

KOREA

Prepared for:

Pennsylvania Department of Education

by:



INTERNATIONAL SERVICE CENTER

21 South River Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
Korea.....	1
History.....	2
Geography.....	2
Climate.....	3
Education.....	3
Traditions.....	4
People and Language.....	4
Religion.....	5
Holidays.....	5
Economy.....	6
Bibliography.....	7
Suggested Reading.....	8

KOREA

Map:



www.asia-lutheran.org

North Korea

Capital: Pyongyang

Population: 22,665,345 (July 2009 est.)

Official Language: Korean

Type of Government: Communist state one-man dictatorship

Administrative Divisions: 9 Provinces and 4 Municipalities

Total Area: 120,540 sq km (46,540 sq mi)

Area: Slightly smaller than Mississippi

South Korea

Capital: Seoul

Population: 48,508,972 (July 2009 est.)

Official Language: Korean

Type of Government: Republic

Administrative Divisions: 9 Provinces and 7 Metropolitan cities

Total Area: 98,480 sq km (38,023 sq mi)

Area: Slightly larger than Indiana

HISTORY

Archaeological evidence indicates that Korea was first inhabited well before 10,000 BC. Two other distinct groups later inhabited Korea during the 7th and 3rd century BC. By 2nd century BC, the state of Choson rose in northwestern Korea and made its capital in present-day city Pyongyang. In 108 BC, Choson and the northern part of the peninsula fell to the Chinese Han Dynasty.



static.panoramio.com

During the 1st century BC, three Kingdoms rose up out of the many Korean tribes. They were Koguryo of the Yula River Basin in the north, Paekche of the Han River Basin in the west and Silla in the southeast. After centuries of war, the combined forces of Silla and the T'ang China unified Korea by defeating Paekche in 660 and Koguryo in 668. In the 9th century, Silla lost control to the warlords in the outlying provinces and Korea was reunified under the state of Koryo.

In the 11th century, Korea was invaded by the Ch'itan people of Manchuria. It was then ruled by military overlords during the 12th century. From 1627 to 1637, Korea was invaded by the Ch'ing Empire and remained tributary to this empire until the late 19th century.

Korea was liberated in 1945 after Japan's defeat in World War II. Under a wartime agreement, Soviet troops occupied the area north of the 38th parallel and United States troops occupied the area south of that line. The United Nations then proposed a nationwide election, which the North refused. As a result, elections were held in the South and the Republic of Korea was established in the South in August 1948. In September 1948, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was established in the north.

By 1950, all of the United States and Soviet troops had withdrawn from Korea and the North Korean army invaded South Korea and started the Korean War. A truce was signed in 1953.

GEOGRAPHY

Korea is located on the Korean Peninsula in Northeastern Asia and spans 684 miles from north to south. The Amnokgang River separates Korea from China in the northwest and the Dumangang River separates Korea from China and Russia in the northeast. To the west lie the Yellow Sea, and to the south is the East China Sea, and to the east is the East Sea.

The southern and western parts of the peninsula have well developed plains, while the eastern and northern parts are mountainous. The highest mountain in Korea, reaching a height 9,000 feet, is Baekdusan. Despite its small size, Korea has a large number of rivers and streams. Most are very short and un-navigable. The two longest rivers in the North are the Amnokgang

River (491 miles) and the Dumangang River (324 miles). In the South lie the Nakdongang River (324 miles) and the Hangang River (299 miles). Korea also has over 3,200 islands located around the Yellow Sea.

CLIMATE

Korea has four distinct seasons similar to some parts of the United States. Spring arrives in April with pleasant and sunny weather. Summer begins in June as weather gradually changes to hot and humid. The average temperatures range from 68°F to 79°F. Fall starts in October and lasts for two months, serving as the transition period to a long winter. Winter begins in November and last until April. The average temperatures range from 23°F to 41°F.

Korea's annual precipitation is about 59 inches the central region. Despite winter lasting for six months, only 10 percent of the total precipitation occurs in the winter. More than half of the total precipitation happens during Korea's rainy season from June until late July.

The relative humidity is highest in July, with about 90 percent nationwide, and lowest from January through April, with about 30 to 50 percent.

EDUCATION

Education in North Korea is compulsory for children between the ages of 5 and 16. The education system includes one year of pre-school, four years of primary school, and six years of secondary school. Most schools place strong emphasis on science and technology. Institutions of higher learning offer programs of two to six years in length. The most well known school of higher learning is Kim Il Sung University in Pyongyang. It is estimated that 99 percent of the adult population are literate.



www.lifeinkorea.com

Education in South Korea follows a 6-3-3-4 ladder pattern which consists of elementary school, middle school, high school and college and university. Elementary education is compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 11. Middle school provides three years of lower secondary education to children between the ages of 12 and 14. High school offers three years of higher secondary education to children between the ages of 15 to 17. After graduating from high school, students can choose to apply to colleges or universities to continue their education. Higher education is offered in two to four year colleges or university. One of the largest institutions of higher learning is Seoul National University. It is estimated that 98 percent of the adult population is literate.

TRADITIONS

Koreans' diet consists of three meals a day, with supper being more elaborate than breakfast or lunch. Each meal is centered on plain boiled rice, soup, and pickled vegetables called kimchi. For centuries, kimchi was the staple food of the poor people of Korea. A meal is not considered complete or acceptable unless there is rice and kimchi. There are hundreds of varieties of kimchi. In addition, three to five side dishes are served, consisting of sautéed greens, grill dishes made of up seafood and meat and stews.

The main utensils used in Korea are chopsticks. When eating, chopsticks should be placed into the rice bowl or when finished, beside oneself on the table. Under no circumstances should the chopsticks be stuck into the rice because this would resemble procedures at sacrificial ceremonies for the deceased.

Koreans pay close attention to detail. Hence, it is a common rule to never pour beverages into ones own glass. If your glass is empty, then your neighbors or host will top you off. The same goes for your neighbor. If their glass should be empty, then you should offer to fill it up for them.



Age is considered so important in Korea that even a one year difference means that the younger person will have to address the older person with respect. Anyone older must be addressed with an honorific title and should not be called by their first name. Traditionally, the elderly are much respected. At supper, the eldest person sits and eats first before anyone can begin.

Marriage in Korea is not a relationship between individuals but that of two families. Therefore, the entire family is involved in every decision making step. Traditional customs forbid people from marrying within their own clan, no matter how distant the cousins are. Large families are prized in Korea and over many centuries, families intermarried to form large clans. As a result, there are only a dozen family names including Kim, Park, Lee, Kang and Cho.

PEOPLE AND LANGUAGE

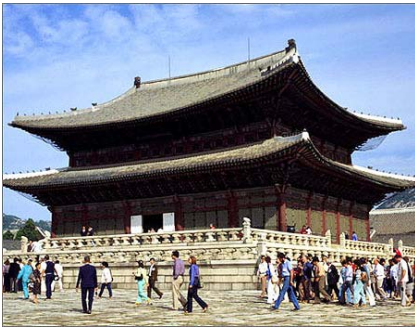
Koreans are an East Asian ethnic group and are believed to be part of the Altaic language family. They call themselves Hangukin or Hanguk in Korean. Ethnically and linguistically Koreans are the world's most homogenous population. So homogenous that if you are a Westerner in a small village in Korea, people will stare at you because they are not used to seeing people of a different ethnicity. There are a few other minorities, but in very low numbers, including Chinese and Japanese.

Korean is the official language of both North and South Korea. It is estimated that there are around 80 million people that speak Korean worldwide. Korean is a distinct language that is derived from Altaic languages and very much different from Japanese and Chinese. Korean when spoken, is soft and lifting. There are no heavy nasal tones and strong accents to emphasize words in sentences. There are about half a dozen different dialects that are spoken in Korea, however, their differences are not great. People living in different parts of the country can understand each other easily.

The alphabet of the Korean language is called Hangul. It is a phonemic alphabet organized into syllabic blocks. Each block consists of at least two of the 24 Hangul letters, and at least one each of the 14 consonants and 10 vowels. This alphabet was developed in 1446 under the direction of King Sejong. Today, almost everything is written in Hangul.

RELIGION

Koreans follow a variety of religious ideas and beliefs. According to statistics compiled by the South Korean government in 2005, 46 percent of its citizens follow no particular religion, 29.2 percent follow Christianity (of which 18.3 percent are Protestants and 10.9 percent are Catholics) and 22.8 percent are Buddhists. Since the middle of the 20th century, Christianity has been in competition with Buddhism to receive new followers. Despite strong Christian missionary efforts, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism have remained the underlying religions of the Korean people as well as a vital aspect of their culture. Additionally, religious practices in North Korea are suppressed.



www.ac-noumea.nc

HOLIDAYS

Early Koreans used the lunar calendar and eventually switched to the solar calendar. However, many still use the lunar calendar to keep track of important dates such as births, deaths, and some traditional holidays. Some important holidays include Lunar New Year, Chuseok, and Christmas.

Koreans celebrate Lunar New Year, *Seollal*, from late January to late February. This holiday is considered the second most important holiday in Korea. During this holiday, families reunite to honor their ancestors and older living relatives.

Chuseok is celebrated on the 15th day of the 8th lunar month on the lunar calendar. On this date, the moon appears larger than usual and often is orange in color. This is also referred to as the harvest moon. This is considered Korea's biggest holiday.

Christmas is also an official holiday since almost half of all who claimed a religion are Christians. Unlike the west, December 25 is celebrated by going out and partying, while December 31 and January 1 are spent with their families.

Other holidays include New Year Day (January 1), Independence Movement Day (March 1), and Liberation day (August 15).

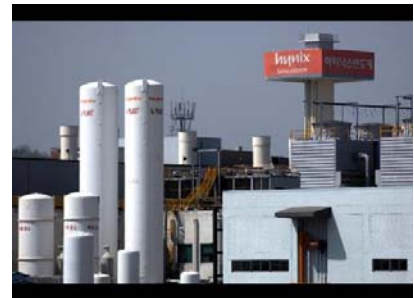
ECONOMY

Timbers including larch, oak, alder, pine, spruce and fir were once one of Korea's important resources. But because of illegal cutting after 1945 and the Korean War, the forests in the South were depleted. Recent reforestation and conservation programs have helped to reverse the effect.

Korea also has a wealth of mineral deposits, mostly concentrated in the North. These include gold, iron ore, coal, tungsten and graphite. With the abundant mineral resources, 70 percent of its national product is now derived from mining, manufacturing and services.

Only 20 percent of Korea's land is arable because of mountainous and rocky terrains. The farmland only supports summer crop because the winters are long and cold. Rice is the chief crop constituting about half of the farmland. Other crops include barley, wheat, corn, soybeans and grain sorghums.

Economic development in Korea has been uneven, with the South showing great significant gains. Since 1960, the South experienced an 85 percent increase in productivity and a 250 percent rise in per capita Gross National Product. From 1962 to 2007, South Korea's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased from \$2.3 billion to \$969.9 billion, with its per capita Gross National Product from \$87 to \$20,045. South Korea has transformed itself from a poor, agricultural society into one of the most highly industrialized countries.



www.bloomberg.com

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"Korean culture." <<http://www.answers.com/topic/korea>>

"Korea." <<http://www.koreaorbit.com>>

"Korea." <<http://www.asianinfo.org/asianinfo/korea/>>

"Korea people." <<http://www.seoulkoreaasia.com/korean-people.htm>>

"Korean Culture." 2007. Korean Asiance Ltd.
<<http://www.korea4expats.com/article-people-culture.html>>

"Korea climate." 2009. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.
<<http://student.britannica.com/comptons/article-203499/Korea>>

"Korea holidays." Asia-Pacific-Connections, Ltd.
<http://www.asia-pacific-connections.com/korean_holidays.html>

SUGGESTED READING

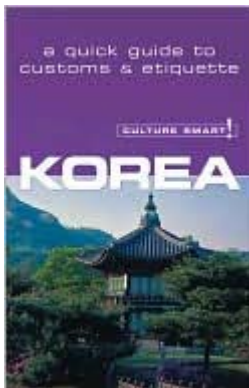


Korea

By: Martin Robinson, Rob Whyte, Ray Barlett

Publisher: Lonely Planet Publications, April 2007

Densely forested mountains, colourful Buddhist temples and sleek modern cities. Discover all this and much more with this bestselling guidebook. Korea's welcoming people, unique culture and incomparable cuisine make it one of the great destinations of Northeast Asia. Whatever your pleasure, we cover it all: North, South, eats, the works! We've reinvented this guidebook with a Highlights section, itineraries, expanded listings, a culture chapter and a practical directory.

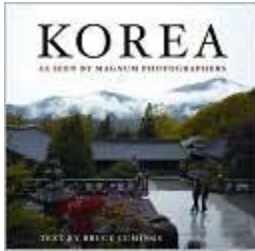


Culture Smart! Korea: A Quick Guide to Customs and Etiquette

By: James Hoare

Publisher: Kuperard, September 2006

Culture Smart! provides essential information on attitudes, beliefs and behavior in different countries, ensuring that you arrive at your destination aware of basic manners, common courtesies, and sensitive issues. These concise guides tell you what to expect, how to behave, and how to establish a rapport with your hosts. This inside knowledge will enable you to steer clear of embarrassing gaffes and mistakes, feel confident in unfamiliar situations, and develop trust, friendships, and successful business relationships.

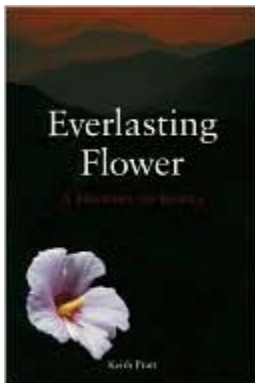


Korea: As Seen by Magnum

Photographers by: Magnum

Publisher: Norton, W.W. & Company, Inc., November 2008

A beautifully photographed portrait of both traditional and highly modernized aspects of life in one of the world's powerful industrial countries.



Everlasting Flower: A History of Korea

By: Keith Pratt

Publisher: Reaktion Books, Limited, August 2007

The defiant dictatorship of North Korea and the thriving democracy of South Korea may appear starkly different, but they share a complex and often misunderstood history that is ably recounted in Everlasting Flower.

Keith Pratt traverses the ancient landscapes of the Koreas, from the kingdoms of Old Choson and Wiman Choson to the present-day 38th Parallel division. The book's engaging narrative details the wars, ruling dynasties, Chinese and Japanese imperialism, and controversial historical events such as the abuses of the Japanese occupation.