

# Essence of South Korea and Japan



## TRIP OVERVIEW

Futuristic cityscapes, centuries-old architecture and long-standing cultural traditions characterise two stunning nations irrevocably sculpted by their politically charged heritage. Set amongst a landscape of natural grandeur, delve into the unique sophistication, cuisine and traditions of South Korea and Japan.

## ITINERARY AND DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to South Korea. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important information such as visa requirements and travel insurance.

### Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

### DAY 1: UK to Seoul

Depart London on your scheduled overnight flight to Seoul.

### DAY 2: Seoul D

Upon arrival, you will be met for a short tour of Seoul. A fusion of high-tech, urban parks and traditional palaces characterise South Korea's dynamic capital. Visit one of the city's most beloved landmarks - the N Seoul Tower. Ascend 480 metres above sea level to the observatory deck for incredible 360-degree views overlooking the city skyline, and later enjoy the tantalising tastes of local delicacies for dinner.

### DAY 3: Seoul B/L

Set out on a morning tour of the heavily fortified Demilitarised Zone (DMZ), an untouched region which separates North and South Korea; admire impeccable panoramic views from the iconic Dora Observatory, before exploring the secret passageways of the 3rd Infiltration tunnel. Next, witness two routes that connect North and South Korea at Dorasan Station and the Bridge of Freedom, which currently serve as symbolic emblems of hope for the reunification between these two countries. From here, return to Seoul for an afternoon sightseeing tour. Commencing at the majestic Gyeongbok Palace, continue to the National Folklore Museum, before immersing yourself in rich cultural traditions through Insa-dong antique street, whose narrow avenues are lined with an array of speciality regional goods. Later, wander through Bukchon Hanok Village's charming streets before browsing through a revered collection of quality silk products and vintage clothing in Gwangjang Market, one of the largest of its kind in Korea.

### DAY 4: Seoul to Gyeongju Via Andong B/L

This morning, travel towards Andong, the spiritual capital of South Korea. Having maintained many aspects of authentic Korean culture, Andong City's tangible heritage manifests itself in the charming 14th century riverside village of Hahoe; with well-preserved Joseon architecture and traditional thatched houses, you'll be transported to a bygone era. Soak in vistas of this clan-based village from nearby Buyongdae Cliff before transferring to Gyeongju for this evening's stay.

### DAY 5: Gyeongju B/L

A full-day tour of Gyeongju takes in the major sites of Korea's ancient former capital, known as the "Museum Without Walls". Journey from the

immense Buddha statue which lies in Seokguram Grotto to UNESCO-listed Bulguksa Temple where you'll explore its Buddhist relics, pavilions and gardens. Continue onward to the age-old observatory of Cheomseongdae before taking in the greenery of Tumuli Park and browsing through ancient artefacts in the Gyeongju National Museum.

### DAY 6: Gyeongju to Busan B/L

Today, explore the sights of Busan and begin at the United Nations Memorial Cemetery, which honours the lives of the soldiers who were tragically lost during the Korean War. Next, take in the delights of vibrant Camellias which flourish on Dongbaekseom Island from January to May, and return to shore for the chance to meander through the bustling stalls of Jagalchi Fish Market. After marvelling at the soaring Busan Tower, visit the hawkers of Kukje Market before concluding today's exploration with a leisurely stroll through the Gamcheon Cultural Village.

### DAY 7: Busan to Fukuoka B

Following a morning at leisure, transfer to the port of Busan and say goodbye to South Korea as you set sail towards the Japanese 'Gateway to Asia', Fukuoka, well known for its ancient temples, beaches and beautiful Maizuru Park which contains the ruins of 17th-century Fukuoka Castle. Savour the tastes of Japanese dishes at a local restaurant this evening.

### DAY 8: Fukuoka to Kyoto B

Board a morning bullet train bound for Kyoto, and experience Japan at its finest as you wander the Zen gardens of Kodaiji Temple. Spend the rest of the day at leisure, perhaps taking the opportunity to look out for geishas draped in lavish kimonos as you meander through Gion.

### DAY 9: Kyoto B/D

Explore the UNESCO-recognised fortifications of Nijo Castle, and witness the gilded pavilion of Kinkaku-ji. Continue to the outskirts of Kyoto and witness thin shreds of sunlight which peek through the luxuriant towers of Bamboo in the enchanting Arashiyama Bamboo Grove, and next, head to the 14th century Tenryuji Temple, where tranquil gardens have survived the test of time as their original design is still intact. Finally, cross the Togetsukyo wooden bridge which is suspended above the Katsura River.

### DAY 10: Kyoto B

Following breakfast, travel to Nara where you'll get the chance to watch over 1,200 protected deer roaming Nara Park. From here, take a short stroll towards the crimson Shinto shrine of Kasuga-Taisha; standing majestically against a backdrop of the Kasuga Mountain. Conclude today's exploration at one of the most important imperial Buddhist Temples in Japan, Yakushi Temple, before returning to Kyoto for a Maiko performance and evening meal.

### DAY 11: Kyoto to Tokyo B

Transfer to Kyoto railway station and board a bullet train to Tokyo. This

afternoon, soak in the sights of this cosmopolitan city at your own pace.

**DAY 12: Tokyo B/D**

A fusion of futuristic districts, centuries-old palaces and family run ramen booths, Tokyo has survived a turbulent past to prosper as one of the world's major metropolises. A full day of sightseeing will commence at Sensoji, Tokyo's oldest temple, before you follow in the footsteps of Japan's masterful sushi chefs in an enlightening sushi-making demonstration. Continue to the bustling area of Ginza, the country's biggest luxury shopping district and visit the iconic Akihabara Electric Town to experience the city's passion for all things electronic.

**DAY 13: Tokyo B**

Today, visit the iconic Hakone National Park, home to one of Japan's most

instantly recognisable sights – Mount Fuji, fringed by thick forests and a crescent shaped ring of shimmering lakes. As you glide over sulphuric hot springs along the Hakone Ropeway, marvel at spectacular vistas of Owakudani Valley, an active volcanic crater, where hot rivers, bubbling pools and steam vents serve as a reminder of the area's volcanic might.

**DAY 14: Tokyo to the UK B**

Transfer to the airport for your return flight to the UK or chosen extension.

**Please note: An overnight daypack/bag is required for your train journey on days: 8,11. (See page 3 for details).**

**ACCOMMODATION DETAILS AND MAP**

**Accommodation**

Your accommodation is selected for convenience, location, comfort or character, and can range from business hotels to leisure hotels. Hotel accommodation is generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note there is no international classification system for hotels, and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and Japan and Korea. Rest assured that all accommodation used by Mercury Holidays is regularly inspected by our staff and partners to ensure that standards meet your needs. If you have booked a triple share please note that your room will be a twin room with a rollaway bed or sofa bed added. This may limit the floor space in the room.

**Please note: the hotels listed are provided for guidance only and final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.**

**Meals**

Breakfast is a mix of western and Korean or Japanese style and served in the hotel each morning. Dinner (when included) will be taken in local restaurants or at the hotel. A variety of restaurants are visited giving you the chance to experience a range of dishes and flavours.



**ON YOUR ARRIVAL**

On your arrival in Incheon you will be met by a representative from our local agent in South Korea, **Holidaylink**, holding a sign displaying 'Mercury Holidays'. The Mercury Holidays/Holidaylink representative will transfer you to your hotel on arrival where you will spend your first night. Your guide will be able to answer any queries you may have. If you need to contact Holidaylink during your stay the details are:

**Holidaylink Seoul**

Seoul office address:  
 RM705, Jindo Bldg., 44 Mapo-daero, Mapo-gu,  
 Seoul, 04174, South Korea.  
 Telephone 09.00am-18.00pm: 0082-2-755-2955

**Emergency contact information**

Please find below the emergency contact details for Holidaylink's 24-hour hotline (during office hours and after working hours):  
 Mobile: 0082 10 4935 1253 or 0082 10 2671 2319

**B Japan Tours**

Address:  
 801 KI Building 8F, 2-2-14 Hamamatsu-cho,  
 Minato-ku, Tokyo, 105-0013  
 Telephone: 0081 3 66599074  
 Email: Pankaj@beautyofjapantours.com & info@bojt.jp

**Emergency contact information**

Please find below the emergency contact details for B Japan Tours:  
 24 hour emergency number: 0081 806 7791 851/ 0081 806 7792 053

**WHAT TO PACK**

- Sunscreen, insect repellent and wide-brimmed hat
- Waterproof, lightweight jacket
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Lightweight clothing
- For winter departures warm sweaters, gloves, scarf, hat and a warm coat will be required
- Camera and charger
- Small day pack for excursions

- Loo paper for public WCs
- Binoculars
- Personal toiletries and first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc
- A plug adaptor – the electricity supply in Japan 110/120 volts and two or three flat pin plugs. The voltage in South Korea is 220v 60Hz. South Korean plugs are of the European variety with two round prongs

**IMPORTANT: An overnight bag/day pack will be required during your train journeys due to luggage limitations on the trains. Your luggage will be transferred using a 24hr luggage delivery service which will arrive at your accommodation the following day.**

**This applies to the following train journeys:**

**Day 8: Fukuoka to Kyoto**

**Day 11: Kyoto to Tokyo**

### WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

#### Visas

**South Korea** - A visa is not required for you travel to South Korea. Further advice should be sought from the applicable tourist authority for other nationalities and for general queries. We strongly advise you check your destinations' Tourist Board or Embassy for the most up-to-date guidelines regarding visas and passport validity.

**Japan** - UK passport holders are not currently required to obtain a visa prior to departure. A tourist visa will be issued on arrival for a duration of 90 days when you show your passport (must be valid for at least six months from the date you are due to leave Japan). Visa, arrival and departure requirements are subject to change and obtaining a visa is the responsibility of the traveller and not Mercury Holidays. We recommend you check with your destinations' Tourist Board or Embassy prior to departure for the most up-to-date guidelines regarding visas and passport validity.

#### Insurance

We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance with Holiday Extras, please call **0800 781 4237** and quote **'WK830'** for preferential rates. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

#### Health and Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to check any health and vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in good time before your departure. Sources of information include; [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk), [www.travelhealthpro.org.uk](http://www.travelhealthpro.org.uk), [www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk), your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

#### Tour Guides

**South Korea** - You will be met by an expert local guide who will accompany you throughout your time in South Korea ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times.

**Japan** - You will be met by an expert local guide in each of the cities that you visit, ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times. Kindly note, guide won't be travelling with you from city to city.

**Please note you will be escorted to the port in South Korea, where you will board the ship without a tour guide, you will be met by your local tour guide upon arrival in Japan.**

#### Private Tour

If you have booked a private tour then you will be accompanied by a Driver Guide or a Driver and Local Guides. These will be available to you during all scheduled sightseeing. Private Tours can depart on any day of the week depending on flight and train schedules and the opening days of the attractions. They will follow the itinerary as described in the brochure unless you have been advised otherwise and you will still have all of the same meals, sightseeing and local excursions included.

#### Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with a good level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves climbing of steep stairs and getting on and off coaches. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties. All our tours feature a "Tour Pace" to help find the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights, climb stairs and get on and off coaches and boats. The tour pace of Essence of South Korea and Japan is rated as Intermediate. A good level of fitness is required as you may be on your feet for approximately four hours in a day, though this will be interspersed with regular breaks and will vary from day to day. You will be walking around the sights, and may be getting on and off coaches, trains and boats and climbing steps which may be irregular. You will stay in variety of hotels throughout the tour Our guides will always endeavour to provide

the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

#### Tipping

**South Korea** - It is customary to tip your guides and drivers approximately £1-£2 per person per day. This is a total of £12 per person to budget for tips on your trip in South Korea. Tips are collected in the local currency.

**Japan** - It is at your customary to tip both your driver and guide. We would recommend to tip approximately £2 per person per day. This is a total of £10 per person to budget for tips on your trip in Japan. Tips will be collected at the end of your tour. Tips are accepted in the local currency.

#### Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 10, and the maximum will be 35. If in the unlikely event there are less than 10 people booked on your tour date, we will endeavour to reduce any disruption to your holiday and try to operate your tour with lower passenger numbers. If we are not able to operate your departure date, then you may be asked to change to a different date and a full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

#### Currency Exchange

**South Korea** - Korea's currency is the won (KRW). Upon arrival, travellers can easily convert their money into the local currency at bank branches and money exchangers located within the airport. However, we recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK for better exchange rate. It is important that you budget carefully and ensure you have the right form of currency before you arrive in the country. Cash machines will also be available throughout the tour in order to withdraw money in your local currency. Most of the businesses in Korea widely use and accept payment by credit cards, including at major hotels, department stores, and general shops. Visa, MasterCard, American Express and other credit cards can be used. Nonetheless, the forms of credit cards and debit cards have become a more preferred means of payment by travellers.

**Japan** - The currency in Japan is the Japanese Yen (JPY or ¥). You can purchase the currency before you travel but you will probably get a better exchange rate if money is exchanged when in Japan. You can buy Yen at foreign exchange banks and at the airport. Credit, debit and prepaid cards from international brands are accepted at a wide variety of places in the major cities within Japan. Outside of these, cards may not be widely accepted, although you will be able to withdraw cash in the local currency across the country at ATMs. We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. It is important that you budget carefully and ensure you have the right form of currency before you arrive in the country. Cash machines will also be available throughout the tour in order to withdraw money in your local currency.

#### Personal Expenses

You'll need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, any meals not included in the itinerary as well as drinks and snacks. Approximately £500- £600 per person will be sufficient for the duration of the tour. It is a good idea to try and maintain a supply of small notes and change in the local currency for tipping or small purchases.

#### Credit Card Information

As normal practice you will be asked for your credit card details on check-in at the hotel in order to cover any extras incurred during your stay. If you do not have a credit card, you may be asked for a cash deposit. American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.

#### Itinerary Changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. The schedules of the domestic airlines in country are subject to frequent changes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction &/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

**Public Holidays**

During the official holidays, offices and banks are closed but palaces, museums, most restaurants, department stores, and amusement facilities are open. Seollal (Lunar New Year's Day) and Chuseok (Korean Thanksgiving Day) are the most important traditional holidays for Koreans, so millions of people visit their hometown to celebrate with their families. During below dates has potential cancellations and schedule changes occurs. You will be expecting significantly more crowds at popular sites due to increase in numbers of locals out enjoying the sites. Seollal is 21st-23rd January 2023. Chuseok is 9th-12th September 2022 and 28th-30th September 2023. If you are travelling within the below Japanese Public

Holidays, please note that celebrations last for several days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Golden Week is between 29th April- 5th May. Obon Holiday is between 13th - 16th August

**FLIGHT INFORMATION**

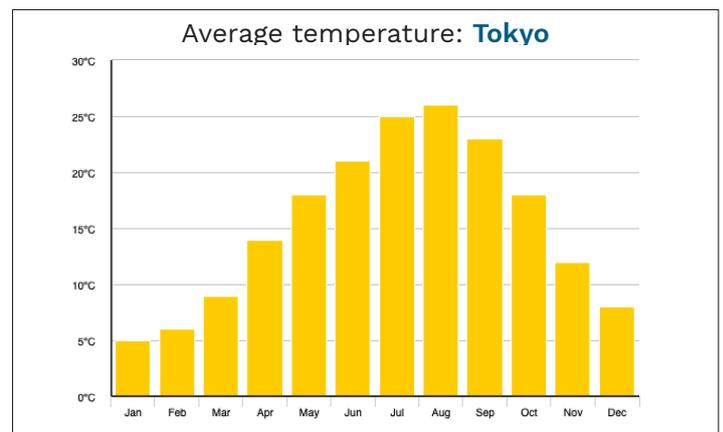
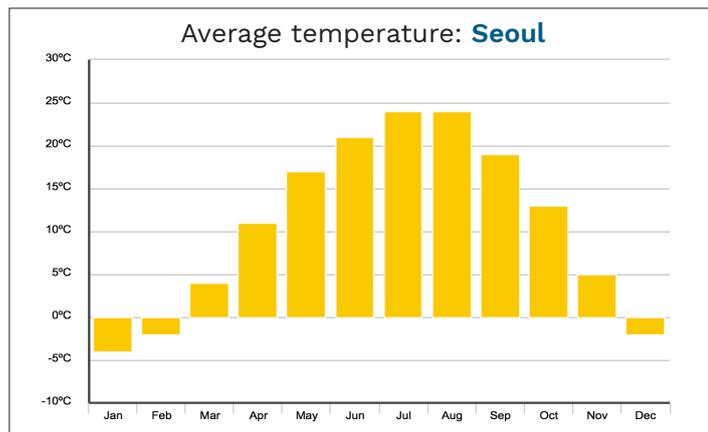
**IMPORTANT: Please note that final flight details, including terminal, airline and baggage allowance, will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure. A printed E-ticket is no longer required at check-in, all you need to do is present your passport to the staff at the desk and your boarding pass will be given to you.**

**Airport Extras**

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras on 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

**WEATHER AND CLIMATE**

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



## Tokyo City Stay Extension

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0333 003 0522



### TRIP OVERVIEW

Extend your tour with 3 extra nights in Japan to explore the electric city of Tokyo, which perfectly demonstrates the country's juxtaposition of ancient traditions with its love of new technology.

### ITINERARY AND DETAILS

*This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your extension to Tokyo.*

#### Hotel Information - Tokyo (3 nights)

Your Tokyo stay will take place at the 4★ Moxy Hotel on Bed & Breakfast. Any alternative hotels or board basis will have been confirmed at booking. Please speak to our reservations department if you are unsure. All internal transfers are included.  
Hotel address: Tokyo, 3-4-2 Kotobashi, Sumida City, Tokyo 130-0022, Japan  
Telephone Number: 0081 3-5624-8801

#### Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry and any additional snacks or drinks you may wish to have.

#### Tour Guides

Your stay in Tokyo is not escorted by a tour guide. Your time here will be free to do as you wish. Details of your departure transfer will be confirmed by your guide at the end of your tour, before you begin your extension stay in Tokyo.

#### Visas

UK passport holders are not currently required to obtain a visa prior to departure. A tourist visa will be issued on arrival for a duration of 90 days when you show your passport (must be valid for at least six months from the date you are due to leave Japan).

#### Please note:

This extension stay in Tokyo will take place at the end of your main tour.

### FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.