of it all!
- [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*).
- [Party Foundation Monument](#) | Iconic Monument made up of stone depictions of hands gripping the hammer, sickle, and writing brush – symbols of the Workers' Party of Korea. Built in 1995 for the 40th anniversary of this Party.
- [Drive south](#) to [Kaesong](#), historic capital of the medieval Koryo Dynasty (918-1392 AD). Once located in South Korea, the city changed hands during the Korean War. It is now located just north of the DMZ. 3 hours by road
- Dinner with a live Kayagum performance - a traditional Korean instrument in a unique setting!

Overnight | [Minsok Folk Hotel](#), Kaesong | Traditional style hotel where guests sleep on heated floors in Korean style. Housed in beautiful courtyards of Kaesong's old city, structures date back to the Ri Dynasty. Basic bathroom facilities. Hot water not guaranteed and erratic electricity supply – please bring a torch.

MAY 2 – SUNDAY

Kaesong and the DMZ, Haeju

- [Old City Walk and South Gate](#) | A stroll from the hotel through Kaesong's historic district lined with homes dating back to the Ri Dynasty from the city's historic South Gate.

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- [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.
- [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.
- [Janam Hill and Old City View](#) | Statues of the DPRK leadership on a hill overlooking Kaesong city and historic pavilion used for archery demonstrations in days of yore.
- Drive to the rarely visited town of [Haeju](#) (*approx. 1 hr drive, very dependent on road conditions but a guaranteed adventure*), the provincial seat of South Hwanghae Province and a port city on the West Sea.
- [Puyong Pavilion](#) | The largest pavilion in the whole DPRK and the only one in Korea built on footstalls in water, originally built in 1500.
- [Haeju Central Square and Statues](#) | As with all cities in the DPRK the centrepiece of the town; Statues of the DPRK Leaders for locals and visitors to pay their respects to

Overnight | [Haeju Hotel](#), Haeju | Utilitarian DPRK-style hotel in the very heart of the city. Rarely used by tourists and a quirky and memorable spot for an overnight stay

MAY 3 – MONDAY

Haeju, Pyongyang

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- **Koryo Fortress** | A major military base in its day, this fortress is situated above the magnificent Suyang Waterfall.
- [Gyenam Stock Farm](#) | While most farms in the DPRK are for crops this one specialises in livestock. See the animals, learn about the co-operative farm system in North Korea. A proper countryside experience!
- Picnic lunch at **Sokdam Ravine** | Made up of 9 valleys spread over a large area the Sokdam scenic area is a worthy place to visit for the views alone. Sokdam ravine means the scenic spot which was seated on the 9 ravines with mountains, rocks and streams.

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- Drive back to **Pyongyang** (*approx. 2.5 hrs drive, depending on road conditions*)
- [Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum](#) | A world-class museum led by a local museum guides. Renovated in 2012 and its exhibits of Korean War from the DPRK perspective containing artefacts, 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 spy ship [USS Pueblo](#). Central to the understanding of the country today and highlight of the trip. Unmissable.
- [Mansugyo Beer Bar](#) | A standing bar serving seven types of beer (50 cents a pint, 4.5 EUR for a flight). Popular with locals after work and on weekends!
- Dinner at [Potonggang Lamb BBQ Restaurant](#) | One of our favourites, excellent Korean Barbeque joint, popular with many of our local friends. Welcome back to the capital!

Overnight | Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang

MAY 4 – TUESDAY

Pyongyang, Anju, Mt. Myohyang

AM

- [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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- [Pyongyang International Football Academy](#) | Premier football school for young and promising athletes. Tour the facilities and learn about the history of football in the DPRK. Has multiple training pitches where you can test yourself against some students here.
- [May Day Stadium](#) | Largest in the DPRK, this massive structure plays host to the amazing Mass Games as well as other mega-scale events. One of Pyongyang's most iconic buildings

PM

- Drive to [Anju](#), a mid-sized industrial city located on the road and rail line north of Pyongyang on the Chongchon River. During the Korean War, major battles were fought near here between North Korean-Chinese forces and UN-South Korean forces. Coal is mined nearby.
- **Paeksang Pavilion and Anju City Walls** | The greatest pavilion in Kwanso (Pyong'an Province,) which overlooks the Chongchon River. Rebuilt after destruction in the Korean War.
- Continue driving to [Mt. Myohyang](#).
- [Manpok Valley Hike](#) | Various options for hikes of a range of distances/difficulties. Passing waterfalls, hermitages, interesting rocks, lovely wooded areas, and viewing points.

Overnight | Huichon Hotel, Mt. Myohyang | Basic but clean hotel located 30 minutes north of Mt. Myohyang. Very good local food much different from the lowlands, on-site sauna, and limited electricity.

MAY 5 – WEDNESDAY

Mt. Myohyang, Pyongyang

AM

- [International Friendship Exhibition](#) | A semi-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. *Presentable dress required.*
- [Pohyon Buddhist Temple](#) | A peaceful temple dating back to 1042 CE with stone pagoda and repository of print blocks and historic text of the *Tripitaka Koreana*,

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Buddhist scriptures first produced to invoke divine assistance from foreign invasions during the Koryo Dynasty.

PM

- [Drive back to Pyongyang](#) (2.5-3 hours) with a stop at [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.
- [Mangyongdae Native House](#) | Birthplace and childhood home of President Kim Il Sung. A traditional Korean house in a beautiful natural surrounding.
- [Kwangbok Department Store](#) | Exchange for Korean currency and shop with the citizens of Pyongyang! Try the snack stands for some of Pyongyang's best local eats
- [Pizza Restaurant](#) | Dinner at one of Pyongyang's Italian eateries (there are three)

Overnight | Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang

MAY 6 – THURSDAY

*Departure Day from Pyongyang and Return to Beijing by flight or train. Please indicated your preferred exit method upon booking**

AM

- Flight departure from Pyongyang on **Air Koryo Flight JS251** at 10:30 with scheduled arrival at Beijing Capital Airport (PEK) Terminal 2 at 11:35.

OR

Train departure by **train to Beijing** at 10:25 with transfer in Dandong. The scheduled arrival is to **Beijing Station** on Friday, May 7 at 08:40. *For this tour the default option is hard sleeper (six beds per berth).*

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