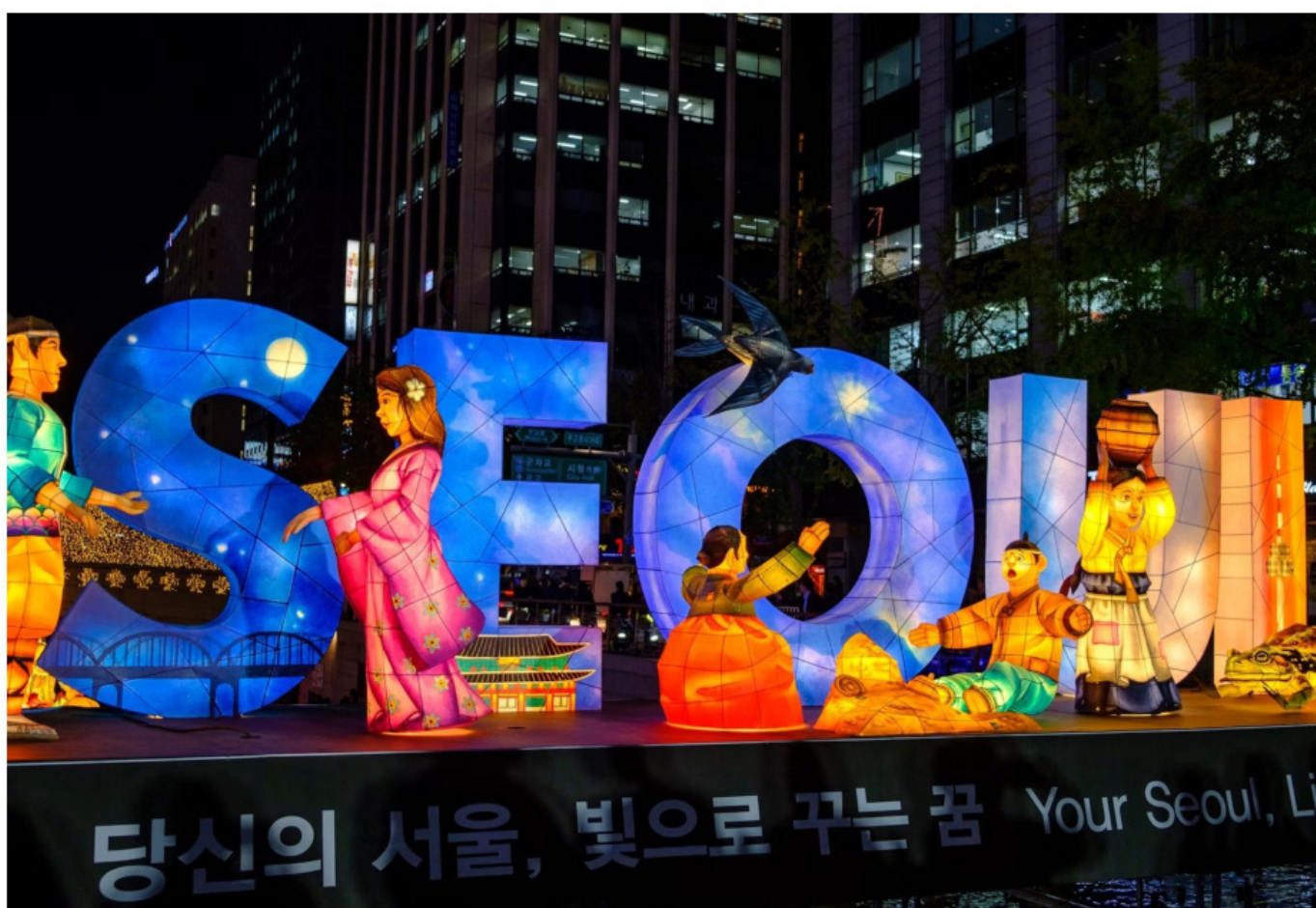


THE SEOUL EDIT

5 DAYS IN SEOUL

A first-timer itinerary built to be followed, not just read.



Historic Seoul | markets | cafes | K-beauty | shopping | nightlife | local food | practical transport

By Park Sue | The Seoul Edit

START HERE

I already planned the hard part.

Seoul is huge, exciting and very easy to over-plan. This itinerary is designed for a first visit: five full days that group places sensibly, mix famous sights with everyday Seoul, and leave enough breathing room for food, cafés, shopping and spontaneous stops.

How to use this guide

Follow it exactly if you want the easiest option, or swap the optional blocks marked FLEX. Each day has a main route, food ideas, a café stop, an evening plan, a rain backup and a 'Sue would...' note.

The five-day shape

TIME	PLAN	WHY IT WORKS
DAY 1	Historic Seoul	Gyeongbokgung → Bukchon/Anguk → Insadong/Ikseondong → evening in Jongno
DAY 2	Markets + city energy	Gwangjang → Dongdaemun/DDP → Myeongdong → Namsan option
DAY 3	West Seoul	Mangwon → Yeonnam/Hongdae → evening food, shopping and nightlife
DAY 4	Trend Seoul	Seongsu → Seoul Forest → Jamsil and the Lotte World area
DAY 5	Your Seoul	Choose K-beauty/shopping, culture, theme park, river day or café-heavy Seoul

Quick reality check

Do not try to cross the city six times in one day. Seoul's subway is excellent, but transfers, station walking, queues and café stops add up. The route design below intentionally keeps neighboring areas together.

DAY 1

Historic Seoul, but make it actually enjoyable

Palace → Anguk/Bukchon → Insadong/Ikseondong → Jongno evening

TIME	PLAN	WHY IT WORKS
09:00	Gyeongbokgung Palace	Start before the central area becomes more crowded. Give yourself time for the grounds instead of treating it like a photo checkpoint.
11:00	Walk toward Anguk / Bukchon	Traditional architecture, alleys and small shops. Keep noise down because parts of Bukchon are residential.
12:30	Lunch around Anguk	Choose Korean comfort food rather than crossing town for one viral restaurant.
14:00	Café stop	This is where Cafe Onion Anguk or another hanok-style café fits naturally.
15:30	Insadong	Souvenirs, crafts, tea, small galleries and easy wandering.
17:00	Ikseondong	Tiny lanes, cafés and dinner options. It feels especially good as daylight starts changing.
19:30	Jongno evening	Dinner, casual drinks, Cheonggyecheon walk or simply go home before you destroy your feet on Day 1.



What to eat today

Lunch: kimchi jjigae, donkatsu, kalguksu, mandu or a simple Korean set meal. Snack: hotteok, yakgwa, salt bread or whatever looks genuinely good. Dinner: stay around Jongno/Ikseondong instead of commuting somewhere just because TikTok told you to.

Worth it / skip it

Worth it: one palace done properly, a slow café, walking the old neighborhoods.

Skip: trying to visit every palace, every hanok photo spot and three viral cafés in the same day.

The food checklist I would actually give a first-timer

TIME	PLAN	WHY IT WORKS
COMFORT	Kimchi jjigae / doenjang jjigae	Easy everyday Korean meal.
GRILL	Samgyeopsal / Korean BBQ	Better with at least two people.
MARKET	Bindaetteok / gimbap / hotteok	Perfect for tasting several things.
LATE NIGHT	Fried chicken	Classic easy group food.
QUICK	Kimbap / ramyeon / convenience-store meal	Useful between bigger meals.
SWEET	Bingsu / bakery café / hotteok	Build dessert into the route.
STREET	Tteokbokki / eomuk	Try it, but do not force yourself to love every viral food.



Enough Korean to make small moments easier

KOREAN	SAY IT LIKE THIS	MEANING
안녕하세요	annyeonghaseyo	Hello
감사합니다	gamsahamnida	Thank you
이거 주세요	igeo juseyo	This one, please
얼마예요?	eolmayeyo?	How much is it?
화장실 어디예요?	hwajangsil eodiyeoyo?	Where is the bathroom?
안 매워요?	an maewoyo?	Is it not spicy? / Is it mild?
포장해 주세요	pojanghae juseyo	Please make it takeaway / to-go
카드 돼요?	kadeu dwaeyo?	Can I pay by card?

Best translation trick

When an address or business name matters, show the Korean text on your phone instead of repeatedly trying to pronounce it. Save screenshots of the Korean address for places you absolutely need to find.

Korean food visual dictionary

Small photos are better than giant blog-style images here. Buyers should recognize a dish at a glance.



Kimchi jjigae

Hot kimchi stew.



Samgyeopsal

Pork belly cooked at the table.



Tteokbokki

Chewy rice cakes in spicy-sweet sauce.



Eomuk

Fish cake, often on skewers with broth.



Gimbap

Rice and fillings rolled in seaweed.



Bindaetteok

Mung-bean pancake, famous at Gwangjang.



Kalguksu

Knife-cut noodle soup.



Hotteok

Sweet filled pancake.



Bingsu

Shaved-ice dessert.



Korean fried chicken

Easy evening group food.



Convenience ramen

Cheap late-night option.



Bakery cafe

A huge part of Seoul cafe culture.

THIS IS JUST A PEEK.

The full 37-page guide has the rest of Seoul planned for you.

Inside the full guide

- A complete 5-day route grouped by neighborhood
- Day-by-day timing, food stops, cafe stops and evening plans
- Gwangjang, Myeongdong, Mangwon, Hongdae, Seongsu and Jamsil
- K-beauty and shopping guidance
- Food and cafe visual dictionaries
- Subway, T-money, taxis, apps and practical Seoul tips
- Rainy-day swaps, budget guidance and first-timer mistakes
- Useful Korean phrases and quick-reference pages

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