EXPLORE! Tour Notes

Inside North Korea (KO 2015)

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TOURDURAT







Tour Style: Classic

Tour Pace: Busy

Tour Type: Small Groups

Tour Comfort: Standard

tour Code: KO

- Pyongyang Explore the capital, admire the socialist architecture and visit the Mansudae Monument, a tribute to Kim II Sung
- Wonsan Discover the beautiful scenery in this little visited region
- Panmunjon Stand at the world's most fortified border
- Beijing Visit Tiananmen Square and the incredible Forbidden City

Tour Essentials

Accommodation: 10 nights Standard

Hotel

1 night Basic Overnight

Train

Included Meals: 10 breakfasts, 6

lunches, 7 dinners

Start Point: Join tour: Beijing **End Point:** Tour ends: Beijing **Transport:** Bus, Train, Flight **Countries:** China, North Korea

Inside North Korea

North Korea is one of the most isolated places on earth and one of the last bastions of Communism. We explore the outstanding natural beauty of its Kumgang Mountains, admire the flamboyant architecture of its socialist capital Pyongyang and stand on the border separating South Korea's peninsula during this fantastic trip through North Korea. This exciting adventure tour offers an unusual insight into the country's political and ideological heritage.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Tour Comfort: Standard

Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Tour Pace: Busy

There may be early starts, long journeys and tiring days along the way, but you'll return home feeling you've really experienced as much as you possibly could.

Your tour itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced tour leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others



Join tour Beijing

Arrive Beijing, check into hotel.

Overnight: Standard Hotel **Single Room Available**







Cross Tiananmen Square and visit the Forbidden City

This morning we'll explore the Chinese capital, the political and cultural centre of the country. Beijing has mostly been the capital since the days of Kublai Khan, and is a more dominant factor in people's lives today than ever before. All clocks in China are set by Beijing time. Today we visit the Forbidden City, the one-time home of the Ming and the Manchu (Qing) emperors, a treasure trove of eastern wares. The recent history of China is similar to that of North Korea in that the Chinese followed the Communist ideology of a freedom fighter who became the dominant leader. The influence of Mao in China remains strong today, with his imposing portrait located above the southern gate of the Forbidden City, overlooking Tiananmen Square. There is free time this afternoon for personal exploration of this amazing city.

Overnight: Standard Hotel Single Room Available



Included Meals: Breakfast



Fly to Pyongyang

We take the short flight from Beijing to Pyongyang. Pyongyang is the showpiece of North Korea, and is unique. We are now in a country where every aspect of life is dominated by the State and the ideology of Kim II Sung, the Great Leader. To live in Pyongyang is considered an honour to the citizens of North Korea, who require permits to enter, or leave the city. Our tour starts with the obligatory visit to the Mansudae Monument, a huge bronze tribute to Kim II Sung, where flowers are laid as a mark of respect by all who visit. We then take the Metro, with its immaculate marble clad stations. Here kitsch chandeliers light enormous mosaics depicting heroic citizens from all walks of life stretching the length of the platforms on both sides. We travel to the impressive Arch of Triumph before returning to our hotel. When in North Korea the order of sightseeing may be changed once in the country. Whilst in North Korea we will try and interact with locals wherever possible, you may wish to bring some photos of your home, hometown or even recent holidays as they are a great way of making a connection with the people we meet during the tour.

Overnight: Standard Hotel Single Room Available



Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Drive to Kaesong and visit the DMZ

We depart Pyongyang along the deserted roads to reach the ancient capital at Kaesong where visit the twin tombs of King Kongmin and his wife who ruled Korea in the 14th century. Kaesong was once the most important city on the peninsular being the first unified capital, and remaining so for nearly 400 years. It remained in South Korea at the outbreak of hostilities of the 1950-3 war and therefore was protected from the bombing that destroyed almost every ancient monument in the North. We drive south to Panmunjon, which is the last frontier in the Cold War. Lying along the 38th Parallel this is one of the most tense and fortified borders in the world, where over a million soldiers are on constant guard. Our Military guide shows us around areas where the armistice agreement was signed in 1953 and talks freely of the North Korean perspective of the current situation. This almost serene setting, where soldiers from the North and South stand almost side by side, is an acute reminder of the tragic division of the peninsula. At our local style hotel, we sleep in the traditional manner on a mattress on a heated floor.

Overnight: Standard Hotel Single Room Available



Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Return to Pyongyang and continue site seeing

Retracing our footsteps along the near empty road we return to Pyongyang. A typical visit this afternoon will include an ascent of the 170m high Juche Tower, a symbol of the country's guiding ideology, Juche. This is based on a self reliance and the principle that each individual is master of their own destiny, and has held the country together for 50 years, outliving many other forms of communism.

Overnight: Standard Hotel Single Room Available



Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



In Pyongyang

We begin this morning with a visit to the captured US spy ship Pueblo. In the afternoon a short drive takes us to Manyongdae - the birth place of Kim II Sung, which is visited by hundreds of Koreans every day to see where the first thoughts of liberation were founded. Later we drive to Moranbong Park where there is the opportunity to take a stroll in the park and the unique opportunity to mix with the locals enjoying their day off.

Overnight: Standard Hotel Single Room Available



Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Drive across the country to Lake Suijung

Todays drive sees us cross the breadth of the country to the port city of Wonsan. After lunch and a visit to a co-operative farm we continue south to Lake Suijung. We stay in a small motel on the edge of the lake. The mud of Lake Suijung is reputed to have great medicinal properties - there's the opportunity to test this with an optional mud bath and massage.

Overnight: Standard Hotel Single Room Available



Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Explore the Kumgang Mountains

Leaving our idyllic location we head into the heart of the Kumgang mountains, into an area only recently opened up to tourism in North Korea. Although geographically in the north, this region was leased from the government by the South Korean Hyundai corporation and was visited by tourist from the south. With the abrupt end of this arrangement, once again this destination is only accessible to tourists from the north. There is the opportunity for some gentle walks in the region before heading back to Wonsan where we spend the night.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel Single Room Available**



Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Visit to the Father Liberation War museum

Leaving Wonsan we return to Pyongyang. The Father Liberation War museum (opened in 1953) is not to be missed; its fascinating to hear the DRPK's side of the story. Exhibits include a massive collection of war memorabilia, a chilling reminder of the brutality of the 'forgotten war'. We'll also take a walk in the sculpture park of monuments to the war, which was unveiled in 1993 to mark the 40th anniversary of its end. The main statue is titled 'Victory' and is an impressive sculpture of a Korean soldier and a red flag.

Overnight: Standard Hotel Single Room Available



Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Overnight train to Beijing

This morning we take the train from Pyongyang through the countryside to the border town of Sinuiju on the banks of the Yalu River. The Yalu River bridge was bombed by the Americans during the Korean war and provides a stark reminder of the turbulent history of the Korean peninsula. Across the river at Dandong, Chinese carriages are joined to the train and we journey on through the night to Beijing.

Overnight: Basic Overnight Train



Included Meals: Breakfast



In Beijing

We arrive back in the Chinese capital this morning. The rest of the day is left free to explore or perhaps make some last minute purchases in the bustling stores and markets.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel Single Room Available**



Included Meals: None



Tour ends Beijing

Our tour ends this morning after breakfast.



Included Meals: Breakfast



The Adventure Travel Experts available online 24/7

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 10 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 7 dinners included in the price of this tour. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

China

Lunch £: 5.00 Dinner £: 10.00

North Korea

Lunch £: All meals are included whilst in North Korea. Dinner £: All meals are included whilst in North Korea.

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Bottle of Beer £: 2.00

Water £: 1.50

North Korea

Bottle of Beer £: .70 Water £: 2.00

Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Optional Excursions

Beijing - Summer Palace £10.00; Acrobat show £20.00; Opera £15.00; Hutong Tour including lunch £20.00, Birds Nest tour £10.00. please note that it may not be possible to do all these optionals.

Tipping - Tour Leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow €40 for tipping. Your tour leader will account to you for any organised tipping.

In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Foreign Exchange

China

ATM Availability: All major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance: Most major restaurants and stores.



The Adventure Travel Experts available online 24/7

Travellers Cheques: Travellers cheques can be changed in Hong Kong and at the Bank of China in all major cities but only during bank opening hours. Please note this is very time consuming and is not recommended.

Local Currency: Renminbi/Yuan

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Either EUR, USD or GBP.

Where to Exchange: In all towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival. When changing money ask for a receipt so you can change Yuan back into your own currency when leaving China.

North Korea

ATM Availability: Not available

Credit Card Acceptance: Not accepted Travellers Cheques: Not available

Local Currency: DPRK: North Korean Won; China Yuan. However, foreigners need either Euros/US Dollars/Chinese Yuan, not North

Korean Won.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Euros or USD are preferred in the DPRK. Please bring cash in small denominations of these currencies, one and two Euro coins are especially useful as this is often the price for postcards, books and drinks. You will not need to convert money into North Korean Won, as Euros or dollars can be used there.

Where to Exchange: It is not possible to change money in DPRK.

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of joining any of our tours that you must have valid travel insurance. It must indicate that you have cover for (at least) medical expenses and emergency repatriation in the event of illness or injury. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling in England and Scotland. We also strongly recommend your policy includes curtailment, personal effects and cancellation protection as all deposits paid are non-refundable. You will also need to ensure your travel policy covers you for all activities you intend to do whilst on tour.

We are delighted to include FREE travel insurance for all qualifying customers who book an Explore trip from 01 January 2015.

For more information about Travel insurance and to check whether you are eligible to receive free cover, please visit www.explore.co.uk/insurance. Explore Worldwide Ltd are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited. who are authorised



and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The registration number can be checked by visiting the the FCA's website www.fca.gov.uk or by contacting them on 0800 111 6768.

Visa Information

China: A visa is required by all nationalities. A double entry visa should be obtained in advance of travel, through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK; Visaswift, at http://www.visaswift.com/explore.aspx. Other nationalities should consult their local

Passengers wishing to extend their stay in China should be aware that current visa regulations only allow foreigners to stay in the country for up to 30 days. Please consider this when planning your trip.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

North Korea: North Korean visas will be issued at the Embassy in Beijing at the start of your holiday. Your tour leader will co-ordinate this on your behalf.

In order for Explore to arrange the necessary North Korea visas please return the following to us as soon as possible, and no later than 8 weeks before your tour departs the UK.

- 1. A filled in copy of the personal and passport information form, sent out in your confirmation pack
- 2. Clear, colour passport copy this must be a colour copy, black and white copies cannot be accepted
- 3. Clear, colour passport photos x2

Please also take 2 passport photographs with you, and 50 Euros for your application fee.

Vaccinations & Protection

China

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, infectious hepatitis, typhoid, tetanus and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Travellers may wish to take immunisation against Japanese Encephalitis. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/ and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

North Korea

You should ensure that you are inoculated against measles, which has broken out in parts of North Korea. We also recommend protection against typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, infectious hepatitis, polio and Japanese encephalitis. Please consult your GP or travel clinic for the latest advise regarding the need to protect against malaria. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at http://www.explore.co.uk/ Travelhealth/ and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

Preparing for your Tour

Climate

China

China has primarily a temperate climate, with a wide spectrum of extremes due to its huge area. Summer months are hot and rainy though in the south the climate is tropical and we can experience rain at any time of the year, often falling in sharp tropical rainstorms which are heavy but short lived. Winter is colder and drier, temperatures in Beijing can be as low as -12c.

North Korea

North Korea has a temperate climate with distinct seasonal changes. Early Spring is sunny but chilly so bring a warm coat and under clothes. In late Spring light clothing in the day and warm clothing at night is needed. Summer (June to August) is warm weather day and night but bring light raincoat. Autumn has marked variations between day and night so be prepared. Winter (December to February) has clear skies not much snow but biting cold. Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at http://www.explore.co.uk/weather. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Up-to-date information on the weather worldwide can be found by following the BBC weather link on this page.

Clothing

Bring some warmer clothing for cooler evenings, lighter clothing for the day. Please note that smart attire is needed for the visit to Kim II Sung's mausoleum. Men are required to wear a shirt and tie. On rare occasions foreigners are allowed to visit the Memorial Palace; for this, shirt and tie for men and dress or skirt for women are required.

Equipment

A water bottle, sunscreen and a torch.

Please note mobile phones and laptops are now permitted to be taken into DPRK. GPS devices are not permitted. Your Tour Leader will be able to offer advice and items can be left securely in Beijing if required.

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes, and trainers and sandals for relaxing.



Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of lockable baggage and a daysac. Remember you are expected to handle your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on tour: 20kg

Transport

Whilst there is little traffic in North Korea the road conditions can be poor. Pot holes and uneven road surfaces can make for some very bumpy journeys.

General Information

Country details

China

Population: 1,339,724,852

Size of Country: 9,640,821 sq km

Major Language: Mandarin Religion: Mainly Buddhist Time Difference to GMT: +8

North Korea

Population: 24,051,218

Size of Country: 120,540 sq km

Major Language: Korean

Religion: Buddhist, Confucian, Christian

Time Difference to GMT: +9

Electric Supply & Plugs

China

3 Pin Flat

North Korea

2 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-quided, private journeys & tailormade holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, elephant, or any number of unusual forms of transport . Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to - and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Our commitment to the environment

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures and traditional, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people), Dekamer (a turtle rescue centre in Turkey) and Kids Saving the Rainforest (a wildlife rescue centre in Costa Rica supported through the LATA foundation). We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation and Friends of Conservation.



Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

- The Travel Foundation
 - Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk
- Tourism Concern
 - Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group www.tourismconcern.org.uk
- For further information on responsible travel go to http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/

Know before you go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at http://www.explore.co.uk/essential-travel-information/travel-resources/travel-safety

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% nonrefundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2014 and 31st December 2015.

Tour Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2015 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2015. 2016/17 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2016.

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