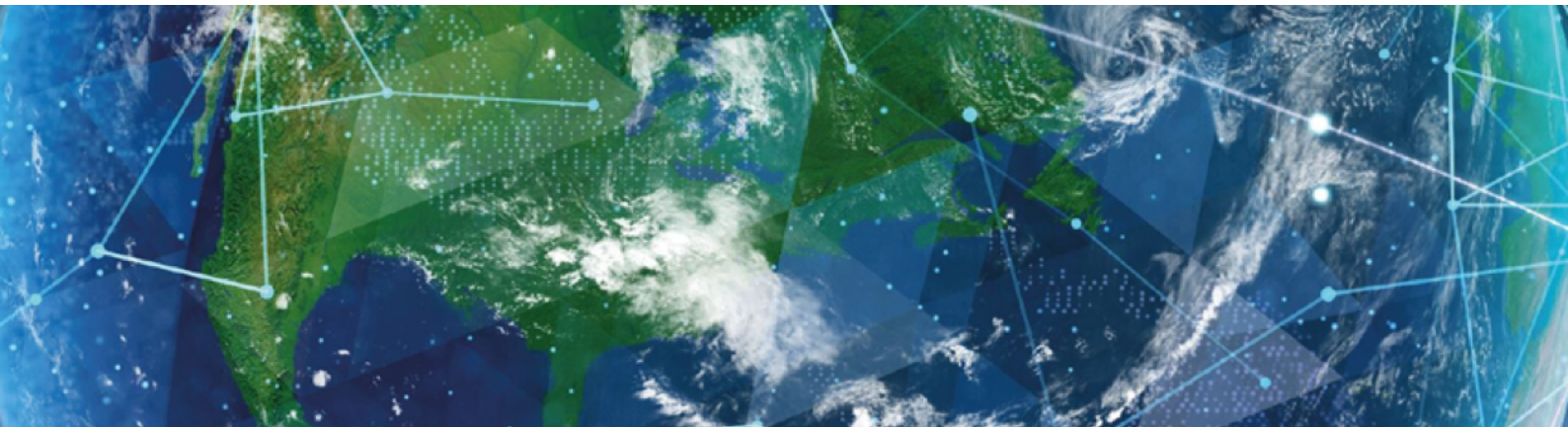


Country Travel Advice Report

South Korea

Overall Risk Rating: **Low | 2.25**



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Country Risk Rating Breakdown

Country Overall Risk Rating				Low 2.25
Security	Environmental	Infrastructural	Political	Medical
Low 2.25	Low - Moderate 2.50	Negligible - Low 1.75	Low 2.00	High 4.00

Country Overview

Low | 2.25

South Korea is an economically prosperous nation in Northeast Asia. The conflict threat from North Korea continually looms large. However, a historic thaw in ties with Pyongyang under current leader Moon Jae-in has led to speculation of increased chances of an eventual political settlement.

While corruption exists, its impact on business activity remains low-to-moderate. The rule of law is generally observed and enforced, although corruption in the judiciary, as well as allegations of nepotism and patronage, have raised concerns. South Korea is generally safe from powerful earthquakes, although it is susceptible to storm systems during the typhoon season as well as other aberrant weather patterns. High-quality healthcare is available, although modern and well-equipped hospitals are limited to urban centers.

Security

Low | 2.25

Overview

South Korea is generally a safe destination for travelers. Petty opportunistic crime poses a limited threat to visitors in the main urban centers. Protests and strike actions occur fairly regularly, although they mostly result in localized disruptions to traffic and commerce rather than pose a direct threat to the safety of individuals. North Korea remains a latent threat due to its history of provocative rhetoric and actions, along with its nuclear capabilities. Though generally reduced tensions from 2018 raised hopes for better ties between the two Koreas, periods of escalated rhetoric and symbolic threats continue to occur. Transnational extremist groups are not known to have a presence in South Korea, and the country has strong counter-terrorism capabilities in place.

Political

Low | 2.00

Overview

The election of Moon Jae-In as the country's new president in early May 2017 helped ease some of the political uncertainty generated by the impeachment of his predecessor Park Geun-Hye over corruption allegations. Corruption levels are still considered low, whilst rule of law is generally observed. However, the recent scandal involving the former president, a confidante, and several local conglomerations have exposed a shady nexus between political and corporate interests in the country.

Infrastructural

Negligible - Low | 1.75

Overview

There are no major safety concerns over air and land travel in South Korea. However, severe weather can result in disruptions. In addition, driving can be somewhat dangerous due to reckless motorists. Electricity supply, mobile network coverage, and Internet connections are reliable across the country, with the country having one of the fastest Internet connections in the world. However, cybercrime poses a credible threat due to the high use of, and reliance on, online networks and platforms.

Environmental

Low - Moderate | 2.50

Overview

South Korea is susceptible to powerful and disruptive storm systems during the typhoon season from July to September. Climatic extremes can also occur during the summer and winter periods. The country does not lie in an active seismic region, and high-intensity tremors are rare. The demilitarized zone separating the two Koreas remain one of the most heavily mined areas in the world.

Medical

High | 4.00

Overview

There are no major disease-related concerns. However, the country has a recent history of a MERS outbreak. The country has high-quality medical care and well-stocked pharmacies, although they are mostly limited to urban centers.

South Korea is currently affected by an outbreak of the COVID-19 virus which originated in mainland China. While the country has managed to contain the initial spread of the virus, there are concerns of a second wave of infections due to a recent surge of the number of clusters and untraceable COVID-19 cases in Seoul.

Fact Box

Government Type	Presidential Republic
Population	50,924,172 (2016)
Currency	South Korean Won
Languages	Korean
Time Zone	UTC+9
Religions	Christian 31.6%, Buddhist 24.2%, other or unknown 0.9%, none 43.3%.
Traffic	Drives on the right
Plug Types	Type C and Type F
Ethnicities	Homogeneous
Drinking Water	Safe to Drink
Additional Information	Significant Dates: January 1 - New Year's Day February 9 - 25 - PyeongChang Winter Olympics February 16-19 - Seol-nal (Lunar New Year) March 1 - Samil Day April 13 - Parliamentary Elections May 1 - Labour Day May 5 - Children's Day May 22 - Sukka Tansin II (Buddha Day) June 6 - Memorial Day (Hyun Choong II) June 13 - Local elections August 15 - Independence Day (Kwang Bok Jul) September 23-26 - Harvest Moon Festival (Chusok) October 3 - National Foundation Day (Kae Chun Jul) October 9 - Hangeul Day December 25 - Christmas Day
International Country Code	+82

Travel Risk Advice

Vaccinations and Key Health Risks

You should visit a health care professional at least four to six weeks prior to the trip. Travellers should ensure that they have routine vaccination courses and boosters. Routine vaccines include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis, varicella (chickenpox), polio, and annual flu vaccine.

Most travellers will require vaccines from:

- Hepatitis A
- Typhoid

Dependent on work, reason for travel, or underlying health conditions, some travellers visiting South Korea may require vaccines from:

- Hepatitis B
- Malaria
- Rabies
- Japanese Encephalitis

Pre-departure

- Travellers should have adequate travel insurance in place to enable rapid medical treatment or emergency extraction from South Korea.
- Travellers should provide friends and family with a copy of their travel itinerary, and make a copy of important travel and identification documents.

On Arrival

- There are no significant measures that need to be undertaken on arrival into South Korea.

In Transit

- Public transport is generally safe, and self driving may be conducted.

At Your Hotel

- Relations between South Korea and North Korea remain tense, and the level of tension on the Korean peninsula can change with little notice. Travellers should familiarise themselves with local plans and shelters. Shelters in Seoul are marked with a special symbol. Travellers should further develop a grab-bag containing minimum essentials.
- Local authorities hold occasional civil emergency exercises during which time sirens are sounded and people are asked to take shelter indoors. Participation is not obligatory but travellers should follow any instructions by local authorities during any exercises.
- Travellers can use the American Forces Network (AFN) 360 app to access the AFN radio stations throughout for guidance during a crisis.

In the Street

- Travellers should be aware of the national culture and behavioural expectations. There are no legal restrictions on consensual same-sex relations. While South Korea remains socially conservative with regards to LGBT-related issues, progress has made in terms of advocacy and anti-discrimination efforts based on sexual orientation. Major urban centres such as Seoul have also hosted an increasing number of venues and events catering to the community.
- Travellers should avoid overt displays of wealth and dress discreetly and appropriately to the environment. Do not display money, jewellery or valuables and keep a low profile. In Seoul, Itaewon, Sinchon, Myeongdong, and Hongdae are well-known entertainment and shopping districts in which crowds, alcohol, and a higher prevalence of drug activity present a higher risk for crime.

- Travellers should use only small denominations of the local currency, and keep large amounts of cash and cards in a separate place on your person. Reduce the contents of your wallet or purse contents, particularly cards which may denote affiliations, memberships and accounts. Do not use credit or debit cards unless absolutely necessary and then only at respected, well-known retail and service establishments.
- Travellers should ensure that their mobile phone is carried with sufficient battery life and programmed with appropriate emergency numbers. Travellers should also carry an ID card or passport and emergency medical information.
- Travellers should be aware of their location and surroundings. Avoid high-crime areas and of walking through dimly lit streets after dark. Travellers should know routes and carry a map if necessary, but keep it concealed.
- In crowded situations, travellers should be aware of jostling as this may be a ploy for pick-pockets. Travellers should also be aware of people loitering, and also that attackers may first pass their victim to attack from behind.

COVID-19 Information

Total Cases (ECDC) (Updated on Monday): 16,929,564

Weekly percentage increase in cases: 3.52%

Travel Restrictions: Domestic Measures South Korea will lift all social distancing measures from April 18 amid lower COVID-19 activity. Limits on private gatherings and business hours are no longer in effect. Facemasks are mandatory in public places, indoor public areas, and on public transport. Public places like food establishments are no longer required to limit business hours or enforce mandatory contact tracing and vaccine or PCR test entry requirements. Close contacts and cohabiting family members of COVID-19 patients are no longer required to undergo compulsory self-isolation. However, authorities recommend cohabiting family members take a PCR test within three days of the patient testing positive and conduct a rapid antigen test on the seventh day or last day of their family member's self-isolation period.

International Travel Restrictions Officials are also allowing most fully vaccinated arrivals to enter the country without needing to undergo quarantine as of April 2. South Korea permits entry for residents, including long-term visa holders. Visa-free and visa-waiver programs with most countries remain suspended; however, travelers from the EU and Schengen countries can enter without a visa for 90 days. Inbound passengers must present evidence of a negative result from a PCR test taken within 48 hours before departure; exceptions are possible for children under age six, as well as South Korean nationals traveling for humanitarian reasons or who have tested positive for COVID-19 between ten and 40 days before their flight, among others. Arrivals are subject to mandatory screenings at points of entry. Authorities in Seoul require inbound passengers remaining in the city to undergo COVID-19 testing upon arrival. Most foreign residents must obtain permits before departing South Korea to facilitate any planned re-entry. Additionally, South Korean nationals are prohibited from traveling to areas in Russia and Belarus that border Ukraine from March 8 amid Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine.

Permitted inbound international travelers who are not fully vaccinated must quarantine for seven days. Most fully vaccinated entrants who have registered their status on the Quarantine COVID19 Defence (Q-Code) website may enter without needing to quarantine; please click here to access the website. South Korea considers a person fully vaccinated if they received a booster or completed two doses of the vaccine 14-180 days before departure. Fully vaccinated entrants from Myanmar, Pakistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan must still quarantine for seven days.

Entrants from Saipan and Singapore under travel bubble arrangements are exempt from quarantine. Unvaccinated nonresidents must quarantine at designated facilities at their own expense and undergo rapid antigen tests on days six and seven of arrival. Returning citizens, long-term residents, and some relatives of these groups can self-quarantine, except if from designated high-risk countries.

Additional Information: <https://kr.usembassy.gov/022420-covid-19-information/>

Threat Scale Reference

Threat Rating	Implication
1 - Negligible	The operating environment is benign and there are only isolated threats to business and/or travel.
2 – Low	The operating environment is generally permissive, although there are a limited number of threats to business and/or travel that requires basic mitigations.
3 – Moderate	The operating environment is challenging and there are serious threats to business and/or travel that requires some mitigations.
4 – High	The operating environment is hostile and there are significant threats to business, personal safety and/or travel, requiring comprehensive mitigations and planning.
5 – Extreme	The operating environment is characterised by pervasive direct threats to business, personal safety and/or travel, requiring strict risk management procedures.

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