



ROTAWINDIES PRECONVENTION TOUR TO

# SOUTH KOREA & JAPAN: SEOUL TO TOKYO

*"Travel far enough, you meet yourself." – David Mitchell*



# **A TALE OF TWO CULTURES... EACH RICH, VIBRANT, AND UNFORGETTABLE.**

South Korea has become a global pop culture powerhouse, captivating the world with its hit dramas, chart-topping K-pop, mouthwatering cuisine, and cutting-edge beauty trends. This wave of creativity has inspired travelers everywhere to experience the country firsthand. Just across the sea, Japan awaits. An equally mesmerizing blend of ancient tradition, timeless craftsmanship, and world-renowned hospitality. Over two unforgettable weeks, you'll journey through both nations. From dazzling city skylines and tranquil temples to charming countryside villages and breathtaking natural wonders.



# TOUR SUMMARY

CITY	NIGHTS	HOTEL
SEOUL	3	Naru Ambassador Hotel Seoul - MGallery Collection or similar property
GYEONGJU	1	Gyeongju Hilton or similar property
BUSAN	1	Busan Asti Hotel or similar property
OSAKA	2	Osaka Excel Hotel Tokyu or similar property
KYOTO	2	Daiwa Roynet Hotel Kyoto Ekimae PREMIER or similar property
HAKONE	1	Prince Hakone Lake Ashinoko or similar property
TOKYO	3	Hotel The Celestine Tokyo Shiba or similar property
TAIPEI	5	Grand Hyatt Taipei or similar property



# KEY DATES

**May 31** Arrive in South Korea

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**June 04** Arrive in Japan

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**June 13** Arrive in Taiwan

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**June 18** Depart Taiwan

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## INCLUDED

- One-way international flight from Busan to Osaka
- One-way international flight from Tokyo to Taipei
- 13 nights in handpicked hotels
- 13 breakfasts
- 9 lunches
- 3 dinners
- 11 sightseeing tours
- Local guides
- 1 on-tour flight
- 3 train rides

## OPTIONAL

- One-way international flight from Los-Angeles to Seoul
- One-way international flight from Taipei to Los-Angeles
- 1 night at a hotel in Los Angeles
- 5 nights at the Grand Hyatt in Taipei

## NOT INCLUDED

- International flights to Los-Angeles or Seoul
- Airport portorage
- Hotel pre-registration and/or late checkout
- Items of a personal nature (e.g. phone calls, mini-bar, laundry, etc.)
- Travel insurance (cancellations, loss of deposits, delays, etc.)
- Departure taxes and visas
- Additional meals and drinks that are not specified in the itinerary
- Tipping to tour guides (approx. USD \$10 /day)
- All other services that are not mentioned in the itinerary

SEOUL - 3 NIGHTS – SUN MAY 31

# DAY 1: ARRIVE IN SEOUL



Welcome to South Korea. Take some time to relax and settle into your hotel before we meet up this evening for a group dinner.

**Overnight: Seoul**

**Meals: Dinner**

MON JUNE 01

## DAY 2: SIGHTSEEING TOUR OF SEOUL



Today, we'll explore Gyeongbokgung Palace, a magnificent landmark with over 600 years of history, and if timing permits, witness the ceremonial changing of the guard. Afterward, we'll leave Seoul and travel south to Suwon, the former capital of Korea, famed for its impressive UNESCO-listed fortress walls and Hwaseong Haenggung, the royal summer palace. Following an included lunch, we'll continue to Jeonju, where we'll stroll through the charming Hanok Village, known for its traditional houses, artisan shops, and delightful art galleries.

**Overnight: Seoul**

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch**



TUE JUNE 02

## DAY 3: DMZ VISIT



Experience one of the most fascinating and historically significant sites in the world—the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Located on the border between North and South Korea, the DMZ offers a rare opportunity to witness the ongoing legacy of the Korean War. Explore key landmarks such as the 3rd Infiltration Tunnel, Dora Observatory, and the Joint Security Area, where the two Koreas stand face to face. This thought-provoking excursion provides insight into the peninsula’s turbulent past and its enduring hope for peace and reunification.

After returning to Seoul, unwind with an evening in the bustling Hongdae district, famous for its stylish boutiques, cozy cafés, street performances, and energetic nightlife.

**Important note:** Please remember to bring your passport, as it is required. The DMZ is a military zone and could be closed unexpectedly without prior notice. If this happens, an alternative route will be provided.

**Overnight:** Seoul

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch



GYEONGJU - 1 NIGHT – WED JUNE 03

## DAY 4: EXPLORE GYEONGJU



Board a high-speed train to Gyeongju, often called the “museum without walls” for its remarkable concentration of archaeological treasures and UNESCO World Heritage sites. Upon arrival, transfer by coach to Bulguksa Temple, the revered head temple of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, founded on the slopes of Mount Toham in the eighth century.

Here, meet resident monks to gain insight into their peaceful monastic way of life, and enjoy a captivating traditional dance performance that reflects Korea’s deep spiritual heritage.

**Overnight: Gyeongju**

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch**

BUSAN - 1 NIGHT – THU JUNE 04

## DAY 5: EXPLORE BUSAN



Take a short train ride to Busan, a vibrant port city on the southeastern tip of the Korean Peninsula and the nation's second-largest metropolis. The moment you arrive, you'll feel the city's laid-back coastal charm, with the sea never far from view as Busan stretches along the shores of the Sea of Japan. In summer, Haeundae Beach beckons with its lively atmosphere and golden sands, perfect for an afternoon of sun and relaxation.

Just east of the city, the cliffside Haedong Yonggungsa Temple, dating back to the 14th century, offers breathtaking ocean views. As night falls, dive into the flavors of Busan at the Bupyeong Kkangtong Night Market, where street food and local treats abound. Don't miss a visit to the famous Jagalchi Fish Market, Korea's largest, or indulge in world-class shopping at Shinsegae Centum City, officially the world's biggest department store.

**Overnight: Busan**

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch**



OSAKA - 2 NIGHTS – FRI JUNE 05

## DAY 6: GOODBYE SOUTH KOREA... HELLO JAPAN



Say “annyeong” to South Korea and “konnichiwa” to Japan as we bid farewell to one amazing destination and begin our next adventure. Upon arrival in Osaka, you’ll have the rest of the day free to relax, settle in, or explore the city at your own pace, as no scheduled activities are planned today.

Optional - Dive into the bustling, brightly lit streets on a local-led food tour; sampling everything from okonomiyaki and tempura to authentic wagyu beef.

**Overnight: Osaka**  
**Meals: Breakfast**



SAT JUNE 06

## DAY 7: FREE DAY IN OSAKA



Enjoy a free day in Osaka to explore at your own pace or join one of the optional excursions available during the trip.

**Himeji Castle & Kokoen Gardens:** Visit the UNESCO-listed Himeji Castle, Japan's most spectacular feudal fortress, then stroll through the beautifully landscaped Kokoen Gardens nearby.

**Hiroshima Day Trip:** Take the bullet train to Hiroshima, then continue to Miyajima Island—famed for its floating Itsukushima Shrine and scenic beauty. After exploring the island, return to Hiroshima to visit the Peace Memorial Park and Atomic Bomb Dome, powerful symbols of the city's history and recovery. Travel back to Osaka by bullet train in the evening.

**Overnight: Osaka**

**Meals: Breakfast**



KYOTO - 2 NIGHTS – SUN JUNE 07

## DAY 8: OSAKA / NARA / KYOTO



This morning, we depart Osaka and journey to Nara, Japan’s first permanent capital and the birthplace of much of the country’s traditional culture. Here, we’ll stroll through Nara Park, where hundreds of friendly, free-roaming deer are regarded as sacred messengers of the gods. Then, explore the beautifully preserved Kasuga Taisha Shrine, famous for its thousands of bronze and stone lanterns lining the pathways.

After exploring Nara’s historic treasures, we continue onward to Kyoto, Japan’s ancient imperial capital and a living showcase of gardens, and timeless traditions.

**Overnight: Kyoto**

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch**



MON JUNE 08

## DAY 9: EXPLORE KYOTO



Begin your day with a visit to the enchanting Arashiyama Bamboo Forest, where towering bamboo stalks create a serene and otherworldly atmosphere.

Next, try your hand at the traditional Japanese art of fan painting before enjoying a truly special experience, lunch with a Maiko, an apprentice geisha. Please be mindful and respectful, as she is still in training and represents an important part of Kyoto's living cultural heritage.

In the afternoon, explore the breathtaking Fushimi Inari Shrine, dedicated to the Shinto god of rice and prosperity. Its mountain path, adorned with thousands of vermilion torii gates, leads up Mount Inari; time permitting, enjoy a peaceful walk along part of this iconic trail.

**Overnight: Kyoto**

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch**



HAKONE – 1 NIGHT – TUE JUNE 09

## DAY 10: KYOTO / HAKONE



Today, we board the Shinkansen bullet train to Odawara and continue to the scenic Lake Hakone region. Enjoy a traditional bento box lunch onboard as you travel. Lake Hakone is known for its stunning views and charming traditional inns. This evening, relax in a soothing onsen, a natural hot spring bath fed by mineral-rich geothermal waters.

**Overnight: Hakone**

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch**



TOKYO - 3 NIGHTS – WED JUNE 10

## DAY 11: HAKONE / TOKYO



Enjoy a full day of sightseeing on the journey to Tokyo. Begin with a relaxing boat cruise on Lake Hakone, surrounded by serene mountain landscapes and, on a clear day, breathtaking views of Mount Fuji reflected on the water.

Next, ride the Hakone Ropeway up to the summit of Mount Komagatake, where you'll be treated to panoramic vistas of the lake, surrounding valleys, and Japan's iconic peaks.

We then continue our scenic drive to Tokyo, Japan's bustling capital, where tradition and modernity meet in spectacular fashion.

**Overnight: Tokyo**

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch**



THU JUNE 11

## DAY 12: EXPLORE TOKYO



Start your day with a visit to the Tokyo Skytree, soaring 634 meters high. Take in breathtaking panoramic views of the city from its observation deck. Continue to the historic Asakusa district, where you can experience the charm of old Tokyo and explore Senso-ji, the city's oldest and most celebrated temple.

After lunch, visit a bonsai museum, where you'll watch a live demonstration and even try your hand at pruning your own miniature tree.

Later, experience the energy of Shibuya Crossing, one of the world's busiest intersections, before ending the day with a relaxing dinner cruise on Tokyo Bay, taking in the glittering skyline as it comes alive at night.

**Overnight: Tokyo**

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**



FRI JUNE 12

## DAY 13: FREE DAY IN TOKYO



Enjoy a free day in Tokyo before departing for Taipei and the convention. Take this opportunity for some last-minute shopping, pampering yourself with a mani-pedi, or indulging in any other activities you may have missed. Whether it's exploring a new neighborhood, visiting a favorite café, or simply relaxing before the next leg of your journey.

**Overnight: Tokyo**

**Meals: Breakfast, Dinner**

SAT JUNE 13

# DAY 14: DEPART TOKYO / ARRIVE IN TAIPEI



This marks the end of our arrangements. Spend the week attending the Rotary International Convention, where Rotarians from around the world gather to exchange ideas, celebrate service, and be inspired by world-class speakers and cultural performances.

Please note that no Soca Islands activities or excursions are scheduled during the convention, allowing you the flexibility to fully participate in all official Rotary sessions, workshops, and events throughout the day.

**Overnight: Taipei**  
**Meals: Breakfast**



# PRICE (USD PER PERSON)

	MEET IN SEOUL	MEET IN SEOUL + CONVENTION	MEET IN LAX	MEET IN LAX + CONVENTION
<b>One-way int'l flight to Seoul</b>	N	N	Y	Y
<b>One-way int'l flight out of Taipei</b>	N	N	Y	Y
<b>Tours in South Korea &amp; Japan</b> (includes airfare between South Korea and Japan)	Y	Y	Y	Y
<b>Flight to Taipei</b>	Y	Y	Y	Y
<b>Hotel in Taipei</b>	N	Y	N	Y
<b>Double Occ.</b> (two persons in one room)	<b>\$5,570</b>	<b>\$6,270</b>	<b>\$6,995</b>	<b>\$7,875</b>
<b>Single Occ.</b>	<b>\$6,139</b>	<b>\$7,879</b>	<b>\$7,895</b>	<b>\$9,613</b>



# NOTE ABOUT ACCOMMODATIONS

Your accommodations are chosen for their location, comfort, and character, ranging from business hotels in major cities to family-run guesthouses in smaller towns. In remote areas, facilities may be simpler and lack some Western amenities. Around Mount Fuji, hotels are often traditional. Guests typically remove their shoes and store them in lockers upon entry.

Most hotels are local three- to four-star standard, though ratings differ from international classifications. Rooms, especially in Japan, are compact, with single rooms smaller than doubles, and all include private Western bathrooms, air-conditioning, TV, and telephone.

In South Korea, some hotels limit hot-water hours to mornings and evenings, and porters are not always available. Guests may need to handle their own luggage. If you need help, your local guide will assist. Rest assured, all Soca Islands accommodations are regularly inspected to ensure quality and comfort.

# NOTE ABOUT TRANSPORTATION

Second-class reserved seats are provided for all high-speed and bullet train journeys, with toilet facilities available onboard. Because luggage space is limited, a separate transfer service will be arranged for one suitcase per person. You'll need to pack an overnight bag for train travel, as your main luggage will arrive the following day. Your guide will advise when to prepare for this during the tour.



# CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

Korean and Japanese cultures are deeply rooted in tradition and social etiquette. While visitors aren't expected to know every custom, showing respect for local practices will make your experience far more enjoyable. For instance, it's customary to remove your shoes, and sometimes your hat, when entering temples, homes, and even certain restaurants. Slippers are often provided, but it's a good idea to bring extra socks and wear shoes that are easy to slip on and off, as you'll likely need to remove them several times during your trip. Your local guide will brief you on additional customs and etiquette at the start of your tour.

# CLIMBING STEPS

Many palaces, fortresses, and temples require climbing numerous uneven steps, often without handrails. These sites were historically built on hills for defense or, in the case of Buddhist temples and pagodas, for their auspicious elevated locations. Visitors may also need to walk from the bus park to the entrance. Those with knee, hip, or balance issues should carefully consider whether this itinerary is suitable for them.



# FAQS

Which airport do I need to fly in to and out of?

If you plan to join us in Los-Angeles, you need to fly into **LAX** on or before Fri May 29. Hotel stay for the night of May 29 is included. If you plan to meet us in Seoul, you must fly into **ICN** on or before Sun May 31. If you are leaving us in Japan, then you need to fly out from . Otherwise, you need to fly out from TPE.

Will the itinerary change?

Please be aware that the itinerary, activities, and hotels are subject to change. These changes can happen with little notice due to availability, poor weather, seasonal changes, or circumstances beyond our control. Still, we'll always do our best to ensure they have little impact on your experience. From time to time, we may also make changes to your itinerary to try out new ideas and keep things fresh and exciting.

## **Passport**

Your passport must be valid for at least six months after your travel destination entry date. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have a valid passport.

## **Do I need a visa?**

Visa and entry information can be found using the website: <https://apply.joinsherpa.com>

## **What vaccinations and medication will I need?**

We recommend checking with your local travel clinic six to eight weeks before your trip to see if any medications or vaccinations are required.



# FAQS

## Deposits and Payment Policy

To confirm your booking, a 30% deposit of the total tour cost is required. You can log in to your Soca Islands account anytime to make payments towards your booking. The full prepayment must be completed 45 days before the start of the trip. You can make this payment using Zelle Quickpay or a credit card. Please note that bank transfer charges or fees and credit card fees are the responsibility of the client.

## Cancellation Policy

Please visit <https://socaislands.com/legal-stuff/> for more information.

## Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is not included in your tour price. It is the passenger's responsibility to verify whether his/her local health insurance carrier provides coverage while traveling. Please get in touch with your insurance carrier for details. Soca Islands LLC strongly advises that you purchase a comprehensive travel insurance policy to cover all aspects of your tour: the loss of deposits through cancellation, loss of baggage and personal items, personal injury, and death. A waiver must be signed if insurance is declined.

## Laundry

Laundry can be done at least once a week while on tour. Most cities have laundromats where you can buy soap and wash your laundry in coin-operated machines.

## Emergency Fund

Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional USD \$200 (or equivalent) as an 'emergency' fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (ex. a natural disaster) require a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence



# FAQS

## Tipping

In **Japan**, tipping is not expected and can be seen as rude, except for small envelopes given discreetly to guides or traditional inn attendants. In **South Korea**, tipping is rare and unnecessary, though modest tips for private guides or drivers are acceptable. In **Taiwan**, tipping isn't customary since service charges are often included, but small tips for hotel staff or guides are appreciated.

## MORE INFORMATION

### Email

[conventionontours@socaislands.com](mailto:conventionontours@socaislands.com)

### Phone or SMS

**+1 (868) 388-2937 / +1 (646) 972-4274**

### WhatsApp

**+1 (868) 388-2937**



