

Gyeongbokgung

경복궁



A LITTLE CONTEXT CHANGES THE VIEW

Two palaces. Different stories.

GYEONGBOKGUNG / 경복궁

Founded in 1395 as the primary palace of the Joseon dynasty, Gyeongbokgung has a formal, monumental presence. It suffered destruction during invasion and colonial rule, and the present experience includes later rebuilding and ongoing restoration.

CHANGDEOKGUNG / 창덕궁

Built in 1405 as a secondary palace, Changdeokgung later served as the main royal residence for a long period. Its arrangement responds more closely to the terrain. The complex became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997.

THE GARDEN IS A SEPARATE DECISION

Huwon 후원, the Secret Garden, requires its own admission arrangements. Use the official KHS reservation route to select a real available visit, including language and meeting time. The Tuesday itinerary still works with the main palace if garden tickets are unavailable.

LOOK FOR WHAT SURVIVES AND WHAT RETURNS

Ask which buildings are old fabric, which have been restored and why a government or community chose to rebuild them. History is also the story of how a place is cared for today.

Color has a history here.

감천문화마을



Gamcheon's terraced houses grew from a community shaped by Korean War refugees. Today, public art and visitors share the neighborhood with residents. Visit in the daytime and keep the lanes quiet.

SOURCES [18] [19]

Live links: pages 61-63

Where the temple meets the sea.

해동용궁사



START WITH SOUNDS / THEN BUILD SYLLABLES

Hangul is an alphabet.

한글

Korean letters combine into square syllable blocks. Start with these 14 basic consonants and 10 basic vowels. Roman letters below are approximations; use native audio for the actual sounds.

14 BASIC CONSONANTS

g / k	n	d / t	r / l	m	b / p	s
silent / ng	j	ch	k + air	t + air	p + air	h

10 BASIC VOWELS

a	ya	eo	yeo	o
yo	u	yu	eu	i

ㅇ is silent at the start of a syllable and sounds like ng at the end. ㄹ changes between r-like and l-like sounds. eo and eu represent single Korean vowels, not two English vowel sounds. Double consonants and compound vowels come next.

A little table knowledge goes far.

식사 예절

WHAT ARRIVES TOGETHER

Rice 밥, soup 국 and side dishes 반찬 (banchan) often share the table. Side dishes are commonly shared. Use serving utensils when supplied; ask before assuming an extra dish or refill is included.

SPOON + CHOPSTICKS

Use the spoon for rice and soup, and chopsticks for many other foods. Bowls generally stay on the table. Avoid standing chopsticks upright in rice. You can ask for help or a different utensil without turning the meal into a test.

WITH HOSTS OR OLDER GUESTS

A common respectful custom is to let the oldest person begin. Follow your host's lead: families and restaurants vary in formality. Receiving something with both hands is a useful polite habit.

SAY IT AT THE TABLE

Before eating: 잘 먹겠습니다 / jal meokgetseumnida, a way to express appreciation for the meal. Afterward: 잘 먹었습니다 / jal meogeotseumnida, thank you for the meal. To ask for water: 물 주세요 / mul juseyo.

ASK, THEN TASTE

Try the broth before seasoning it. Ask about fish stock, nuts, sesame and spice when relevant. Korean food is varied; no one dish represents every region or every table.