



North Korea National Day Long Tour

TOUR

Sept 2nd - 11th 2023

9 nights in North Korea + Beijing-Pyongyang travel time

OVERVIEW

National Day on September 9 is one of the largest North Korean holidays. Be in Pyongyang for the 75th anniversary of the foundation of the DPRK for mass dances and possible fireworks.

In addition to the must-see Pyongyang attractions, we'll take a ride on both lines of the [Pyongyang Metro](#) and one of the municipal trams of Pyongyang. September is one of the best times of the year to tour North Korea for fine weather and long days.

This 9-night adventure gets you out of Pyongyang to explore a range of places, from the [DMZ](#) at [Kaesong](#) to [Mt Myohyang](#) and the enormous [International Friendship Exhibition](#) - exhibition hall of gifts to the DPRK leaders. We'll visit plenty in between, including the port city of [Nampo Sariwon](#), [Pyongsong](#), and [Anju](#) - a rarely visited industrial city.

Year to year this one of Koryo's most popular tours, this tour has it all: grand monuments, museums, historic sights, industry, agriculture, and more!

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The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.
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DAILY ITINERARY

SEPTEMBER 1 - FRIDAY

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.

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- *Recommended latest arrival in Beijing.*
- **10:00 | Briefing for those departing by train.**

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- **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.*

SEPTEMBER 2 - SATURDAY

Arrival day in Pyongyang

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- **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.

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- Flight departure from **Beijing Capital International Airport (PEK) Terminal 2** on [Air Koryo flight JS251](#) at 13:05. 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 16:05. DPRK immigration and customs, meet your Korean guides and transfer to the city.
- 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.

SEPTEMBER 3 – SUNDAY

Pyongyang and Nampo

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- **[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.
- **[Mangyongdae Native House](#)** | Birthplace of and childhood home of President Kim Il Sung. A traditional Korean house in beautiful natural surroundings.

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- [Kwangbok Department Store](#) | Exchange for 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.
- [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.

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- Drive west along the 'Youth Hero Highway' to [Nampo](#) (45 minutes to 1-hour drive), the port city of Pyongyang at the mouth of the Taedong River on the West Sea.
- [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, kindergarten and see the fields and greenhouses.
- [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.
- [Pi Island](#) | A local beach next to West Sea Barrage. Go for a swim or join the locals for a karaoke.
- [Nampo Clam BBQ](#) | Nampo's famous clam BBQ - cooked in petrol and washed down with Korea's national drink, Soju.

Overnight | [Ryonggang Hot Spa Hotel](#), Nampo. Compound with holiday houses and a main building for dinner and entertainment. Bring a torch! 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.

SEPTEMBER 4 - MONDAY

Drive from Nampo to Kaesong via Mount Kuwol, the 'September Mountain', the scenic Chaeryong Plains, and Sariwon. We'll cross the West Sea Barrage at the mouth of the Taedong River in the morning.

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- [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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- [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 Seat Barrage in the morning.
- **Woljong Temple** | Buddhist temple established in the middle of the 9th century and later rebuilt at the start of the Ri Dynasty.
- [Sinchon Town and Museum of US War Crimes](#) | Museum dedicated to 'crimes committed by the US imperialists'. Located on the site of a civilian massacre, the museum has an array of harrowing exhibits, displays, and panoramas on the haunting events that took place in this region during the war. Not for the faint at heart and sensitivity is called for here. ***Please note that this location was closed to foreign visitors in 2018 following the DPRK-US Summit Meeting. If the situation changes, we will visit this site.***

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- [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.
- **Unjong Livestock Farm and Mask Dance** | See the facilities of this livestock farm and then be treated to a traditional Korean mask dance.
- Continue 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.
- [Traditional Korean Royal Meal with Kayagum Performance](#) | Also known as pansanggi, the meal is made up of different dishes served in small brass bowls. The more dishes, the more distinguished the guest!

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.

SEPTEMBER 5 - TUESDAY

Historic Kaesong and Panmunjom

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- [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 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.
- [Sonjuk Bridge](#) | Small stone bridge built in 1290, which in 1392 was the site of the assassination of the last loyal Koryo Dynasty minister Jong Mong Ju by a son of Ri Song Gye (founder of the next, and final, dynasty). This bloody act extinguished the Koryo which had ruled over Korea for 474 years and is said to have left a permanent mark on the bridge that can be seen to this day.
- [Kaesong Koryo Museum & Stamp Shop](#) | A former Confucian education school, now a museum on the Koryo Dynasty exhibiting historical objects, statues, pagodas, and porcelain from the time. One of Kaesong's many UNESCO World Heritage Site.

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- [Pakyon Waterfall](#) | Light walking with a picnic lunch in a relaxing wooded area. Local people commonly visit here for picnics and sometimes swimming in the series of pools above the falls.
- **Gwanum Temple** | Located a 30-minute hike, above Pakyon Waterfalls, the temple dates back more than a thousand years and is dedicated to the Buddhist Bodhisattva of Mercy. There is an ornate marble Bodhisattva statue the nearby cave. The current building dates back to the Ri Dynasty and has an interesting tale associated with its construction.
- [Tomb of King Wanggon](#) | Resting place of the founder of the Koryo Dynasty, who died in 943. The tomb is largely reconstructed after looting by the Japanese occupiers and general disrepair. A UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- [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](#) | Statues of the DPRK leadership on a hill overlooking Kaesong city and historic pavilion used for archery demonstrations in days of yore.

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Overnight | Minsok Folk Hotel, Kaesong

SEPTEMBER 6 - WEDNESDAY

Haeju, and onto Pyongsong

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- Drive to the rarely visited town of [Haeju](#) (*approx. 2 hrs 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.
- 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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- [Haeju Central Square and Statues](#)
- [Puyong Pavilion](#) | The largest pavilion in the whole DPRK and the only one in Korea built on footstalls in water, originally built in 1500.
- **Koryo Fortress** | A major military base in its day, this fortress is situated above the magnificent Suyang Waterfall.
- Drive to Pyongyang with a stop at the [Monument to the Three-Charter of National Reunification](#), Iconic arch over the Pyongyang-Kaesong Highway dedicated to joint meeting between Koreas, north and south. Also known as the 'Arch of Reunification'. *A 3-hours drive.*
- [Pyongsong](#) | Continue north of Pyongyang to the capital of South Pyongan Province. *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 the best bartenders in the country mans the bar. Billiards, karaoke, hairdresser, and outdoor eateries in summer.

SEPTEMBER 7 - THURSDAY

Pyongsong and Mt Myohyang

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- [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!
- [Paeksong Revolutionary Site](#) | Location of Kim Il Sung University during the Korean War. Tour the renovated buildings and learn about life there during the war.
- **Drive to Mt Myohyang via 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. *Rarely visited by foreigners.*

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- [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.
- [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](#), Chagang Province. 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.

SEPTEMBER 8 – FRIDAY

Mt Myohyang and return to 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*, Buddhist scriptures first produced to invoke divine assistance from foreign invasions during the Koryo Dynasty.

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- Lunch at local hotel.

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- 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.
- [Mansugyo Beer Bar](#) | A traditional standing bar serving seven type of beer (1 EUR a pint). Popular with locals after work and on weekends!

Overnight | Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang

SEPTEMBER 9 – SATURDAY

National Day, the 75th anniversary of the foundation of the DPRK (North Korea)

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). Here we will also see the Chollima, or ‘thousand *ri* [400 mile] horse’ – a symbol of speed- commemorating the quick rebuilding of the country in the 1950’s following the Korean War.
- [FULL Pyongyang Metro Tour](#) | One of the deepest metro systems in the world with stunning artwork reflecting the name of each station. Ride both lines and stop off at smaller stations, rarely visited by tourists.
- [Arch of Triumph](#) | Massive archway made for the 70th anniversary of President Kim Il Sung in 1982 and commemorating the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonial rule. Larger than its counterpart in Paris.
- [Moranbong Park](#) | 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’.

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- **Tram Ride** | A ride through Pyongyang on one of the city's trams from Kwangbok Street. A Koryo exclusive!
- **Mass Dance** | We'll watch as hundreds of locals, many in brightly coloured national dress, join together in a beautiful choreographed dance in the heart of the city (and maybe even join in ourselves!)
- **Pyongyang Circus (or other available performance)** | We will leave time this afternoon to try and catch a local performance – either of the Pyongyang Circus, theatre, or a revolutionary opera. Schedules are typically announced only a few weeks before the trip. If no performances are available, we will find an alternative activity in the city. *Tickets to be paid on the spot (from 5-25 EUR) depending on the available performance.*
- **Dinner and sunset boat cruise along the Taedong River** | We will take a cruise on the Taedong River while having dinner with live music performance and waiting for the fireworks.

Overnight | Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang

SEPTEMBER 10 – SUNDAY

Pyongyang City Tour

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- **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.
- **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.
- **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!

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- [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.

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- [Grand People's Study House](#) | National library and public correspondence university with Neo-traditional Korean and great views of the city.
- [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.
- [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 airgun shooting range (*approximately 6 EUR per 20 round cartridge*) and some of the best coffee in Pyongyang.
- [Taedonggang Seafood Restaurant](#) | Dinner tonight will be at the Taedonggang Seafood Restaurant (*10 EUR per person*).

Overnight | Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang

SEPTEMBER 11 – MONDAY

Departure Day from Pyongyang and Return to Beijing by flight or train.

Flight departure from Pyongyang on **Air Koryo Flight JS151** at 08:35 with scheduled arrival at Beijing Capital Airport (PEK) Terminal 2 at 09:50.

OR

Train departure by **train to Beijing** at 10:25 with transfer in Dandong. The scheduled arrival is to **Beijing Station** on Sunday, September 11 at 08:40. *For this tour the default option is hard sleeper (six beds per berth).*

End of Tour

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