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Hidden Hotspots: Explore South Korea Beyond Seoul



Take an inter-city itinerary for an authentic Korean adventure.

When you think of South Korea, Seoul often steals the spotlight—but there's so much more waiting to be discovered beyond the bustling capital. If you're looking to tick off your bucket list or wander off the beaten path in 2026, here are some incredible destinations that promise culture, adventure, and unforgettable memories.

♀ Busan

Busan is where coastal charm meets vibrant city life.

Haeundae Beach



Photo Credit: Busan Tourism Organization

Spend your days sunbathing or taking relaxing seaside strolls at **Haeundae Beach**, then experience the dazzling night views at **Gwangalli Beach**, renowned for its stunning vista of the illuminated Gwangan Bridge. Wander through the **Gamcheon Culture Village**, a colorful labyrinth filled with art and history, or head to **Taejongdae Park** for dramatic cliffs and sweeping ocean panoramas. For a unique thrill, try the Songdo Skywalk and cable car that offers exhilarating walks above the waves and breathtaking views of Busan's coastline.

Gamcheon Culture Village



Photo Credit: Korean Tourism Organization

How to Get There

If you're not flying directly into Busan and are flying in from Incheon, getting to Busan is easy: take the KTX from Seoul (2.5 hours), SRT (about 2 hours 15 minutes), or fly from Seoul (about 55 minutes).

Suwon

Suwon offers travelers a captivating glimpse into Korea's rich heritage, making it an essential stop for anyone seeking cultural immersion beyond Seoul.

Hwaseong Fortress



Photo Credit: Korean Tourism Organization

At the heart of the city lies **Hwaseong Fortress**, a UNESCO World Heritage site where centuries-old walls and impressive gates tell stories of the past. Nearby, **Haenggung-dong Café Street** beckons with its cozy cafés and visually striking, Instagram-worthy spots—perfect for relaxing after exploring historical sites. For those who appreciate natural beauty, **Gwanggyo Lake Park** provides scenic walking trails and tranquil landscapes, offering a peaceful retreat within the vibrant city. Together, these attractions reveal Suwon as a destination blending history, charm, and serenity for an unforgettable experience.

Gwanggyo Lake Park



Photo Credit: Korean Tourism Organization



How to Get There

From Seoul, take the KTX (approx. 25 minutes) or the subway (approx. 1 hour)

⌚ Yong-In

Yongin seamlessly blends excitement and culture, making it an ideal destination to a diverse range of travelers.

Korean Folk Village



Photo Credit: Korean Tourism Organization

Waujeongsa Temple



Photo Credit: Korean Tourism Organization

Thrill-seekers can experience the adrenaline rush at **Everland**, Korea's largest theme park, while those interested in history can immerse themselves in the authentic atmosphere of the **Korean Folk Village** that offers a glimpse into traditional Korean life. Art enthusiasts will appreciate the **Hoam Art Museum**, renowned for its impressive collections and tranquil setting. For a peaceful retreat, **Waujeongsa Temple** awaits with its serene grounds and unique sculptures, providing a contemplative escape from the city's bustle.



How to Get There

From Seoul, take a car ride for approx. 1 hour or the subway for 1 hour and 10 minutes.

♀ Paju

Paju is a vibrant city near Seoul that blends creative arts, cultural sites, and unique shopping experiences.

Heyri Art Village



Photo Credit: Korean Tourism Organization

Provence Village



Photo Credit: Korean Tourism Organization

Wander through **Heyri Art Village**, where creative studios and galleries showcase the vibrant local arts scene, or visit **Provence Village** for a taste of European charm nestled in Korea. Reflect on history and hope at **Imjingak Peace Park**, a meaningful site dedicated to the story of Korea's division and reconciliation. For those looking to indulge in some retail therapy, the **Shinsegae Simon Paju Premium Outlets** provide ample opportunities to shop top brands. Altogether, Paju promises a memorable escape that combines creativity, contemplation, and shopping in one dynamic locale.

How to Get There

From Seoul, take the Gyeongui–Jungang line subway for about 1 hr 10 minutes, or by car for about 1-1.5 hours.

Incheon

Incheon, often regarded as the gateway to adventure in South Korea, offers a unique blend of cultural experiences and modern attractions just beyond the capital.

Wolmido Island



Photo Credit: Korean Tourism Organization

Incheon Chinatown



Photo Credit: Korean Tourism Organization

Start your visit in vibrant **Chinatown**, where a colorful mix of flavors and sights creates a lively atmosphere rich in history. Stroll through **Songdo Central Park**, where sleek modern architecture is beautifully balanced with serene natural landscapes, providing a tranquil escape in the city. For a day packed with seaside excitement, head to **Wolmido Island**, known for its fun-filled amusement rides and boardwalk charm. If you're seeking a peaceful retreat, **Ganghwado Island** awaits with its storied past and tranquil scenery, offering the perfect balance of relaxation and exploration. These destinations make Incheon a must-visit spot for travelers eager to experience Korea's dynamic fusion of tradition and innovation.

How to Get There

If you're already coming from Seoul, hop on the AREX/Airport Railway for a quick ride of about one hour, or drive by car, which takes roughly 1 to 1.5 hours.

⌚ Yangpyeong

Yangpyeong stands out as a tranquil nature retreat, perfect for travelers seeking a peaceful escape amid South Korea's scenic beauty.

Dumulmeori



Photo Credit: Korean Tourism Organization

Yongmeunsa Temple



Photo Credit: Korean Tourism Organization

Begin your journey at **Dumulmeori**, where breathtaking riverside views offer a picturesque backdrop for relaxation and reflection. Continue on to **Semyon Garden**, a vibrant floral haven filled with colorful blooms and serene pathways, ideal for leisurely strolls and connecting with nature. For those in search of spiritual calm, **Yongmunsa Temple** awaits nestled in lush surroundings, providing a quiet sanctuary to unwind and experience traditional Korean serenity. Together, these destinations showcase Yangpyeong as an inviting getaway for nature lovers and those looking to rejuvenate body and mind.

How to Get There

Take the KTX from Seoul, which gets you there in about 1 hour, or opt for the express bus, which takes approximately 1 hour and 10 minutes.

Damyang

Damyang invites travelers to immerse themselves in its serene and distinctive attractions.

Juknukwoon Bamboo Forest



Meta Provence Village



Photo Credit: Korean Tourism Organization

Wander through **Juknokwon Bamboo Forest**, a tranquil green sanctuary where towering bamboo creates a peaceful escape from city life. For a touch of European charm, visit **Meta Provence Village**—an enchanting enclave that transports visitors to the French countryside with its colorful architecture and quaint ambiance. No trip to Damyang is complete without sampling the region's culinary specialties on **Damyang Noodle Street**, where local flavors come to life in every bowl.

How to Get There

Board the KTX from Seoul, which will take you to Damyang in approximately 3.5 hours or By Express Bus, Catch an express bus from Seoul, with a travel time of about 3 hours and 10 minutes.

The Great BDO Travel Sale is Your Gateway to Authentic South Korean Experiences

Ready to step off the usual tourist trail? Make your most unforgettable Korean adventure happen in 2026 through **The Great BDO Travel Sale!** Enjoy exclusive deals and unbeatable offers on the following dates and venues—or book online at www.bdo.com.ph/travel:

- Manila: Jan 8–11, SMX Aura, SM Aura Premier
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Whether you're drawn to the coastal charm of Busan, the historical treasures of Suwon, the vibrant arts scene in Paju, or the tranquil nature retreats in Yangpyeong and Damyang, South Korea's hidden gems let you carve your own unique journey. With convenient transportation options and a diverse array of cultural, natural, and culinary experiences, these destinations promise new adventures and memories every time you visit. Make 2026 the year you explore Korea beyond Seoul and discover the country's captivating mix of tradition, excitement, and scenic beauty.