

## MONEY

**EXCHANGING FOREIGN CURRENCY** - The local currency in Korea is known as the *won* (KRW) with notes in denominations of W1000, 5000 & 10, 000. Korean currency is quite difficult to find in Australia. We recommend all tour members take *Australian Currency* in cash and/or travellers cheques. The exchange rate is approximately AUD\$1 = 942.417 KRW (*as at 11 May 09*) and exchange facilities will be available at the airport upon arrival and will also be located in most hotels. It is recommended that the majority of money be exchanged whilst in Seoul to ensure availability of facilities. It is recommended that you change any unused Won back into original currency before you leave Korea.

**CREDIT CARDS** - Credit cards are becoming more and more widespread in Korea, but mainly in major cities. One is essential in case of an emergency; widely accepted credit cards include Visa, MasterCard and American Express.

**ATM'S** - Unless you are in a major city, most ATM's will only work with the Korean Banking system and all foreign cards will be rejected. We strongly recommend that you *do not* rely on this method. Locating ATM's with access to foreign accounts can be difficult; they are mostly present in subway stations and some convenience stores and marked either 'HanNet' or 'Samsung'.

## TIME DIFFERENCE

Time in Korea is Greenwich Mean Time plus nine hours. This means when it is 12.00 midday in Sydney for example, during daylight saving time, it is 10.00 am in Korea. During non daylight saving periods, Korea is only one hour behind.

## INSURANCE & HEALTH

Anyone travelling with us must take out comprehensive travel insurance. If you wish to take out an insurance policy through Wendy Wu Tours but do not have an application form, please contact our office. If you choose to decline our insurance, ensure you have the appropriate cover for your holiday. Please inform our office of relevant policy numbers. If you are **taking out travel insurance with your credit card company**, you need to investigate the policy's inclusions and conditions fully. You should receive a policy number, an international access phone number to contact them in an emergency and a copy of full conditions. **It is essential you inform your insurance company of all pre-existing conditions.** All travel insurance providers require you to contact them ASAP in the unlikely event that you need assistance while overseas. They will then decide the best course of action and make appropriate arrangements. **You must check your policy** for exact inclusions and procedures. If clients receive any service that will result in an insurance claim such as medical treatment, they should keep all receipts they receive as proof of the claim.

A health certificate is not required for travel to Korea. Please

consult your doctor or contact the Travellers Medical and Vaccination Centre in your capital city at least four weeks prior to your departure.

## VISAS

Tourists visiting Korea will be granted a transit stay of up to 30 days without a visa. If you are traveling for business or other purposes; a visa is required regardless of how long the stay.

## KEEPING IN TOUCH

**PHONE CALLS & PHONE CARDS** - All our hotel rooms are equipped with telephones; however these are usually quite high in price. The better option is to use the increasingly popular card phones. They can be used for long distance and international calls and you can purchase magnetic telephone cards in denominations of W2000, W3000, W5000 AND W10, 000 from banks, convenience stores and shops in close proximity to a card phone. You can also purchase international calling cards from Telstra before you leave – just ensure that they list Korea as an accessible country. To call Australia the international access code is 001, followed by the country code, 61 then the local area code (omitting the first 0) then the number. For example to call Wendy Wu Tours the number would be 001 61 2 9224 8888. There is generally a 10% discount off the cost of calls made from midnight to 6.00am.

**MOBILE PHONES** - Mobile phones are very popular and use the CDMA technology which is incompatible with the GSM network commonly used in Australia. Please check with your mobile supplier to see if your phone is able to use the CDMA technology and for any associated costs if it does.

**FAX** – Most hotels are equipped with fax machines in the Business Centre. The cost varies with each hotels, so please check applicable fees.

**POSTAGE** - The international postage service is efficient and items will take around 7-14 working days in ordinary mail and between 3-4 days for express mail services. Most hotels have a reliable postage service available through the hotel concierge or alternatively you can do it at the post office.

**INTERNET & EMAIL** - Email is very popular and internet cafes can be found in most areas and are usually open around the clock. This is often the easiest and cheapest way to keep in touch. Internet access is also available in our hotels in the major cities.

## ELECTRICITY

Korea has an electricity supply of 220 Volts, but some older buildings may still have the former 110 Volts. The 220V requires the two round pin plugs whilst the 110V utilize the two flat pins. You should be able to purchase these from electrical, hardware, department and Duty Free stores in Australia and also in Seoul.

# KOREA

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO



 Wendy Wu Tours®

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## SHOPPING

Korea is a shopping haven and has a vast array of shopping venues and opportunities; markets, shopping centres, underground arcades and even entire districts specializing in a certain type of good – like electronics and fashion! Popular items to purchase in Korea include leather goods (bags and jackets), tailor made/ready made clothing, handicrafts, embroidery, sportswear, antique furniture, jewelry and arts and crafts. Most goods purchased in South Korea are subject to a 10% VAT (Value Added Tax) which should be included in the selling price. Shopping centres are generally open from 9.00am until 9.00pm.

Whilst shopping can be fun and entertaining, especially in local market areas where copies of international brand names can be purchased for next to nothing, Wendy Wu Tours, its staff and employees in no way endorse any retail outlet or establishment nor can they confirm or guarantee the 'genuineness' or 'quality' of any items purchased regardless of where that might take place.

## HOTELS

All hotels have been specially selected to meet the needs of our customers. They are all of international tourist class standard, mainly 4 star and conveniently located. All hotels have private western facilities, air-conditioning, television, telephone and foreign exchange facilities. Some hotels in Korea have hot water restrictions, operating for a few hours at a time, usually in the morning and evenings.

## TRANSPORT

The travel modes on our Korean packages have been planned with both variety and enjoyment in mind. Coach tours and flights are utilised to make your holiday more enjoyable. Whilst traveling on domestic flights, please ensure that any valuables and medications are taken on board in your carry on luggage.

## MEALS & WATER

Breakfast will be served in your hotel and will consist mainly of a standard American Breakfast (ABF). Other meals supplied will be as specified in your itinerary. There is an abundance of restaurants for you to explore the local cuisine. Most meals consist of an individual portion of traditional Korean cuisine, with the exception of barbeque beef and side dishes like the Korean staple – Kimchi, which will be served for the entire table. Seating at most local restaurants will require seating on the heated floor with shoes left outside the restaurant. Korean food is generally hot and spicy compared to Chinese and Japanese cuisine. We recommend that you do not drink the tap water, nor take ice in your drinks. Bottled water is readily and cheaply available; however please always ensure that the seal is unbroken.

## CONFECTIONARY & CONDIMENTS

For those tour members who may crave western food we recommend that you take some favorites with you such as Vegemite, Peanut Butter and Muesli Bars.

## TIPPING

Tipping is most appreciated in the Korean tourism industry. Tipping can be a rather sensitive subject with passengers unsure as to what amount is appropriate and in order to make the situation simpler for our clients we recommend;

**USD\$5 per person per day to be split between guides and drivers**

You will find a standard 10% charge is added to your hotel and restaurant bills.

## WHAT TO WEAR

We recommend casual and comfortable attire at all times, subject to climatic conditions. We recommend layers of clothing be taken to easily accommodate the range of temperatures likely to be experienced. Most hotel rooms do not have an iron/ironing board however; laundry service is available in most hotels. The service is usually overnight and reasonably priced.

## CLIMATE

The climate in Korea is temperate with four very distinct seasons. The summer months of June through to early September are generally very hot and humid, while the temperatures in the winter months of December through to early March plummet to below freezing. Autumn (September – November) and spring (late March – May) are the most comfortable seasons to visit. The majority of the annual rainfall occurs in summer during a monsoon season known locally as 'jangma'. For more detailed information, a useful website is [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) for up to the minute climate information for guidance when packing.

## DUTY FREE ALLOWANCE

Korea has a duty free allowance of 200 cigarettes, 59 ml of perfume and one bottle of spirits (not exceeding one litre). You are unable to carry alcohol on board domestic flights and any bottles should be wrapped up (in a towel or clothing) and well packed within your suitcase. There are no restrictions on foreign currency, however if you have US\$5000 (or its equivalent) in cash, it will need to be declared. You will also need to declare any goods outside of Korea that have a total exceeding \$400USD. Travellers are often asked how much money they are taking out of Australia and this should not exceed \$10,000 USD.

## CUSTOMS

Cultural relics, handicrafts, gold and silver ornaments and any jewellery purchased in Korea must be declared upon leaving the country. All bags are x-rayed at the airport and if not declared,

customs agents may seize these items. Please note that any type of food – from chewing gum to muesli bars will also need to be declared if they are placed in your suit cases.

## SAFETY & SECURITY

All tour members are recommended to maintain a high level of personal security, especially in crowded places. Although Korea is considered generally safe for travellers please ensure you keep belongings on you at all times and that your suitcase has a lock on it. It is also important to travel with all valuables and prescribed medication in your carry on luggage as bag searches are becoming increasingly more common. Alcohol is not permitted in carry on luggage and will be confiscated when found.

*We wish you to embark on this tour with a level of tolerance, patience and understanding that the areas to which you are travelling are remote and conditions are not as developed as those that we are used to. You will encounter traffic jams, slow road conditions, and at times experience poor English and irregular levels of service in regional hotels. You will however be richly rewarded by means of experiencing abundant culture, historic landmarks and a journey filled with legend, magic and wonders of the ancient world.*

**At any stage throughout your tour, if you are not completely satisfied with any aspect, please inform your guide immediately so that they may resolve the problem. Should the outcome not be satisfactory please contact Wendy Wu Tours by telephone, email or Facsimile.**