



Unseen North Korea

TOUR

September 10th – September 23rd 2021

13 nights in North Korea + Beijing-Pyongyang travel time

OVERVIEW

Head further off the tourist trail as we not only take you to North Korea, but we also head into little-explored areas on this two-week North Korea adventure.

We will explore [Mt Paektu](#), the most sacred place in North Korea, as well as the industrial cities of [Chongjin](#) and [Hamhung](#), as well as the country's most scenic regions open to travellers.

This is Unseen North Korea.

Over this two week adventure, we spend a lot of our time on the move, making the most of what North Korea has to offer. We travel from the capital of [Pyongyang](#) and cross the width of the peninsula to North Korea's east coast and visit [Hamhung](#), the country's second-largest city and work our way along the beautiful coast road to major port city [Wonsan](#) and the stunning 'Diamond Mountain' area of [Mt Kumgang](#).

It's then off to the North Korea's far north by special domestic charter flight to the volcanic [Mt Paektu](#) before flying to the rarely-visited North Hamgyong Province to visit [Chongjin](#), the DPRK's 'city of steel' and the city of [Hoeryong](#) on the Chinese border. We then take a well-needed relax as we hit the beaches and take a hike in the [Mt Chilbo](#) area before heading to [Kyongsong](#) and [Rason SEZ](#) (Special Economic Zone) bordering China and Russia, and exit across the bridge through [Yanji](#) in North-East China. Alternatively, you can return to Pyongyang from Chongjin on a domestic Air Koryo flight and return directly to Beijing.

This tour is perfect for people who have been to North Korea before and want to see more of the country, or those wanting an adventure! If you want something more conventional but almost as equally comprehensive, check out the 10-night [National Day Long Tour](#).

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DAILY ITINERARY

SEPTEMBER 9 – THURSDAY

***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.

SEPTEMBER 10 – FRIDAY

Arrival day in Pyongyang

AM

- **Train transfer at Dandong Station** from overnight sleeper train to Dandong-Pyongyang local. 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 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 12:00. *A 2-hour flight with basic lunch.*
- **Flight arrival into [Pyongyang's Sunan International Airport](#)** (FNJ) at 15:00. DPRK immigration and customs, meet your Korean guides, and transfer to the city.
- **Korean Central History Museum** | Located on Kim Il Sung Square, this is North Korea's national museum dedicated to the history of the Korean peninsula.
- **[Helmut Sacher Coffee Shop](#)** | Relaxing afternoon stop at this coffee shop tucked away near Kim Il Sung Square. Good coffee here, cost around 3-5 EUR per cup.
- Train arrival to Pyongyang Railway Station at 18:45.
- **[Mass Games!](#)** | The Mass Games are an art form in North Korea, developed over decades, which can involve up to 100,000 performers in massive synchronised displays of gymnastics and dance. Not to be missed!

Overnight

[Koryo Hotel, Pyongyang](#) | Pyongyang's premier hotel, built in 1985, and located in the heart of downtown, near Pyongyang Station. The go-to for visiting delegations, both foreign and domestic. Shops, bookstore, cafes, a revolving restaurant, beer brewed on-site.

SEPTEMBER 11 – SATURDAY

Hoechang

AM

- Drive to **[Hoechang](#)**, a 3 hour drive.
- **Cemetery for the Martyrs of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army** | Built in the 1950s (renovated in 2010) and opened by Zhou Enlai. Scenic Chinese hillside cemetery with domed tombs of 134 Chinese soldiers. Including a bust and tomb of Mao Anying; the Chairman's son.

PM

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- **Songhung Revolutionary Site** | Drive past the giant zinc factory to the wartime base of the Volunteer Army. Caves and tunnels, buildings from the period used by the soldiers and by Kim Il Sung when he visited to thank them for assistance.
- Return to Pyongyang via [Konji-ri Revolutionary Site](#), one of the preserved wartime headquarters of the North Korean leadership from the Korean War.

Overnight | Koryo Hotel, Pyongyang

SEPTEMBER 12 – SUNDAY

Drive to Hamhung, the DPRK's second largest city and centre of heavy industry, stopping at sights along the way.

AM

- [Hamhung](#) | Drive east across the width of the peninsula before heading north to Hamhung (6-7 hour drive), the second-largest city of the DPRK and major centre of industry.
- [Tomb of King Tongmyong](#) | Largest of the UNESCO listed Koguryo Tombs spread through the area, this is the beautiful tomb complex of the founder of the Koguryo Dynasty two thousand years ago. Statues, a Buddhist Monastery, and lovely wall paintings make this a fascinating visit for history buffs.
- [Sinpyong Lake Rest Stop](#) | Known as 'Little Kumgang' this scenic lakeside rest stop, a great opportunity to stretch your legs.
- [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.

PM

- [Hamhung Grand Theatre and Central Square](#) | Exterior view of the DPRK's largest theatre on the city's central square.
- [Home of Ri Song Gye](#) | Home of the first king of the Ri Dynasty (1392-1910) who extinguished the Koryo Dynasty, only to be then ousted by his own son. A traditional hall and pavilion and associated naughty stories of the former king's retirement years – some not appropriate for the youth!

Overnight

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[Majon Beach Guesthouse, Hamhung](#) | A beachside holiday compound with basic but comfortable chalets. Rooms have heated floors but no running water. Bring a torch! There is a main building with restaurant, bar, billiards, table-tennis, bookshop, and Korean karaoke.

SEPTEMBER 13 – MONDAY

From Hamhung to the truly rarely visited Pujon Highlands (and back!)

AM

- [Hungnam Fertiliser Factory](#) | Massive chemical-industrial plant producing various kinds of fertilisers. Tour of the plant control room, production facilities, and packing plant - just don't light up next to the Ammonium Nitrate!

PM

- [Pujon Highlands](#) | A scenic drive through the highlands above Hamhung, traditionally considered as one of the 'Eight Great Sights of Korea'. Home to the **Pujon Stone River**, a multi-kilometre river of boulders running down the side a mountain and the **Okryonsan Revolutionary Site** – a base for anti-Japanese guerillas during the colonial period. This region was the sight of some of the most brutal fighting of the Korean War in the middle of the unusually cold winter of 1950. Notice how the local architecture differs from the lowlands beneath.

Overnight | Majon Beach Guesthouse, Hamhung

SEPTEMBER 14 – TUESDAY

Drive to Wonsan, a major port city on North Korea's east coast.

AM

- **Tonghung Revolutionary Site** | Hillside park with statues of the DPRK leadership overlooking Hamhung city centre and the Songchon River. A presentation of flowers is customary.
- Drive south to [Wonsan](#), a major port city on the East Sea, stopping at scenic spots along the way. *A 2.5-3 hour drive.*
- [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.

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- [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, birdhouse, gymnasium, and more!
- [Wonsan City Centre and Docks](#) | Central square and ship terminal in downtown Wonsan.
- [Mangyongbong-92](#) | A ferry/cruise ship built in 1992 to ferry Japanese Koreans and goods between Japan and North Korea till 2006. In 2018, the ship carried North Korean performers for the Winter Olympics in South Korea.
- [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 harbour (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.

SEPTEMBER 15 – WEDNESDAY

Mt. Kumgang

AM

- [Mt. Kumgang](#) | Drive along the East Sea to see 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

PM

- [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. Feel like a rewarding challenge? Extend your hike by tackling Sangpaldam Peak.

Overnight

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[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.

SEPTEMBER 16 – THURSDAY

Back to Pyongyang via Wonsan

AM

- Drive back north to **Wonsan**. A 2.5-3 hr drive.
- **Kosan Fruit Farm** | Situated on a flat land in middle of mountains this fruit farm has been growing apples since the 1920s. The farm was completely renovated in 2008 and currently midway through mechanizing old process. Also grows pear and peach, and has an iron fence factory, pig farm, and other smaller factories.
- [Former Wonsan Railway Station Revolutionary Site](#) | Preserved Japanese colonial era train station, waiting room, guesthouse, and the train which future President Kim Il Sung rode to Pyongyang during the liberation of the country in 1945.

PM

- Continue drive back to [Pyongyang](#), a 4 hour drive with stops along the way.
- [Kaeson Funfair](#) | We'll take on the rides of Pyongyang's newest funfair with the locals: pirate ship, vominator, rollercoaster, bumper cars, arcades, and more. Tickets purchased on the spot (1 EUR entry, 2-7 EUR for rides).

Overnight | Koryo Hotel, Pyongyang

SEPTEMBER 17 – FRIDAY

Flight to Mt. Paektu!

AM

- Charter flight to **Samjiyon Town**, the gateway to Mt. Paektu located in the far north of the country. A 1-hour flight.
- [Mt. Paektu crater rim](#) and [Lake Chon](#) | Ascend to the highest point in all of Korea (on foot, or by funicular railway) for amazing views of the highest crater lake in the world, sitting in the caldera of the volcano. A breathtaking and remote place of stunning and unique scenery – unforgettable in fact. From the top one can either

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walk down or cable car (weather permitting) to the lake itself to sample the crystal-clear waters. Basic facilities on site with a picnic lunch to maximise the time here.

PM

- [Mt. Paektu Secret Camp](#) | The guerilla headquarters of General Kim Il Sung during the anti-Japanese struggle set in a hidden alpine valley lined by towering peaks and said to be the birthplace of leader Kim Jong Il. See the reconstructed camp telling of how the guerillas lived year in and year out.
- [Samjiyon Grand Monument](#) | Group of bronze statues, including one of President Kim Il Sung, and stone monuments next to a scenic alpine lake. One of three 'grand monuments' in the country.
- [Rimyongsu Waterfall](#) | A scenic waterfall which never freezes due despite chilling alpine winters. The waterfall also provides hydroelectric power to neighbouring villages.

Overnight

[Paegaebong Hotel](#) | The only option in this area. Located on the edge of Samjiyon Town. A well-maintained place offering hospitable service, a range of potato-based dishes (spuds are the main crop in this area) as well as billiards and a very nice garden area.

SEPTEMBER 18 – SATURDAY

Charter flight to North Hamgyong Province and Mount Chilbo

AM

- We will catch our charter flight onwards to [Orang Airport](#) in North Hamgyong Province. *A 1-hour flight.*

PM

- Upon arrival at [Mount Chilbo](#), we will start our tour of the mountain range. The 'Seven Treasures' mountain is one of the DPRK's most remote and scenic areas with a vast array of strangely shaped peaks and unique geologic formations. This primordial landscape is home to many colourful (and suggestive) legends and offers a contrast to the densely populated cities and agricultural areas seen in much the rest of the country.

Overnight

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[Homestay Village, Mount Chilbo](#) | The only place in the DPRK where foreigners can stay with local families in either a Korean-style or European-style home. Each home has a bedroom and washroom for guests.

SEPTEMBER 19 – SUNDAY

Mount Chilbo

AM

- **Hiking to Kangson Gate** | A morning hike to **Kangson Gate**, a rock archway overlooking the sea.

PM

- [Local games, boating, and picnic at homestay village](#) | Brush up on your Korean (or body-language) for an evening spent with your local family. It is also possible to play volleyball against or wrestle the village team. *Fees for boating, swimming (shower or swimsuit rental), a la carte BBQ (mushroom and fish), and cooking class to be paid on the spot. Estimated 100-300 RMB depending on the activities you choose.*

Overnight | Homestay Village, Mount Chilbo

SEPTEMBER 20 – MONDAY

Mount Chilbo to Chongjin

AM

- We'll leave Mount Chilbo by way of the scenic coastal road (weather permitting) that leads to Kyongsong and [Chongjin](#) the DPRK's third largest city, provincial seat of North Hamgyong Province, and Korea's 'city of steel' - home to the massive Kim Chaek Iron Works.
- **So Ryang Hwa Waterfall** | A picturesque waterfall along the scenic coastal road from Mt. Chilbo north to Kyongsong.
- **Mugae Lagoon** | About an hour north from the So Ryang Hwa waterfall is Mugae Lagoon, another pleasant rest stop where the guides can tell some interesting legends about the events that caused the lake to be created. The slogan along the road reads 'Even though the road is difficult, we go along with a smile' – good advice for travelling in North Hamgyong Province!

PM

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- **Chongjin Trolley Bus** | We'll take a ride down Chongjin's main drag on one of the city's trolleybuses.
- **Chongjin Central Square** | Central Square of Chongjin city with statues of the DPRK leadership. A presentation of flowers is customary (2-3 EUR).
- [North Hamgyong Province Revolutionary Museum](#) | Museum depicting the revolutionary struggles of the region.
- [North Hamgyong Province E-Library](#) | A library, study, and computer centre for the province, located just off Chongjin Central Square.
- **North Hamgyong Province Art Gallery** | Studio exhibiting and selling art from the region at comparatively good prices.
- **Chongjin Foreign Languages School** | One of the best school in the country to learn foreign languages (English, Chinese, and Russian). Join one of the English classes!

Overnight

[Chongjin Foreigners' Lodging, Chongjin](#) | The former foreign expert apartments of Kim Chaek Steelworks, similar in design to local apartments. Basic rooms but great food and service.

SEPTEMBER 21 – TUESDAY

and drive to Hoeryong

AM

- **Gomalsan Revolutionary Site** | Birds eye view of Chongjin and memorial site honoring the Soviet troops who helped liberating this area.
- **Mushroom Factory** | See how a North Korean factory works, and learn about the production process of different mushrooms. You can even taste the products if you're lucky.
- Drive to [Hoeryong](#) the birthplace of Kim Jong Il's mother Kim Jong Suk. A city on the Sino-Korean border opened for tourists in 2012. A 2-2.5 hours drive.

PM

- **Central Square and Statue of Mother Kim Jong Suk** | Bronze statue of 'The Mother of Korea' in central Hoeryong. A presentation of flowers (2-4 EUR) is customary here.

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- [Native House of Kim Jong Suk](#) | Traditional Korean home of Kim Jong Suk set among a peaceful apricot orchard.
- [Hoeryong Revolutionary Museum](#) | Museum depicting the revolutionary struggles of the region. Particularly interesting for its giant mural depicting the 'Three Generals of Mt. Paekdu' during the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle. The painting was made by artists from the Mansudae Art Studio in Pyongyang and smaller replicas of it can be found throughout the country.
- [Hoeryong Schoolchildren's Palace](#) | Center of extracurricular activities in the arts, music, and sports for local children.

Overnight

[Hoeryong Hotel, Hoeryong](#) | A basic hotel featuring large rooms with air conditioning but no hot water, separate sauna/shower block, small shop and bar and large banquet hall.

SEPTEMBER 22 – WEDNESDAY

Kyongsong and domestic flight back to Pyongyang OR overland crossing over the internal Korean border to Rason Special Economic Zone

AM

- Drive to [Kyongsong](#) once one of the primary cities in Hamgyong Province, from which 'Kyong' derives, now eclipsed by neighbor Chongjin. Kyongsong is renowned for its hot spas which provide needed relaxation after days on the road and outdoor activities at Mt. Chilbo. A 2.5-3 hours drive.
- [Jipsam Revolutionary Site](#) | Seven Generals revolutionary site is worth visiting for the view of the sea and the nearby fishing village alone. Of course as befits any North Korean revolutionary site there is a granite monument with Korean text detailing the revolutionary events that occurred here (the guides will explain) and you can also see some old tools used to haul boats ashore. But the highlight is having a walk out along a rocky path along the coast, stand out on the pavilions and have a look out to the sea.
- [Kyongsong Revolutionary Site](#) | Japanese colonial-era house once used by the DPRK leadership and telling of their exploits in the region.

PM

After lunch our group will split up. You have the choice of flying back with your Korean guides to Pyongyang to catch the flight or train back to Beijing the next day. Or you can stay two more nights with your Tour Leader (we will have new guides joining us from Rason) in the

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DPRK to visit Rason Special Economic Zone to see North Korea to its fullest like nobody did before.

Option 1 | Flight back to Pyongyang

- Flight departure from Incheon Airport on domestic **Air Koryo Flight JS4102** at 15:00 with scheduled arrival in Pyongyang at 16:00.
- [War Heroes' Cemetery](#) | Large gun, flag, and bayonet monument surrounded by rows of tombstones commemorating individual heroes of the Korean War.
- Farewell dinner at [Arirang Restaurant](#) | One of Pyongyang's best restaurant in the center of the city.

Overnight | Koryo Hotel, Pyongyang

OR

Option 2 | Rason Special Economic Zone

- 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.
- **Statues of the DPRK's Leaders** | Situated on a hill behind the hotel and offering a great view over the city and bay.
- [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 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!
- After dinner, 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, Rajin](#) | Centrally located and locally famous. Right in the heart of Rajin city.

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SEPTEMBER 23 – THURSDAY

Departure Day from Pyongyang and Return to Beijing by flight or train OR Rason/SEZ

AM

Option 1 | Departure Day from Pyongyang

Flight departure from Pyongyang on **Air Koryo Flight JS251** at 10:00 with scheduled arrival at Beijing Capital Airport (PEK) Terminal 2 at 11:30.

OR

Train departure by **train to Beijing** at 10:25 with transfer in Dandong. The scheduled arrival is to **Beijing Station** on Sunday, September 24 at 08:40. *For this tour the default option is hard sleeper (six beds per berth).*

Tour Ends for Option 1.

OR

Option 2 | Rason Special Economic Zone

- 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

- **Foreign Language School** | Here local children learn English, Chinese, and other languages. Step in and help out with some lessons!
- **Sonryang Hana Shoe Factory** | Interesting small factory founded by a overseas Korean making various types of shoes (basketball, football, snow boots and many

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more). Many different designs. The logo of the brand is the Korean letter 'thiut (ㅄ)' referring to 'reunification'.

- [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!
- [Haeyang Revolutionary Site](#) | A 20 minute drive from Rajin City this set of two houses are still occupied but are notable for having visited by Kim Il Sung, who gave 'on the spot guidance' about the lives of fisher folk. There is a nice view of the sea here.
- [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!

Overnight | Namsan Hotel, Rajin

SEPTEMBER 24 – FRIDAY

Rason to Yanji – 2 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** | Exhibit of photos of visits by key figures from the neighbouring countries.

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- [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.
- Next up is our final drive in the DPRK where we head across the northern part of the Rason zone and end up at **Wonjong Bridge** - the frontier between the DPRK and the PRC. We pass through customs here on the Korean side, take a short ride or walk across the bridge and then we are back in China, just like that!
- [Drive to Yanji](#) | We will get picked up after we enter China. We have a 3 hour drive (with scenic stops) to the Chinese city of Yanji, the capital of the **Yanbian Korean Autonomous Region**. We'll end up here for dinner, drinks to celebrate the end of this adventure, and an overnight stay to bring our tour to a close. Congratulations to you for being with us on this amazing journey!
- Our tour sadly ends tonight and we all bid each other a fond *farewell!* How you depart from here is up to you – there are trains, planes, buses, etc. Koryo Tours can assist in planning onward travel in this region, back to Beijing, or onward elsewhere (Yanji may seem remote, but actually you can get to a lot of fascinating places from here without too much difficulty) – drop us a line with how you plan to finish this trip and we'll help you out!

Overnight | Yanji Hotel, Yanji

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