

SEOUL MOUNTAINS

SEOUL HIKING GUIDE BOOK

BUKHANSAN NATIONAL PARK
INWANGSAN MOUNTAIN
BUGAKSAN MOUNTAIN

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BUKHANSAN NATIONAL PARK
INWANGSAN MOUNTAIN
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BUKHANSAN NATIONAL PARK INWANGSAN MOUNTAIN BUGAKSAN MOUNTAIN

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sto 서울관광조직



CONTENTS

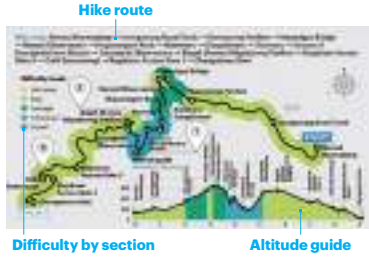
- 002 **ALL ABOUT SEOUL HIKING TOURISM**
An Ideal Setting for Leisurely Hikes
- 114 **READY FOR HIKING**
Seasonal Tips for Safe Hiking
- 116 **ECO ADVENTURER**
Eco-friendly 'Clean Hiking'

Level of Course Difficulty

 **Difficulty Easy / Average / Advanced**

Overall difficulty of each trail

Course Map



Difficulty Levels

- **Very easy** This refers to generally flat and paved courses easily traveled with children (stroller friendly) and elderly people.
- **Easy** These sections consist primarily of relatively flat dirt roads with limited rocky sections. Children wearing light sneakers can also hike here.
- **Average** Hiking boots and proper wear are necessary. Most of the trail is made up of dirt roads, with many steps and a considerable number of rock faces and outcrops.
- **Advanced** Hikers must come fully equipped with proper gear. Most of the trail is made up of rocky roads, with rock faces and outcrops that have ladders and ropes installed on them.
- **Expert** This level involves extremely steep, time-consuming hikes featuring unassisted ascents and descents up rock faces and outcrops. Only seasoned mountaineers should attempt this level.

PART. 1

Bukhansan National Park



- 004 **INTRO**
Natural Treasure Trove in the Heart of the Metropolis
- 010 **HIKING COURSE MAP**
Bukhansan National Park's 10 Trails
- 012 **COURSE 01**
Baegundae–Ui Gugok Trail
- 014 **COURSE 02**
Bukhansanseong–Daenamun Trail
- 016 **COURSE 03**
Samobawi–Bibong Trail
- 018 **COURSE 04**
Samcheonsa Trail
- 020 **COURSE 05**
Complete Tour of 12 Bukhansanseong Gates
- 024 **COURSE 06**
Dobongsan–Sinseonda Trail
- 026 **COURSE 07**
Dobongsan Main Ridge Trail
- 028 **COURSE 08**
Bukhansan Dulle-gil: Uiryong-gil
- 030 **COURSE 09**
Bukhansan Dulle-gil: Gureumjeongwon-gil
- 032 **COURSE 10**
Bukhansan Dulle-gil: Banghakdong-gil



- 034 **EDITOR'S PICK**
Crisscrossing between Nature and the City
- 040 **COLUMN**
Messengers of Spring Guarding Bukhansan Mountain

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PART. 2

Inwangsan Mountain



- 042 **INTRO**
Sweeping Views of Seoul
- 048 **HIKING COURSE MAP**
Inwangsan's 10 Trails
- 050 **COURSE 01**
Seonbawi Trail
- 052 **COURSE 02**
Seoul City Wall (Hanyangdoseong) Trail
- 054 **COURSE 03**
Hongjimun–Tangchundaeseong Trail
- 056 **COURSE 04**
Buam-dong Trail
- 058 **COURSE 05**
Gaemi Maeul Trail
- 060 **COURSE 06**
Inwangsan Jarak-gil Trail
- 062 **COURSE 07**
Inwangsan Forest Trail
- 064 **COURSE 08**
Suseong-dong Valley–Chimabawi Trail
- 066 **COURSE 09**
Inwangsan Dulle-gil Trail: Seodaemun Section
- 068 **COURSE 10**
Inwangsan Dulle-gil Trail: Jongno Section



- 070 **EDITOR'S PICK**
Journey of Artistic Inspiration
- 076 **COLUMN**
Inwang jesaekdo: The Story behind the Painting

PART. 3

Bugaksan Mountain



- 078 **INTRO**
Mountain Therapy for Healing Mind and Body
- 084 **HIKING COURSE MAP**
Bugaksan's 10 Trails
- 086 **COURSE 01**
Changuimun–Baegakmaru Trail
- 088 **COURSE 02**
Cheong Wa Dae–Samcheong Park Trail
- 090 **COURSE 03**
Cheong Wa Dae Observatory–Chunchugwan Trail
- 092 **COURSE 04**
Changuimun–Hyehwamun Trail
- 094 **COURSE 05**
Changuimun–Malbawi Trail
- 096 **COURSE 06**
Samcheong-dong–Chilgung Trail
- 098 **COURSE 07**
Yeoraesa–Hogyeongam Trail
- 100 **COURSE 08**
Bugak Haneul-gil Trails
- 102 **COURSE 09**
Baeksasil Valley–Seonggyungwan Trail
- 104 **COURSE 10**
Manse Dongbang Trail



- 106 **EDITOR'S PICK**
Mental Healing and Nourishment
- 112 **COLUMN**
Viewing Bugaksan Mountain via Feng Shui

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An Ideal Setting for Leisurely Hikes

Seoul's many hills and mountains are key elements of the capital's beauty and charm, with 14 mountains boasting summits of 300 meters or higher among numerous lesser hills. The city is centrally located between the "four outer mountains" of Bukhansan, Deogyangsan, Gwanaksan, and Yongmasan and "four inner mountains" of Bugaksan, Inwangsan, Namsan, and Naksan. Most popular among hikers and tourists are Bukhansan, Seoul's tallest mountain, Inwangsan, with its beautiful rock formations and islets, and Bugaksan, which towers behind the former presidential compound of Cheong Wa Dae. The harmony of nature and city create the ideal setting for leisurely hiking excursions.

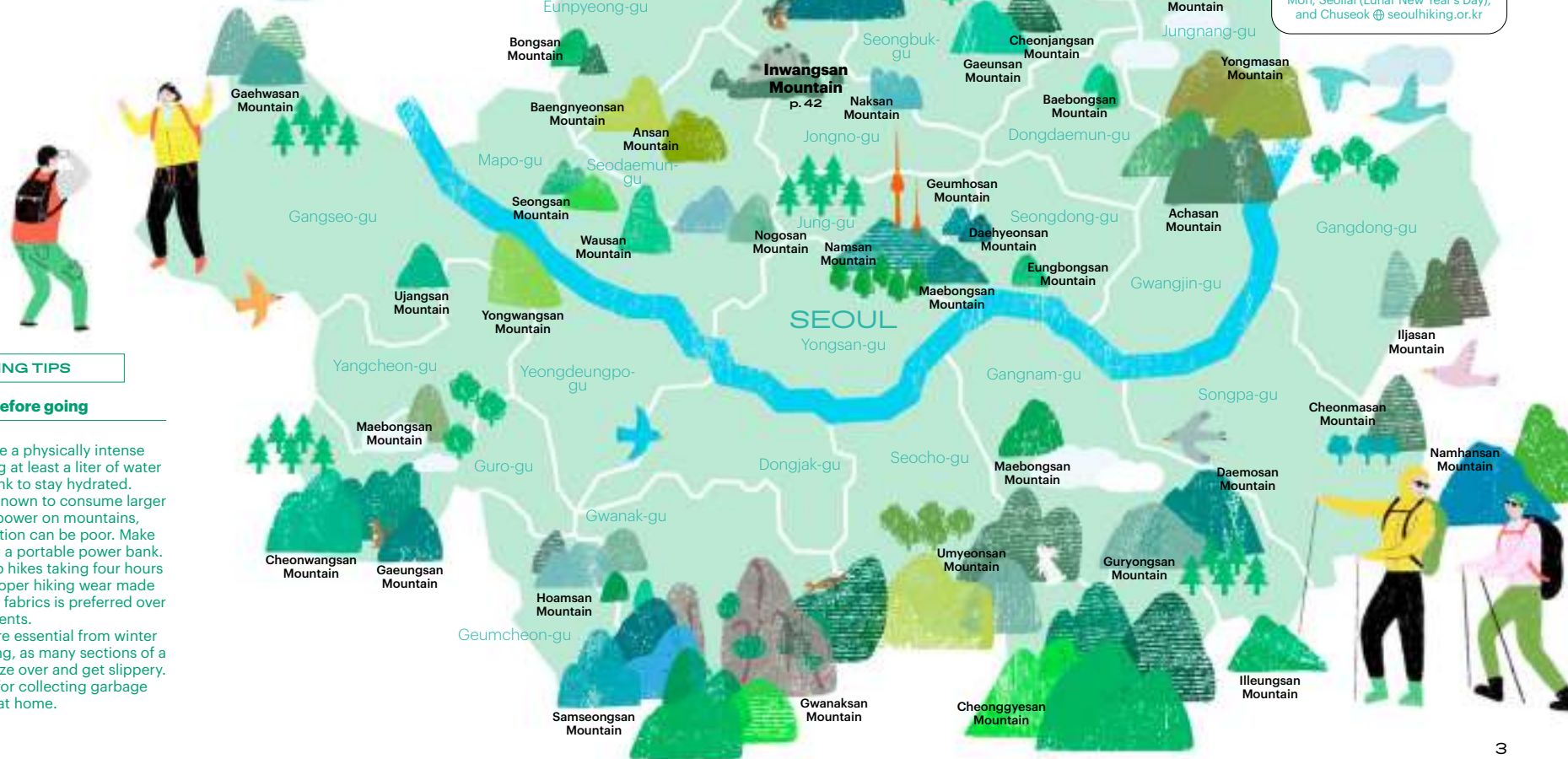


Seoul Hiking Tourism Center

The center offers a range of hiking tourism information and hiking equipment rentals (hiking wear and boots) to tourists.

5F, Gwanglim Building,
52, Samyang-ro 173-gil,
Gangbuk-gu, Seoul
82-2-1533-2608

9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. (closed on
Mon, Seollal (Lunar New Year's Day),
and Chuseok) seoulhiking.or.kr



HIKING TIPS

Checklist before going

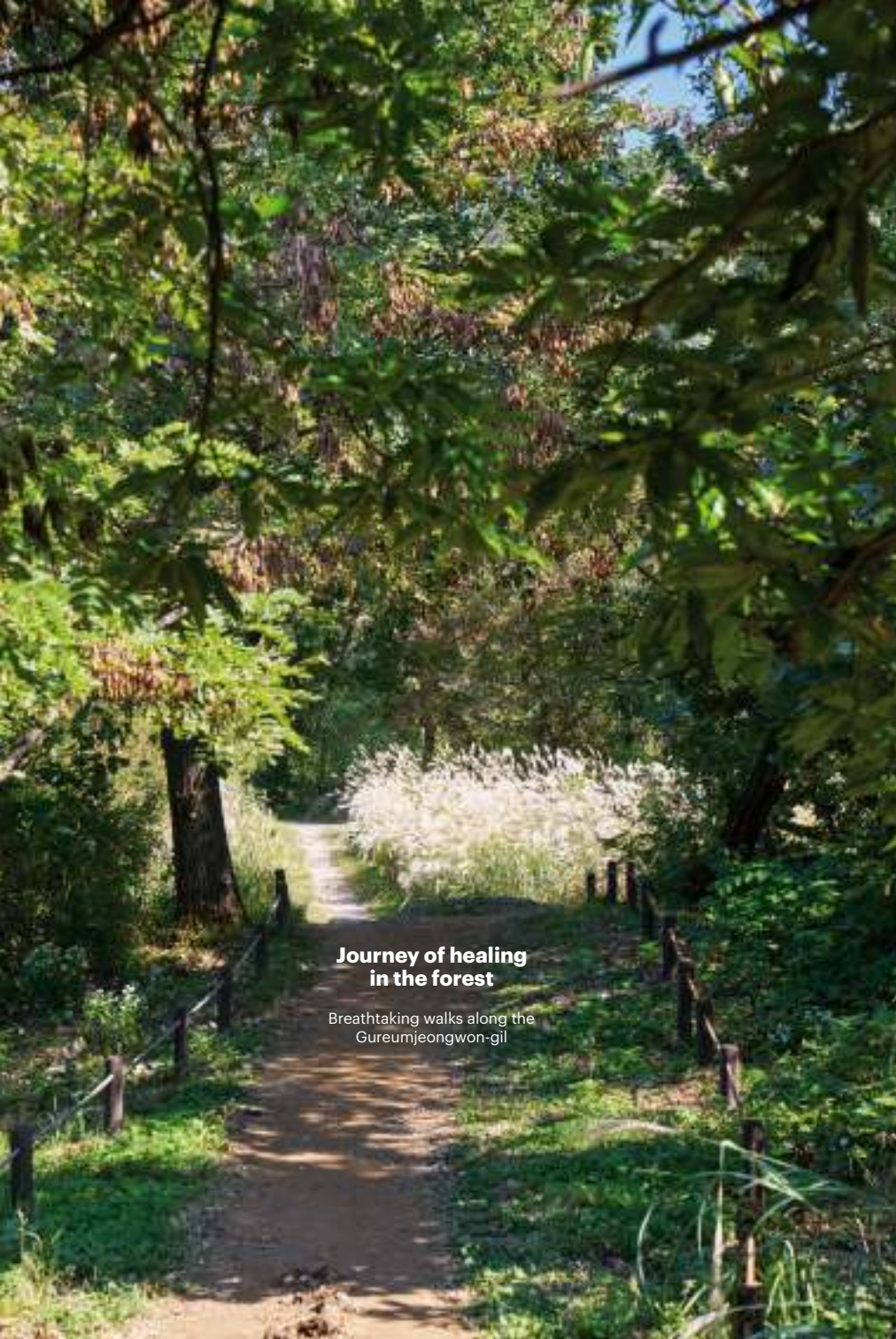
- Hiking can be a physically intense activity. Bring at least a liter of water or sports drink to stay hydrated.
- Phones are known to consume larger amounts of power on mountains, where reception can be poor. Make sure to bring a portable power bank.
- For roundtrip hikes taking four hours or longer, proper hiking wear made of functional fabrics is preferred over cotton garments.
- Crampons are essential from winter to early spring, as many sections of a trail can freeze over and get slippery.
- Bring a bag for collecting garbage for disposal at home.

PART. 1

Bukhansan National Park

Natural Treasure Trove in the Heart of the Metropolis

Bukhansan National Park, sitting directly above the nation's capital, is one of the in-city natural parks rarely found around the world. See pristine natural woodland and reach the summit to experience breathtaking views.



**Journey of healing
in the forest**

Breathtaking walks along the
Gureumjeongwon-gil



Joys of nature

Gugi Valley: Crystal-clear
water cascading down
jagged rock formations



**Historical marker
at the summit**

Monument Commemorating
the Border Inspection by
King Jinheung on Bibong Peak



“Bukhansan is a rugged mountain, nevertheless frequented by those captivated by its grandeur. Ascending Insubong Peak is like a rite of passage for the rock climber. The trails and ridge lines of Bukhansan and Dobongsan are incredibly numerous and complex; choosing the right course according to physical condition and circumstances is important.”

Kim Woo-sun (director, Baekdudaegan Humanities Research Institute)

Awe-inspiring Majesty

Bukhansan is the tallest mountain in Seoul and boasts over 2,000 years of Korean history. According to the *Samguk sagi* (*History of the Three Kingdoms*), the founder of the Baekje Kingdom (18 BCE–660 CE) climbed Bukhansan to find a site for the capital. The Hangang River basin fell to the rival Silla Kingdom (57 BCE–935 CE) in the mid-sixth century, and a monument commemorating a border patrol by Silla King Jinheung was erected on the mountain. Bukhansan was also the site of the greatest Buddhist temples of the Goryeo Dynasty (918–1392) and played an important role in the founding of the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910).

Bukhansan (elevation of 836.5 meters) is a rare nature park in a city that is surrounded by urban development. Designated Korea's 15th national park in 1983 with that of Dobongsan Mountain, the area has seen modern mountaineers develop numerous routes to the mountain's rock face. Insubong Peak on Bukhansan and Seoninbong Peak on Dobongsan are must-climb destinations for all rock climbers. Yet the casual hiker will feel just as home on the mountain thanks to its many easier trails and ridges depending on physical ability and circumstances.

The summit offers truly awe-inspiring views. Baegundae Peak boasts unobstructed 360-degree views of all of Seoul and parts of Gyeonggi-do. Bukhansan was once called Samgaksan, or "Three-horned Mountain," with the peaks of Insubong, Baegundae, and Mangyeongdae comprising the three horns. Yeongbong Peak, with views no less spectacular, is a viable alternative for those who find Baegundae too challenging.

©Jung Jong-won

Bukhansan National Park's 10 Trails

Bukhansan National Park straddles the metropolis of Seoul and the surrounding Gyeonggi-do, covering 78.5 square kilometers. Uiryeong Pass divides the park into two zones: Bukhansan to the south and Dobongsan to the north. Bukhansan's summit is Baegundae, with an elevation of 836.5 meters. While conquering the mountain is quite a challenge, many less difficult trails for casual hikers crisscross the mountain. All of Seoul and even parts of Gyeonggi-do can be seen from Baegundae.

COURSE 01.

Baegundae-Ui Gugok Trail (p.12)
 Seoul Hiking Tourism Center → Ui Gugok → Baegun Visitor Center → Baegundae Peak → Seoul Hiking Tourism Center

COURSE 02.

Bukhansanseong-Daenamun Trail (p.14)
 Bukhansanseong Visitor Center → Mangyeongdae Peak → Site of Jungheungs Temple → Gugi Visitor Center

COURSE 03.

Samobawi-Bibong Trail (p.16)
 Gugi Visitor Center → Samobawi Rock → Bibong Peak → Geumseonsa Temple → Bibong Visitor Center

COURSE 04.

Samcheonsa Temple Trail (p.18)
 Samcheon Visitor Center → Samcheonsa Temple (Rock-carved Standing Buddha) → Jingwansa Temple

COURSE 05.

Complete Tour of 12 Bukhansanseong Gates (p.20)
 Bukhansanseong Visitor Center → Gasadangammun Gate → Cheongsudongammun Gate → Daeseongmun Gate → Yongammun Gate → Bukmun Gate → Daeseomun Gate → Entrance to Bukhansanseong Fortress

COURSE 06.

Dobongsan-Sinseondae Trail (p.24)
 Dobong Visitor Center → Dobongseowon Confucian Academy → Seoninbong Peak → Sinseondae Peak → Dobong Visitor Center

COURSE 07.

Dobongsan Main Ridge Trail (p.26)
 Mangwolsa Station → Podae Ridge → Sinseondae Peak → Dobong Visitor Center

COURSE 08.

Bukhansan Dulle-gil: Uiryeong-gil (p.28)
 Ui Entrance, Uiryeong-gil → Uiryeong-gil Visitor Center → Obong Observatory → Gyohyeon-ri Entrance, Uiryeong-gil

COURSE 09.

Bukhansan Dulle-gil: Gureum jeongwon-gil (Cloud Garden Trail) (p.30)
 Northern Bukhansan Ecological Park → Haneul Observatory → Jingwan Ecological Bridge (Tomb of Prince Hwau)

COURSE 10.

Bukhansan Dulle-gil: Banghaktong-gil (p.32)
 Musugol → Ssangdungi Observatory → Tomb of Princess Jeongui and Ahn Maeng-dam



COURSE 01.

Sweeping views of Seoul Baegundae- Ui Gugok Trail

This is the shortest trail up to Baegundae Peak, the summit of Bukhansan. The section from Haroojae Pass to Yeongbong Peak is extremely steep. Atop Yeongbong Peak at 604 meters, hikers are greeted by the majestic rock face of Insubong Peak. At the 836.5-meter-tall summit, a 360-degree panoramic view of Seoul unfolds.

Total travel distance: **9.98 km** ; Average travel time: **4 hours 20 minutes** ; Difficulty: **advanced**



SPOTS



①

Ui Gugok

The name originated from *Udong gugokgi* written by Hong Yang-ho (1724-1802), which named and described nine scenic spots of the Ui-dong valley. The magical scenery here is walled in by granite rock faces with jagged rocks and stones scattered about.



②

Yeongbong Peak

Yeongbong Peak (604 meters) is reached by following Ui Ridge from Baegun Visitor Center past Haroojae Pass. Easily reachable even by novice hikers, the peak stands opposite Insubong Peak, a popular rock face climbing attraction.

COURSE MAP



③

Baegundae Peak

The summit of Bukhansan stands 836.5 meters tall, flanked by Insubong Peak to the north and Mangyeongdae Peak to the south. Climbers atop Baegundae Peak can enjoy unobstructed views of all of Bukhansan's peaks. Enjoy views of the Seoul city center beneath and clear blue skies above.

INFORMATION

About the trail

- The section from Haroojae Pass to Yeongbong Peak is steep and slippery. Sufficient safety gear such as hiking poles and gloves is thus a must and be sure to grip the handrails installed along the path.
- The path down from Baegundae to Yongammun Gate goes past Baegunbongammun Gate, with a fork in the trail less than 100 meter down. Take the left path to go to Daedongmun Gate and the path on the right leads to Yaksuam Hermitage.

Shelter and hiking tips

- No shelters are installed along the path, so get sufficient rest at Haroojae Pass before going up to Baegundae Peak.

Transportation

- Take Exit 2 at Bukhansan Ui (Doseonsa) Station, the last stop of the Seoul LRT Ui-Sinseol Line, and walk for about five minutes toward the Seoul Hiking Tourism Center. An alternative is to grab a taxi at the station and get off at the Baegun Visitor Center.

More info

- The Seoul Hiking Tourism Center provides hiking and tourism information for visitors and also rents hiking clothing and boots. Equipped with a rest area, a changing room, a shower facility, and lockers, it serves as a guide for a more convenient hike.

Seoul Hiking Tourism Center
5F, Gwanglim Building, 52, Samyang-ro 173-gil, Gangbuk-gu, Seoul



Hikers' favorite

Bukhansanseong-Daenamun Trail

This trail marked by beautiful scenery and historical sites is a hikers' favorite. It is also popular among foreigners as it passes through the main castle of the Bukhansanseong Fortress and historical palace sites. The wildflowers that bloom throughout the four seasons add to the beauty of the trail.

Total travel distance: **10.2 km** Average travel time: **4 hours 10 minutes** Difficulty: **advanced**



SPOTS



①

Site of Jungheungsa Temple

The former site of Jungheungsa Temple is found at the southern base of Nojeokbong Peak between the peaks of Janggunbong and Guambong. The original temple was lost to fire in 1894 and later to flooding in 1915, and is currently undergoing restoration. Surviving artifacts include a temple bell from 1103 and a Buddhist incense holder (used in the sanctum) from 1344.



②

Site of Haenggung

After Japanese and Qing invasions in 1592 and 1636, King Sukjong reinforced the capital's defenses with Bukhansanseong Fortress. A temporary palace (*haenggung*) was built at the base of Sangwonbong Peak. The original *haenggung* was destroyed in a landslide in 1915.



③

Daenamun Gate

One of the gates of Bukhansanseong Fortress, Daenamun has access to and from all major points in Bukhansan Mountain. The gate is connected to Baegundae Peak, Haroojae Pass, and Yeongbong Peak to the north and Bibong Peak to the west. Gugi Valley lies south of the gate, which leads to Kalbawi Ridge in the east. The roundtrip from the valley to the gate is also popular among hikers.

About the trail

- From Bukhandong History Museum and past the gates of Jungseongmun and Yongammun, take a detour toward Mangyeongdae Peak. While this means a longer hike, the trail is less steep and eases the journey up to Baegunbongammun and Baegundae.

Shelter and hiking tips

- The trail spans over 10 kilometers of steep climbs and drops. At least 10 minutes of rest for every hour traveled is thus recommended. Rest and recover at Yaksuam Hermitage past Daedongs Temple before moving on.

Transportation

- Take bus No. 704 at Exit 2 of Gupabal Station, Seoul Metro Line 3. Get off at the entrance of Bukhansanseong Fortress. Bukhansanseong Visitor Center is located about 700 meters up the road.

More info

- Gugi Valley's pristine nature makes it a prime habitat for the Chinese minnow, which is only found in Grade 1 water (biological oxygen demand of 1ppm or less). Gugi Ranger Station enforces a strict no-access policy for the stream until 2026 to protect the ecosystem.



Hiking through history

Samobawi-Bibong Trail

This trail is optimal for enjoying the pristine mountain streams and blue skies on a clear day. On the trail is a monument commemorating the border inspection by King Jinheung of the ancient Silla Kingdom, as well as the path taken in 1968 by 31 North Korean commandos on their mission to assassinate South Korean President Park Chung-hee. The top of the trail offers an open panoramic view.

Total travel distance: **6 km** | Average travel time: **3 hours** | Difficulty: **advanced**



SPOTS



1 Seungasa Temple

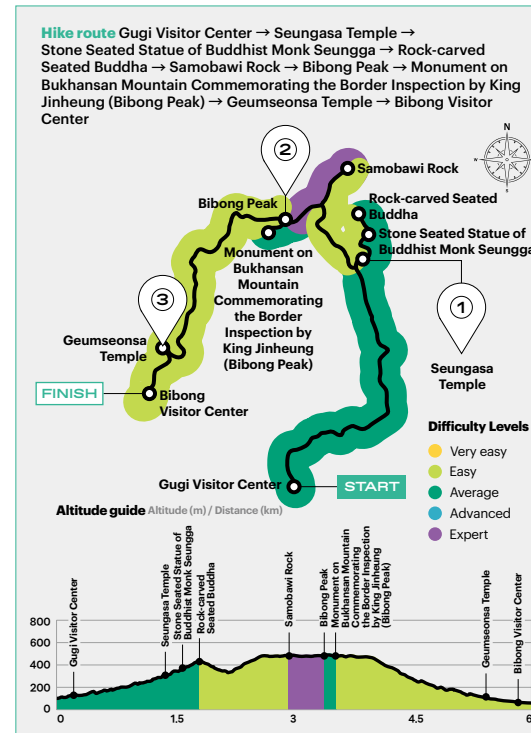
Sitting halfway up the mountain around 1 kilometer east of Bibong, this temple is dedicated to and named after the Indian monk Seungga (Sengqie). Born in 640, the priest dedicated 53 years to spreading Buddhism in Tang China.



2 Bibong Peak

With a name meaning "monument peak," Bibong, at 560 meters, is lower than Baegundae Peak but its views are no less impressive. At the top of the peak is a replica of the Monument on Bukhansan Mountain Commemorating the Border Inspection by King Jinheung. The original monument produced in the Silla period is currently conserved at the National Museum of Korea.

COURSE MAP



3 Geumseonsa Temple

The Buddhist monk Muhak, an important figure in the founding of the Joseon Dynasty, set up Geumseonsa Temple after discovering the energy of Samgaksan (former name of Bukhansan). Past the double centenarian pine tree and the 108 steps is Daejeokgwangjeon Hall, housing the Vairocana Buddha. Geumseonsa is also popular for temple stays.



INFORMATION

About the trail

- The gravel path heading up the mountain from Seungasa Temple splits in two directions, with the left path leading to Bibong Peak and the right ending at Samobawi Rock. The trip from Bibong to Samobawi requires a lot of back-tracking, and visiting the rock first before heading to the peak is recommended.

Shelter and hiking tips

- Clear and clean water from the Bukhansan summit trickles down the mountain streams along the path to Seungasa Temple, forming small and cool pools. Dipping one's feet in them is a great way to recover from a grueling hike.

Transportation

- Take bus No. 7212 at the bus stop across the street from Exit 2 of Bulgwang Station, Seoul Metro Line 3. Get off at the entrance of Seungasa, cross the street at Lycee International Xavier, and walk up Bibong-gil. Gugi Visitor Center is about 800 meters up the road.

More info

- There is an inscribed monument at the summit of Bukhansan, which the greatest calligrapher of the Joseon Dynasty Kim Jeonghui (pen name Chusa) deciphered in 1816 to reveal that it was erected to commemorate a border inspection by King Jinheung of the Silla Kingdom following his conquest of the Hangang River Basin. Currently conserved at the National Museum of Korea, the granite monument is 154 centimeters tall and 69 centimeters wide, and inscribed with King Jinheung's achievements.

Path for peace of mind Samcheonsa Trail

This trail starts and ends at Buddhist temples each more than 1,000 years old. Samcheonsa was founded in 661 during the Silla period and Jingwansa in 1011, during the Goryeo period. Seungabong Peak, the highest point on the trail, is named after Seungasa Temple that sits beneath it. The temples along the trail offer rest and peace of mind.

Total travel distance: **7.33 km** Average travel time: **2 hours 40 minutes** Difficulty: **average**



SPOTS



① Samcheonsa Temple

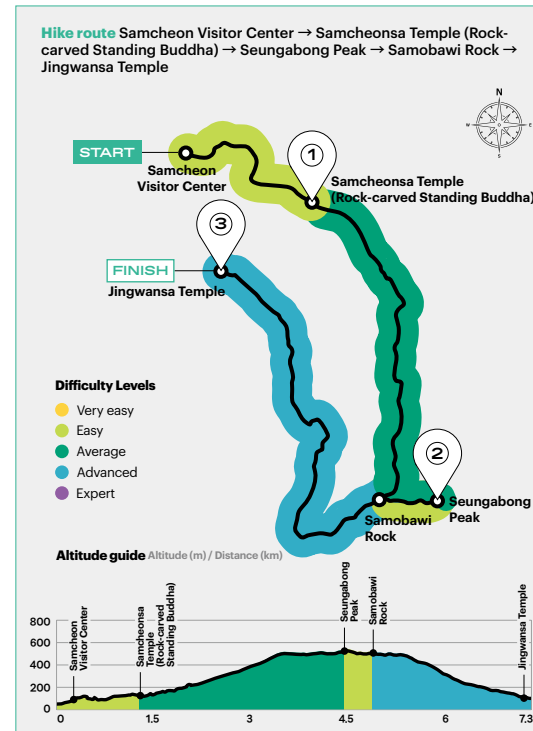
Founded by the Buddhist monk of Silla Wonhyo in 661, this temple gets its name from the legend saying it housed more than 3,000 practicing monks (*samcheon* means 3,000 in Korean). Engraved on a giant boulder to the back of Daengjeon Hall is a standing Sakyamuni Buddha statue believed to date back to the early Goryeo Dynasty.



② Seungabong Peak

This 567-meter-high peak stands between Samobawi Rock and Munsubong Peak on Bibong Ridge. East of Seungabong are the peaks Baegundae, Insubong, Munsubong, and Bohyeonbong and west are Samobawi Rock and Bibong. The splendid view from the top makes the peak a popular photo spot.

COURSE MAP



③ Jingwansa Temple

This 1,000-year-old temple was built in 1011 by King Hyeonjong, the 8th monarch of the Goryeo Dynasty. Together with Buramsa in the east, Sammaksa in the south and Seungasa in the north, Jingwansa is one of the four great temples in the Seoul region. Jingwansa is also famous at home and abroad for its temple food developed by its abbot Gyehe.

INFORMATION

About the trail

- The path down from Samobawi Rock to Jingwansa Temple is extremely steep. Hikers are advised to wear gloves and descend slowly while firmly grasping the hand rails and cables.
- Beware of steep cliffs along the descending path in the valley from Jingwansa Temple.

Shelter and hiking tips

- The flagstone in front of the rock-carved standing Buddha statue at Samcheonsa Temple and the tea house on the Jingwansa grounds are great for resting and recharging one's strength.

Transportation

- Take bus No. 7723 at the bus stop behind Exit 3 of Gupabal Station, Seoul Metro Line 3. Get off after seven stops at Hana High School, Samcheonsa, and Jingwansa and turn right toward Samcheonsa. Samcheon Visitor Center is about a nine-minute walk up the road.

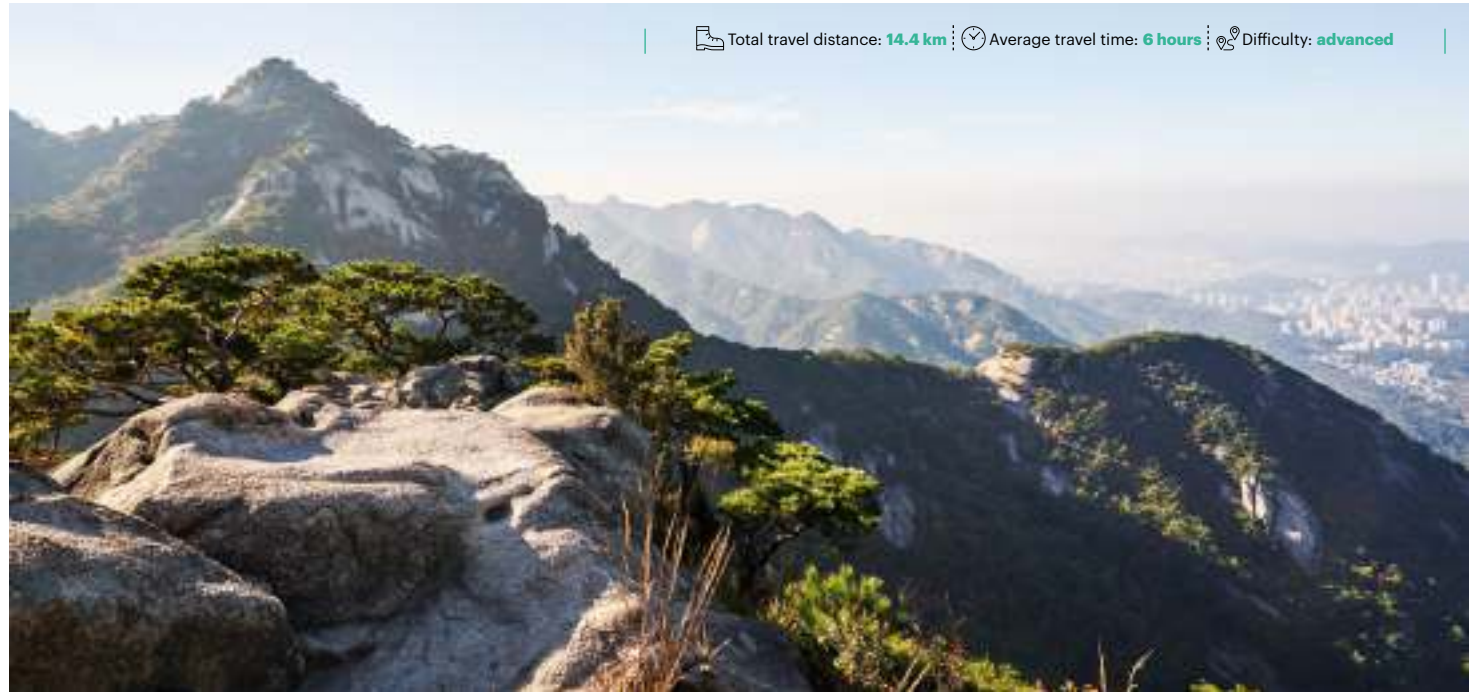
More info

- Jingwansa Temple is also known for keeping the tradition of Korean temple food alive. Deeming the process of cooking and eating part of ascetic practice, it carries out a temple stay program incorporating an alms bowl meal. This program is popular among foreign tourists seeking to purify their mind and body through temple stay and food.



Best of Bukhansan scenery

Complete Tour of 12 Bukhansanseong Gates



Total travel distance: 14.4 km | Average travel time: 6 hours | Difficulty: advanced

Bukhansanseong Fortress was built in 1711, the 37th year of the reign of King Sukjong of the Joseon Dynasty, to defend the capital Hanyang (today's Seoul). The structure uses the rough topography of Bukhansan and extends for 11.6 kilometers. This trail goes through the five main gates Daedongmun, Daeseongmun, Daenamun, Daeseomun, and Bukmun and the seven hidden gates Seomun, Baeugunbongmun, Yongammun, Bogukmun, Cheongsudongmun, Buwangdongmun, and Gasadangammun along the fortifications, as well as Uisang Ridge (made up of Uisangbong, Yongchulbong, Jeungchwibong, Nahanbong, and Munsubong peaks) known to be Bukhansan's most challenging section. The reward for this punishing course awaits at the summit: great views of Bukhansan scenery along the ridge line.

SPOTS



Buwangdongammun Gate

One of the hidden gates (*ammun*) installed when Bukhansanseong was built in 1711, this gate was strategically placed on the path linking the temples of Samcheonsa and Jungheungsa. Hidden gates were used to bring weapons, food, and reinforcements into the fortress during an emergency.



Munsubong Peak

Marking the end of Uisang Ridge, this peak towers over and is named after Munsusa Temple, which was built during the Goryeo Dynasty. The ridges of Uisang, Sanseongju, and Bibong meet at Cheongsudongammun Gate. Legend has it that those who pray on the toad-shaped boulder at the tip of the peak will beget a son.



Daseongmun Gate

The southeast gate of Bukhansanseong was built in 1711 along with the main structure. As the closest access point to Bukhansanseong from Changdeokgung Palace, Daeseongmun was reopened to the public in 2018 after columns at the gatehouse and roof tiles were repaired.

COURSE MAP

Hike route Bukhansanseong Visitor Center → Uisangbong Peak → Gasadangammun Gate (Gate 1) → Yongchulbong Peak → Yonghyeolbong Peak → Jeungchwibong Peak → Buwangdongammun Gate (Gate 2) → Nahanbong Peak → Cheongsudongammun Gate (Gate 3) → Munsubong Peak → Daenammmun Gate (Gate 4) → Daeseongmun Gate (Gate 5) → Bogukmun Gate (Gate 6) → Daedongmun Gate (Gate 7) → Dongjangdae Post → Yongammun Gate (Gate 8) → Nojeokbong Peak → Wimun Gate (Gate 9) → Daedongsa Temple → Bukmun Gate (Gate 10) → Saemaulgyo Bridge → Jungseongmun Gate (Gate 11) → Daeseomun Gate (Gate 12) → Entrance to Bukhansanseong Fortress



SPOTS



4 Dongjangdae Post

A full view of the ridges of Bukhansanseong unfolds at the top of Dongjangdae, which served as generals' command post in the Joseon Dynasty. The dirt and forest paths stretched slightly below the fortress walls in the middle, offer the joy of variety. A short break at Dongjangdae might also be a good idea.



5 Daeseomun Gate

The main gate of Bukhansanseong has the lowest elevation of the fortress' 16 gates. The royal procession of King Sukjong entered this gate in 1712. Daeseomun was also the main access point for villagers living within the fortifications.

INFORMATION

About the trail

- The steep slopes and challenging terrain of Uisang Ridge stretching west from Munsubong and the main ridge of Bukhansan might be too difficult for novice hikers.
- The section from Baegunbongammun Gate over Baegundae Peak past Wonhyobong Peak to Bukmun Gate is particularly dangerous, requiring full rock-climbing gear. Those without the proper equipment must descend toward Daedongsa Temple, take the path from the temple to Bukmun, and return to Daedongsa.

Shelter and hiking tips

- This trail through 12 Bukhansanseong gates can be exhausting so take every opportunity to rest and recover. Broad boulders appear every six or so peaks for sitting and resting.

Transportation

- Take bus No. 34 or 704 at the bus stop outside Exit 2 of Gupabal Station, Seoul Metro Line 3. Get off at the entrance to Bukhansanseong Fortress and walk up Daeseomun-gil Road for about 900 meters. On the right are steps and a sign reading "Uisangbong Peak." Follow this road to reach Uisang Ridge.

More info

- Making way through steep rocks can be challenging, but the view of Bukhansan encountered at the end of this trail is one of a kind. The intense and dynamic hike offered by the rocky ridge has hikers return for more. The view from the rocks will leave hikers feeling like a Taoist hermit.



Favorite sunrise spot

Dobongsan-Sinseondae Trail

Jaunbong Peak (740.2 meters) is the tallest peak of Dobongsan Mountain, but access to the steep rock cliffs is restricted. Sinseondae Peak, standing opposite Jaunbong, is considered the de facto summit of the mountain. This trail is the shortest way up to Sinseondae, a favorite spot to see the sunrise among early morning hikers.

Total travel distance: **6.3 km** Average travel time: **2 hours 25 minutes** Difficulty: **average**



SPOTS



①

Dobongseowon Confucian Academy

Dobongseowon, founded in 1573, is Seoul's only seowon (Confucian academy). It honors the Joseon-era neo-Confucian scholar Jo Gwang-jo. Spirit tablets of Jo and philosopher and politician Song Si-yeol are enshrined here. The academy was razed in 1871 under a decree abolishing all seowon, but was restored in 1971.

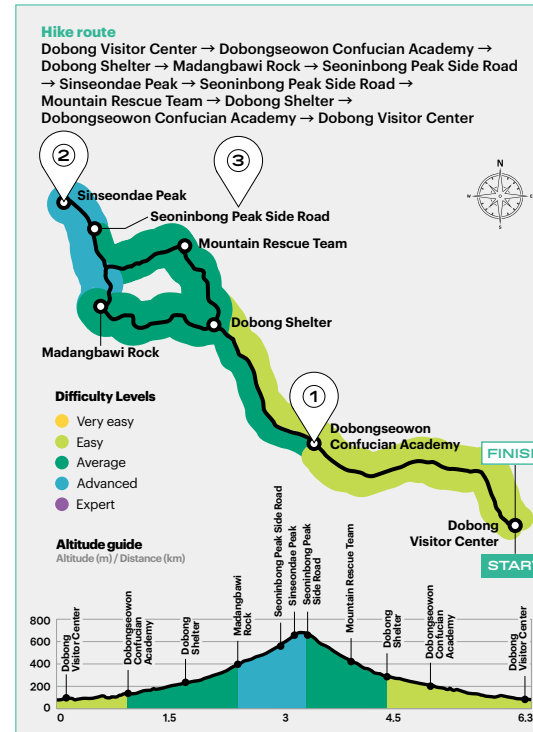


②

Sinseondae Peak

Standing opposite Jaunbong, this peak at the top shows the scenery of Dobongsan Mountain meld with views of downtown Seoul. The climb up to Sinseondae is steep, so hikers are advised to use the installed handrails. Sinseondae is also popular spot to see the sunrise.

COURSE MAP



③

Seoninbong Peak

Standing 708 meters high, this granite peak has a sheer rock face of around 200 meters high and 500 meters wide. Seoninbong is one of the "three brother peaks" together with Jaunbong and Manjangbong. With a name meaning "a peak where Taoist hermits undergo spiritual training," Seoninbong requires rock-climbing equipment to climb.

INFORMATION

About the trail

- The climb from Seonin Shelter to Sinseondae Peak is extremely steep. Elderly hikers and those with weak knees or ankles are advised to exercise caution on this course.
- The line of hikers waiting to scale Sinseondae can be up to 50 meters long on weekends and public holidays. So going on a weekday is highly recommended.

Shelter and hiking tips

- Take sufficient time to recover at Seonin Shelter before ascending Sinseondae Peak, as the crawl up the steep rock face can be exhausting.

Transportation

- Take Exit 1 at Dobongsan Station, Seoul Metro Line 1 (Gyeongwonseon), and walk about 20 minutes toward the Dobongsan Station Intersection to reach Dobong Visitor Center.

More info

- The peaks of Dobongsan—Manjangbong, Seoninbong, Jubong, Obong, Uiam, and Jaunbong—attract numerous rock climbers.
- One of the 35 mountain cabins built around Korea in the 1970s, Dobong Shelter used to be called the "Dobongsan Mountain Cabin." Among the cabins built around the time, it is the only civilian-occupied cabin that accommodates hikers. The place is currently also used as a hiking school.



Discover hidden beauty among ridges

Dobongsan Main Ridge Trail

The main ridge of Dobongsan stretches from the Uinam Ridge, past Uiam Rock, and up to Sinseondae Peak via Jubong. Including the ridges of Podae and Sapae, the entire ridge line measures some 11 kilometers. The relatively challenging climb starts with a gentle uphill that gradually increases in slope past Mangwolsa Temple. Those who make it to the top are rewarded with unobstructed panoramic views and the beauty of the valleys and streams hidden between the ridges.

Total travel distance: **9.32 km** | Average travel time: **6 hours** | Difficulty: **advanced**



SPOTS



①

Wondobong Valley

The “won” in Wondobong means “original.” Also known as Mangwolsa Valley, Wondobong Valley stretches from Jaunbong Peak past Mangwolsa Temple, Deokje Spring, and Ssangyongsa Temple all the way down to Wondobong Visitor Center. Midway between Ssangyongsa and the spring is Dukkeobibawi, a boulder projecting from the rock face that is said to resemble the head of a toad.

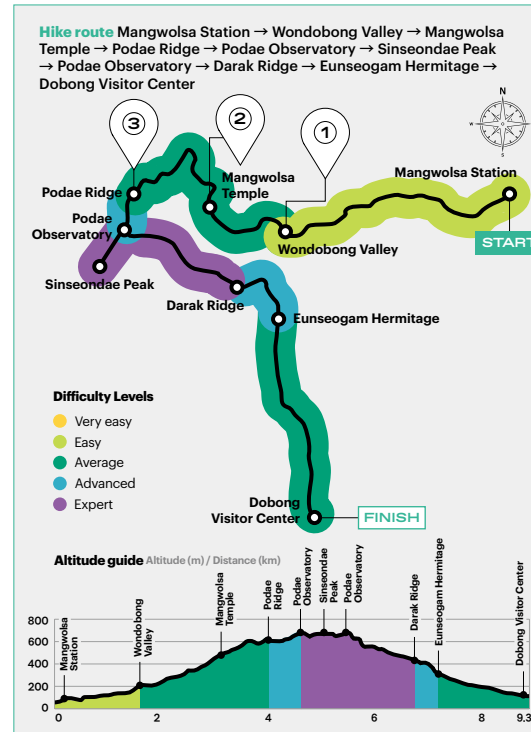


②

Mangwolsa Temple

Founded by the Buddhist monk Haeho in 639 under orders from Queen Seondeok of the Silla Kingdom, this temple gets its name from *mangwol*, which means to “gaze at the moon.” A rabbit-shaped boulder to the east of the Daeungjeon Hall stares at the moon-shaped boulder to the west.

COURSE MAP



③

Podae Ridge

Stretching north from Jaunbong Peak, the summit of Dobongsan, this ridge got its name, which literally means “artillery battery,” from the anti-aircraft artillery installed here during the Korean War. Podae connects to Wondobong Valley in the north and Dobong Valley and Obong Ridge in the south.

INFORMATION

About the trail

- The path down Darak Ridge from Podae Observatory can be hard to find. Take the left narrow path down from Podae Observatory and make a left at the entrance to the boardwalk. Go around the boulder while holding the handrails.

Shelter and hiking tips

- The trail is physically demanding so hikers should pace themselves and take regular breaks.

Transportation

- Take Exit 3 at Mangwolsa Station, Seoul Metro Line 1, and walk about 20 minutes down the path to the right to reach Wondobong Visitor Center, then hike toward Wondobong Valley from there.

More info

- King Gyeongsun, the last monarch of the Silla Kingdom, was preparing to surrender to Goryeo. His son, Crown Prince Maui, was vehemently opposed to surrendering the millennium-old kingdom. With his life in danger, the prince went into hiding at Mangwolsa Temple on Dobongsan Mountain. His father eventually surrendered to Goryeo King Taejo. Lamenting the loss of his kingdom, Maui spent the rest of his days eating wild shrubs and grass as a hermit.
- Dobongsan purportedly nurtured Um Hong-gil, the first person to climb the 16 highest points on Earth, and his mountaineering aspiration. As a child, Um honed his rock-climbing skills with professional mountaineers on the steep rock faces surrounding his home.

Nature-friendly mountain walk

Bukhansan Dulle-gil: Uiryeong-gil

Uiryeong-gil is Section 21 of Bukhansan Dulle-gil Trail along unpaved paths between Bukhansan to the south and Dobongsan to the north. Public access to the path was restricted due to the thwarted 1968 mission by 31 North Korean commandos to assassinate South Korean President Park Chung-hee, but the path was reopened in July 2009 under a reservation system. The natural ecosystem on this path has been well-preserved through about four decades of no human contact, and the gentle ascents and descents make Uiryeong-gil an easy walk.

Total travel distance: **6.42 km** | Average travel time: **1 hour 55 minutes** | Difficulty: **easy**



SPOTS



①

Uiryeong-gil Visitor Center

This is where the journey through Uiryeong-gil begins. Forty-one years after its closure, the path was reopened to the public in July 2009. Visitors must make a reservation and present ID at the visitor center to access this trail.

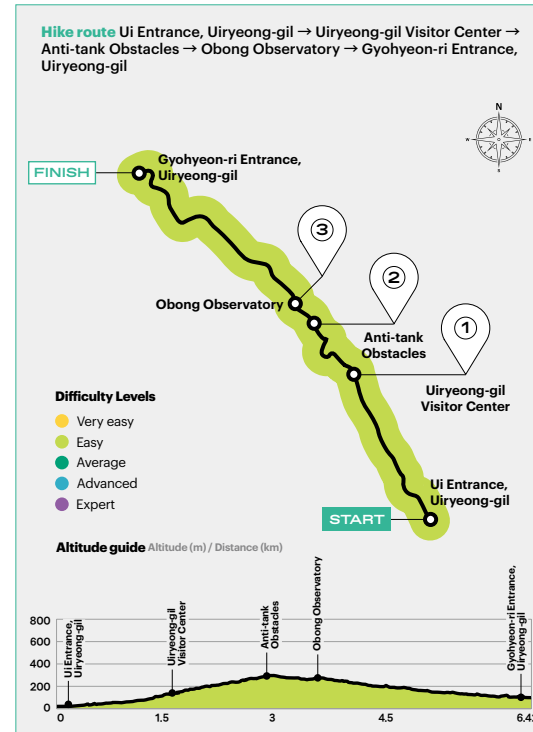


②

Anti-tank Obstacles

The anti-tank obstacles are a military installation designed to block advancing tanks. In case of emergency, the concrete blocks are dislodged from their supports to block the road. The road was created for military operations by the US Army Engineering Corps during the Korean War and was used to evacuate residents of Yangju and Paju, Gyeonggi-do, and as an accessway to Seoul.

COURSE MAP



③

Obong Observatory

The highest point of Uiryeong-gil, this observatory offers the finest views of Dobongsan's peaks. The five rocky pinnacles are perched precariously atop the summit ridge at 660 meters and commonly called the "five brothers" or "five fingers."

INFORMATION

About the trail

- Reservations are required at least a day in advance to enter Uiryeong-gil. Access is permitted from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., with the last entry at 4 p.m. In winter, the last entry is at 3 p.m. Make sure to bring identification as it will be checked at the trailhead.

Shelter and hiking tips

- Uiryeong-gil offers several shelters for rest and snacks.

Transportation

- Take the Ui-Sinseol Line to Bukhansan Ui Station and leave through Exit 1. The entrance to Uiryeong-gil is just 40 meters ahead and Uiryeong-gil Visitor Center is just 2 kilometers up the road.

More info

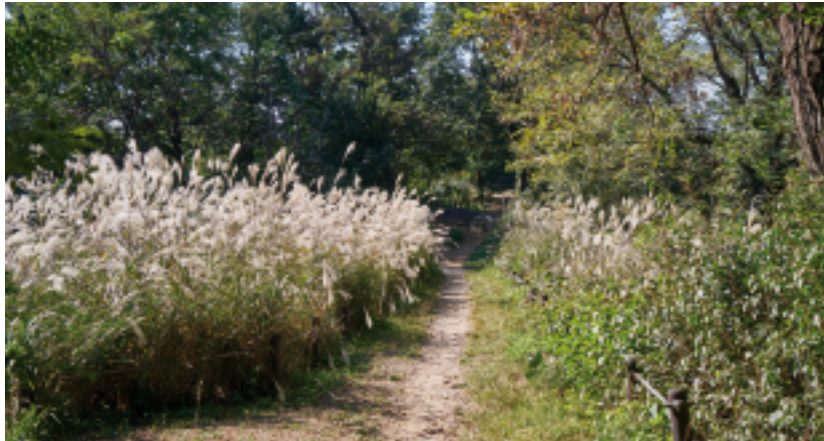
- Once called Sogwijaе Pass, Uiryeong-gil was an important link between the capital and northern Gyeonggi-do region. The road was used to transport agricultural produce and daily necessities. Uiryeong-gil was used to evacuate Korean War refugees, and after the 1953 ceasefire, it was restricted for military use.
- According to the legend of the five peaks, a magistrate's beautiful daughter was an only child. Five young men vying for her hand in marriage climbed the ridge opposite where the five peaks stand today to see who could throw the farthest. The boulders they hurled landed on the mountaintop, where they remain to this day.

Magical forest walk merging with the sky

Bukhansan Dulle-gil: Gureum jeongwon-gil (Cloud Garden Trail)

A 60-meter-long deck over the lush forest below is one of the many attractions at Section 8 of Bukhansan Dulle-gil Trail. The deck is installed over a ravine above Gugi Tunnel, taking hikers up close to the canopy and the open skies above. Superb views of the peaks of Bukhansan including Jokduribong await at the summit.

Total travel distance: **5 km** Average travel time: **2 hours** Difficulty: **easy**



SPOTS



①

Haneul Observatory

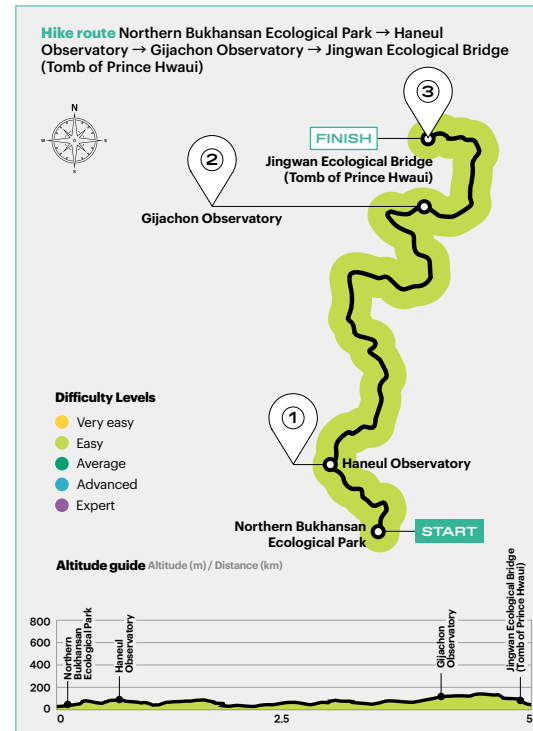
Enjoy views of nature and Seoul from the boardwalk. Take in the sight of the blue skies above and the lush green woods and megalopolis of Seoul below. The sky looks bright red as the sun sets behind the surrounding peaks.



②

Gijachon Observatory

This spot offers some of the best scenery at Section 8 of Bukhansan Dulle-gil Trail. Midway along the deck is a small field of silver grass. In the late 1960s, Gijachon (Journalists Village) was a community of media personnel developed on publicly owned land at the foothills of Bukhansan. The village's buildings were demolished in 2006 and replaced by the park.



③

Tomb of Crown Prince Hwaui (Yi Yeong)

This neatly manicured tomb is the resting place of Joseon Prince Hwaui (Yi Yeong), the sixth son of King Sejong the Great. Implicated in a plot to reinstate the ousted King Danjong just a year after King Sejo had seized power from his nephew through a coup, the prince was banished from the capital and executed by poison. The red spiked gate (*hongsalmun*) stands at the entrance to ward off evil spirits.

About the trail

- This easy trail is more of a walk than a hike. Leisurely stroll over the boardwalk through the forest trees and sit on a bench at Gijachon Observatory to stare at Bukhansan's peaks.
- Eunpyeong New Town Public Library is just a short walk away from the Tomb of Prince Hwaui, with multiple bus routes leading into downtown of Seoul. A 10-minute walk toward the neighborhood Jingwan-dong leads to Eunpyeong Hanok Village, which is definitely worth a visit given its traditional Hanok style.

Shelter and hiking tips

- The trail features rest spots, exercise facilities, and benches throughout, with a small park and stream at the end of the boardwalk.

Transportation

- Exit Bulgwang Station, Seoul Metro Line 3, at Exit 2 and turn left. Follow Jinheung-ro for about 15 minutes to the entrance to Gureumjeongwon-gil Trail.

More info

- The easy, breezy hike through Section 8 of Bukhansan Dulle-gil Trail feels like walking on clouds and is suitable for novice hikers. The lush greenery encountered in the middle of the city provides a therapeutic experience. This beautiful trail optimal for a light stroll is beloved by those who seek quiet time for meditation.

Relaxation with no worry in the world

Bukhansan Dulle-gil: Banghakdong-gil

The trail begins at Musugol, where the only remaining rice paddies in Seoul are found, and ends at the royal tombs. The short trail has only gentle uphill and downhill routes to allow a leisurely walk. The entire trail of Banghakdong-gil is surrounded by evergreen pine trees.

Total travel distance: **3.1 km** Average travel time: **1 hour 10 minutes** Difficulty: **easy**



SPOTS



①

Musugol

The warmth of the rural landscape of Musugol is bound to stop hikers' feet. The trees lining the paddies and fields come across like a scene in a painting. There are cafés and camping grounds in the area for hikers who want to spend the night in the valley.

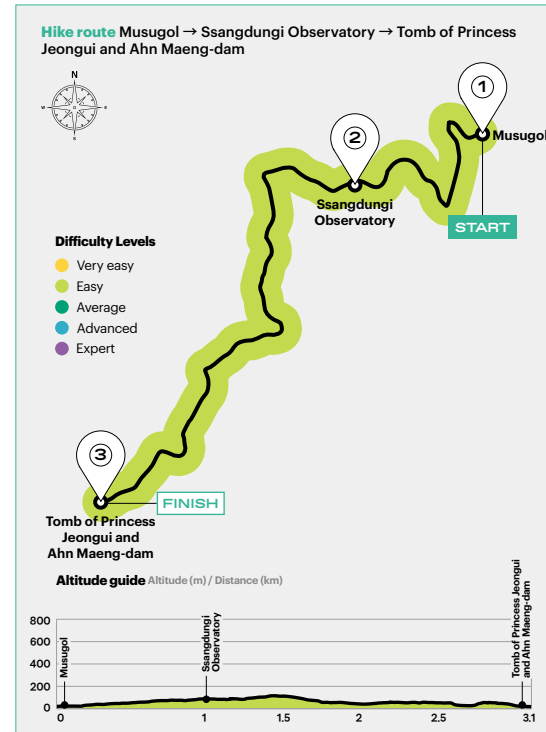


②

Ssangdungi Observatory

The best views along Banghakdong-gil are here. Climb the staircase to see the picturesque peaks of Dobongsan and Bukhansan: Jaunbong (summit), Sinseondae, Manjangbong, Seoninbong, Kalbawi, and Byeongpungbawi.

COURSE MAP



③

Tomb of Princess Jeongui and Ahn Maeng-dam

Princess Jeongui, second daughter of King Sejong the Great, and her husband Ahn Maeng-dam were put to rest here. She was a contributor to the creation of the hangeul textbook *Hunminjeongeum* and well-versed in astronomy and mathematics. Her husband, also a noted calligrapher, participated in the coup of 1453 and earned the favor of his brother-in-law King Sejo.

INFORMATION

About the trail

- The grave of Princess Jeongui is among the royal tombs housed on this trail. Those interested in such burial plots of the Joseon Dynasty, including that of the tyrant King Yeonsangun, should explore this path.

Shelter and hiking tips

- No more than 3 kilometers long, the trail can be completed in a short time. Several rest spots are at Ssangdungi Observatory and along the woods lining the trail.

Transportation

- Cross the street at Exit 2 of Dobong Station, Seoul Metro Line 1, and walk for about 20 minutes to Seilgyo Bridge, where Banghakdong-gil starts, in Musugol. Alternatively, take the Dobong shuttle bus No. 08 from Chang-dong or Banghak Station, Seoul Metro Line 1, and get off at the entrance of Musugol.

More info

- Past Musugol, there are maple trees along the Banghakdong-gil entryway. In autumn, the walking path is covered with red maple leaves, resembling a red carpet. This trail is beautiful in any season, but a late autumn hike is highly recommended.



Crisscrossing between Nature and the City

Bukhansan Mountain is north of Seoul, with something to offer both novice and seasoned hikers. There is much to see and do after exploring the neighborhoods around the mountain. Crossing over from city to nature and back again is one of the great charms of Seoul.

Bukhansan National Park: Two-day itinerary

- 1:00 p.m.** Lunch at Woorikong Sundubu after hiking – 750 meters (3 minutes by car) –
- 1:45 p.m.** Virtual reality experience at UIDONG Mountain Culture H-U-B – 3.6 kilometers (11 minutes by car) –
- 2:50 p.m.** Coffee or tea at 419 Café Street – 18 kilometers (45 minutes by car) – **4:30 p.m.** Soak up culture at Eunpyeong History & Hanok Museum – 240 meters (1 minute by car) – **6:00 p.m.** Wind down at Eungjeongcheon

The entrance to Book1, a bookstore-café

Leave everyday problems behind and nurture the mind



Hwagyesa Temple

Founded in 1522, this temple sits above a quiet residential neighborhood in the northern Seoul neighborhood of Suyu-dong. The lush forest surrounding the temple belies its proximity to the city below. Temple stays at this temple take guests on a journey to find their true selves in a wonderfully pristine natural setting featuring traditional meditation, ringing of the temple bell, and dialogue over tea with resident monks. Weekend programs are geared toward experiencing Buddhist temple culture while those on weekdays focus more on rest and relaxation.

📍 177, Hwagyesa-gil, Gangbuk-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-10-4024-4326



Geumseonsa Temple

Along Bibong Trail up Bukhansan Mountain stands a temple in the shadows of the mountains of Bugaksan and Inwangsan. Geumseonsa Temple was founded by the monk Muhak, who taught Yi Seong-gye, who founded the Joseon Dynasty as its first king. A Buddhist temple stay amid clear mountain streams and pristine valleys is a great way to make a hike more special. Leave behind the everyday grind and let go of all stress and suffering while concentrating entirely on the self, breath, and each step. Temple stays vary by season.

📍 137, Bibong-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-2-395-9955

Jingwansa Temple

This millennium-old Buddhist temple was founded in 1011 during the reign of King Hyeonjong of the Goryeo Dynasty. Buddhism dictates that the food one eats forms his or her physique and character, and this temple is renowned for its temple food and *baru gongyang* (communal meal ceremony). This healthy meal is followed by chats over tea with resident monks. For those unable to visit in person, Jingwansa on Saturday mornings also offers a weekly online meditation program. Reservations can be made on the temple's website.

📍 73, Jingwan-gil, Eunpyeong-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-2-388-7999



Things to do in the foothills of Bukhansan



419 Café Street

A street lined with trendy and quaint cafés, this is a great place to stop by after a hike thanks to its array of coffee shops by major chains and trendy individual cafés. The name of the street is borrowed from the nearby April 19th National Cemetery, which honors the April 19 Revolution of 1960 against the regime of President Syngman Rhee. Those killed in this movement by police are buried in the cemetery.

📍 535-221, Suyu-dong, Gangbuk-gu, Seoul



Sunwoongak

Sunwoongak is a Hanok café in the neighborhood of Ui-dong, harkening back to the Bukhansan Mountain of the past. Originally built in 1967 as an upscale gentlemen's club, Sunwoongak today is a popular café and a sought-after location for weddings and photo shoots. This is also the largest privately owned Hanok residence in Seoul, with well-managed stone walls and pleasantly manicured lawns. As a popular venue for weddings, photo shoots, and other functions, Sunwoongak is often closed to walk-in customers. Check the building's Instagram account (@café_sunwoongak) before visiting.

📍 223, Samyang-ro 173-gil, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-0507-1399-1105 ☉ 11:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m. daily (11:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m. in winter)



Bukhansan International Climbing Center

This is an outdoor rock-climbing face on the way up Bukhansan Mountain from the Seoul Hiking Tourism Center. A safer way of rock climbing, the center offers both a monthly membership and a one-day pass. Its indoor climbing wall offers all-weather fun. The outdoor wall towers 15 meters high, while the indoor wall stands at an impressive 12 meters, making them perfect for expert climbers. People can shower there after a climb.

📍 80, Samyang-ro 173-gil, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-70-4167-7468 ☉ 9:30 a.m.–9:30 p.m. Tue.–Fri. / 9:30–7:30 p.m. Sat.–Sun. (closed Mon., Jan. 1, Seollal [Lunar New Year's Day], Chuseok, and Labor Day [May 1])



Eunpyeong History & Hanok Museum

Located on the foothills of Bukhansan, this museum has exhibits on the history of Seoul's Eunpyeong-gu district and the Hanok architecture the area is famous for. Expect fabulous views of Eupyeong Hanok Village against the backdrop of Bukhansan Mountain from the rooftop observation deck. The museum is also great for children with an interactive learning center and mini and toy libraries.

📍 8, Yeonso-ro 50-gil, Eunpyeong-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-2-351-8524 ☉ 9:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m. (closed Mondays, Jan. 1, Seollal [Lunar New Year's Day], and Chuseok)



UIDONG Mountain Culture H·U·B

This multi-purpose space for alpine culture combines alpine experiences, culture, and communities. One exhibition commemorates Um Hong-gil, world-renowned mountaineer and the first person to conquer all 16 Himalayan peaks, and offers general alpine information and training. Other features include courses in basic mountaineering including those on selection of the proper attire and boots for a hike and a virtual reality trip up Insubong Peak.

📍 B2, 689-1, Samyang-ro, Gangbuk-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-2-994-8848
☉ 10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. / break from 12:00 p.m.–13:00 p.m. (closed Mon.)



Hanpyeong Bookstore

Located at Seoul Innovation Park, Hanpyeong is not only a lively bookstore but also a community space hosting programs for socializing and sharing. This charming venue's extensive book collection flooding the shelves was hand-picked by the owner, and teas and baked goodies are sold in a corner. Flowers are sold seasonally in the vast yard, which also hosts exhibitions and flea markets. Hanpyeong regularly holds book club gatherings, book talks, and workshops.

📍 101-ho, 25-dong, Seoul Innovation Park, 684 Tongil-ro, Eunpyeong-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-10-3056-3315
☉ 11:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. Mon.–Thu. / 12:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m. Fri.–Sun.

Made slow and healthy with love: eateries near Bukhansan Mountain



Woorikong Sundubu

A proper hike will lead to quite an appetite. Rich in protein and gentle on the stomach, warm tofu is the ideal way of replenishing energy expended on a mountain. Located next to Seoul Hiking Tourism Center, Woorikong Sundubu serves tofu dishes made with prime Jangdan soybeans cultivated and harvested in Paju, Gyeonggi-do Province. The most popular dishes are the *sundubu* (curdled soft tofu) meal, highlighting the neat and gently sweet silkiness of freshly made tofu, *bijijijigae* (soy pulp stew), and kimchi *bijijijigae*. Pan-fried tofu (*buchim*) is a great food pairing with *makgeolli* (milky rice wine).

📍 46, Samyang-ro 173-gil, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-2-995-5918
🕒 9:30 a.m.–7:30 p.m.



Spoon & Fork Kitchen

Located in a secluded alley of the Ssangmun-dong neighborhood, this small bistro features a seasoned chef with 20 years of experience in Western cuisine who makes pastas, steaks, risottos, burgers, and salads using fresh ingredients prepped every morning. The basil and prawn spaghetti, spaghetti aglio, and olio e peperoncino linguine are crowd favorites and the New York strip cooked to a perfect medium is just the right mix of juiciness and bite.

📍 1F, 483, Uicheon-ro Dobong-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-0507-1371-1818
🕒 11:00 a.m.–10:00 p.m. Tue.–Sat. / 11:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. Sun. (closed Mon.)



Ellim Deulkkae Sujebi Kalguksu

Noodle lovers should not miss this restaurant, which specializes in bowls with a generous portion of *kalguksu* (knife-cut noodles) in a hearty broth made with perilla seeds freshly toasted each morning. The simple menu of just three items—*kalguksu*, *suyuk* (sliced boiled pork), and *mandu* (dumplings)—betrays the depth of flavors on offer. Ellim is always packed with locals and hungry hikers; long lines outside before it opens are not uncommon even on weekdays. A portion is generous as an order of *kalguksu* is accompanied by a bowl of barley rice and a few slices of *suyuk*.

📍 177, Samgaksan-ro, Gangbuk-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-2-996-2583
🕒 11:30 a.m.–9:00 p.m. Tue.–Sun. / break from 3:30 p.m.–5:00 p.m. (closed Sun.)

Long overdue timeout



Ui-dong Family Camping Ground

As an ideal setting for outdoor family excursions, this extremely popular area has boarded decks for pitching tents as well as "glamping" (glamorous and camping) facilities equipped with proper beds, refrigerators, firepits, and cooking utensils. A convenience store, showers, and room to dust off and clean camping gear are also available. Reservations can be made through the Interpark ticketing site at 2 p.m. on the 10th of each month. Competition is fierce for reservations as this facility is exceptionally managed.

📍 28, Samyang-ro 181-gil, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-2-944-2941
🕒 Check in 2:00 p.m., check-out 11:00 a.m. (closed Tue.)

Eungjeongheon

This Hanok accommodation in Eunpyeong Hanok Village was built entirely from natural building materials. This place receives just one team of guests per day and the antique furniture and sensible decorations throughout add to its dignified grace. Everything about an Eungjeongheon stay is special from the picnic box provided at check in, hotel-quality breakfast, morning yoga session, and a follow-up letter sent to each guest on the one-year anniversary of their stay. Jingwansa Temple and a pleasant mountain stream are within walking distance.

📍 19, Yeonseo-ro 50-gil, Eunpyeong-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-0507-1417-3270
🕒 Check in 3:00 p.m., check out 11:00 a.m.



Paraspara Seoul

Paraspara Resort Seoul is a healing destination surrounded by lush pine forests on the foothills of Bukhansan National Park. The well-equipped guestrooms are decorated extensively with wood to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Facilities include indoor and outdoor pools, Jacuzzis, baths, and saunas, and a fully-equipped gym. The panoramic views of the peaks of Insubong and others like it on Bukhansan Mountain from the rooftop garden are not to be missed.

📍 689, Samyang-ro, Gangbuk-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-2-3408-5000
🕒 Check in 3:00 p.m., check out 11:00 a.m.

Messengers of Spring Guarding Bukhansan Mountain

Inhabiting Bukhansan Mountain, which is considered "the lungs of Seoul," are over 3,000 species of organisms and 635 of plants. The messengers of spring guarding the mountain greet visitors with beautiful blossoms.

Written by Kim Jin Ohk (curator at Seodaemun Museum of Natural History)
Illustrated by Lee Soyoung (botanical illustrator)



Blunt-lobed spice bush

Saeng-gang-na-mu

Scientific name
Lindera obtusiloba Blume
Habitat
Deciduous shrub that grows on sunny ground at foot of mountain
Flowering period
March–April

Bukhansan Mountain is a rare national park in the heart of the Seoul covering 76.922 square kilometers across the capital and the surrounding Gyeonggi-do. A combined 635 plant species grow on the mountain, with huge granite peaks and the valleys formed between them creating a beautiful harmony. Plants on Bukhansan blossom from early spring to announce the beginning of a new season.

Blunt-lobed spice bushes

The first to bloom are the yellow flowers of blunt-lobed spice bushes. In March, tiny flowers of such bushes appear throughout Bukhansan to herald the coming of spring. Its Korean name, which literally means "ginger bush," is derived from the scent of ginger produced when the branches and leaves are rubbed. Brewing their branches in water produces a fragrant tea, to which the dried yellow flowers of the bushes can be added. In September, the berries from the bushes sport a spicy scent. In the nation's southern region long ago, the oil squeezed from the berries was used as hair oil by women along with camellia oil.

Seoul violets

Around the time flowers fully bloom, Seoul violets start to blossom on sunny grounds. The violets, whose multiple leaves and flowers grow directly from the roots because of the lack of stem, blossom from early spring and thus have fluff covering the peduncles and leaves. This species grows nowhere else in the world except the Seoul metropolitan area and was designated a new species in 1918. Its Korean name, which literally means "swallow flower," is derived from the migratory bird swallow whose return to Korea after a cold winter coincides with flowers blossoming around spring. Other types of violets bloom on Bukhansan such as downy golden, Namsan, and *viola rossii*.



Seoul violet
Seo-ul-je-bi-kkot

Scientific name
Viola seoulensis Nakai
Habitat
Perennial plant that grows on sunny field
Flowering period
April–May



Old-fashioned weigela
Bulgeunbyeongkkotnamu

Scientific name
Weigela florida (Bunge) A.DC.
Habitat
Deciduous shrub growing on sunny ground around valleys or forests
Flowering period
May–June

Old-fashioned weigelas

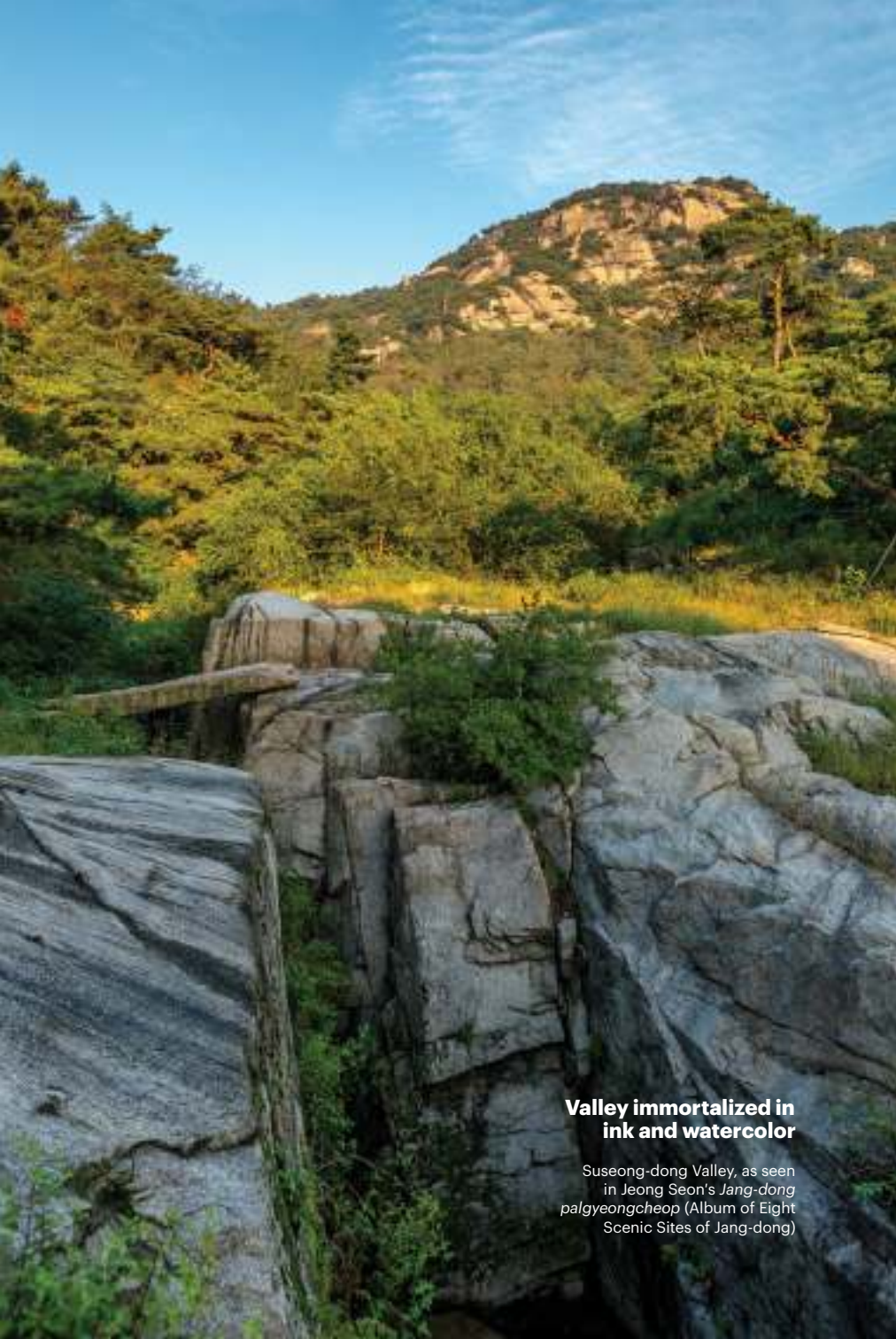
In May, old-fashioned weigelas start to blossom in mid-spring on the mountain's rocky ridges and valleys. These trees, whose Korean name literally means "bottle flower tree," bear buds that resemble a gourd-shaped bottle and flowers redder than those of regular Korean weigela. Unlike the latter, whose flowers blossom yellow and turn red, old-fashioned weigelas produce red flowers. The contrast of red five-lobed corolla against the green leaves when in full bloom in May is eye-catching.

Inwangsan Mountain

Sweeping Views of Seoul

Inwangsan Mountain features relatively gentle terrains, making it an easy climb even for novices. As an attractive hiking destination, the mountain features a brisk hike and picturesque views of the Seoul city center and many chic cafés nearby.





Valley immortalized in ink and watercolor

Suseong-dong Valley, as seen in Jeong Seon's *Jang-dong palgyeongcheop* (Album of Eight Scenic Sites of Jang-dong)

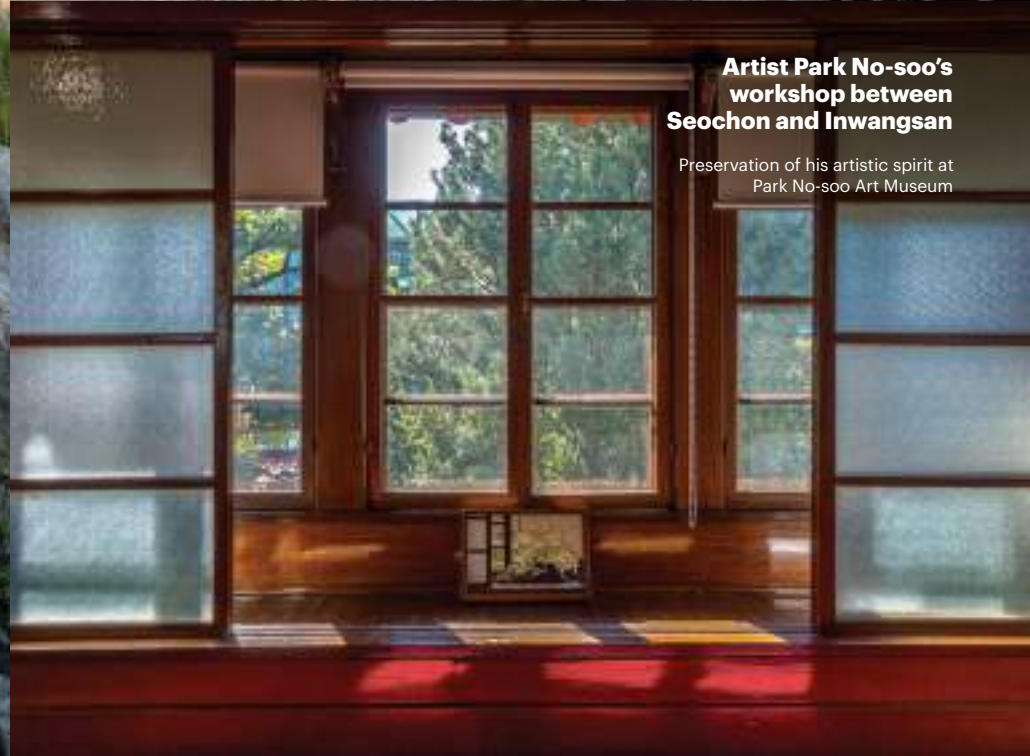
Experiencing history through literature

The Yoon Dong-ju Literature Museum offers glimpses into the life and works of Yoon Dong-ju, who used poetry to describe his troubled times.



Artist Park No-soo's workshop between Seochon and Inwangsan

Preservation of his artistic spirit at Park No-soo Art Museum



Beautiful Coexistence of Natural and Concrete Forests

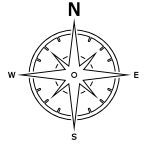
The "Inwang" in Inwangsan Mountain was derived from the name of one of the guardian gods of Buddhism as the mountain was believed to guard the Joseon Dynasty. Inwangsan was infamous for its large tiger population, mentioned in the old saying "No tiger in Joseon doesn't know its way around Inwangsan." According to feng shui, a properly placed building is flanked on the right by a white tiger and on the left by a blue dragon. Inwangsan was incorporated into the capital as the white tiger of the royal palace of the Joseon Dynasty. Standing 338.2 meters high, the mountain is made entirely of granite. While most of Korea's celebrated mountains have multiple peaks, Inwangsan has just one peak and summit. The typical roundtrip hike takes no more than three hours and hence is relatively light. Centuries ago, the Joseon literati gathered on the mountain to mingle and conduct scholarly or cultural exchanges, and Inwangsan was also a sacred spot for Buddhism and folk religions. *Inwang jesaekdo* (Scene of Inwangsan Mountain after Rain), a painting by famed Joseon artist Jeong Seon, depicts the mountain as seen from Suseong-dong Valley. Hiking up the valley feels like walking straight into this painting. A tip for visiting is to go on a clear day with fair weather and under blue skies to see the real Seoul, a harmonious mingling of green and grey. Between Bukhansan to the north and the Seoul landmark Lotte World Tower to the southeast, hills and trees alternate with concrete and high rises. Inwangsan sports a different charm as the sun begins to set. The illuminated Seoul City Wall climb the slope from Sajik Park to the summit and make a great spot to snap the Seoul nightscape. The multi-faceted charm of Inwangsan is best appreciated slowly and at a leisurely pace.



"Inwangsan is a relatively low mountain and a great place for leisurely hiking on foot. Following the political, cultural, and religious keywords hidden throughout the mountain further enriches your journey. The nearby neighborhoods of Seochon, Bukchon, and Ikseon-dong are full of quaint cafés and great eateries to rest, lounge, and recover."

Kim Mi-hyun (travel news editor)

Inwangsan's 10 Trails



START → FINISH

A granite monolith standing 338.2 meters tall, Inwangsan Mountain is a relatively easy climb. Rest as needed at the many springs on the way up and leisurely take in the views at key points such as Beombawi and Chimabawi along the ridge. The climb up and down the mountain typically takes around three hours. Parts of Inwangsan were reopened to the public in 2018 after being off-limits for decades as military zones. The mountain's trails have since been a favorite among hikers.



- COURSE 01.**
Seonbawi Trail (p.50)
Dongnimmun Gate → Seonbawi Rock → Summit of Inwangsan Mountain
- COURSE 02.**
Seoul City Wall Trail (p.52)
Donuimun Museum Village → Gokseong → Inwangsan Summit → Changuimun Gate
- COURSE 03.**
Hongjimun-Tangchundaeseong Trail (p.54)
Hongjimun Gate and Tangchundaeseong Fortress → Gichabawi Rock → Inwangsan Summit
- COURSE 04.**
Buam-dong Trail (p.56)
Seoul Museum → Gichabawi Rock → Yoon Dong-ju Literature Museum → Changuimun Gate
- COURSE 05.**
Gaemi Maeul Trail (p.58)
Hongje Yuyeon → Gaemi Maeul → Gichabawi Rock → Inwangsan Summit (Satgatbawi Rock)
- COURSE 06.**
Inwangsan Jarak-gil Trail (p.60)
Sajikdan Altar → Dangunseongjeon Shrine → Hwanghakjeong Pavilion → Mumudae Observatory → Yoon Dong-ju Literature Museum
- COURSE 07.**
Inwangsan Forest Trail (p.62)
Sajikdan Altar → Suseong-dong Valley → Cheongun Park → Yoon Dong-ju Literature Museum
- COURSE 08.**
Suseong-dong Valley-Chimabawi Trail (p.64)
Suseong-dong Valley → Seokguram Grotto → Chimabawi Rock
- COURSE 09.**
Inwangsan Dulle-gil Trail: Seodaemun Section (p.66)
Hongjimun Gate and Tangchundaeseong Fortress → Mugunghwa Park → Muakjae Sky Bridge
- COURSE 10.**
Inwangsan Dulle-gil Trail: Jongno Section (p.68)
Muakjae Sky Bridge → Muak Park → Changuimun Gate → Hongjimun Gate and Tangchundaeseong Fortress

See incredible rock formations

Seonbawi Trail

This classic trail features the notable boulders and rock formations of Inwangsan Mountain, a giant mass of granite. Witness the wonder of the boulders Seonbawi, Beombawi, Haegolbawi, and Satgatbawi as well as breathtaking panoramic views of the heart of Seoul on this hour-long one-way journey.

Total travel distance: **1.84 km** | Average travel time: **1 hour 8 minutes** | Difficulty: **average**



SPOTS



①

Dongnimmun Arch

This commemorative gate was built by the Independence Club between 1896 and 1897 to proclaim the country's autonomy and independence. Pioneering reformer and independence fighter Soh Jaipil devised the plans based on photos of the Arc of Triomphe in Paris in a project funded by public donations.



②

Seonbawi Rock

This rock formation sits on the west edge of Inwangsan Mountain. Ladies seeking to bear children often prayed for blessings here. The boulder is said to resemble a robed monk in deep prayer, hence the name *seon* (zen).



About the trail

- Beombawi Rock is more popular than the summit as a spot to see the sunrise and sunset. The path from this rock formation to the summit is narrow so proceed with caution.
- Follow the trail past Seonbawi Rock onto other boulders like Haegolbawi Rock and Mojabawi Rock. The climb up to Inwangsa Temple is arduous but the main trail is a less-demanding walk through nature.

Shelter and hiking tips

- The mountain has no restrooms after the ones next to Inwangsa Temple. Beombawi and the old Seoul fortress walls make a great place to sit and rest.

Transportation

- Walk toward Muak-dong Community Center from Exit 2 of Dongnimmun Station, Seoul Metro Line 3.

More info

- There are murals painted on either side of the stairs leading to Seonbawi Rock. The painting of the Inwangsan Tiger sporting intense colors makes for a perfect photo spot.



③

Beombawi Rock

Beom is a Korean word meaning “tiger.” and the tiger crouching in this boulder is easy to see. Legend says a tiger who lost his mate smashed his own head in and died in sorrow here. The howling of the winds over the rock are said to be the cries of the beast in distress.

Tracing Seoul's history

Seoul City Wall (Hanyangdoseong) Trail

The trail starts at the former site of Seodaemun Gate and follows the Seoul City Wall past Gyeonggyojang House, home of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea during Japanese occupation, and ends at Changuimun Gate. Public access to the old fortress walls was barred after the 1968 North Korean raid on the presidential compound of Cheong Wa Dae, a ban that lasted until 1993. The fortifications mark the boundaries of Hanyang, Seoul's name during the Joseon era.

Total travel distance: **4.1 km** Average travel time: **2 hours 11 minutes** Difficulty: **average**



SPOTS



About the trail

- A three-way split is on the road past Sunseong Shelter and Information Center, with the left path leading to Muakjae Sky Bridge and the right to Inwangsan Urban Nature Park. The summit is at the end of the middle path, and the last section before the summit involves light rock climbing, so please be careful.
- Inwangsan is a rocky mountain so proper hiking gear is essential when climbing in winter.

Shelter and hiking tips

- A convenience store is next to Sunseong Shelter and Information Center. Benches line the path down from the summit to Changuimun Gate.

Transportation

- Donuimun Museum Village is a five-minute walk from Exit 4 of Seodaemun Station, Seoul Metro Line 5. Follow the road signs to Kangbuk Samsung Hospital.

More info

- With alleys recreated to resemble those of the yore, Donuimun Museum Village offers a journey through Seoul's 100-year history. The village also hosts various exhibitions and performances that allow an experience of traditional culture, which makes it a popular outing spot for families and a perfect date course for couples.

① Donuimun Museum

② Gyeonggyojang House

③ Hong Lanpa's House in Hongpa-dong

Donuimun Gate was the main western entrance of Hanyang and whose name means "gate of strong righteousness." Donuimun Museum is a historical and cultural space preserving artifacts and scenes from modern and contemporary Seoul, including the history of the city and traces left by those who lived here.

This facility was the residence of Kim Koo, president of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea, and headquarters of this administration after its return from exile. Gyeonggyojang House hosted cabinet meetings and was the base of the Anti-trusteeship Campaign in the chaos that followed national liberation.

Composer Hong Lanpa, who wrote the Korean folk song "Spring in My Hometown," lived his final years in this modern Western-style residence built by a German missionary in 1930. An epitaph and bust commemorating Hong are in front of the home. Reservations are required at least a day before visiting.

Picturesque views from Inwangsan Mountain

Hongjimun Gate- Tangchundaeseong Fortress Trail

The path from Hongjimun Gate along Tangchundaeseong Fortress is relatively less traveled by hikers. This is the perfect way to peacefully and quietly enjoy the scenery of the mountains of Bugaksan and Bukhansan below. The stunning panoramic view at Gichabawi Rock stops many hikers in their tracks.

Total travel distance: **2 km** Average travel time: **1 hour 15 minutes** Difficulty: **average**



SPOTS



① Hongjimun Gate

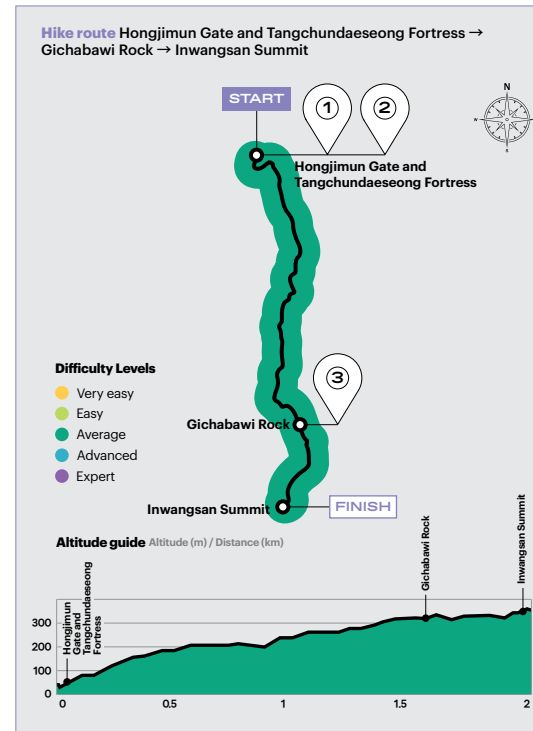
A gate in the northern fortifications of Hanyang, Hongjimun is said to have been named by King Sukjong of the Joseon Dynasty. The gate was the de facto northern entrance of Hanyang instead of Sukjeongmun, which was closed in 1413. Hongjimun collapsed in a flood in 1921 and was restored in 1977.



② Tangchundaeseong Fortress

This fortress links the Seoul City Wall to Bukhansanseong Fortress, with construction taking two years (1718-1719). The structure stretches four kilometers from Changuimun Gate to Bibong Peak on Bukhansan Mountain. In addition to reinforcing the defenses of the city wall and outer walls, Tangchundaeseong also stored military provisions.

COURSE MAP



③ Gichabawi Rock

This spot offers one of the best views from Inwangsan Mountain and got its name from its long shape (*gicha* means “train”). Safety ropes are installed on both sides of the rocky ridge line. The slippery rock face beyond the ropes creates an exciting walk.

INFORMATION

About the trail

- The section along Tangchundaeseong Fortress includes steep uphill stretches. Hikers are advised to bring crampons in the winter. A pair of gloves is handy for gripping the safety ropes up the many boulders.
- Many paths down from the summit take hikers past Changuimun Gate, Suseong-dong Valley, and Muakjae Sky Bridge.

Shelter and hiking tips

- Many hikers sit here to rest and enjoy the city view before climbing Gichabawi Rock.

Transportation

- Take bus No. 7018 at the bus stop 320 meters straight ahead from Exit 3 of Gyeongbokgung Station, Seoul Metro Line 3. Get off at the stop Hongjimun Gate and follow the signs to Tangchundaeseong Fortress.

More info

- Tangchundaeseong Fortress was apparently named after Tangchundae, a pleasure place for the king built by the 10th monarch of the Joseon Dynasty King Yeonsangun on a nearby hill. Tangchundaeseong Fortress was also known as the West Fortress as it was to the west of the Seoul City Wall.
- Examining the differences among methods used to build the fortifications in each era makes the walk even more interesting. Tangchundaeseong Fortress starts past Chimabawi Rock on the way down from the summit. Walking around the fortress, hikers will find that a long section of the wall is layered with different stones from different eras.

Arts and crafts

Buam-dong Trail

The neighborhood of Buam-dong, home to Seoul Museum, is full of art galleries and other artsy sights. Touring the neighborhood's craft shops, eateries, and cafés is every bit as enjoyable as a hike up the mountains. Also here are the Yoon Dong-ju Literature Museum and a hill named after the poet.

Total travel distance: **3.36 km** | Average travel time: **2 hours 9 minutes** | Difficulty: **average**



SPOTS



① Seoul Museum

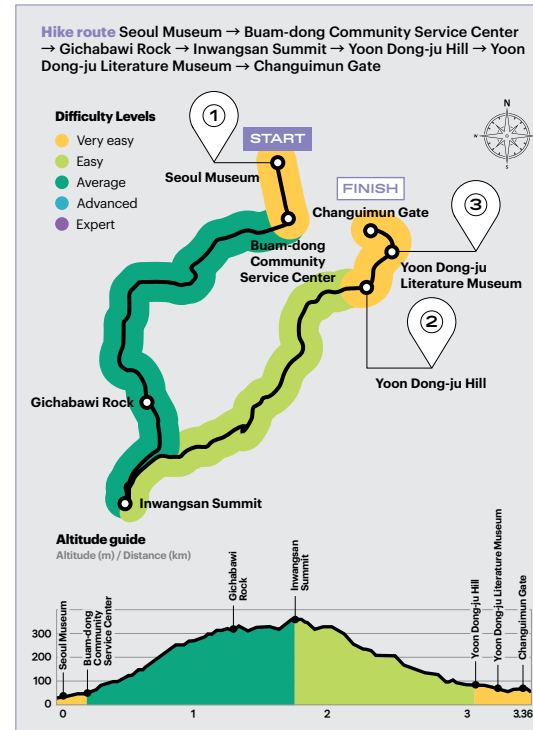
Seoul Museum was founded as part of broad support for creating an arts and culture environment in Korea and the world where the traditional and contemporary coexist. The facility is committed to passing on and preserving traditional Korean culture. Seokpajeong, the vacation home of Prince Regent Heungseon Daewongun, was acquired by the museum and sits behind it.



② Yoon Dong-ju Hill

This park marking the poet's literary spirit is on the western tip of Inwangsan Mountain. While attending Yonhi College (now Yonsei University), Yoon frequently strolled the neighborhood in search of poetic inspiration. A large monument inscribed with his immortal poem "Seosi" (Foreword) stands atop the hill.

COURSE MAP



③ Yoon Dong-ju Literature Museum

Poet Yoon Dong-ju lived in a boarding house in the neighborhood, writing from time to time. The defunct Cheongun Pumping Station was remodeled into a literary museum in his honor. The museum hosts an annual literary festival, exhibitions, and interactive learning programs.

INFORMATION

About the trail

- The path splits at Buam-dong Community Service Center. Follow the alley between the laundromat and convenience store. At the road sign, take the left path up to the summit and be careful not to slip while climbing the substantial incline.

Shelter and hiking tips

- No restrooms are available from Seoul Museum to the summit and Changuimun Gate. Use the restrooms between Yoon Dong-ju Hill and Cheongun Literature Library.

Transportation

- Take bus No. 1020, 1711, 7016, 7018, 7022, or 7212 outside Exit 3 of Gyeongbokgung Station, Seoul Metro Line 3, or 1020, 1711, 7016, or 7018 outside Exit 2 or 3 of Gwanghwamun Station, Seoul Metro Line 5. Get off at Jahamun Tunnel.

More info

- The walk down from the summit to Changuimun Gate leads to the Seoul City Wall. Sections of the walls vary in color depending on the period they were built.



Murals and narrow alleys

Gaemi Maeul Trail

The trail begins at Hongje Yujeon, an underground walkway-turned-art museum, and leads to Gaemi Maeul (Ant Village) and its murals amid the shadows of the imposing granite mountain Inwangsan.

Total travel distance: **2.5 km** Average travel time: **1 hour 17 minutes** Difficulty: **average**



SPOTS



1

Hongje Yujeon

Hongje Yujeon is a promenade accompanied by art, where “the stream and art connect, heal, and reunite people.” Hongjecheon Stream in the past was covered to make room for roads and development above, but the walkway beneath the bridge was restored through a public art project to offer leisure and artistic experiences.

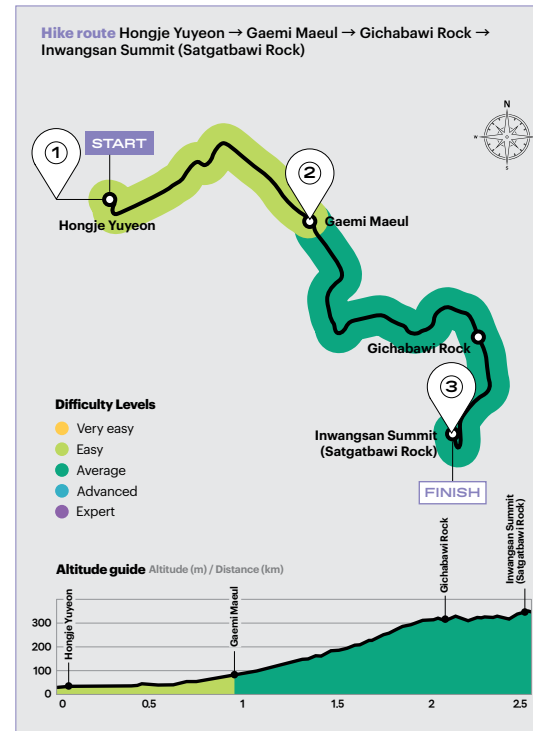


2

Gaemi Maeul (Ant Village)

Formerly called Indian Town, the village got its name from its diligent “ant-like” residents. The murals on the walls were part of a project launched by Seodaemun-gu Office in 2009, turning the village into a tourist attraction. Gaemi Maeul is also the setting for the cinematic tearjerker *Miracle in Cell No. 7*.

COURSE MAP



3

Inwangsan Summit (Satgatbawi Rock)

Gyeongbokgung Palace and the former presidential compound of Cheong Wa Dae are just a stone’s throw from the summit of Inwangsan, with the mountains of Bukhansan, Ansan, and Namsan nearby as well. At the summit is Satgatbawi Rock, which resembles the traditional men’s hat satgat worn by the elite of Joseon society.

INFORMATION

About the trail

- Descend toward Buam-dong or Hongje Yujeon for a bite to eat after a hike.
- A small corner shop at the entrance to Gaemi Maeul is great for buying snacks and bottled water here for those who came unprepared.

Shelter and hiking tips

- Restrooms are available between Gaemi Maeul and the entrance to Inwangsan Dulle-gil Trail. A water fountain and air guns for dusting off gear are found past a children’s forest interactive center.
- Follow the Seoul City Wall down to Changuimun Gate from the forest and take the path to Suseong-dong Valley. This leads to Inwang Guard Post Forest Retreat, a fine place to read, sit, and rest.

Transportation

- Hongje Yujeon is beneath Yujin Arcade, an eight-minute walk from Exit 1 of Hongje Station, Seoul Metro Line 3.

More info

- Hongje Yujeon is part of a public arts project. The space beneath Yujin Arcade, unused for 50 years, was chosen for the Seoul Urban Art Project in 2019 and turned into an arts space.
- Hongje Yujeon is named after Hongjecheon Stream, which flows through this cavernous underground space. The stream is said to have been named after Hongjwong, a residence for visiting Chinese emissaries or government officials during the Joseon era.

Breathtaking nightscape

Inwangsan Jarak-gil Trail

This trail traverses along the foothills of Inwangsan Mountain, with spectacular evening views of Seoul. The nightscape from the observation deck is quite a sight. The trail is well maintained and managed and an easy walk for people of all ages.

Total travel distance: 2.73 km Average travel time: 1 hour 4 minutes Difficulty: easy



SPOTS



①

Dangunseongjeon Shrine

Dedicated to Dangun, the mythical god-king who founded the Korean nation, Dangunseongjeon Shrine was built in the Hanok style in the 1960s during the restoration of Sajikdan Altar. Displayed here are a portrait of Dangun and the spirit tablets of the early kings of the ancient Three Kingdoms era. A commemorative offering is made to the shrine every year on October 3, Gaecheonjeol (National Foundation Day).



②

Hwanghakjeong Pavilion

This cultural property and archery range was established in 1899 by Emperor Gojong at Gyeonghuigung Palace to promote traditional archery and was later moved to its present location during the Japanese occupation. The name Hwanghak, meaning "a yellow crane," was given to the pavilion as Emperor Gojong is said to have been as graceful as a crane when wielding his bow and arrow in his imperial yellow robe.



③

Mumudae Observatory

This is the halfway point of Inwangsan Jarak-gil Trail. Hikers flock to this point on Jan. 1 each year to watch the year's first sunrise. The "mu" in Mumudae refers to the Chinese script 無, meaning "nothing." Indeed, this point contains nothing but beauty, and the shimmering lights of the city below are brilliant at night.

About the trail

- A series of boardwalks and dirt trails appears with gentle ascents and descents. Hiking boots are not necessary but bringing drinking water is highly recommended because no stores are along the way.

Shelter and hiking tips

- Restrooms are available just past Hwanghakjeong Pavilion. The broad observation deck is great for sitting and resting, as is the bookstore and café The Forest Chosochaekbang.

Transportation

- From Exit 1 of Gyeongbokgung Station, Seoul Metro Line 3, Sajik-dong Community Center is 300 meters ahead. Continue down the road toward Sajikdan Altar. Follow the road sign up the hill to Hwanghakjeong to see Dangunseongjeon Shrine to the right.

More info

- The Forest Chosochaekbang, located between Mumudae and Seosijeong, was transformed from a police guard post to a café and bookstore. The great forest scenery makes it a popular spot for dates.



Lush greenery with flowery scents

Inwangsan Forest Trail

This trail boasts picturesque views of Seoul from quiet dirt trails through lush forests and over babbling brooks. The path is especially breathtaking in spring, when cherry blossoms are in full bloom, and in summer with its lush greenery. This trail weaving between forest and city is a treat for the senses: a cool breeze, warm sun, and whispering sounds and scents of nature.

Total travel distance: **2.9 km** Average travel time: **1 hour 22 minutes** Difficulty: **average**



SPOTS



①

Sajikdan Altar

A place to make offerings to the gods of the soil and grain, this altar was built around the founding of the Joseon Dynasty, alongside the palace and Jongmyo Shrine for the new capital. Rituals praying for rain or a good harvest were performed here, and offerings were made in times of national hardship.



②

Haemaji Park

As Inwangsan Mountain's best spot to watch the sunrise, Haemaji Park is located on a mountain west of Gyeongbokgung Palace. In Korean geomancy, the west is associated with the tiger and the color white. Legend has it that Inwangsan's white tiger basks in the morning sun here.

COURSE MAP



INFORMATION

About the trail

- Inwangsan Forest Trail is a series of casual walking paths with numerous forks in the road. Follow the road signs to avoid getting lost.
- The section between Haemaji Park and Gaon Bridge offers can't-miss views. The stairs leading up and down from the bridge are quite steep so caution is urged to avoid slipping and falling.

Shelter and hiking tips

- Benches are at key points next to information panels along the trail. They are also great for sitting, resting, and snacking.

Transportation

- The trail starts at the entrance to Sajikdan Altar 300m from Exit 1 of Gyeongbokgung Station, Seoul Metro Line 3.

More info

- Sitting west of Gyeongbokgung Palace, Inwangsan Mountain was once called Seosan (West Mountain). It was eventually named after Inwangsa, a Buddhist temple from the late Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392).
- The narrow path between the swinging bridge and Ippalbawi Rock was a favorite practice spot for Jeong Yak-dae, the greatest daegeum player of the Joseon era. He is said to have placed a grain of sand in his shoe for each time he practiced and refused to descend the mountain until his shoe was full.



③

Gaon Bridge

This swinging bridge is found about midway through the trail. The term *gaon* is a pure Korean word referring to "middle" or "center." The name thus suggests that visitors find physical and mental balance while crossing the swinging bridge.

Full of hidden tales and stories

Suseong-dong Valley -Chimabawi Rock Trail

This beautiful trail was often depicted in paintings by Jeong Seon (pen name Gyeomjae), a genius painter from the late Joseon era, and is full of hidden stories and tales. Walking along the trail along Suseong-dong Valley is like traveling through history.

Total travel distance: **1.5 km** Average travel time: **1 hour 26 minutes** Difficulty: **average**



SPOTS



①

Suseong-dong Valley

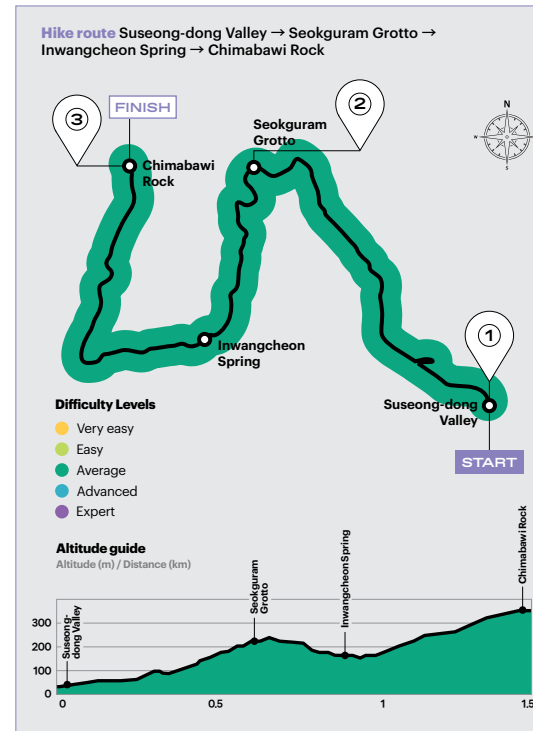
Joseon wunderkind painter Jeong Seon often featured this valley in his works. The term "suseong" means "sound of waters," befitting this charming forested retreat not far from the hustle and bustle of Seoul.



②

Seokguram Grotto

This stone grotto is found halfway up Inwangsan Mountain beneath Chimabawi Rock. Inside is a carved stone Buddha triad and the path leading up to the structure is lined with Buddha statues and engravings of the Maitreya Buddha in the rock faces. Sansingak (Mountain Spirit Hall) just behind the main hall is dedicated to the mountain spirit and tiger who are said to guard the mountain.



③

Chimabawi Rock

The name of this rock comes from the story of Queen Dangeyeong, the favorite wife of King Jungjong, who was banished to the foothills of Inwangsan Mountain. After hearing of the king's longing for her, she is said to have hung her skirt on this boulder. The creases in the boulder resemble the pleats of a *chima* (skirt).

About the trail

- Walking down Suseong-dong Valley is recommended instead of taking the bus when descending. Those who walk down pass the site of the boarding house where poet Yoon Dong-ju used to live. The house is no longer there, but signs on the walls of neighboring homes indicate its former location.

Shelter and hiking tips

- Have a snack on the benches in the clearing in front of Suseong-dong Valley before getting started. The path up to the observation deck starts just after Samojeong Pavilion near the restrooms.

Transportation

- Take bus No. 9 outside Exit 3 of Gyeongbokgung Station, Seoul Metro Line 3. The last stop is the entrance to Suseong-dong Valley.

More info

- Seochon is a neighborhood between the west wall of Gyeongbokgung Palace and the eastern edge of Inwangsan Mountain, a perfect location for browsing after a hike. Tongin Market is famous for its eateries, especially lightly fried tteokbokki (spicy rice cake), and Daewoo Bookstore is also famed as the backdrop of K-pop star IU's album cover. The streets are also lined with quaint cafés and charming accessory stores.



Hidden and contemplative forest trail

Inwangsan Dulle-gil Trail: Seodaemun Section

Strolling on the deck around the spur of the mountain is like walking on clouds. This place of healing features the sounds of waters trickling beneath the rocks, singing of the birds, and evergreen pines and humble flowers on the edges of the path.

Total travel distance: **3.43 km** Average travel time: **1 hour 51 minutes** Difficulty: **average**



SPOTS



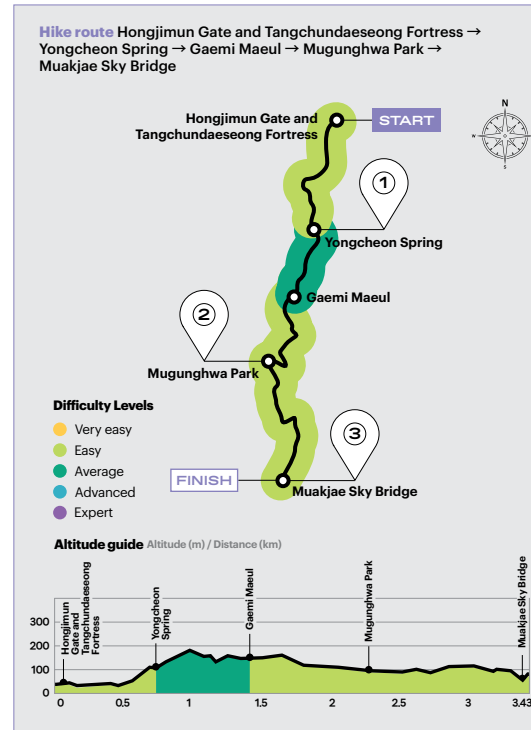
1 Yongcheon Spring

This spring lies past a short stone bridge along a forest trail amid the songs of birds. The views from the pavilion next to the spring offer a quaint beauty. The sound of the waters flowing beneath the bridge cleanses the mind.



2 Mugunghwa Park

Planted with Korea's national flower *mugunghwa* (rose of Sharon), the hill is also a neighborhood park and public space for residents of the Hongje-dong neighborhood. Also here are exercise machines and a pavilion where people can sit and rest.



3 Muakjae Sky Bridge

This eco-bridge links the mountains of Inwangsan and Ansan, whose previous connection was severed when a road was built in between them. The eco-bridge facilitates movement of wildlife between the two mountains and promotes biodiversity. Access to the bridge is restricted at night to protect the wildlife.



About the trail

- The trail alternates between forest trails lined with wildflowers, stone steps, dirt paths, and well-kept boardwalks. Daily walking shoes instead of hiking boots will do fine here.
- Past Gaemi Maeul on the way to Mugunghwa Park leads to a *maehwa* (plum blossom) village that is a great photo spot when the blossoms are in full bloom. Remember not to be too loud when passing through the residential neighborhood between the hill and Muakjae Sky Bridge.

Shelter and hiking tips

- The pavilion at Yongcheon Stream is a nice break spot, with restrooms about 50 meters from the pavilion. Restrooms are also available next to the multi-purpose ballpark on Mugunghwa Park.

Transportation

- Take bus No. 7016 outside Exit 6 of Sookmyung Women's University Station, Seoul Metro Line 4. Get off at the stop Sangmyung University to find a road sign indicating the direction of Inwangsan Dulle-gil Trail just 258 meters away.

Combination of forest walk and mountain hiking

Inwangsan Dulle-gil Trail: Jongno Section

Total travel distance: **5.71 km** | Average travel time: **3 hours 7 minutes** | Difficulty: **average**



SPOTS



1 Muak Park

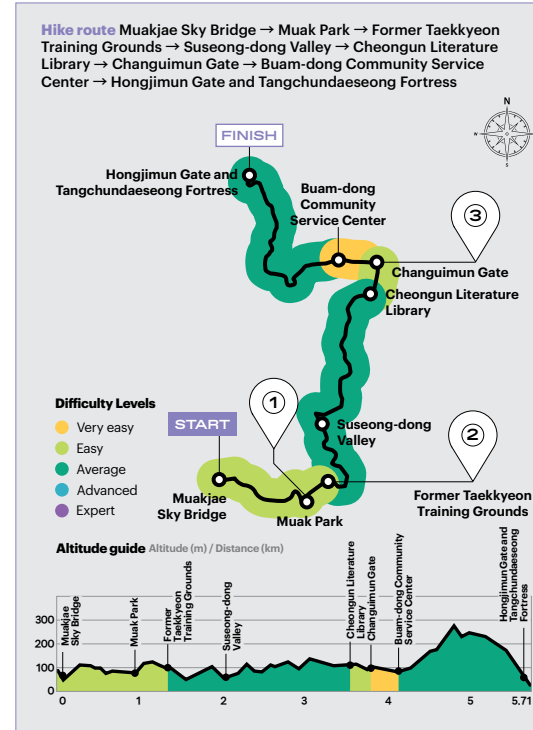
This flowery and wooded retreat is not far from the urban center. The flowers lining the pathways make for a pleasant stroll. Muak Park is great for family outings with a children's playground containing a maze, climbing wall, and log bridge.



2 Former Taekkyeon Training Grounds

During the Joseon era, practitioners of the traditional martial art *taekkyeon* honed their skills and sparred at these training grounds. In November 2011, *taekkyeon* became the first traditional martial art added to the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

COURSE MAP



3 Changuimun Gate

Also called Jahamun, this gate marks the border between the mountains of Inwangsan and Bugaksan and is the only surviving gatehouse among those of Seoul's four minor gates built during the Joseon era. Lost to fire during the Japanese invasion of 1592, the gatehouse was rebuilt in 1741.

INFORMATION

About the trail

- The steep climb from Buam-dong Community Service Center to Hongjimun Dulle-gil Trail leads to the alleys of a quiet residential neighborhood. Follow the alley between the laundromat and convenience store toward Seongdeoksa Temple.
- The path along the bunker beneath the military base on the descent to Hongjimun is rough and can be dangerous, so caution while walking is advised.

Shelter and hiking tips

- Plenty of shelters line the forest walk. Dipping one's feet in the waters of Suseong-dong Valley is also a nice way to rest and recover.

Transportation

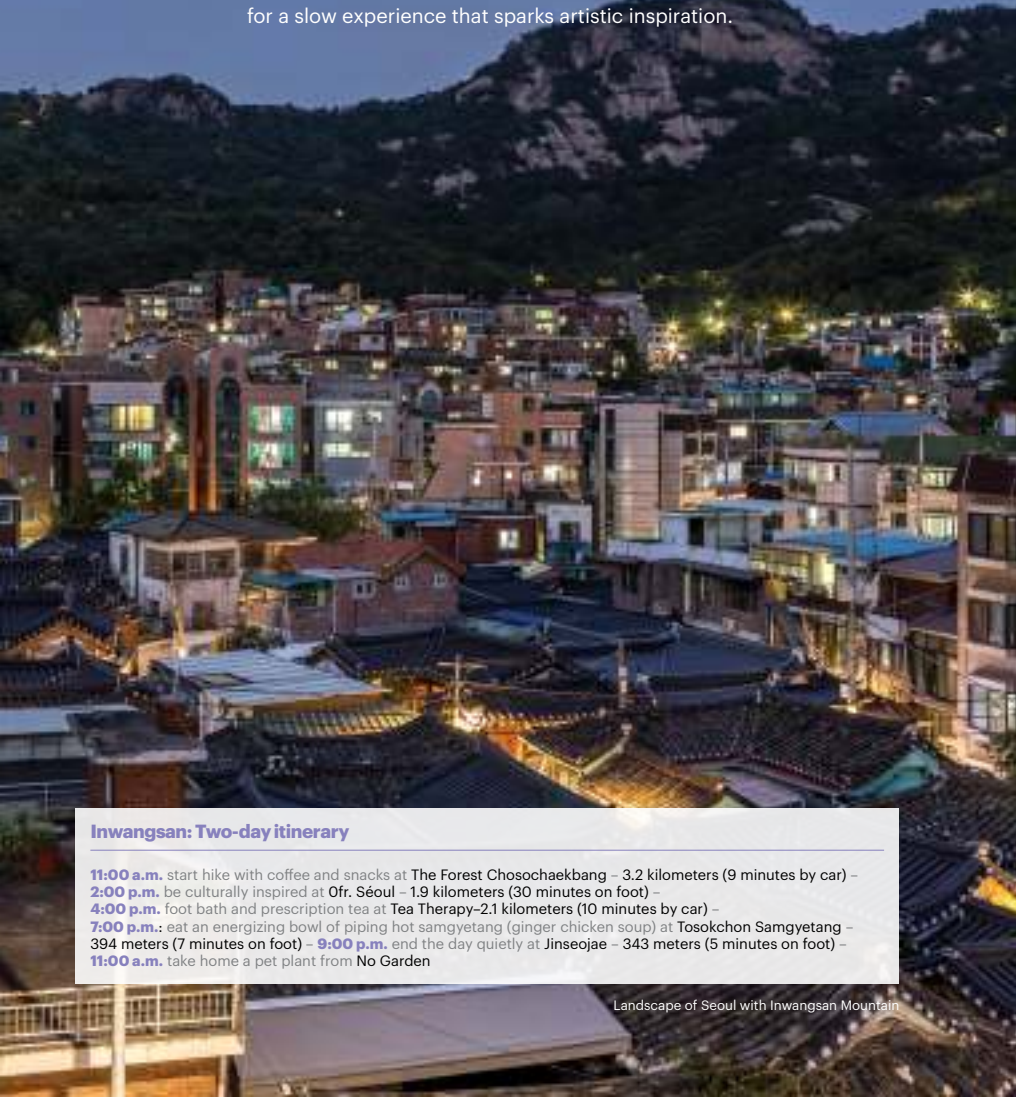
- Muakjae Sky Bridge is 644 meters straight ahead from Exit 5 of Dongnimmun Station, Seoul Metro Line 3.

More info

- Suseong-dong Valley has been a favorite spot for many Korean artists. Master contemporary painter Lee Jung-seop is said to have bathed in the valley's waters every morning before spending all day drawing. A poem by surrealist poet Yi Sang and portrait by painter Gu Bon-ung are on display at Dulle-gil Shelter. Gu drew the portrait of Yi Sang, and the latter returned the favor by dedicating a poem to Gu.
- The painting *Inwang jesaekdo* (Scene of Inwangsan Mountain after Rain) by Joseon painter Jeong Seon when he was 75 is designated a natural treasure. The work was inspired by the view of the eastern face of Inwangsan as seen from the present-day neighborhood of Hyoja-dong.

Journey of Artistic Inspiration

The picturesque trails through and around Inwangsan can easily wow even the novice hiker. An early morning climb leaves the afternoon open for exploring the city. Follow the itinerary below for a slow experience that sparks artistic inspiration.



Inwangsan: Two-day itinerary

- 11:00 a.m.** start hike with coffee and snacks at **The Forest Chosochaekbang** – 3.2 kilometers (9 minutes by car) –
- 2:00 p.m.** be culturally inspired at **Ofr. Séoul** – 1.9 kilometers (30 minutes on foot) –
- 4:00 p.m.** foot bath and prescription tea at **Tea Therapy**–2.1 kilometers (10 minutes by car) –
- 7:00 p.m.**: eat an energizing bowl of piping hot samgyetang (ginger chicken soup) at **Tosokchon Samgyetang** – 394 meters (7 minutes on foot) – **9:00 p.m.** end the day quietly at **Jinseojae** – 343 meters (5 minutes on foot) –
- 11:00 a.m.** take home a pet plant from **No Garden**

Landscape of Seoul with Inwangsan Mountain



Jogyesa Temple

Sitting at the heart of the metropolis, Jogyesa has a vast yard, traditional architecture, and elements of Korean Buddhist culture. The temple grounds offer a unique charm every season, attracting visitors and devotees year-round: lanterns in spring, lotus flowers in summer, and chrysanthemums in fall. A temple stay also offers a more profound understanding of Korean Buddhist culture through inner contemplation and meditation sessions, dialogues with the resident monks over tea, and reading programs.

📍 55, Ujeongjuk-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-2-768-8600

Tea Therapy

This program occupies a remodeled corner of the residence of President Yun Po-sun and offers traditional Korean teas tailored to a visitor's individual physical constitution and energy. *Yulmu* (pearl barley) tea is prescribed for a heavy detox and *gugija* (goji berry) tea to relieve tired eyes and heavy stress. The slowly extracted teas are deeply warming and soothing, with their strong yet gentle aromas forming the essence of tea therapy. The mini foot bath outside the café is also great for healing and relaxation.

📍 74, Yunboseon-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul.
☎ 82-2-730-7507 ☉ 10:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m
Mon.–Sat. / 10:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m. Sun.

Hong Geon-ik's House

The merchant Hong Geon-ik bought this site in the Pirun-dong neighborhood in 1934 and built the structure for two years. The home has quarters for the main gate, servants, men, and women, an annex, and garden. The inner and outer quarters are separated by a gate and another leads to the garden. The elevated garden has an ice shed built into the ground below. Designated Seoul Folklore Cultural Heritage No. 33 in 2013 and managed by the social enterprise Remark Press, the residence is also a venue for cultural programs and archive exhibitions as a living and integral part of the neighborhood.

📍 14-4, Pirundae-ro 1-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-2-735-1374 ☉ 10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. (closed Mon.)



Seochon's artistic attractions



The Forest Chosochaekbang

This bookstore and café opened in 2020 sits midway up Inwangsan Mountain. Formerly a police guard post, the building was remodeled in glass to offer 360-degree views of the natural scenery of Inwangsan. The bookstore on the ground floor offers books on nature, meditation, and life lessons. Pick a book and beverage before heading up to the second floor. Engage in literary contemplation surrounded by Inwangsan on all sides.

📍 172, Inwangsan-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul.
☎ 82-2-735-0206 🕒 8:00 a.m.–10:00 p.m.



Ofr. Séoul

Starting as a bookstore in the Le Marais quarter of Paris, Ofr has since expanded into a studio and publisher thanks to its popularity among the French capital's creative people. Its Seoul branch has moved from Seongsu-dong to resettle in Seochon, and this detached house remodeled with liberal artistic sensibilities has merchandise irregularly arranged inside among torn-down walls for visitors to freely wander through. Ofr. Séoul is full of art literature, trendy design posters, and other goods including echo bags sporting the Ofr logo.

📍 1F, 11-14, Jahamun-ro 1-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-2-722-9357
🕒 11:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m.



Makefolio Seochon

A lifestyle shop featuring sustainable lifestyles, this store showcases handcrafted Korean liquor and spirits from obscure makers, with considerable time and effort devoted to bringing out the flavor of each. Take home a bottle to unwind as the perfect way to spend a post-hike evening. The shop offers a plethora of eco-friendly merchandise with natural and recycled materials, with the space's keywords being earthenware teapots and cups, vegan soaps, and incense holders chiseled from humble rocks.

📍 1F, 17, Jahamun-ro 9-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-70-5158-9013 🕒 12:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m. Tue.–Thu. / 12:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m. Fri.–Sun. (closed Mon.)

Daechung Park

This building seemingly without purpose has a simple facade void of color or scent, ironically making the structure one of the most interesting in the Seochon neighborhood. Daechung Park melts naturally into the hood with a fluid arrangement of interior spaces. Glimpses of the neighborhood while ascending the labyrinth-like steps to the fourth-floor café are intriguing. Daechung Park does away with the giant espresso machines of most cafés and serves hand-dripped cups made from specialty beans, with two types of beans served each week. Take a seat on the veranda facing Inwangsan to take in the view while sipping.

📍 4F, 46, Pirundae-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-70-7807-5640
🕒 12:30 p.m.–9:30 p.m. Mon.–Thu. / 12:00 p.m.–10:00 p.m. Fri.–Sat. / 11:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m. Sun.



Park No-soo Art Museum

The museum sits at the residential quarters among alleyways where many painters and poets from yesteryear lived. The former home of artist Park No-soo was built in 1937 and he lived and worked there from 1973. He donated his home to the city of Seoul, which reopened it as a museum in 2013. Exhibitions from the artist's private collection are held here for artists and casual visitors alike.

📍 34, Ogin 1-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-2-2148-4171
🕒 10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. (closed Mon., Jan. 1, Seollal [Lunar New Year's Day], and Chuseok)



No Garden

"Come February, the yellow blossoms of blue bush (*Acacia covenyi*) fill the storefront. It's such a welcome flourish of color in an otherwise grey and glum season." Good things come to those who wait, and this saying is especially true with flowers. Opened in 2014 in Seochon, No Garden specializes in plants and flowers native to Australia. The shopkeeper-owner tends to them with extra care to ensure the flowers flourish away from home as well. Numerous hanging plants and well-manicured trees and bushes also populate the store.

📍 6, Jahamun-ro 9-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-2-736-7266
🕒 11:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m. (closed Sun. and Mon.)

Rich flavors matured and perfected over time



Seochon Blues

For an early-afternoon sip of drink accompanied by good music, Seochon Blues is ideal. Climb the steep stairs up to the second floor to find an old-school space packed with vinyl records and CDs. Request a song by writing its name on a piece of paper, handing it to the DJ, fetching a drink, and sitting down and waiting. Seochon Blues is all about nostalgia for analog and often hosts flea markets and oldies concerts.

📍 2F, 17-1, Jahamun-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-70-8878-1412
🕒 3:00 p.m.–2:00 a.m. (closed Sun.)



Tongin Market

A small pavilion at the western entrance to Tongin Market is where villagers used to gather to chat and mingle. The market only measures 200 meters from end to end, with 80 tiny stores crammed tight but has must-try foods like trademark light-fried *tteokbokki* (spicy rice cake), grilled buckwheat crepes, and giant chicken skewers. Dosirak Café Tong, located midway through the market, has seats and tables to eat the street foods in comfort. Pick up a tray here and fill it with grub while roaming the market.

📍 18, Jahamun-ro 15-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-2-722-0911
🕒 7:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m. (varies by store), closed every third Sun. of each month



Tosokchon Samgyetang

Samgyetang (ginseng chicken soup) is a great way to recover energy after a long day's hike. Opened in 1983, Tosokchon Samgyetang has served profound flavors of this dish for 40 years near Gyeongbokgung Station. The *samgyetang* here is especially sought after during the peak of summer, as a Korean secret to surviving the heat is to "fight fire with fire." Succulent, fall-off-the-bone chicken in a thick and hearty broth is this area's hallmark. The chicken is stuffed with sticky rice, flavorful ginseng, pumpkin seeds, chestnuts, jujubes, and ginkgo.

📍 5, Jahamun-ro 5-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-2-737-7444
🕒 10:00 a.m.–9:30 p.m.

Tranquility and rest at a traditional Hanok

Hanok Essay Seochon

This humble residence occupies a corner of a tiny alley deep inside the Nuha-dong neighborhood, with a quality that makes the mundane precious. The garden greets visitors followed by a patterned wall with steppingstones. The lounge offers healing and music amid the warmth of a wood-fire stove. Relax the mind and body in the modern sunken bathtub while focusing on the self. The garden is especially beautiful when the crepe myrtle tree is in full pink bloom.

📍 12, Pirundae-ro 3-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-0504-0904-2431
🕒 Check in 4:00 p.m., check out 11:00 a.m.



Of Onebookstay

As its name suggests, Of Onebookstay is designed around "stay" and "book" at a private Hanok (traditional Korean home) for quiet reading and contemplation. A footbath, scented candles, and playing of slow tunes are great for visitors while they gaze into the sky above through the old birch tree in the courtyard.

📍 11-1, Pirundae-ro 3-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-0504-0904-2313
🕒 Check in 6:00 p.m., check out 2:00 p.m.



Jinseojae

A night at Jinseojae, a traditional Hanok whose original woodwork has been meticulously preserved, is truly special with its name literally meaning "Where the light creeps in." The blue sky is visible between the eaves of the opposing quarters and through the skylights in the master bedroom's ceiling. Completing the space is a modern dining space and bathroom. Jinseojae is conveniently located near Tongin Market and a stone's throw from major attractions.

📍 17-17, Pirundae-ro 6-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-1544-5931
🕒 Check in 3:00 p.m., check out 11:00 a.m.



Inwang jesaekdo: Story behind the Painting

Seochon, a village west of Gyeongbokgung Palace and situated at the foot of Inwangsan Mountain, was the home of Jeong Seon (pen name Gyeomjae), the founder and master of true-view painting, a genre unique to the Joseon Dynasty. He painted *Inwang jesaekdo* (Scene of Inwangsan Mountain after Rain) with sincere get-well wishes for a dear friend of six decades who was bedridden with illness.

Written by Park Hyuntaek (director of the Pencil Museum)



Inwang jesaekdo, Jeong Seon

©National Museum of Korea

Mountain as Guardian of Seoul

Wishing peace in the dynasty, the royal court of the Joseon Dynasty designated Bugaksan the primary mountain for the main royal palace Gyeongbokgung and Naksan Mountain as the Blue Dragon on the left (east) and Inwangsan Mountain as the White Tiger on the right (west). Inwangsan was named “west mountain” from the early Joseon era and got its name, which literally means “mountain of virtuous king(s),” from King Sejong (r. 1418–1450), who reflected his will to guard the dynasty. Mostly covered with granite, the mountain has many rocks of eccentric shapes due to weathering. Weathering pits and joints are frequently found there as well as rocks with all sorts of names such as skeleton, hat, and tiger.

True-view Landscape: Painting Genre Unique to Joseon

Jeong’s most famous painting, *Inwang jesaekdo*, portrayed the skirt-shaped rock on Inwangsan from Gyeongbokgung and showed the mountain after rain. Referring to the colors of the mountain or sky after rain or snow has cleared, the term *jesaek* was frequently used by literati in both China and Joseon in their prose and poetry, which represented the spiritual objective of neo-Confucian scholars who aimed to cultivate a pure spirit. So why does the mountain in the painting not resemble the one in real life? Since ancient times, artists have deemed nature the archetype of beauty and expressed it in a diversity of ways. Real-scenery landscape refers to a landscape painting genre that recreates a real-life landscape as is. But true-view landscape, though also based on real-life landscape, adds the artist’s subjectivity through reinterpretation in presenting a landscape different from the real thing. Unique to Joseon, this genre had Jeong as its inventor and master. At age 76, he is known to have painted a landscape for his friend of 60 years, Yi Beongyeon (pen name Sacheon), reflecting his get-well wishes for his ill bedridden friend. They were both born in the same neighborhood of Seochon and lived there for the rest of their lives. True-view landscape was an artistic style unique to Korea created by Jeong and Yi’s consciousness at the time. Both were from the families of the Old Doctrine faction, which championed the belief of putting Joseon as the world’s cultural center. While the mountain after rain might stress brightness, Jeong’s painting presents a tense mood with a contrast between intense ink and clean blank space. The screen exudes depth as the mountain peak is presented at a low angle, while the roof-tiled house at the foot of the mountain is shown at a high angle. The black peak is cut at the top to give a strange sense of pressure, and the wriggling features of the mountain and cloud and fog swirling around appear dynamic. Though certain opinions say this painting had a bit of political implication as it was painted against the backdrop of the illness of Jeong’s political and philosophical comrade, grasping all the meanings within the work is difficult. What is certain is that Jeong added the ideal to reality to complete *Inwang jesaekdo*, through which the mountain appeared even more divine.

Bugaksan Mountain

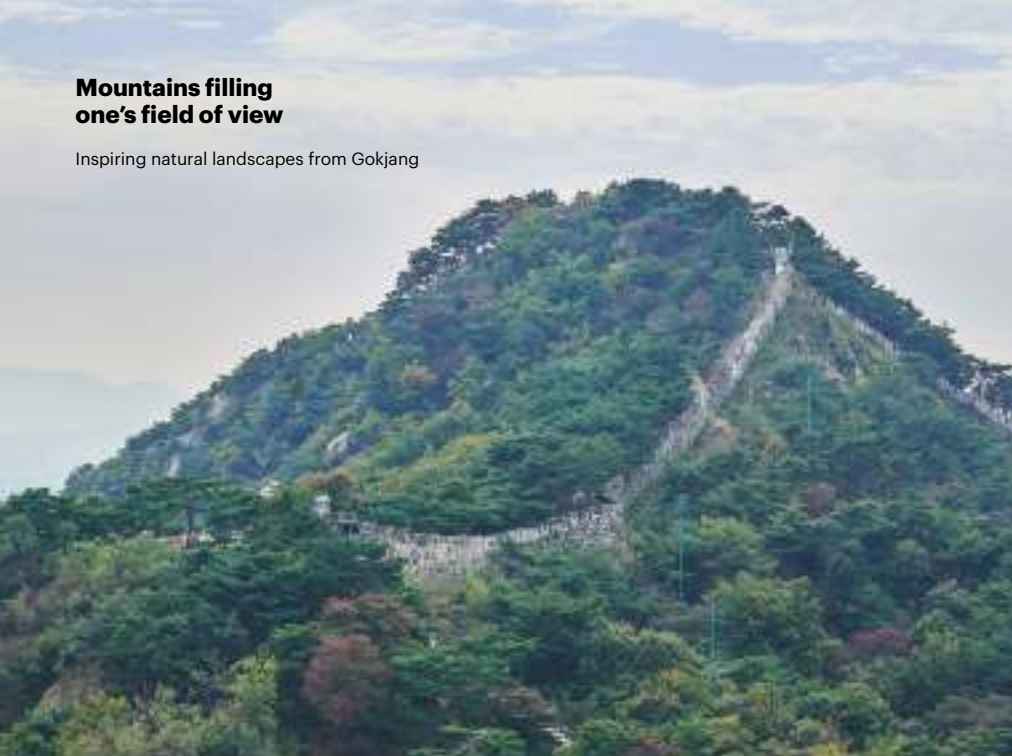
Mountain Therapy for Healing Mind and Body

A journey to Bugaksan Mountain in any season results in peace of mind and body. The grand landscapes of the mountain reminiscent of the painting *Irworobongdo* (Painting of the Sun, Moon, and Five Peaks) provide the perfect setting for quiet contemplation.



**Mountains filling
one's field of view**

Inspiring natural landscapes from Gokjang



**Four main gates of
old Seoul fortifications**

Sukjeongmun, main north gate of capital and corridor for yin energy.



**Blessings inscribed
in rock**

Manse Dongbang Spring gushes from beneath a rock inscription praying for the prosperity of the king.

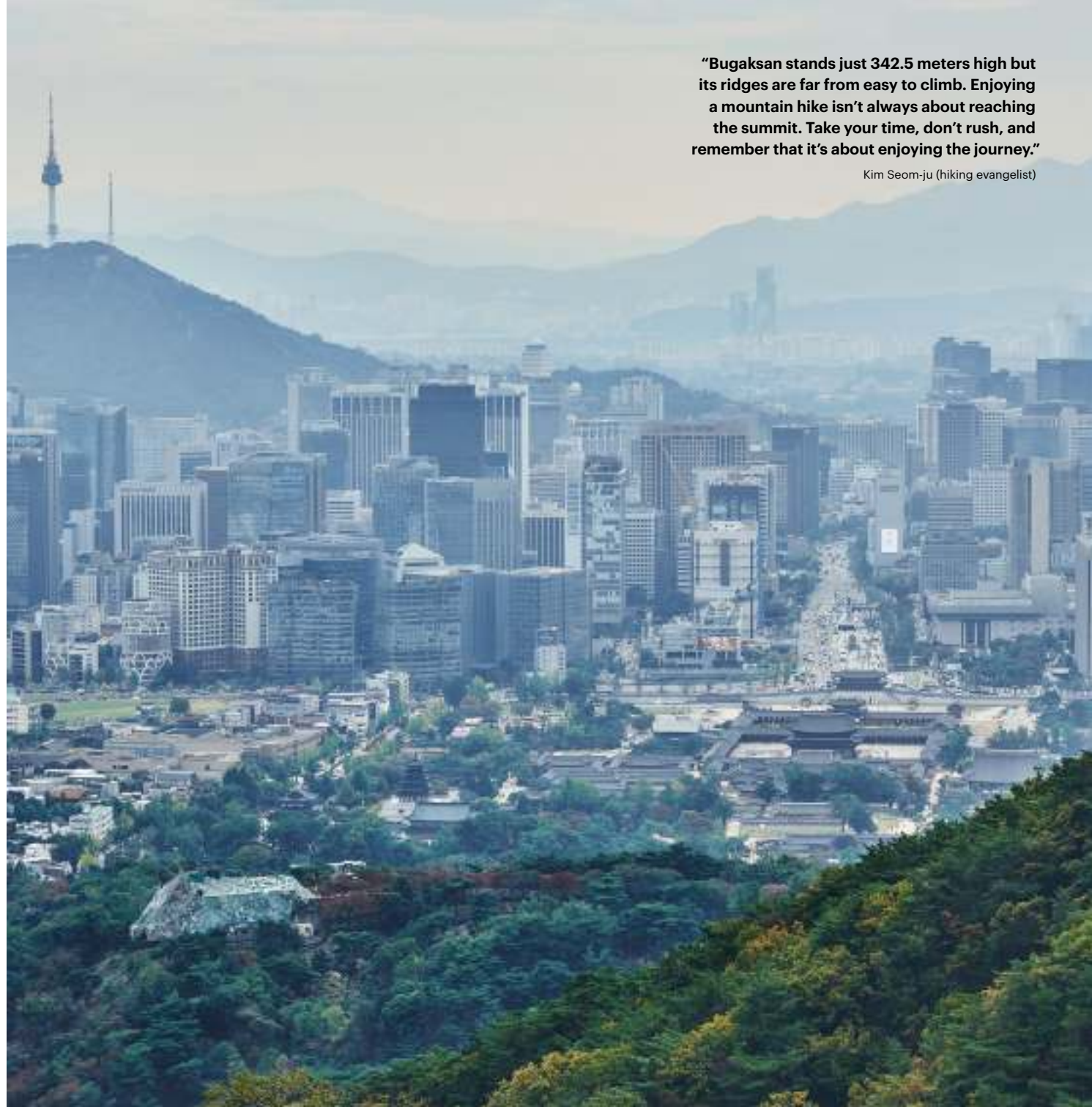


Historical archives

Chunchugwan, historical archive of Goryeo and Joseon dynasties

Taking It Slow

Bugaksan Mountain is a monolith of sheer rock faces and granite outcrops, with its rocky terrain and steep inclines reputed among hikers as a challenging course. If reaching the summit is too much, Bugaksan Dulle-gil Trail is a great alternative to enjoy the mountain. Instead of focusing on reaching the top, take time to appreciate the joy of experiencing the mountain and nature. Among the numerous routes up the summit, the trails of Samcheong Park and the Seoul City Wall Trail along the old Seoul walls are relatively easy climbs and perfect for the solo traveler. Bugaksan was off-limits to the public until recently, so the woods here have retained their primordial state after decades of no human contact. Since the Joseon era, the beauty of Bugaksan—also known as Baegaksan and Myeonaksan—has inspired many a poem and painting. Few hikers who scale the mountain leave unimpressed with its awe and beauty.



“Bugaksan stands just 342.5 meters high but its ridges are far from easy to climb. Enjoying a mountain hike isn’t always about reaching the summit. Take your time, don’t rush, and remember that it’s about enjoying the journey.”

Kim Seom-ju (hiking evangelist)

HIKING COURSE MAP

Bugaksan's 10 Trails

Access to Bugaksan was restricted for nearly 40 years after North Korean commandos infiltrated Cheong Wa Dae through the mountain in an attempted assassination of then President Park Chung-hee in 1968. Beginning with the Seoul City Wall Trail in 2007, the northern and southern trails were opened up to the public in 2020 and 2022, respectively. Hikes to Bugaksan should be planned for daylight hours as access through the information centers is restricted from 3 p.m. between November and February, 4 p.m. in March, April, September, and October, and 5 p.m. between May and August.



COURSE 01.

Changuimun-Baegakmaru Trail (p.86)
 Changuimun Gate → Cheongundae Shelter → Baegakjeong Pavilion → Chunchugwan Backroad

COURSE 02.

Cheong Wa Dae-Samcheong Park Trail (p.88)
 Chunchugwan → Cheongundae Peak → Malbawi Observatory → Samcheong Park

COURSE 03.

Cheong Wa Dae Observatory-Chunchugwan Trail (p.90)
 Chilgung Shrine → Cheong Wa Dae Observatory → Chunchugwan Backroad

COURSE 04.

Changuimun-Hyehwamun Trail (p.92)
 Changuimun Gate → Baegakmaru Peak → Gokjang → Waryong Park → Hyehwamun Gate

COURSE 05.

Changuimun Gate-Malbawi Rock Trail (p.94)
 Changuimun Gate → Cheongundae Peak → Chotdaebawi Rock → Samcheong Park Entrance

COURSE 06.

Samcheong-dong-Chilgung Shrine Trail (p.96)
 Geonchunmun Gate at Gyeongbokgung Palace → Samcheong Shelter → Baegakjeong Pavilion → Chilgung Shrine

COURSE 07.

Yeoraesa Temple-Hogyeongam Rock Trail (p.98)
 Yeoraesa Temple → Hogyeongam Rock → Sukjeongmun Gate Information Center → Samcheonggak

COURSE 08.

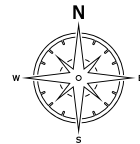
Bugak Haneul-gil Trails (p.100)
 Haneul Hanmadang → Damojeong Pavilion → Bugak Skyway Palgakjeong Pavilion → Café Sanmotungi → Changuimun Gate

COURSE 09.

Baeksasil Valley-Seonggyungwan Trail (p.102)
 Segeomjeong → Baeksasil Valley Detached House Site → Source of Seongsucheon Stream → Waryong Park → Myeongnyundang Hall

COURSE 10.

Manse Dongbang Trail (p.104)
 Changuimun Gate → Cheongundae Shelter → Site of Beopheungsa Temple → Manse Dongbang Spring → Chunchugwan Backroad



START → FINISH

↓ 200m Geonchunmun Gate at Gyeongbokgung Palace
 ↓ 300m Geongbukgung Station
 ↓ 300m Anguk Station

Views over Cheong Wa Dae

Changuimun-Baegakmaru Trail

This section of the trail is popular for great observation points to see the Seoul skyline. The descent after a steep uphill climb from Changuimun Gate to Baegakmaru Peak brings hikers down the recently opened trail behind Cheong Wa Dae, the former presidential compound. Awesome views of the Seoul metropolis in green hues are the prime attraction of this trail.

Total travel distance: **3.32 km** | Average travel time: **1 hour 30 minutes** | Difficulty: **average**



SPOTS



① Changuimun Gate

This gate stands between Bugaksan and Inwangsan mountains. Also called Bukmun (North Gate), it was one of the four minor gates of the original city walls of Hanyang (now Seoul) built in 1396. During a coup in 1623, rebels are said to have entered through this gate, ousting King Gwanghaegun and enthroning King Injo as the new Joseon king.



② Baegakmaru Peak

The 342.5-meter-high peak of Bugaksan is marked by a stone stele reading "Baegaksan (白岳山)." A shrine to the mountain spirit Baegak was on the mountain during the Joseon era, and ritual offerings were made to the spirit after whom the mountain was named. A mass of granite projects upward from one side of the summit overlooking downtown Seoul.



③ Cheongundae Peak

From 293 meters high, Cheongundae Peak offers picturesque views of Seoul's buildings against the backdrop of ridge lines leading to the mountains of Ansan and Inwangsan. On clear days, Gyeongbokgung Palace and Gwanghwamun Gate, and even the Hangang River and Gangnam commercial district beyond N Seoul Tower, can be seen.

About the trail

- The descent from Manse Dongbang Spring to Chunchugwan is rather steep, so those with bad knees are advised to use hiking sticks.
- The climb from Changuimun Gate to Baegakmaru Peak is grueling. Firmly grab the handrails installed along the path for safety.

Shelter and hiking tips

- Two shelters (Dolgorae and Baegak) are along the city walls between Changuimun and Baegakmaru.
- Bring plenty of drinking water as the way has no stores or water fountains.

Transportation

- Take bus No. 1020 outside Exit 3 of Gyeongbokgung Station, Seoul Metro Line 3. Get off at the stop Jahamun Pass and Yoon Dong-ju Literature Museum and climb the stairs to reach Changuimun Gate Information Center.

More info

- The trail from Cheong Wa Dae Observatory through Baegakjeong Pavilion to Chunchugwan is a newly opened Bugaksan trail. The Cheong Wa Dae Observatory is a photo spot that overlooks the entire Seoul city.



Stroll through the fresh forest

Cheong Wa Dae-Samcheong Park Trail

This trail begins at Cheong Wa Dae Chunchugwan and leads down to Samcheong Park, the name of which means "a place with refreshingly clean water and forest." Once closed for security reasons, this newly opened trail near Cheong Wa Dae offers hikers an open view of Seoul city. The tranquil view of the forest that leads to Samcheong Park also brings peace of mind.

Total travel distance: **5 km** ; Average travel time: **1 hour 45 minutes** ; Difficulty: **average**



SPOTS



①

Chunchugwan

Chunchugwan got its name from Yemun Chunchugwan, a government office during the Joseon Dynasty for keeping historical records. This annex to the former presidential complex of Cheong Wa Dae was used by the Cheong Wa Dae media corps and hosted media briefings until the presidential office was moved to Seoul's Yongsan-gu District.



②

Sukjeongmun Gate

Originally called Sukcheongmun, Sukjeongmun was one of the four major gates of old Seoul. Its position and orientation give the gate the nature of yin (water). Rain ceremonies were held here during droughts, and the gates were closed to stem the flow of water energy and prevent floods during the rainy season. Sukjeongmun is typically crowded with hikers on weekends, so visit during the week for a leisurely hike.

COURSE MAP



INFORMATION

About the trail

- Bring hiking sticks as certain parts of the trail are quite steep. The section from the road behind Chunchugwan to Baegakjeong Pavilion is paved but has a steep incline. Baegakjeong Pavilion to Manse Dongbang Spring is the most challenging leg, with steep climbs and numerous stairs.
- For those who have previously visited Cheongundae Observatory, take a shortcut from Manse Dongbang Spring to Sukjeongmun Gate. Hikers who wish to avoid climbing up and down steep stairs should head directly to this gate.

Shelter and hiking tips

- Take in the views of downtown Seoul while catching your breath at Cheongundae. N Seoul Tower and even Lotte World Tower can be seen from the peak on a clear day.

Transportation

- Take bus No. 1711 (green) outside Exit 3 of Gyeongbokgung Station, Seoul Metro Line 3. Get off at the stop Hyoja-dong. Make a right turn at Hyoja-ro Road and go straight for 911 meters. The building across the street is Chunchugwan.

More info

- Once in Samcheong Park at the end of the hike, a look around Samcheong-dong is mandatory. The old Hanok-turned-shops, cafés, and galleries clustered around the narrow alleys boast a hip vibe. The neighborhood is also a popular destination for foodies with celebrated restaurants at every corner.



③

Samcheong Park

This urban nature park, located on the hills of Bugaksan Mountain northeast of Gyeongbokgung Palace, features mountain streams meandering among the old pine trees of the park. Also here are a children's playground, eco-park, and small library.

Best views from Bugaksan Mountain

Cheong Wa Dae Observatory- Chunchugwan Trail

This relatively short and leisurely trail makes for easy walking. Follow the one-way road on the right side of Daetongmun Gate up to Cheong Wa Dae Observatory, the highest point of the trail. The boarded deck offers great views of the Cheong Wa Dae complex, Gyeongbokgung Palace, and Gwanghwamun Gate as well as the thoroughfare stretching all the way to Seoul City Hall.

Total travel distance: **2.18 km** ; Average travel time: **50 minutes** ; Difficulty: **easy**



SPOTS



①

Baegakjeong Pavilion

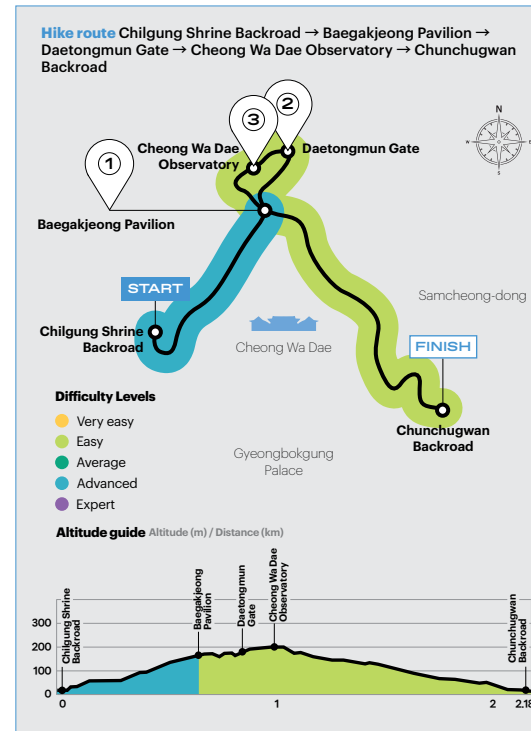
This pavilion is great for taking a quick break before making the climb to Cheong Wa Dae Observatory. N Seoul Tower is visible over Cheong Wa Dae walls from Baegakjeong Pavilion, which is flanked by commemorative zelkova and hornbeam trees planted by past presidents.



②

Daetongmun Gate

This gate stands along the path from Cheong Wa Dae Observatory to the summit, but has limited opening hours. Those arriving after hours must turn left toward Samcheong Park, passing the Baegak 1-gyo and Baegak 2-gyo bridges.



About the trail

- Steep stone steps link Chilgung Shrine to Baegakjeong Pavilion. A pair of hiking sticks make the climb far easier.

Shelter and hiking tips

- Take a seat at Baegakjeong Pavilion and look south beyond the Cheong Wa Dae walls. Visible beyond Namsan Mountain are the peaks of Cheonggyesan Mountain south of the Hangang River and to the right is Gwanaksan Mountain.

Transportation

- Take bus No. 1711 at Exit 3 of Gyeongbokgung Station, Seoul Metro Line 3. Get off at the stop Hyoja-dong and turn right. Mugunghwa Park is about 100 meters ahead across the street. Enter the park and find Chilgung Shrine. The entrance to Bugaksan Trail is just a short walk up the road.

More info

- Gyeongbokgung Palace was built in 1395, and the Cheong Wa Dae grounds were originally its backyard. When Cheong Wa Dae was first built in 1939, it was called "Gyeongmudae" (the palace police station), and from when the government of the Republic of Korea in 1948 was established until recently, it was used as the official residence of the president. Cheong Wa Dae took on its current name during the term of the fourth president Yun Po-sun, and it has been open to the public since May 2022.
- Looking up at Bugaksan Mountain from the main gate of Cheong Wa Dae, a pair of boulders called Buaam Rock or Haetaebawi Rock projects above the roof line. The haetae is a mythical unicorn-lion that was believed to ward off evil spirits and symbolize the energy of water. The watery energy of Haetaebawi on Bugaksan to the north counters the fiery energy of Gwanaksan Mountain to the south, striking a harmonious balance.



③

Cheong Wa Dae Observatory

The great views of downtown Seoul from Cheong Wa Dae Observatory impress all who visit and provide a great spot for taking panoramic photos. Looking south from the deck, Namsan Mountain can be seen on the left and Gwanaksan Mountain on the right. Even Lotte World Tower in the city's Jamsil district can be seen on a clear day.

Along the Seoul City Wall Trail

Changuimun-Hyehwamun Trail

This journey takes travelers along the old Seoul City Wall, which are 5–10 meters high and were erected to defend against marauding northern tribes during the Joseon era. Seoul City Wall Trail is 18.6 kilometers long and stretches from Namsan Mountain via the mountains of Ansan and Inwangsan to Bugaksan. The section from the gates of Changuimun to Hyehwamun is loaded with interesting scenery.

Total travel distance: **5 km** Average travel time: **2 hours 10 minutes** Difficulty: **average**



SPOTS



①

Chotdaebawi Rock

Located 400 meters northeast of Sukjeongmun Gate is Chotdaebawi (Candlestick) Rock, a 13-meter-high rock. At the foot of the rock is a rest area with a wooden deck surrounded by the healing scent of pine trees.

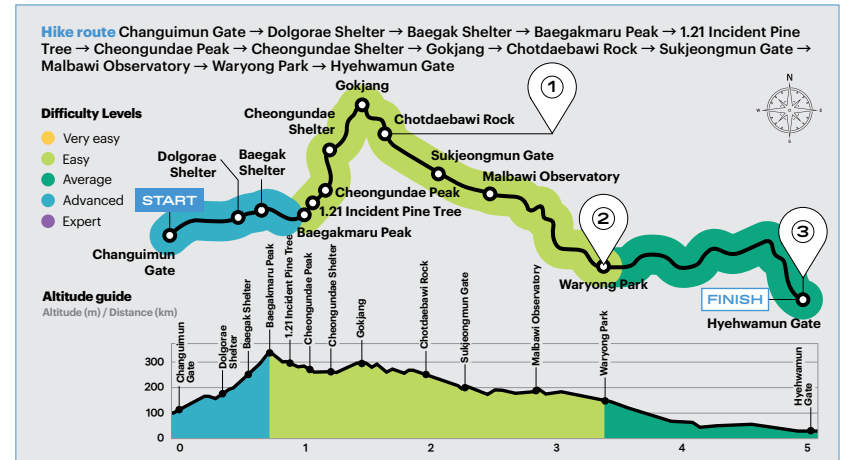


②

Waryong Park

The name “Waryong” means “lying dragon,” and the park’s name was inspired by the long and winding shape of the castle walls. This section of the trail is surrounded by trees, many of which were planted by residents of nearby neighborhoods as part of a massive tree-planting campaign.

COURSE MAP



INFORMATION

About the trail

- Bring the appropriate safety gear such as hiking poles and firmly grip the handrails installed along the steep rocky path from Changuimun Gate to Baegakmaru Peak.

Shelter and hiking tips

- The 1.6-kilometer section from Waryong Park to Hyehwamun Gate takes around 30 minutes. It would be a good idea to take a moment to recharge at Malbawi Observatory.

Transportation

- Take bus No. 1711 or 7212 outside Exit 3 of Gyeongbokgung Station, Seoul Metro Line 3. Get off at the stop Jahamun Pass and Yoon Dong-ju Literature Museum and climb the stairs to reach Changuimun Gate Information Center.

More info

- In Asian folklore, the phoenix is considered the king of the birds. A pair of phoenixes was painted on the ceiling over Hyehwamun Gate to ward off birds that often ruined the grain harvest outside the gate.
- Seoul City Wall Trail follows the old Hanyang (Seoul) city walls that marked the boundaries of the Joseon capital and kept out invaders. The original city walls were built in 1396, the fifth year of King Taejo’s reign, along the ridges of Seoul’s “four inner mountains”—Bugaksan, Naksan, Namsan, and Inwangsan—and underwent numerous rounds of reinforcement and augmentation.



③

Hyehwamun Gate

Four large and four small gates were originally installed when the Hanyang (now Seoul) city walls were first erected. Commonly called Dongsomun, or literally “small east gate,” Hyehwamun was a lesser gate between the east and north gates of the Seoul City Wall. Past the gate is the Naksan section of the Seoul City Wall Trail.

Classic Bugaksan hiking course

Changuimun Gate– Malbawi Rock Trail

Walk down from Baegakmaru Peak along the ridge line to Malbawi Rock past Gokjang to see the Samcheong-dong neighborhood, which was considered the most beautiful neighborhood in Seoul by the Joseon nobility. This section is one of the oldest hiking trails on Bugaksan Mountain. Before the backroads of Chilgung Shrine and Chunchugwan were opened to the public, many hikers took the Malbawi detour along the ridge line.

Total travel distance: **4 km** | Average travel time: **1 hour 50 minutes** | Difficulty: **average**



SPOTS



① 1.21 Incident Pine Tree

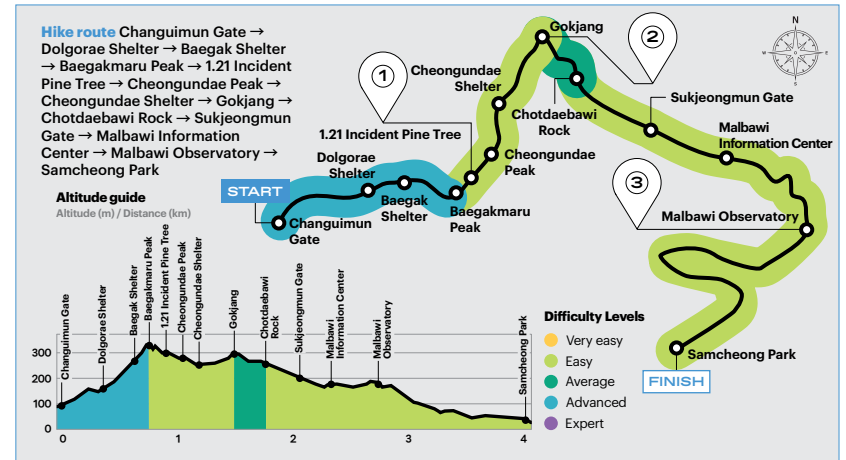
On January 21, 1968, 31 armed North Korean commandos sought to infiltrate Cheong Wa Dae and assassinate South Korean President Park Chung-hee. The attempt failed as South Korean police and armed forces engaged them in a shootout. Taking 15 shots during the gunfight, the pine tree still clearly bears the battle wounds as a witness to the so-called 1.21 Incident.



② Gokjang

A gokjang is an outward-projecting tower strategically located to observe and repel enemy forces. Unobstructed views in all directions make this a great observation spot. Visible from here are Gyeongbokgung Palace to the south, Baegakmaru Peak and Inwangsan Mountain to the east, and the mountains of Bukhansan and Dobongsan to the north.

COURSE MAP



INFORMATION

About the trail

- The section from Changuimun Gate to Baegakmaru Peak is a long series of steep hills. Firmly grab the handrails while climbing the stairs or use a pair of hiking sticks.

Shelter and hiking tips

- The path from Malbawi Observatory to Samcheong Park is fraught with steps. Hikers are advised to take a break at the Malbawi Information Center or Malbawi Observatory.

Transportation

- Take bus No. 1711 or 7212 outside Exit 3 of Gyeongbokgung Station, Seoul Metro Line 3. Get off at the stop Jahamun Pass and Yoon Dong-ju Literature Museum and climb the stairs to reach Changuimun Gate Information Center.

More info

- The Samcheong-dong neighborhood is located at the eastern foothills of Bugaksan Mountain, noted for its lush forest and clean water. The word *samcheong* means “three times clean” and refers to the mountain, water, and people. In a ritual to “cleanse” themselves of evil spirits and bad energy, women in the past ascended to Sukjeongmun Gate through the valleys of Samcheong-dong and went down again three times before the first full moon of the lunar year.



③ Malbawi Observatory

Dignitaries and high-ranking officials during the Joseon era are said to have ridden their horses up to this rock to rest in nature and recite poetry. Malbawi Rock is known for its views of the city's Jongno-gu District. On clear days, Namsan Mountain can be seen far in the distance.



Downtown view and forest walks

Samcheong-dong- Chilgung Shrine Trail

This trail is at Geonchunmun Gate, the east gate of Gyeongbokgung Palace built in the mid-Joseon era that was reserved for civil officials. The trail covers both the bustling downtown area and secluded forest walks, taking travelers from the Bugaksan foothills in the heart of the city and past its hidden valleys and streams. The one-way trip through the past and present of Samcheong-dong takes around one hour.

Total travel distance: **3.3 km** Average travel time: **1 hour** Difficulty: **easy**



SPOTS



①

Gyeongbokgung Palace

Gyeongbokgung Palace was built in 1394 by King Taejo, the founder of the Joseon Dynasty who moved the capital from Gaegyeong to Hanyang (now Seoul). The primary palace for Joseon kings, it comprised royal and official facilities, royal living quarters, and leisure facilities.

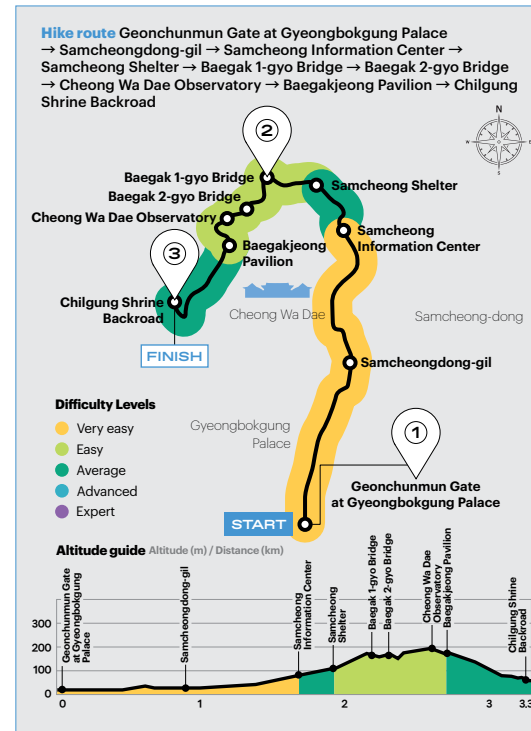


②

Baegak 1-gyo and 2-gyo Bridges

These wooden bridges are found on a forest trail frequented by residents near Bugaksan Mountain. A wooden deck is along the road from Samcheong Shelter to Daetongmun Gate. The thick forest around the trail attracts visitors seeking a therapeutic walk in the woods.

COURSE MAP



③

Chilgung Shrine

The spirit tablets of the seven royal concubines who gave birth to Joseon kings are enshrined in the structure, which sits just next to Cheong Wa Dae. Among those enshrined are Lady Jang, mother of the 20th Joseon King Gyeongjong, Lady Choi (21st King Yeongjo), and Lady Yi (Crown Prince Sado). The architectural style unique to Joseon is well-preserved here.

INFORMATION

About the trail

- The section from Geonchunmun Gate to Samcheong Park is paved and can accommodate wheelchairs or strollers.
- The path down from Baegakjeong Pavilion to Chilgung Shrine is steep and rocky, so have a pair of hiking sticks handy.

Shelter and hiking tips

- The section from Samcheong Shelter to the Baegak 1-gyo and Baegak 2-gyo bridges is steep. Hikers can rest on benches along the path. Baegakjeong Pavilion is a good place to rest before descending to Chilgung Shrine.

Transportation

- The starting point is about a 15-minute walk toward Geonchunmun Gate from Exit 1 of Anguk Station, Seoul Metro Line 3, or Exit 4 of Gyeongbokgung Station on the same line.

More info

- Visitors in Hanbok (traditional Korean attire) can enter Gyeongbokgung Palace for free, but they must be wearing a traditional *jeogori* (upper garment) and skirt or pants; a *durumagi* (overcoat) alone does not qualify. The palace is closed every Tuesday, and admission begins at 9 a.m. Visitors under the age of 6 and over the age of 65 are admitted for free.



Witness to history

Yeoraesa Temple–Hogyeongam Rock Trail

Popularly known as the Kim Shin-jo Route, named after one of two North Korean commandos who survived the 1968 raid on the presidential office in Seoul, this is the second of the Bugak Haneul-gil Trails. It's at Haneulgyo Bridge and passes Hogyeongam Rock and Nammaru Observatory on the way to the source of Seongbukcheon Stream. On January 21, 1968, 31 North Korean commandos took this route to infiltrate Cheong Wa Dae in an attempted assassination of then President Park Chung-hee. Hogyeongam Rock is covered with dozens of bullet marks from the firefight in that incident.

Total travel distance: **2.48 km** Average travel time: **1 hour 30 minutes** Difficulty: **average**



SPOTS



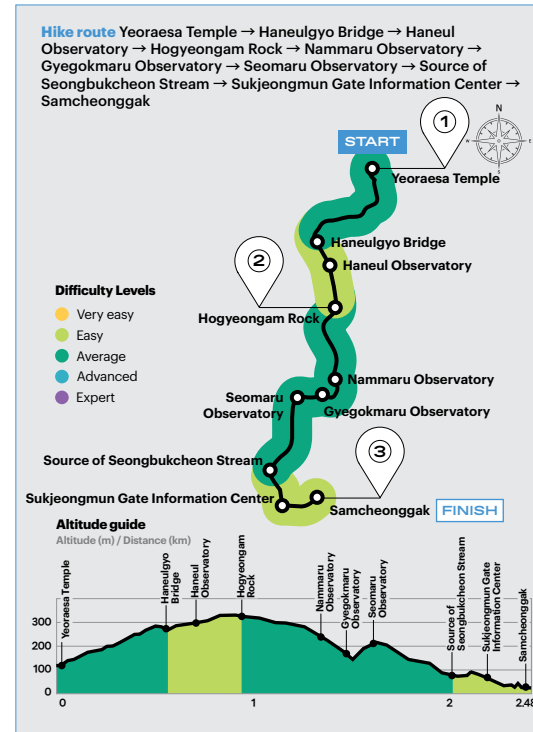
① Yeoraesa Temple

This temple houses the spirit tablets of many pro-independence fighters. Most of them had no children or their remains were never found. A combined 373 of the patriots are enshrined here including Yi Jun, who was sent as a secret emissary in 1907 to The Hague to declare as invalid the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1905.



② Hogyeongam Rock

Intercepted by police, the 31 North Korean commandos in 1968 fled to the hills behind Gujinbong Peak and the neighborhood of Seongbuk-dong. Law enforcement officers discovered the commandos hiding near Hogyeongam Rock, killing three, and the rock is pockmarked with bullet holes from the exchange.



③ Samcheonggak

Sitting at the entrance to Samcheong Tunnel, Samcheonggak is a *hanjeongsik* (traditional Korean full-course dinner) restaurant specializing in cuisine once served to Korean nobility and royalty with a modern touch. This is also an arts and culture space hosting functions and gatherings. Samcheonggak was named one of the nation's top 100 restaurants by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism.

About the trail

- Because the way from Hogyeongam Rock to the source of Seongbukcheon Stream requires a steep descent, hiking sticks are highly recommended to distribute and balance body weight.
- Bugak Haneul-gil Trail No. 2 has numerous observation points offering views of the city. The peaks of Bukhansan—Bohyeonbong, Samobawi Rock, Bibong, and Hyangnobong—are clearly visible from Haneul Observatory.

Shelter and hiking tips

- The bench at the Gyegokmaru Observatory and gurgling spring at the source of Seongbukcheon Stream are great for taking a rest.

Transportation

- Take bus No. 1213, 7211, 171, or 163 at the stop Sungdeok Elementary School outside Exit 1 of Jeongneung Station, Ui-Sinseol Line. Get off at Kookmin University and walk up for five minutes toward Bugak Tunnel to reach Bugak Park Ranger Post. Walk 100 meters past the center toward the tunnel to reach the path to Yeoraesa Temple.

More info

- There are numerous famous restaurants around Samcheonggak. From traditional Korean food to fancy restaurants, and bakery-slash-dessert-café, the choice is endless. A leisurely walk around the vicinity is highly recommended.

Hidden forest eco-paths

Bugak Haneul-gil Trails

These trails link the foothills of Bugaksan Mountain with the ridges surrounding the former presidential compound of Cheong Wa Dae, and connect to the hiking trails in the depths of the mountain along the popular Bugak Skyway and trail. Decades of no human contact have left the pristine natural ecosystems flawlessly preserved. A tranquil and relaxed journey awaits with the magical energy of the deep forest.

Total travel distance: **9 km** Average travel time: **2 hours 50 minutes** Difficulty: **advanced**



SPOTS



① Source of Seongbukcheon Stream

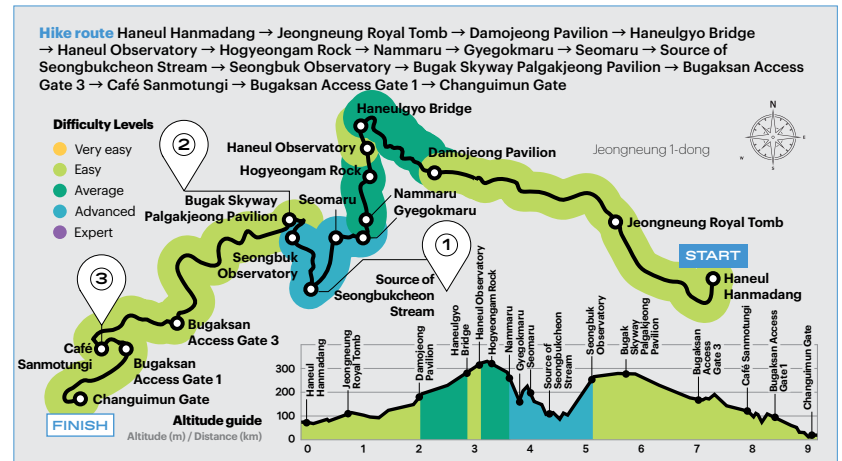
Seongbukcheon Stream is a tributary of the Hangang River, flowing down Bugaksan Mountain and merging into Cheonggyecheon Stream. Its source is at the end of Bugak Haneul-gil Trail 2. The small pond at the source is an artificially made firefly habitat created by releasing 1,000 fireflies and 30 kilograms of marsh snails to feed their larvae.



② Bugak Skyway Palgakjeong Pavilion

This octagonal structure that sports the traditional Hanok style 342 meters above sea level offers views of the Bukhansan Mountain peaks of Bohyeonbong, Munsubong, and Bibong to the north and those of Namsan Mountain and the Seoul metropolis to the south. The Bugaksan trails and observatories have limited opening hours, but Bugak Skyway Palgakjeong Pavilion is open 24 hours.

COURSE MAP



INFORMATION

About the trail

- The trail spans over 9 kilometers and is rather steep. Be extra careful when descending from Hogeongam Rock to the source of Seongbukcheon Stream and up from there to Bugak Skyway Palgakjeong Pavilion.

Shelter and hiking tips

- Gyegokmaru Shelter has no noise, worries, and mobile phone coverage, making it a great place to clear the mind and soak in the sky above and hills below.

Transportation

- Take the Seongbuk No. 1 bus at the bus stop Samseongyo Bridge and Seongbuk Cultural Center outside Exit 6 of Hansung University Station, Seoul Metro Line 4. Get off at the stop Seongbuk-gu Community Center and walk up the road for 268 meters to reach Haneul Hanmadang.

More info

- Once back at Changuimun Gate upon descent, continue to walk from Buam-dong to Inwangsan Dulle-gil to explore Inwangsan Course 2 around Seoul City Wall and Course 4 around Buam-dong.



③ Café Sanmotungi

This café on Bugaksan Mountain was the filming site of the popular K-drama Coffee Prince. The entrance is just short of Bugaksan Access Gate 1 on the way down from Bugak Skyway Palgakjeong Pavilion to Changuimun Gate. Visit at night to see the illuminated fortress walls on Bugaksan.

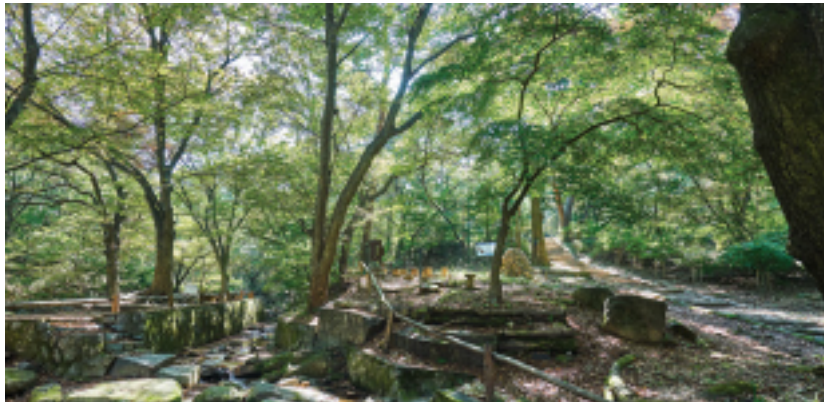


Secret urban garden

Baeksasil Valley- Seonggyungwan Trail

The crystal-clear waters of Baeksasil Valley are a prime habitat for salamanders, Chinese minnows, and crayfish. Restrictions on development have helped preserve nature and wildlife here, earning the valley the nickname "Secret Garden." The scenery along the narrow forest path transforms with the coming and going of the seasons.

Total travel distance: **6.14 km** | Average travel time: **2 hours** | Difficulty: **average**



SPOTS



①

Segeomjeong

Segeomjeong is famous for its great scenery and crystal-clear valley streams. The tyrannical King Yeonsangun is said to have committed all manner of debauchery with court ladies here. King Yeongjo held archery competitions and selected military officials against the backdrop of Segeomjeong's scenery.

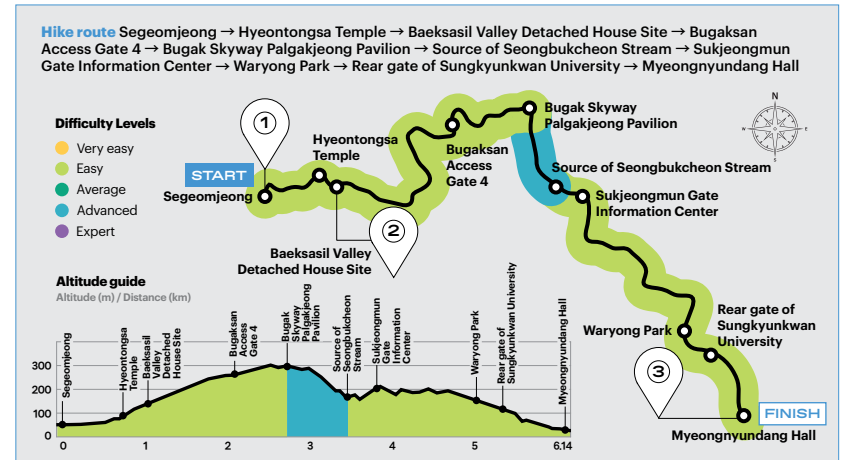


②

Baeksasil Valley

Beautiful Baeksasil Valley was a popular site for summer homes in the Joseon era and considered fit for the mountain spirit. Around the valley are numerous cultural sites including the site of the summer home of the late Joseon calligrapher and scholar Kim Jeong-hui (pen name Chusa).

COURSE MAP



INFORMATION

About the trail

- A paved sidewalk connects Baeksasil Valley to the forest path and Bugak Skyway Palgjaeong Pavilion, with an easy walk on the gentle uphill path.

Shelter and hiking tips

- Sit on the stone steps at the detached house site in Baeksasil Valley to recharge while listening to the gurgling mountain stream underneath the tree shade.

Transportation

- Take bus No. 1020, 1711, 7016, 7018, 7022, or 7212 at Exit 3 of Gyeongbokgung Station, Seoul Metro Line 3, and get off at the stop Sangmyung University entrance and Segeomjeong Church.

More info

- There are lots to see around the Myeongnyundang Hall, among which is a ginkgo tree that draws people's eyes every fall. Officially christened the "Ginkgo Tree of Munmyo Confucian Shrine, Seoul," the tree is so big that its foliage turns the whole area yellow. The view is fair from Myeongnyundang Hall, but the famed photo spot is to the back of Daeseongjeon Shrine.



③

Myeongnyundang Hall

Myeongnyundang was the central lecture hall of Seonggyungwan National Academy, the leading educational institution of the Joseon Dynasty. The king visited the hall to encourage, train, and even test the scholars. Myeongnyundang sits to the right of the main gate of Sungkyunkwan University.

Prayers for national prosperity

Manse Dongbang Trail

The inscription "Manse Dongbang (萬世東方)" is engraved on a rock hanging over a mountain spring, wishing for the prosperity of the nation and longevity of the king. Found on the trail are the ruins of the Buddhist temple of Beopheungsa, a structure built during the reign of King Jinpyeong of the Silla Kingdom.

Total travel distance: **4 km** ; Average travel time: **1 hour 47 minutes** ; Difficulty: **average**



SPOTS



COURSE MAP



INFORMATION

About the trail

- Walking from Bugaksan Access Gate 1 to Cheongundae Information Center takes around 20 minutes. Entry into Bugaksan through the information center is restricted after 3 p.m., 4 p.m., or 5 p.m. depending on the season. Last entry Nov.-Feb.: 3 p.m. Mar.-Apr. & Sep.-Oct.: 4 p.m. May-Aug.: 5 p.m.
- The site of Beopheungsa Temple is easy to miss and requires a steep descent. If this trail is physically too demanding, skip the temple site and hike toward Manse Dongbang Spring from Cheongundae Shelter.

Shelter and hiking tips

- This trail is one of the fastest ways up to Cheongundae Peak. Cheongundae Shelter is well-equipped to accommodate for hikers looking to rest and recover, and getting here takes just 30 minutes.



Transportation

- Take bus No. 1020, 7022, or 7212 outside Exit 3 of Gyeongbokgung Station, Seoul Metro Line 3. Get off at the bus stop Buamdong Community Service Center and Mugyewon and walk toward Baekseokdonggil road past Changuimun Intersection for about 10 minutes to reach Bugaksan Access Gate 1.

① Bugaksan Access Gate 1

② Site of Beopheungsa Temple

③ Manse Dongbang Spring

Bugaksan Access Gate 1 is the gateway to the trails newly opened to the public. Bugaksan is open to hikers from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in winter, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in summer, and 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. in spring and fall. Last entry is two hours before closing.

This is allegedly the site of Beopheungsa Temple, which was built during the reign of Silla King Jinpyeong. Another temple named Yeongulsa might also have stood here, as records from the area describe a tiger hunt by Joseon King Sejo east of Yeongulsa temple. Shards of inlaid buncheong wares dating back to the 15th century have been discovered near the site.

The spring gets its name from the anonymous inscription on the boulder hanging over expressing wishes for the king's health and longevity. King Gojong, the 26th monarch of the Joseon Dynasty, is said to have been fond of the water here.

Mental Healing and Nourishment

Descending toward the Seoul neighborhood of Buam-dong and spending the evening in Seongbuk-dong is a great way to end a day of hiking on Bugaksan Mountain. The historical Seongbuk-dong area has attracted scholars and literati throughout the nation's history and is home to many renovated Hanok residences where visitors can recover and recharge.

Bugaksan: Two-day itinerary

12:30 p.m. descent followed by lunch at Jaha Sonmandu -6.5 kilometers (19 minutes by car)-
2:00 p.m. rejuvenate at Cheongsudang SPA -3.8 kilometers (12 minutes by car)-**3:30 p.m.** quiet contemplation over tea at Suyeon Sanbang -1.4 kilometers (4 minutes by car)-**5:00 p.m.** see traditional and antique Korean furniture at Korea Furniture Museum -1.2 kilometers (3 minutes by car)-**7:00 p.m.** traditional dinner fit for nobility at Samcheonggak -2.8 kilometers (11 minutes by car)-**8:00 p.m.** unwind at Hanok hotel Rakkojae

Cheongsudang SPA: restore energy and balance to mind and body

©Clow Seoul

Soothing and recuperation for tired minds and bodies



Temple Stay at Gilsangsa Temple

Gilsangsa Temple lies just outside the commotion and congestion of the capital. The temple grounds are open to all who wish to meditate, contemplate, and pray and temple stays are offered throughout the year. This temple only offers a one-day stay, but even a few hours are enough to cleanse the mind. A brief initiation in temple etiquette is followed by a silent circling of the main pagoda, learning the lotus position, attending a contemplation session, and holding dialogue over tea. Contemplation is the principal method of Korean Buddhism practice and a means of transcending life and death to discover the true freedom of the unattached self.

📍 68, Seonjam-ro 5-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul
 ☎ 82-2-3672-5945



Tea at Heungcheonsa Temple

Heungcheonsa Temple stands at the entrance to Jeongneung Royal Tomb. While the temple has a collection of cultural properties, the centerpiece is Geungnakbojeon Hall. The temple was built in 1853 by the monk Gubong Gyejang in the typical architectural style of the late Joseon Dynasty. The flower-patterned engravings above the doorways and dragon's head carvings atop the pillars attest to the ornate and functional architectural techniques of the time. After marveling at the technical sophistication of the structure, chat with resident monks over a cup of tea. This is a great opportunity to inquire about Buddhist culture or discuss the daily conflicts and hardships of modern life.

📍 29, Heungcheonsa-gil, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul
 ☎ 82-2-929-6611



©Clow Seoul

Cheongsudang SPA

A visit to Cheongsudang SPA is great for people with sore muscles after hiking. The entrance is immediately soothing with a bamboo forest and mountain brook-themed gateway. Cheongsudang offers a broad range of therapies for revitalizing the body, balance, focus, and face. "Namu" (Wood) is a body therapy program using bamboo sourced from Damyang, Jeollanam-do; "Heuk" (Soil) employs more than 20 organic herbs; and "Mul" (Water) cleanses using organic aromatic oils. The powers of the natural elements wood, earth, and water are channeled to soothe and heal all dimensions of the body. A session lasts from 70 minutes to 250 minutes maximum and produces relaxation and restoration of the proper balance of body and mind.

📍 31-19, Donhwamun-ro 11na-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul
 ☎ 82-2-742-0619 ☀ 11:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. daily

Trip around places imbued with the spirit of Korean literature



Bukchon Hanok Village

Sitting on the foothills of Bugaksan Mountain, this village was a favorite neighborhood of the Joseon Dynasty's royalty, high-ranking officials, and elites. The number of Hanok homes here has exploded from around 30 to 1,400. To truly appreciate the 600-year history of the neighborhood, two must-visit places before exploring the village are Bukchon Cultural Center and Bukchon Hanok History Museum. The village also offers workshops in many traditional Korean handicrafts. Bukchon Village Library has a sizable collection of over 1,230 books donated by residents for reading by visitors.

📍 37, Gyeongdong-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul.
☎ 82-2-2133-1372



Korean Stone Art Museum

The Korean Stone Art Museum houses more than 1,250 masonry artifacts, 280 needlework pieces, and 100 modern and contemporary paintings. The museum occupies a sprawling site of 18,182 square meters on the Seongbuk-dong hills between Bugaksan Mountain and the Seoul City Wall. Many *muninseok* stone statues sold or smuggled overseas are on display at the Recovered Artifacts Hall. These imposing replicas of civil officials, like those of military officials and guardians, were placed around tombs and graves to guard and protect the premises.

📍 16, Daesagwan-ro 13-gil, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-2-986-1001
🕒 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Tue.–Fri. /
10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. Sat.–Sun. (closed Mon.)



Yi Jong-seok's Villa

This was a favorite gathering spot for noted modern Korean writers Yi Tae-jun, Jeong Ji-yong, Lee Hyo-seok, and Lee Eun-sang. The residence sits among the western hills of the neighborhood Seongbuk-dong and features cross-shaped holes in the outer walls designed to pass the wind through. The original owner was Yi Jong-seok, an affluent merchant from the late Joseon era who built his fortune selling salted shrimp in Mapo, the epicenter of waterborne transportation at the time. The gambrel roof and manicured landscaping attest to his vast wealth.

📍 131, Seongbuk-ro, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul
🕒 10:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m. Tue.–Sun. (closed Mon.)



Suyeon Sanbang

The archetypal text on syntax theory, *Munjang ganghwa* (Diction on Writing), by novelist Yi Tae-jun remains a classic among Korean writers even today. Suyeon Sanbang was his residence from 1933 to 1946, a period in which he wrote some of his best works. The residence was also the headquarters of the literary community Guinhoe (Group of Nine) before being turned into a tea house in 1998. The facility's name is loosely translated into "a home in the mountains for reading and scholarly gatherings." Thus sit with a warm cup of ginger tea and soak up culture here.

📍 8, Seongbuk-ro 26-gil, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-2-764-1736
🕒 11:30 a.m.–6:00 p.m. Wed.–Fri. /
11:30 a.m.–10:00 p.m. Sat.–Sun. / break time:
6:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m. (closed Mon. and Tue.)



Bugak Skyway Palgajeong Pavilion

A leisurely drive along the 19-kilometer mountain road along the ridge of Bugaksan Mountain leads to Bugak Skyway Palgajeong Pavilion, standing 342 meters above sea level and offering excellent views of Seoul's beautiful seasonal transformations. At night, this is a great vantage point amid city lights. Food and drink are available at Sky Restaurant inside the pavilion, which is also great for seeing views when the weather is too hot or cold.

📍 267, Bugaksan-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul.
☎ Pavilion: 82-2-6312-3438 / Restaurant: 82-2-6312-6602
🕒 Pavilion: open 24 hours /
Restaurant: 11:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m. daily



Manhae Han Yong-un Simujang

Built in 1933 during Japanese occupation, this structure faces north to shun the former headquarters of the Japanese Government-General in the south. The humble abode reflects the upright and thrifty nature of its builder, independence activist Han Yong-un. The name board in the study bears the name of the home as written by fellow independence activist and calligrapher Oh Se-chang.

📍 24, Seongbuk-ro 29-gil, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-2-2241-2652
🕒 9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. daily

Flavors and aromas crafted by time and tenacity



Jaha Sonmandu

A Buam-dong institution since 1993, this restaurant is best known for its signature tri-color *tteok* (rice cake) and *mandu* (dumpling) soup, colored naturally using spinach, carrots, and beet. Jaha Sonmandu is featured in the Michelin Guide Seoul 2023. The depth of flavor here owes to the homemade *jang* (fermented soybean paste) prepared once annually in winter using *meju* (boiled and crushed soybean) blocks sourced from Chungcheong-do.

📍 12, Baekseokdong-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul.
☎ 82-2-379-2648

🕒 11:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m. Tue.–Sun. (closed Mon.)



Gyeyeolsa Chicken

This place serves old-style Korean fried chicken with hefty wedges of fried *sumi* (waxy) potatoes harvested in the highlands of Gangwon-do. The salt here is straight from the salt flats of Sinan, Korea's largest salt-producing region, and carefully stored for at least six years before being toasted to evaporate away any impurities. This results in a decidedly sweet and nutty flavor on the coarse grains of salt, amplifying the chicken's flavor. A popular side dish is *golbaengi* (sea snail) noodles, a classic *anju* (food to be eaten while drinking alcohol). The sea snails are tossed in a gently spicy sauce with apples, Korean pears, and sea grass and served with a mound of cold, thin noodles made from flour. The fresh taste added with low-key umami is one of a kind.

📍 7, Baekseokdong-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-2-391-3566

🕒 12:00 p.m.–10:40 p.m. Tue.–Sat. /
12:00 p.m.–10:30 p.m. Sun. (closed Mon.)



Eum Teahouse

Eum Teahouse was originally an importer of Taiwanese teas and is now run by a tea curator who studied puer tea in China and managed tea gardens for the Taiwanese government. This landmark regularly brings a range of seasonal teas to Korea straight from the source. An in-depth tea tasting is offered to interested visitors. Teas are brewed using three varieties of tea leaves and served alongside stories on the flavors, aromas, and source garden of each.

📍 Suite 201, 3F, Building 2, 137, Changeumun-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-2-391-2010

🕒 1:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m. Fri.–Mon. (closed Tue.–Thu.)

Spending the night next to the Bugaksan Mountain view



Rakkojaje

This 130-year-old traditional Hanok was remodeled by master carpenter Jeong Yeong-jin. A pavilion, pond, and an open wooden floor are arranged around the yard in the classical style in a throwback to Korea's past. The guest quarters are divided into five sections and the Pavilion Room provides a perfect space for drinking tea and quiet contemplation.

📍 218, Gahoe-dong, Jongno-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-2-742-3410

🕒 Check in 3:00 p.m., check-out 11:00 a.m.



Boan Stay

Boan Inn was run for around 60 years from 1942. Many notable Korean writers including Seo Jeong-ju and Kim Dong-ni passed through the walls of the inn, which was also the headquarters of the literary coterie magazine *Siin burak* (Poet's Village). Boan Stay preserves the tradition of the old Boan Inn, occupying the third and fourth floors of what is now a cultural arts establishment called Boan 1942. Boan Stay is ideal for temporary lodging for cultural nomads. Rooms feature great contrasting views of the urban skyline and peaks of Bugaksan Mountain and are artistically decorated with works and furniture by contemporary designers.

📍 33, Hoyoja-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-02-720-8409

🕒 Check in 3:00 p.m., check out 11:00 a.m.



Jeongyeonjae

This Hanok residence is nestled in the old residential neighborhood of Samcheong-dong. Originally built in 1938, the premises were remodeled in May 2019. Its name loosely translates to "House of Comforting Acquaintances." This private accommodation also accepts just one guest or group at a time. The graceful and dignified interior is an ideal setting for conversations over tea. The signature outdoor bath here is closed for winter from December to February.

📍 19-14, Samcheong-ro 7-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul
☎ 82-10-6837-2044

🕒 Check in 4:00 p.m., check out 12:00 p.m.

Viewing Bugaksan Mountain via Feng Shui

Yi Seong-gye, the founder of the Joseon Dynasty who was later crowned its first monarch, King Taejo, aimed to use the energy of the great mountain ranges of Baekdudaegan from Baekdusan Mountain and all the way down to Jirisan Mountain to connect it to Gyeongbokgung Palace through Bugaksan Mountain. The layout of the palace, which was geared to set Bugaksan in the background, symbolized the royal authority granted by heaven, an official philosophy that was used to justify the 600-year rule of the dynasty.

Written by Kim Wooseon (director of Baekdudaegan Humanities Research Institute)



"Doseongdo (Map of the Capital)," *Dongguk yeodo* (Map of Korea)

1. Inwangsan Mountain
2. Bugaksan (Baegaksan) Mountain
3. Naksan Mountain
4. Gyeongbokgung Palace
5. Namsan (Mongmyeoksan) Mountain

Fundamental Energy Flowing through Baekdudaegan

Since ancient times, feng shui (*pungsu jiri* in Korean referring to Chinese geomancy), has considered the mountain range "paths through which energy flows" in its emphasis on the flow of energy (*qi*). The fundamental energy flowing down from Baekdusan, the starting point, passes through the mountains of Geumgangsan, Seoraksan, Odaesan, and Songnisan before finally reaching Jirisan. All of these are collectively referred to as the "great mountain range" of Baekdu (Baekdudaegan). Among the mountains of this range, the Hanbukjeongmaek range splits from the northern watershed of Geumgangsan and encompasses the mountains north of the Hangang River. Passing through the mountains of Dobongsan and Bukhansan, Bugaksan displays its majesty as the guardian mountain of the capital of Seoul. To cut off this energy, the Japanese colonial government exploited feng shui to its advantage during Japanese occupation of the Korean Peninsula and drove in iron stakes all over the nation's mountains. Chotdaebawi (Candlestick) Rock on Bugaksan acquired its name when the stakes were removed after Korea's independence and a candlestick was installed instead to wish for national development. This way, feng shui, which connects the flow of energy and terrain of the land to human fortune, was an important idea that formed the basis of traditional Korean culture.

People built shrines for Four Celestial Guardians in the four directions: Black Warrior in the north, Red Phoenix in the south, Blue Dragon in the east (left), and White Tiger in the west (right). Bugaksan has one of these four shrines. Seoul, the capital of Joseon, was surrounded by four inner mountains—Bugaksan, Inwangsan, Namsan,

and Naksan—and four outer mountains—Bukhansan, Deogyangsan, Gwanaksan, and Yongmasan. Usually called Baegaksan during the Joseon period as well as Myeonak (face rock mountain) for resembling a human face, Bugaksan is designated Historic Site No. 10 and Scenic Site No. 67.

Magnificent Guardian of Seoul

Gyeongbokgung Palace has a more magnificent and outstanding presence thanks to Bugaksan, which contains a profound meaning. A power struggle between Buddhism and neo-Confucianism in the early Joseon period ended with the neo-Confucian camp winning. This led to the construction and layout of Hanyangdoseong (Seoul City Wall) and palaces under strict accordance to neo-Confucian interpretations. The exquisite arrangement resulted in one seeing the mountain in the back while facing Gyeongbokgung along with Gwanghwamun Gate and Geunjeongjeon Hall, but as one approaches the towering palace, the mountain disappears from view, leaving just the gate and hall. This was the result of the application of the political philosophy of authority granted by heaven flowing from Bugaksan to the palace. The shift of perspective from the magnificence of the mountain range to that of the palace symbolized the king's absolute authority as reflected in architectural structure. This is even more apparent when the palace is photographed from up close and afar.

Haetae and South Pond to Deter Fire and Evil Spirits

A *haetae* (mythical creature that symbolizes the water deity) statue was used as a remedy (*C. bibu*) based on feng shui. Gyeongbokgung suffered from frequent small and major fires, and people believed that the cause was the energy of fire embedded in Gwanaksan, one of the four outer mountains of Seoul. So more such statues were erected at the Office of Inspector General in front of Gwanghwamun Gate. Namji Pond was dug near Sungnyemun Gate. A pair of *haetae* is now moved to both sides of Gwanghwamun, from its original location of the Office of Inspector General.

Imaginary Animal Haetae

The *haetae* is an imaginary animal that judges right and wrong and good and evil. Considered an auspicious animal that wards off fire or evil spirits, this creature has statues of itself decorate many traditional structures such as palaces.



Seasonal Tips for Safe Hiking

Mountain conditions in Korea change drastically from season to season and have their fair share of deep ravines, loose boulders, and other hazards. This accentuates the importance of being properly prepared—and dressed—for the journey.

Written by Albert Lee (president, Mountain Journal)

©Jung Jong-won



Winter in Bukhansan Mountain ©Lee Young-jun



Attire

Hiking wear is important for two reasons: energy conservation and regulation of body temperature. Sweat-wicking, fast-drying, and waterproof fabrics are most preferred as they allow maintenance of body temperature amid temperature fluctuations on a mountain. Make sure to wear layers (innerwear, insulating layer, and outerwear), adding and removing layers as needed. Removing layers before breaking a sweat and adding them before feeling cold is a sure-fire approach. Be aware that hypothermia is a real danger on mountains, even in summer.



Hiking boots

Hiking boots are roughly classified as light or heavy depending on use but for the rocky mountains around Seoul, the sole matters most. "Ridge shoes" with isobutylene isoprene rubber soles provide the best grip. Because substantial portions of Korea's mountains are solid granite, domestically made hiking shoes designed specifically for Korea's mountains provide better grip than multi-terrain imports. The right-size shoes will let the toes wiggle when worn over thick socks.



Backpack

Legs do most of the work when hiking but hands are essential for support at steeper sections. All belongings should be in a backpack, with one with a 20- to 30-liter capacity enough for a one-day hike. Simple is best, as in avoid bags with too many outer pockets and ornaments. A backpack should contain survival items: water, flashlight, clothes, food, and first-aid kit.



Food

Hiking is an energy-intensive outdoor activity, so eating right is crucial. A day of hiking will burn twice the calories than that on a typical day, and one's diet must provide this energy.

So pack hiking food that is

- ▶ light and compact,
- ▶ quick and simple to prepare,
- ▶ resistant to spoilage and creates little waste,
- ▶ energy dense and easily digestible,
- ▶ properly packaged for transport, and most importantly to your taste.

Winter hiking is even more demanding and requires a high-calorie, carbohydrate-rich packed lunch. Food spoils easily in summer, so snacks with low-moisture content that will not spoil are best.



Seasonal preparation

Certain seasons require better equipment. Even during spring in the city, winter lingers on the north face of a mountain. So bring crampons, hiking sticks, and plenty of warm layers in early spring and late fall. Summer hiking means lots of sweat and the potential for sudden downpours, so a change of clothes in a waterproof pack is a must.

Seasonal hiking tips

Spring

Hiking during the spring thaw from March is the most difficult and requires the most preparation. Conditions can vary wildly depending on if a section of the trail receives sunlight. Hard-soled winter hiking shoes, crampons, windbreakers, and well-insulated clothing are essential. Bring headlamps in a backpack, as spring weather can be fickle and hikers often fail to descend by sundown. Because of the hazard of falling rocks during the spring thaw, choose a course wisely with safety as the top priority.

Summer

Summer and the vacation season bring many hikers out to the mountains, but this is also when many related accidents occur. Korean summers are prone to torrential rain and lightning strikes, so hikers must exercise caution. Stay away from mountain streams and valleys in heavy rain. Waterproofing is crucial in summer, and all equipment and supplies should be individually packed in watertight containers. Wearing the proper clothing is also important for maintaining body temperature. Many hikers suffer hypothermia by standing in the wind after a downpour. Wear a hat with a large brim to avoid heatstroke under the beating sun and bring plenty of drinking water.

Fall

In fall, the weather can change in the blink of an eye. Typhoons are not uncommon and the sun begins to set earlier. Even amid still hot temperatures in September, properly insulated clothes are a must. Gloves and padded hats are recommended in late fall, and a good idea is to start and end a hike earlier than in spring and summer.

Winter

Staying warm is the most important task on a mountain during winter. Staying dry is the first step in avoiding hypothermia. Evaporating sweat robs the body of heat, so properly maintaining core body temperature when resting is the key to safe winter hiking. Remove layers before getting too hot and add layers before feeling cold. Wearing multiple layers of clothing is important as a thick parka over thin innerwear simply cannot maintain proper body temperature.

Eco-friendly 'Clean Hiking'

Written by Lee Yeong-joon (president, Mountain Journal)



SEOUL HIKING TOURISM

english.visitseoul.net/seoul-hiking

"Leave no trace" is a fundamental rule of hiking. Hiking is enjoyed on mountains and in forests, meaning this activity is only possible if the mountains and forests are preserved. So every hiker must take play a leading role in environmental preservation. This attitude dates back to the concept of "outdoor citizenship" proclaimed in 1876 by the Appalachian Mountain Club of the US. Climbers at Yosemite National Park in the 1960s embarked on a "Clean Climbing" campaign, urging hikers to leave nothing on the rocks. The International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation (UIAA) followed suit with the Kathmandu Declaration of 1980 and Tyrol Declaration of 2002, building a global consensus that environmental protection on

mountains should go beyond simply leaving no traces and include respecting all nature, people, and culture associated with mountains. In Korea, mountaineers have continued nature protection efforts since the 1978 Nature Protection Charter of the Korean Alpine Club. Today, plogging, or the practice of picking up trash while hiking, is a new trend among young hikers. Guidelines and instructions are being developed for hikers and mountaineers to monitor the many signs of climate change apparent on the mountains to further reduce carbon footprints left by humans. The seven practices proposed by the UIAA's "Respect the Mountains" campaign are as follows.

RESPECT MOUNTAINS

BOOK SMART

Why not explore a lesser-known mountain resort or range and travel there during low or off-season? This will have less impact on mountains during peak season.

TRAVEL WISE

Carbon emissions begin the moment people leave home. Make it a habit to use public transportation or ride a bicycle.

SUPPORT

Seek and support sustainable businesses for mountain tourism.



BE RESPECTFUL

Attitudes toward mountains and other hikers reflect those toward their values and culture. Always treat people with respect.

LEAVE NO TRACE

Remember that garbage thrown away on mountains negatively impacts the plants and wildlife there and always returns down valleys and streams.

RRR&U

Practice the three "R's" and U: Reduce impact, reuse items, recycle what cannot be reused, and upcycle.

SPREAD THE WORD

Promote these guidelines to everyone who loves mountains.

