



The May Day Tour

TOUR

April 28th - May 6th 2023

8 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](#). We will take another road less travelled between Haeju and [Nampo](#) via scenic [Mt. Kuwol](#) after crossing the [West Sea Barrage](#). We will also go off the beaten track for a short visit to [Anju](#), an industrial city between Pyongyang and [Mt. Myohyang](#) and hardly ever on offer by other tour companies.

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The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.
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DAILY ITINERARY

APRIL 27 - 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, and pay any outstanding tour fees. 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 Chinese domestic sleeper train to [Dandong](#), the Chinese city on the border with North Korea. 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 28 - 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*

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with the transfer. Train crosses the [China-North Korea border](#) followed by North Korean customs and immigration.

PM

- Flight departure from **Beijing Capital International Airport (PEK) Terminal 2** on [Air Koryo flight JS152](#) at 12:20. A 1.5-hour flight with basic lunch ([vegetarian option](#) is subject to availability). **Check-in starts 3 hours prior to departure.**
- **Flight arrival to [Pyongyang's Sunan International Airport](#)** (FNJ) at 15:20. DPRK immigration and customs, meet your Korean guides and transfer to the city.
- **[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.
- 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.

APRIL 29 – SATURDAY

Pyongyang City Tour

AM

- **[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.
- **[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.

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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. Visits are optional and require a certain dress code (close-toed shoes and covered legs and shoulders).*
- [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.
- [Mt Ryonggak](#) | Enjoy a picnic lunch in this park on the outskirts of Pyongyang and popular with locals. Stretch your legs after lunch with a short hike to the top of Mt Ryonggak itself.

PM

- [Mangyongdae Native House](#) | Birthplace and childhood home of President Kim Il Sung. A traditional Korean house in a beautiful natural surrounding.
- [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.
- [Arch of Triumph](#) | A 60-m archway commemorating the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonial rule and larger than its counterpart in Paris.
- [Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum and USS Pueblo](#) | We'll tour this world-class museum led by a local museum guides. Renovated in 2012 and its exhibits of 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 captures equipment from the US military, including the spyship [USS Pueblo](#). Central to the understanding of the country today and highlight of the trip.
- 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](#).

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- [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.

APRIL 30 – SUNDAY

Mt. Myohyang

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*, 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.
- [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*).
- [Pizza Restaurant](#) | Farewell dinner at one of Pyongyang's Italian eateries (there are three).
- [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.*

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Overnight | Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang

MAY 1 – MONDAY

Pyongyang, National Holiday Celebrations

AM

- [Revolutionary Martyrs' Cemetery](#) | Hilltop cemetery with dozens of bronze busts of those who took part in the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonial rule. At the top of the hill are the graves of Kim Jong Suk (wife of Kim Il Sung) and Kim Chaek (Kim Il Sung's right-hand man). *A presentation of flowers is customary here.*
- [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!
- [Moranbong Park with picnic lunch](#) | We'll take a stroll and have picnic lunch 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'.

PM

- [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 5 EUR for great views of the city.
- [Monument to the Party Foundation](#) | 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.
- [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.

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MAY 2 - TUESDAY

Kaesong, Haeju

AM

- [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.
- [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.
- [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.
- [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.

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- [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 – WEDNESDAY

Haeju, and drive to Nampo via the scenic Chaeryong Plains and Mount Kuwol, the 'September Mountain'. We'll cross the West Sea Barrage at the mouth of the Taedong River in the evening.

AM

- **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.

PM

- Drive to [Nampo](#) (*approx. 4 hrs drive including stops, depending on road conditions*)
- **Woljong Temple** | Buddhist temple established in the middle of the 9th century and later rebuilt at the start of the Ri Dynasty.
- [Mt. Kuwol](#) | A scenic mountain area on the West Coast of Korea. We'll pass through this region on a full-day drive between Nampo and Kaesong after crossing over the West Sea Barrage in the morning.
- [West Sea Barrage](#) | An 8 km concrete, steel, and earthen barrage constructed between the Taedong River estuary and the West Sea for land reclamation, irrigation, flood prevention, and power generation. It also acts as a ship lock and fish ladder. One of the DPRK's greatest engineering feats.

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- Optional [Petrol Clam BBQ](#) (approximately 5 EUR).

Overnight | [Ryonggang Hot Spa Hotel](#), Nampo. Compound with holiday houses and the main building for dinner and entertainment. [Spa bath](#) in every room with mineral water from the Sindok Spring - the most famous mineral spa in the DPRK. Billiards, karaoke, and ping pong. Bring a torch!

MAY 4- THURSDAY

Nampo, Pyongyang

AM

- [Tae'an Glass Factory](#) | Factory producing glass and glass products for the domestic market. Watch the glass-making process from smelting to sheet-cutting and even try to break a sheet of strengthened glass.
- [Chongsam-ri Co-operative Farm](#) | The DPRK's most famous and iconic model farm. Visited hundreds of times by Kim Il Sung, the place where the 'Chongsam-ri Method' was developed (they will explain on-site). See how the farming system works, visit a farmhouse, the local shop, and kindergarten, see the fields and greenhouses.
- Drive east along the '[Youth Hero Highway](#)' back to the capital.

PM

- **Taekwondo Class** | A 60 minute introductory class at the **Taekwondo Arena on Sports Street** to taekwondo the national martial art which all children learn to a certain degree in school. Followed by a long walk on Sports Street - a fascinating part of Pyongyang
- [Helmut Sacher Coffee Shop](#) | Opened in 2012, A branch of the famed Viennese Coffee and Cake merchant Helmut Sacher's empire in Pyongyang on Kim Il Sung Square.
- [Okryugwan](#) | A meal at Pyongyang's most famous restaurant. Housed in a huge traditional building on the banks of the Taedong River. Okryugwan specialises in Pyongyang Cold Noodles.

Overnight | Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang

MAY 5 - FRIDAY

Pyongyang

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AM

- A walking tour of some of the main streets of Pyongyang as well as some of the lesser-known monuments, markers, and famous local spots - try some street food, do some shopping, mingle with local pedestrians. This is a fantastic way to see the city at the end of an adventurous tour and will see you get much more access to the North Korean capital and people than almost anyone else!

PM

- [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.
- [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.
- [Mansugyo Beer Bar](#) | A beer bar serving seven types of beer. Popular with locals after work and on weekends. Best place to drink pints with local people.
- **Dinner at Potonggang Lamb BBQ Restaurant** | One of our favourites, excellent Korean Barbeque joint, popular with many of our local friends.

Overnight | Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang

MAY 6 – SATURDAY

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

AM

- Flight departure from Pyongyang on **Air Koryo Flight JS151** at 08:35 with scheduled arrival at Beijing Capital Airport (PEK) Terminal 2 at 09:55.

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- Train departure by **train to Beijing** at 10:25 with transfer in Dandong. The scheduled arrival is to **Beijing Station** on Sunday May 8 at 08:40. *For this tour the default option is hard sleeper (six beds per berth).*

End of Tour

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