

# South Korea and Taiwan

Departs 17th April 2026

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Itinerary correct as at 20 Aug 2024, but subject to change. ALL flights to be confirmed. [www.bluedottravel.com.au](http://www.bluedottravel.com.au)



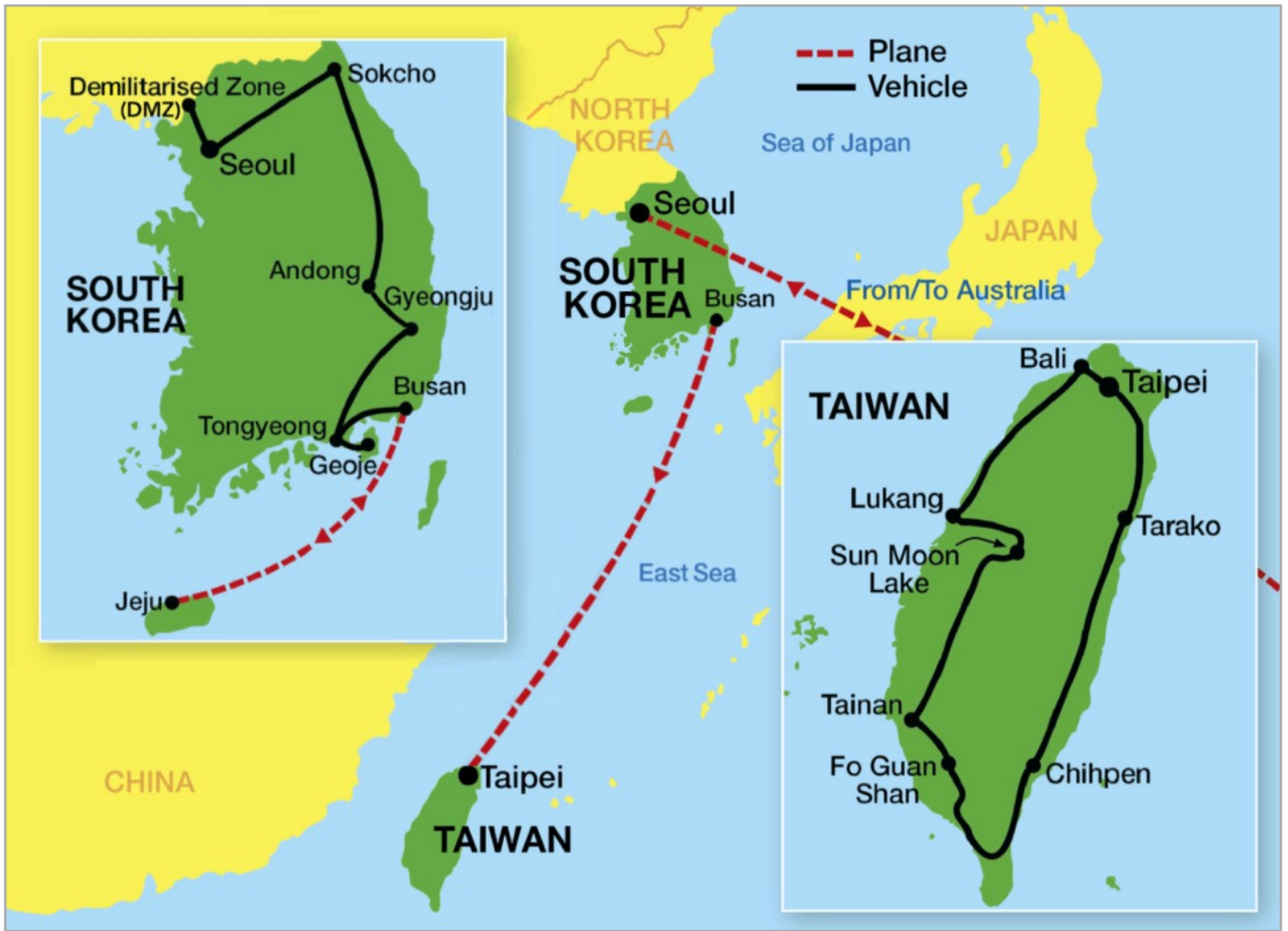
## **SOUTH KOREA AND TAIWAN**

For too long, South Korea and Taiwan have flown under the radar for travellers.

At just 100,000 square km, South Korea is a small country that is easy to get around, and you can see a lot without spending long days on the road. Seoul is a very modern capital city with a population of around 10 million. While there is much to see and do in Seoul, you need to leave the capital to see this wonderful country. Traditional villages, bustling modern cities, UNESCO monasteries, lakes and waterfalls, coastal beauty and mountainous lush countryside await. Hills full of native trees and rice paddies on what appear to be every spare piece of flat land.

The subtropical island of Taiwan is also small, yet even with its population of 23 million, it doesn't feel crowded. Taiwan's indigenous tribes - of which there are ten officially recognised by today's government - are believed to have Polynesian ancestors, not Chinese. Having been ruled by the Dutch, Han Chinese and Japanese, Taiwan's culture is an interesting mix. Taipei, the modern, efficient capital, has wonderful food and café culture - if you like your dumplings, you've come to the right place! But there is so much more to offer in the way of food. Taiwan is known as the "Beautiful Isle"; towering sea cliffs, dramatic gorges, tropical forests and mountains are waiting to be discovered.

If you enjoy unique Asian culture, scenic views, friendly people, and exploring lesser-visited places far away from the tourist crowd, grab your camera and join us!



**Day 1, Friday 17th April**  
**ARRIVE SEOUL**

Depart Australia in the morning, on a direct Qantas flight from Sydney to Seoul. You'll arrive to your hotel in the evening, where there will be time for a late dinner and rest before exploring Seoul tomorrow. Overnight at Courtyard Marriott Seoul (or similar). *D*



**Day 2, Saturday 18th April**  
**SEOUL**

After breakfast, we'll spend a full day in Seoul. First stop Gyeongbok

Palace, which was built in 1395 and served as the main palace until the 16th century. We will also visit the National Folk Museum, which displays the lifestyle of ancient Koreans, and the Insadong Antique Alley, which has many antique stores, art galleries, and secondhand bookstores. Then on to Namdaemun Market, considered the best market for almost everything! We'll visit Bukchon Hanok Village, which

has traditional wooden homes, and Myeongdong, a busy retail precinct with wonderful alleys, shops, and restaurants. Finally, we will take a walk along Cheonggyecheon Stream, which used to be a waste catchment but, after an urban renewal, is now a modern public recreation precinct. After dinner, we'll enjoy a 'Nanta' or non-verbal performance. Overnight at the Courtyard Marriott Seoul. *B/D*

**Day 3, Sunday**  
**19th April**  
**SEOUL**

This morning, we will tour the De-Militarised Zone (DMZ), a strip of land running across the Korean Peninsula on the 38th parallel as a buffer zone between North and South Korea. The two countries are technically still at war, and a formal peace treaty has never been signed. We will see the 3rd Tunnel, dug by the North and capable of dispatching 10,000 troops an hour. We'll also visit the Bridge of Freedom, DMZ Theatre and Exhibition Hall, Dora Observatory and Dorasan train station. After



returning to Seoul, we'll visit Gwangjang Market, established in 1905 and home to more than 5,000 stores selling fabric, bedding, handmade crafts, and hanbok (traditional costume). Then we'll head to Itaewon, a popular district with the locals. Overnight at the Courtyard Marriott Seoul. **B/D**



#### **Day 4, Monday 20th April SEOUL – MT. SEORAK – SOKCHO**

Today we will drive to Sokcho and Mt. Seorak National Park (about 3 hours east). Mt. Seorak is considered one of Korea's most beautiful mountains, with its granite peaks, lush green valleys, and dense forests. Weather permitting, we will take a 1,100m long cable car that connects the park entrance with Gwongeumseong Fortress, an old mountaintop fortress of the Silla Kingdom. At the top is a 3km pleasant hike for those up to it (about 50 min). Overnight at Sokcho Ramada (or similar). **B/D**



#### **Day 5, Tuesday 21st April SOKCHO – ANDONG – GYEONGJU**

After breakfast, we transfer to Andong (a 3.5 hours drive)

and visit Hahoe Village, which has preserved the Joseon dynasty's housing architecture and village structure. There are 180 families within the group village known as the village of the Pungsan Ryu family. We'll then drive to Gyeongju and check in to the Commodore Chosun Hotel (or similar) for three nights. **B/D**



#### **Day 6, Wednesday 22nd April GYEONGJU – MT. GAYA – GYEONGJU**

This morning we'll drive to Mt. Gaya National Park to visit Haeinsa Temple, home to the Tripitaka Koreana, a set of 80,000 wooden printing blocks engraved with one of Asia's most comprehensive compilations of Buddhist scriptures. We'll return to Gyeongju, considered one of the country's highlights. The city is teeming with stunning architecture and ancient artefacts. The historic area is a UNESCO-listed site, and the city has become known as the "Museum without Walls". In the afternoon, there is some free time to enjoy this wonderful city (bicycle rental is available if that's your thing). **B/D**



#### **Day 7, Thursday 23rd April GYEONGJU**

After breakfast, a full-day tour of Gyeongju. The Gyeongju National Museum preserves much of the Silla heritage, including magnificent gold crowns, pottery, Buddhist artefacts, stone sculptures and the legendary Emille Bell, one of Asia's largest and most resonant - 25 tonnes of bronze standing 11 feet

high. We will also see Tumuli Park, a collection of royal Silla tombs, Cheom-seongdae Observatory, the world's earliest known existing observatory, and Anapji Pond where the Silla royal family relaxed. After that, our tour takes us to see the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Seokguram Grotto and Bulguksa Temple, a monument to both the skill of the Silla architects and the depth of Buddhist faith at the time. **B/D**



#### **Day 8, Friday 24th April GYEONGJU – TONGYEONG**

After breakfast, we'll begin our drive to Tongyeong (about 3 hours drive). Often called the Naples of the Orient, Tongyeong has many islands spread along the oceanfront front, with lovely buildings of varying heights along the port. We will take a 2km long cable car to get the top of Mt. Mireuk to see the beautiful islands of Hallyeo Haesang National Park and visit Hansando Island by boat. Overnight at the Tongyeong Anchovy Hotel (or similar). **B/D**



#### **Day 9, Saturday 25th April TONGYEONG – GEOJE**

This morning, we'll travel to Geoje, Korea's second-largest island. Oedo-Botania is a marine botanical garden with a beautiful view of the crystal blue South Sea, the surrounding landscape, and the huge rocky structures of Haegeumgang. In the afternoon, we'll visit the pebble-strewn Mongdol beach and Windy Hill, where you can enjoy a beautiful panorama. Overnight at Geoje Art Nouveau Hotel (or similar). **B/D**



#### **Day 10, Sunday 26th April GEOJE – BUSAN**

After breakfast, we'll drive to Busan, the largest port city and the second largest city in the country after Seoul (approx 2hr drive south). Visit the quirky and artsy Gamcheon Cultural Village,



Busan Tower with its panoramic view of the city and head to the internationally known, enormous Jagalchi Fish Market. Here, we can photograph weird and wonderful fish and other sea creatures being sold to the locals. Late in the afternoon, we'll head down for dinner in the Nampodong area, where all the locals congregate for a meal. Overnight at Busan Crown Harbour Hotel (or similar). **B/D**



#### **Day 11, Monday 27th April BUSAN**

After breakfast, we'll continue our tour of Busan, taking in Haedong Yonggungsa Temple, first built in 1376 and situated on the coast of the northeastern

part of Busan. Next, we'll visit Dongbaekseom Island, noted for its beautiful, natural landscape accented by dense camellia and pine trees, and Haeundae Beach and the 15-metre high Oryukdo Skywalk. Overnight at Busan Crown Harbour Hotel (or similar). *B/D*

 **Day 12, Tuesday 28th April**  
**BUSAN – JEJU**

This morning, we will fly to Jeju Island (approximately 1 hour), arriving before lunch. On arrival, we'll visit some of the island's natural attractions, including the volcanic Mt. Songaksan, the rock formations of the Yongmeori Coast (also known as Dragon Head Cliff) and Jusanggeolli Cliff, a spectacular volcanic rock formation created when Mt. Hallasan erupted into the sea. Overnight at Jeju Lotte City Hotel (or similar). *B/D*



 **Day 13,**  
**Wednesday**  
**29th April**  
**JEJU**

Our full-day tour of Jeju today includes Manjanggal Cave, one of the finest lava

tunnels in the world, the Haenyeo Museum, a great source of information on haenyeos (women divers) and the island's fishing industry, Seongsan Ilchulbong (Sunrise peak) which rose from under the sea in a volcanic eruption over 100,000 years ago, Seongeup folk village and the Jeongbang waterfalls. Overnight at Jeju Lotte City Hotel. *B/D*

**Day 14, Thursday 30th April**  
**JEJU – BUSAN – TAIPEI, TAIWAN**

After an early breakfast we will fly from Jeju, via Busan to Taipei (total travel time approx 5.5 hours) arriving in the early afternoon.

**Welcome to Taiwan!**

The group will be met at the airport and transferred to the hotel where we will spend four nights. We'll have a dinner stop along the way. Overnight at Landis Hotel Taipei (or similar). *B/D*

**Day 15, Friday 1st May**  
**TAIPEI**

Today we will take a tour of this fabulous, dynamic city. Sites will include Chang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall, which mimics Beijing's Heavenly Temple and the Presidential Square, which were built in the post-renaissance style. This will be followed by visits to Lungshan Temple and its neighbourhood Herb Lane. Then we will visit the city centre and Taipei 101, which

was once the world's tallest building. Dinner will be at a renowned specialty rice restaurant in Dadaocheng, operated by the fifth-generation owner. <https://www.ricenshine329.com/>. Overnight at Landis Hotel Taipei. *B/D*

 **Day 16, Saturday 2nd May**  
**TAIPEI**

We will start the day with a visit to the Yangmingshan National Park, where we'll see the beautiful mountainous and volcanic landscape and some light trekking for those up to it. (Those who don't wish to walk can sit at a nearby scenic spot). Later on we will transfer to Beitou, a famous hot-spring resort with a Japanese flavour. In the afternoon, we'll visit the world's fourth-largest museum, the National Palace Museum and see the Chinese imperial artistic treasury collections. We will also see the Martyrs' Shrine and changing of the guard. Dinner will be at the famous Din Tai Fung dumpling restaurant at the bottom of Taipei 101. Overnight at Landis Hotel Taipei. *B/D*



**Day 17, Sunday 3rd May**  
**TAIPEI – NORTH COAST**

This morning we will drive 1 hour along the scenic Northern Coast route to Juming Museum to admire master Ju's amazing outdoor artistic work display. We'll then drive for 1 hour to Tamsui to experience its buzzing vibe. Next, we will head to Bali and visit the Bali pier, old streets, shops with interesting wares, an ancient fortress with banyan trees, and the Shihsanhang Museum of Archaeology. An early dinner will be arranged at a local restaurant in Taipei. Overnight at Landis Hotel Taipei. *B/D*

**Day 18, Monday**  
**4th May**  
**TAIPEI –**  
**LUKANG – SUN**  
**MOON LAKE**

Start with a leisurely breakfast at the hotel before heading to Lukang. We will take the HSR - high-speed rail - capable of speeds well over 300km/hr. Lukang is a charming 3-century old town, once the second largest city and a busy business port. We'll visit the market,



and walk on its lovely old street, the Matsu Temple. Then we'll drive to the resort in the heart of Taiwan – stunning Sun Moon Lake. We'll visit the local landmark, Wen Wu Temple, and Peacock Garden before checking in the hotel – the Lalu Sun Moon Lake (or similar), for two nights. Dinner at a local restaurant. *B/D*

**Day 19, Tuesday 5th May**  
**SUN MOON LAKE**

Today we'll take a motorboat ride around the lake and visit the Holy Monk Shrine. If you would like to, you can bike-ride along the well-established cycling path (It's a round-lake bike trail, moderate to easy). Then we will drive to the famous Chung Tai Zen Monastery, followed by the magnificent Buddhist Art Museum. This afternoon we'll visit the Antique Assam Tea Farm, where you can see the tea plantation and taste the famous local black tea. Dinner tonight is at a famous restaurant, the Full House Guest House. Overnight at the Lalu. *B/D*

**Day 20, Wednesday 6th May**  
**SUN MOON LAKE – TAINAN**

This morning, we will drive southward to the first capital city in Taiwan, Tainan, arriving around midday. We will visit Chikan Tower and Confucius Temple in the city. After this brief tour, we will transfer to Anping the fishing port, and visit the Anping Fort. Check in to the hotel the Evergreen Plaza Hotel (or similar). Dinner will be at Duxiaoyue Restaurant. *B/D*

 **Day 21, Thursday 7th May**  
**TAINAN – FO GUAN SHAN – KAOHSIUNG**

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast at the hotel and then drive southward to Kaohsiung, the biggest harbour city in southern Taiwan. We'll visit Fo Guan Shan Monastery and its surroundings. Then on to Dragon and Tiger Pagoda and the



graceful Spring and Autumn Pavilions, which stand in the water of Lotus Lake. We then visit Cijing and take a ferry ride with the locals. Dinner at Hakka Restaurant, and after, we'll go to the night market for those who like to mix it with the locals. Overnight at the Howard Hotel Kaohsiung (or similar). *B/D*

 **Day 22, Friday 8th May**  
**KAOHSIUNG – TAITUNG (CHIH PEN)**

Today, we'll enjoy a train journey on the South-Link Line towards Taitung, passing sweeping views of the Pacific Ocean against a mountainous backdrop on the other side. We'll check in to the Hotel Royal Chihpen

on arrival and refresh. In the afternoon, we'll walk through the nearby Chihpen Forest recreation area, which is rich in natural scenery, including hot springs, waterfalls, banyan trees, and tropical forests. After dinner, we can relax in the hot springs at the hotel and then enjoy indigenous music and dance performances. Overnight Hotel Royal Chihpen (or similar). *B/D*

**Day 23,**  
**Saturday 9th**  
**May**  
**CHIH PEN –**  
**TAROKO**

Much of today is transferring northward to Taroko along the east coast. On



the way, we'll visit Siaoyeliou, Dulan Bay, Donghe, the marvellous Sansiantai and the Stone Steps. Our destination is the magnificent Taroko Gorge, a striking ravine, dotted with ancient temples. Dinner and overnight at the delightful Silks Place Taroko (or similar). *B/D*

 **Day 24, Sunday 10th May**  
**TAROKO**

Today, those up to it will enjoy some soft trekking on the trails in the National Park. For those not wishing to trek, this area is full of natural beauty to appreciate. Take in the grand gorge view, the iconic rock formations of Swallow Grotto and the Eternal Spring Shrine built across a running waterfall. Afterwards, we'll return to Taipei and check into our hotel, the Landis Taipei (or similar), for dinner. *B/D*

**Day 25, Monday 11th May**  
**DEPARTURE**

After breakfast, you will have a free day to explore Taipei before transferring to the airport for your flight home, departing in the evening. *B/Meals in flight*

**Tuesday 12th May**  
**ARRIVE HOME**



Icon indicates a day where there is **moderate physical exertion**. A basic level of fitness is required: eg. A trek over 'mostly flat' terrain or climbing several flights of steps without the support of handrails or elevators.



Icon indicates a day where there is a **particularly active section**. A good level of fitness is required: eg. A longer trek over non-groomed, uneven terrain, or ascending to reach a panorama. May also include exposure to higher altitude. **An alternate activity may be offered if you choose to sit out an active section.** Please call - we are happy to discuss each tour in more detail.