



SEOUL INCHEON

SOUTH KOREA

Inchon was a small fishing village during the 1880's, today it is a thriving harbor and major industrial site. Historically it has been an important port since the time of the Kingdom of Koguryo, which occupied the area in 475 A.D. It served central Korea during the Unified Silla Period and Koryo Period, and during the Yi Dynasty became even more important as the port which linked the capital with China. More recently, Inchon has had interest as the site of the earliest foreign communities in Korea, at the end of the 19th century. However, today Inchon is undoubtedly best known as the scene of General Douglas MacArthur's Inchon landing, a military maneuver that led to the recapture of Seoul from the North Koreans only 12 days after the assault. The General is memorialized with a bronze statue facing the Yellow Sea from a hill in Chayu Park.

The capital city of Seoul, in a pretty valley divided by the Han-gang River, is home to more than 20% of the country's population. It's divided into an old and new city. The old city (proclaimed the nation's capital in 1392) is centuries old; until the early 1900's, it was a walled city with gates and towers. Some of the gates remain: The Great South Gate, which has been designated the National Treasure No. 1, was built in 1394 as the principal entrance to Seoul. Unfortunately, both it and the Great East Gate aren't easily inspected – they're located in the center of traffic roundabouts. Sections of the old wall also still stand, but mostly on the mountains. The Great East Gate is near East Gate Market, where some of the best bargains in Korea can be obtained. A beautiful view of Seoul can be had from Seoul Tower, atop the 901 foot (270.3 meter) Namsan Mountain, which can be reached by road, cable car or walking. There are also many gardens and parks that are especially beautiful during spring and summer. The 78 acre (31.2 hectare) Secret Garden in the Changdok Palace complex (built in 1406) has particularly striking pavilions and gardens.

HISTORY

Recorded history dates the first kingdom of Korea, Chosun (Gojoseon) and its founder Dangun Wanggeom, to around 2333 BC. Korea's first dynasty, whether fact, fiction or ancient folklore, historians are still debating, was the theocratic Tan'gun Dynasty, in mid 2000's BC.

China's Han Dynasty spread thru much of the northern peninsula in the first century BC. With it came the philosophy of Confucius and the development of a highly organized imperial bureaucracy. As China governed the north, now known as the province of Nangnang, the south of Korea was divided between three Han tribes; Ma Han in the southwest, Chin Han in the southeast and Poyun Han in middle. This period, 37 BC - 935 AD, became known as the Age of the Three Kingdoms. The Poyun and Chin Han would soon create a strategic alliance that would become known as the famous Shilla Dynasty. The Shilla Dynasty saw the expansion of scholarship and the introduction of Buddhism. General Wangkum followed the Shilla Dynasty as he established the Koryo Dynasty in 918 AD. With the general's rise to power came extensive changes in governance, education, the consolidation of farmland and the unifying of the military. All changes were brought about in order to centralize power.

Seoul's origins date back to 1392 with the establishment of the Yi Dynasty, which ruled Korea until 1910. During this time when Korea was largely closed to the outside world, the shrines, palaces and fortresses which still stand today were constructed.

In 1443 King Sae Jong, of the now ruling Yi Dynasty, commanded his scholars to create Korea's own phonetically based written language called Hangul. Up until this time the Korean language could only be written by the use of Chinese style characters. Easier to teach and learn than the complicated Chinese style characters, and with his Hangul style still in use today, Korea shows their respect by placing King Sae Jong's likeness on their W100 coin and W1,000 bill.

The first western ideas came to Korea in 1777 in the form of Roman Catholicism brought by a Korean convert upon his return from studying



with missionaries in China. By the early 1800's, concerned by their growing influence, Prince Tae Won Kun would ban their ideas and bar westerners from the country. It would be to no avail. Major powers and countries that were determined to become a major power, were carving up much of the world into colonial possessions. By the late 1800's Korea had become a de facto vassal state of Japan and would remain so until its liberation at the end of World War II, in 1945.

Liberation did not bring peace. Korea was divided along the 38th parallel by the United States and the Soviet Union. In June of 1950 the Soviet and Chinese backed army of Communist North Korea attacked in mass across the 38th parallel. Under the flag of the United Nations, 22 countries joined in defending the sovereignty of the Republic of Korea. In 1953 a cease fire agreement was signed and official hostilities came to an end. South Korea lay in ruins and her people destitute.

When the United Nations Police Action came to an uneasy conclusion the United States offered economic support to the

Republic of Korea. In the second half of the 20th century, in less than the span of one lifetime, after thousands of years of great turmoil and upheaval that yielded very little real change or advancement, the Republic of Korea, a decimated and impoverished country, developed into a juggernaut and burst upon the world stage. Government funding for the repair and restoration of historic sites is one of Korea's outstanding features and explains why the very new and ancient continue to stand side by side. Seoul is a magnet which caters to every taste. The nation's capital, Seoul is a city of incredible contrasts. It was flattened during the Korean War, but has risen from the dust and ashes to become a modern high rise metropolis.

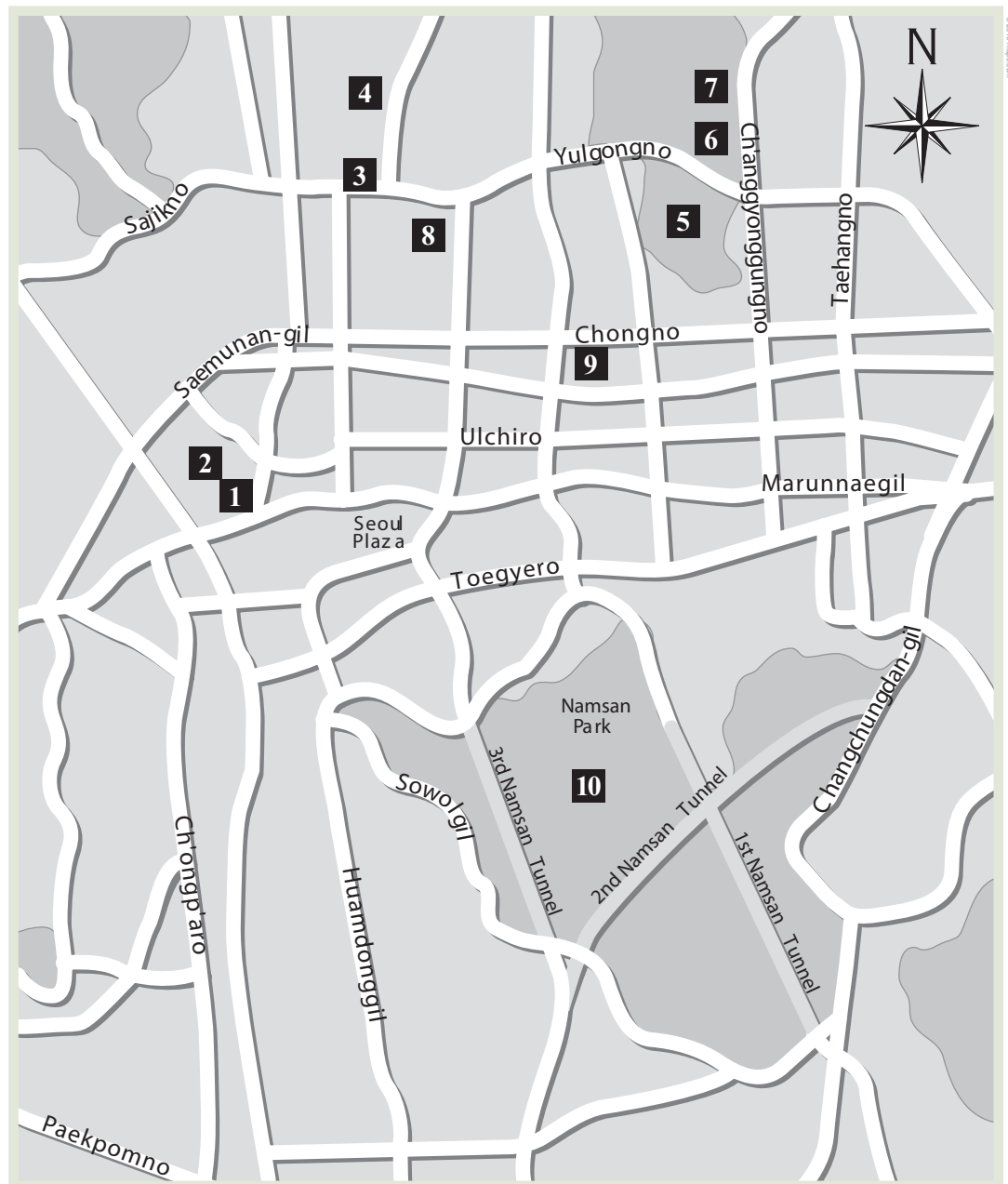
SEOUL PLACES OF INTEREST

1 Toksugung Palace is just beside City Hall. This palace complex is dotted with commanding structures: Taehanmun, the main gate; Chunghwajon, the throne room or audience hall; and Sokchojon, the first Renaissance style building in Korea, which now houses a cultural institute that offers monthly public audio-visual programs. The palace and grounds are open to the public year round.

2 Anglican Cathedral - A stroll up Sejongno Street offers a look at the old and new Seoul. The lovely red brick Anglican Cathedral sits snugly behind Toksugung Palace. The cathedral, built in 1926, is next to the British Embassy, built in 1890.

3 Kwanghwamun Gate, at the end of Sejongno Street, was the original entrance to Kyongbok-kung Palace. The two entrances to the Kyongbok-kung Palace grounds are located along the northeast and northwest walls.

4 Kyongbok-kung Palace Located behind the Capitol Building, this palace dates from 1392 (rebuilt in 1867). The



grounds contain some exceptionally beautiful buildings and a collection of ancient stone pagodas.

5 Chongmyo Royal Ancestral Shrines - A collection of beautiful traditional Korean temples which house the ancestral tablets of the 27 Yi Dynasty Kings and Queens.

6 Changdok-kung Palace is the best preserved of Seoul's five palaces. Built originally in 1405, it is still the official residence of Korea's Royal Family. Visit the Secret Garden, a landscaped wooded retreat covering 78 acres (31.2 hectares) incorporating over 40 pavilions as well as many stone bridges and ponds.

7 Changgyong-kung Palace, adjacent to Changdok-kung Palace, this is another well preserved Royal complex with magnificent gates and elaborate bridges, evoking visions of an earlier era.

8 Chogyesa Temple, one of the largest Buddhist temples to be found within the city limits. Headquarters of the Chogyejong sect, Chogyesa Temple is famous for its Lantern Festival which is held every spring to commemorate Buddha's birthday.

9 Poshingak - Chongno Street is home to another great landmark, Poshingak, a historic Bell Pavilion. The original bell, cast in 1468, once tolled the closing of the city gates at dusk and their opening at dawn. The original bell is in the National Museum and the replacement, dedicated in 1985, is rung on New Year's Day and other special occasions. The original has been designated as National Treasure No. 2.

10 Namsan, a granite mountain located south of Namdaemun in the heart of the city, is surrounded by Myong-dong and It'aewon. Its slopes are graced by several deluxe hotels. From the Seoul Tower on the mountain's summit, visitors can take in a panoramic view of the city while enjoying a drink or a meal at the skyline restaurant. A beautiful park can be found on Namsan, featuring a botanical garden, and statues of famous historical figures. The mountain's interior is crisscrossed by three tunnels connecting the city's northern and southern districts.

SHORE EXCURSIONS

To make the most of your visit to **Seoul, Incheon**, and surrounding areas, we suggest you take one of the organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing, consult **azamaracruises.com** or contact the onboard Shore Excursion Desk. When going ashore, guests are advised to take with them only the items they need and to secure any valuables.

LOCAL CUSTOMS

Korean social customs are built largely upon 500 years of following Confucius. The good of the family comes first then society at large before the needs of the individual. Age is highly respected in Korea. As in many western countries, it is expected that the elderly be seated first at a dinner gathering or, if on a bus, for a young person to offer their seat to a senior. Unlike Japan, raising a bowl of rice to the mouth then using chopsticks to scoop it out is not practiced. Bowls stay on the table. "Face", an individual's self-respect or reputation, is extremely important in Korea. To become visibly angry or to criticize someone in public is to be avoided at all cost. It would cause one to lose face.

Bargaining: Although many shops are using the fixed price system, you may have a chance to bargain in some shops. It is easier to bargain with cash. Department stores all have fixed prices.

Tipping: Tipping is not a traditional Korean custom. A 10% service charge is added to your bill at all tourist hotels and tipping is not expected. It is not necessary to tip a taxi driver unless he assists you with luggage or provides an

LOCAL CUISINE AND DRINK SPECIALTIES

The food in Korea is different from that in the rest of the Orient . . . it's generally spicy and salty, and more red meat is used. The basic foods include rice, a fish or meat soup, fresh vegetables and kimchi, cabbage and/or other vegetables pickled in brine with red pepper powder, garlic, salt, scallions, carrots, etc., for flavor . . . it's an acquired taste. Garlic and chilies are used extensively in Korean cooking. Short ribs and marinated beef are also popular. There are also many stews, soups and fish and noodle dishes. European and other Western food is available, but generally only at deluxe hotels and western restaurants, as is Chinese and Japanese cuisine.

Soju is the national drink of Korea. It was introduced in the 1300's by the invading Mongols. Made from distilled rice and sweet potatoes, the alcohol content can reach as high as 45% though 20% is most common. Makkoli is a milky drink distilled from white rice. Moderation is the key. Cass, OB and Hite are the most popular beers in Korea. Bottled water is recommended.

SHOPPING

There is some shopping in Incheon, but for the best shopping in Korea make the journey to Seoul. The huge International Market (Itaewon District) is a maze of streets and vendors all offering their wares at "bargain prices." The Itaewon district has been developed exclusively for foreign clientele. Clothing is one of the biggest bargains in Itaewon. Tailor shops (there are more than 100) offer custom made suits, silk dresses and blouses that can be made for a fraction of their overseas price. Ready made clothes, such as jogging suits, sports shirts, sweaters, down jackets, and ski wear are great Itaewon bargains. Shoes are a popular buy. But there is more to Itaewon than clothing and shoes. This is a great area to shop for Korean souvenirs, crafts, small gifts, and bags, as well as smoky topaz, amethyst and jade jewelry. A short distance from the picturesque East Gate, or Tongdaemun, on

