SAMPLE PLAN · This is a sample of a Classic plan (4 days, Seoul). Your plan is written for your own dates and answers.

Seoulmate

CUSTOM TRIP PLAN · SEOUL

Your Seoul trip plan

Prepared for	**Sample couple** — a made-up traveler profile for this example, not a real customer.
Dates	**Dec 16, 2026 – Dec 19, 2026 · 3 nights**
Plan option	**Classic**
Order number	**SM-SAMPLE-0001**

> We use our own planning tools and guides, and every plan is personally reviewed and edited by John Kim and Bomi Lee, locals who live in Seoul.

Sample information was checked on 21 Nov 2026. Opening hours, prices and transit can change; in your own plan we check them when we write it and show the date. Please check again before you go.

Questions about your plan? Email seoulexpress88@gmail.com (reply within 1 business day, Korea time).

SAMPLE PLAN

Your trip at a glance

Four December days in central Seoul for a couple on their first trip. You stay in Jongno, so the palaces, hanok lanes and old markets are a short walk or one subway stop away. Each day pairs one palace or historic site in the morning with a food stop and a cafe neighborhood in the afternoon, and ends with an easy evening near your stay. The dates avoid every palace closing day: you visit Gyeongbokgung on Thursday (it closes on Tuesdays), Changdeokgung on Friday and Deoksugung on Saturday (both close on Mondays). Budget guide for meals, roughly: 10,000-25,000 won per person for a casual meal, and 30,000-50,000 won per person for a sit-down dinner such as Korean BBQ. Seoul restaurant prices rose again in 2026, so treat these as a range, not a quote.

Who's traveling: 2 adults, first time in Korea

Planned for: Interests: Food, palaces, cafes · Pace: Normal · Budget: Mid-range

Where to stay: Jongno / Insadong 종로·인사동

Day 1	Dec 16, 2026	Arrive, settle into Jongno, Gwangjang Market dinner and winter lights
Day 2	Dec 17, 2026	Gyeongbokgung Palace, Seochon lunch, Bukchon and Samcheong-dong cafes
Day 3	Dec 18, 2026	Changdeokgung and the Secret Garden, Seongsu cafes, Namsan night view
Day 4	Dec 19, 2026	Deoksugung and Jeongdong-gil, Myeongdong lunch, fly home

SAMPLE PLAN

Where to stay

We suggest an area, not a specific hotel. You book your room yourself.

OUR PICK

Jongno / Insadong 종로·인사동

Best fit for palaces and food. Gyeongbokgung, Changdeokgung, Bukchon, Insadong, Ikseon-dong and Gwangjang Market are all within walking distance or one stop on Line 3 or Line 1. You can reach the palaces at opening time, before tour groups. Hanok guesthouses are an option if you want a traditional room. It is quiet after dark, which suits a couple. Look near Anguk (Line 3) or Jongno 3-ga (Lines 1, 3, 5) stations.

Our guide to this area

GOOD ALTERNATIVE

Myeongdong 명동

Choose this if you want more hotel choices and livelier evenings. Street food, shopping and the Namsan cable car are on your doorstep, and Line 4 runs two stops to Seoul Station for the airport train. Gyeongbokgung and Changdeokgung are about 20-25 minutes by subway with one change (Line 4 to Chungmuro, then Line 3), and Deoksugung is about a 15-minute walk. It is crowded and very touristy.

Our guide to this area

SAMPLE PLAN

Book ahead

You book these yourself, on the official site or app.

K-ETA or visa check 전자여행허가(K-ETA)

What you need depends on your passport, so check your nationality on the official K-ETA site before you fly. Travelers from many visa-free countries, including the US, do not need a K-ETA for arrivals up to 31 December 2026 (Korea time), which would cover these sample dates; the site lists which nationalities this applies to. If your nationality is not exempt, apply only on the official K-ETA site or the official K-ETA app (fee 10,000 won); results usually come within 72 hours, so apply at least 72 hours before your flight. If your country is not visa-free, you need a visa instead: ask the Korean embassy or consulate in your country. If you enter without a K-ETA, you also fill in an arrival card; the free online e-Arrival Card opens 3 days before you land. Ignore look-alike sites that charge extra. This is general travel information, not immigration advice; the official site has the final word.

Official site Checked on 21 Nov 2026

Changdeokgung Secret Garden (Huwon) tour 창덕궁 후원 관람

The Secret Garden can only be visited on a timed guided tour. In December the English tours start at 10:30, 11:30 and 14:30 (Tuesday to Sunday). Each tour takes up to 100 people per language: 50 tickets online and 50 sold on site. Online booking opens at 10:00 Korea time six days before your visit (for Friday 2026-12-18 that is Saturday 2026-12-12) and closes the day before; on-site tickets go on sale from 09:00 on the day, first come, first served. This plan uses the 11:30 English tour. The Secret Garden ticket is extra: you also need a regular Changdeokgung ticket. Book from the official Royal Palaces page (link below), which opens the palace ticket booking site.

Official site Checked on 21 Nov 2026

AREX Express train (optional) 공항철도 직통열차

Express tickets are sold at the AREX counters and ticket machines in the airport train station, and every Express seat is reserved. Fares and any online discounts change, so check the current fare at the AREX counter or ticket machine before you buy. Not needed if you take the All-Stop train with T-money.

Official site Checked on 21 Nov 2026

Korean BBQ dinner in Seongsu (optional) 성수동 저녁 식당

Friday evening is busy. Many BBQ places work on walk-ins and a waiting list. If you want a fixed time, look for places listed on CatchTable Global, the English version of Korea's restaurant booking app, which works with foreign cards; Naver Map bookings often need a Korean phone number. Otherwise arrive before 18:00 or put your name on the waiting list.

Search on Naver Map Checked on 21 Nov 2026

SAMPLE PLAN

Arrival day

Airport to your area

From Incheon Airport, take the AREX Airport Railroad to Seoul Station. The Express train runs non-stop in about 43 minutes from Terminal 1 (about 51 minutes from Terminal 2) and needs its own ticket; the All-Stop train takes about an hour (about 59 minutes from Terminal 1) and you pay with a T-money card. At Seoul Station change to Line 1 (3 stops to Jongno 3-ga) or Line 4 then Line 3 (to Anguk); allow about 20-30 minutes including the long transfer walk. With heavy bags, a metered taxi straight to Jongno takes about an hour without traffic and costs very roughly 60,000-90,000 won including highway tolls; a late-night surcharge applies from 22:00 to 04:00.

Read our guide Checked on 21 Nov 2026

Transit card

Buy a T-money card at a convenience store in the arrivals hall and top it up with cash. A central Seoul subway ride costs 1,550 won per adult with a card, so about 30,000-40,000 won each covers four days of rides plus one All-Stop airport train. Each of you needs your own card. Tap in and tap out on the subway and buses; many taxis take it too.

Read our guide Checked on 21 Nov 2026

Phone data (eSIM)

Set up an eSIM before you fly (check that your phone supports eSIM and is unlocked), or pick up a SIM or pocket Wi-Fi at the airport counters. Download Naver Map or KakaoMap before you land: Google Maps is fine for searching places, but its walking and driving directions in Korea are often limited, so the map links in this plan include both Naver and Google.

Read our guide Checked on 21 Nov 2026

SAMPLE PLAN

DAY 1 · WED, DEC 16, 2026

Arrive, settle into Jongno, Gwangjang Market dinner and winter lights

MORNING

Incheon International Airport 인천국제공항

Land (this sample assumes around midday). Buy T-money cards, turn on your eSIM, then take AREX to Seoul Station and change to Line 1 or Line 3 for Jongno.

Getting there: AREX to Seoul Station, then Line 1 to Jongno 3-ga or Line 4 + Line 3 to Anguk · about 90 min

Hours: Open 24 hours · source · Checked on 21 Nov 2026

Naver Map | Google Maps

Tip: Allow about 2.5-3 hours from landing to your hotel door: immigration and bags can take an hour or more at busy times, and the train plus transfer takes about 1.5 hours.

AFTERNOON

Insadong-gil 인사동길

Drop your bags, then take an easy first walk down Insadong's main street: craft shops, tea houses and Ssamziegil. Stop at a traditional tea house to warm up.

Getting there: Walk from Anguk Station (Line 3), Exit 6 · about 5 min

Hours: Street open all day; shop and tea house hours vary, so check the place you pick on Naver Map · Naver Map search · Checked on 21 Nov 2026

Naver Map | Google Maps

Tip: Keep the first afternoon light. December sunset is around 17:15, so plan dinner early.

EVENING

Gwangjang Market 광장시장

Dinner at one of Seoul's oldest markets. Share bindaetteok (mung bean pancake), mayak gimbap and tteokbokki at the food stalls, roughly 10,000-20,000 won per person. Then walk west along Cheonggyecheon Stream to Gwanghwamun for the winter lights of the 2026 Seoul Winter Festival: the Seoul Lantern Festival along the stream (December 11 to January 31, 18:00-23:00), and the Seoul Light media facade and Christmas market at Gwanghwamun (December 11 to January 10, from 17:30).

Getting there: Line 1 Jongno 3-ga to Jongno 5-ga (1 stop), or walk about 20 minutes from Insadong · about 15 min

Hours: Food alley about 09:00-23:00 daily; the clothing and fabric shops close on Sundays · source · Checked on 21 Nov 2026

Naver Map | Google Maps

Tip: Prices differ from stall to stall: check the board and the total before you order. Carry some cash, since many small stalls prefer it. Festival hours: winterfestival.co.kr/program-festivals

If it rains: Skip the stream walk. After Gwangjang Market, take Line 1 back and spend the evening in a tea house in Insadong, or browse the indoor Ssamziegil shops.

Opening hours, prices and transit can change after the checked-on date. Check the official page the day before you go.

SAMPLE PLAN

DAY 2 · THU, DEC 17, 2026

Gyeongbokgung Palace, Seochon lunch, Bukchon and Samcheong-dong cafes

MORNING

Gyeongbokgung Palace 경복궁

Seoul's largest palace, built in 1395. Arrive at opening time and watch the free Royal Guard Changing Ceremony between Gwanghwamun and Heungnyemun gates (10:00 and 14:00, about 20 minutes, weather permitting), then walk back to Gyeonghoeru Pavilion and Hyangwonjeong. Entry 3,000 won per adult; free if you wear hanbok, for foreign visitors too. The National Palace Museum next to the palace has free permanent galleries (09:30-17:30 on weekdays).

Getting there: Line 3, Anguk to Gyeongbokgung (1 stop), Exit 5; or walk 15 minutes · about 10 min

Hours: 09:00-17:00 in December, last entry 16:00; closed Tuesdays · source · Checked on 21 Nov 2026

Naver Map | Google Maps

Tip: Thursday is chosen on purpose: the palace is closed on Tuesdays. Dress warm, the courtyards are windy.

AFTERNOON

Seochon (Tongin Market area) 서촌(통인시장 일대)

Lunch in Seochon, the quiet neighborhood west of the palace. Choose ginseng chicken soup (samgyetang) at one of the well-known samgyetang restaurants in the area, roughly 20,000-25,000 won per person, or the Tongin Market coin lunchbox (dosirak) for something lighter: buy brass coins (500 won each) and fill a tray from the stalls, about 10,000 won per person. Then walk east to Bukchon Hanok Village and Samcheong-dong for coffee in a hanok-style cafe; the lanes between them are full of small cafes, so pick one that looks cozy. Reach Bukchon before 17:00.

Getting there: Walk from Gyeongbokgung west gate (Yeongchumun) to Seochon; Seochon to Bukchon by walking or a short taxi · about 10 min

Hours: Bukchon red zone (Bukchon-ro 11-gil area): tourists may visit 10:00-17:00 only. Tongin lunchbox cafe: weekdays 11:00-16:00 (coins sold until 15:00), closed Tuesdays and the third Sunday · source · Checked on 21 Nov 2026

Naver Map | Google Maps

Tip: Bukchon is a residential area. Keep your voice down and do not go into private gates. Outside 10:00-17:00, tourists can be fined in the red zone.

EVENING

Ikseon-dong Hanok Street 익선동 한옥거리

Dinner in Ikseon-dong's narrow hanok lanes: small Korean, fusion and dessert spots under tiled roofs. A mid-range sit-down meal is roughly 20,000-35,000 won per person.

Getting there: Walk from Bukchon or take Line 3 Anguk to Jongno 3-ga (1 stop), Exit 4 · about 15 min

Hours: Hours vary by restaurant, and some close between lunch and dinner; check the place you pick on Naver Map · Naver Map search · Checked on 21 Nov 2026

Naver Map | Google Maps

Tip: Popular places queue from 18:00. Put your name on the waiting list, then wait in a nearby cafe.

If it rains: Stay indoors after the palace: the National Palace Museum (free permanent galleries) and the National Folk Museum of Korea (free, inside the Gyeongbokgung grounds, 09:00-17:00 in winter) are both by the palace. Have lunch in Seochon, then spend the afternoon in Insadong tea houses instead of the Bukchon lanes, which are steep and slippery when wet.

Opening hours, prices and transit can change after the checked-on date. Check the official page the day before you go.

SAMPLE PLAN

DAY 3 · FRI, DEC 18, 2026

Changdeokgung and the Secret Garden, Seongsu cafes, Namsan night view

MORNING

Changdeokgung Palace and Huwon (Secret Garden) 창덕궁·후원

A UNESCO World Heritage palace that follows the hills rather than a grid. Walk the main halls from 09:00, then join your booked 11:30 English Secret Garden tour (about 70 minutes) through the royal garden and its ponds. The tour meets at the Secret Garden entrance, a walk of 15 minutes or more from the palace gate, so head there by 11:15. The Ongnyucheon area at the back of the garden is closed for repair work until further notice. Entry 3,000 won per adult, plus 5,000 won for the Secret Garden.

Getting there: Walk from Anguk Station (Line 3), Exit 3 · about 5 min

Hours: 09:00-17:30 from November to January, last entry 16:30; closed Mondays · source · Checked on 21 Nov 2026

Naver Map | Google Maps

Tip: Friday is chosen on purpose: Changdeokgung is closed on Mondays. Book the Secret Garden tour ahead (see Book ahead).

AFTERNOON

Seongsu-dong 성수동

Quick lunch near the palace (a bowl of kalguksu, knife-cut noodle soup, in Insadong, roughly 10,000-13,000 won), then go east to Seongsu, Seoul's cafe district in old factories and warehouses. Walk the streets around Seongsu Station and Seoul Forest Station, try two cafes, and browse the small design and pop-up shops.

Getting there: Line 3 Anguk to Euljiro 3-ga (2 stops), then Line 2 to Seongsu · about 30 min

Hours: Cafe and shop hours vary, and pop-up stores run for limited dates; check the place you pick on Naver Map · Naver Map search · Checked on 21 Nov 2026

Naver Map | Google Maps

Tip: Cafes and pop-ups in Seongsu change often, so this plan names the neighborhood rather than one shop. Have Korean BBQ dinner here before heading to Namsan.

EVENING

Namsan Seoul Tower N서울타워

The classic couple's night view. Take the Namsan cable car up, walk the terrace with the love locks, and go up to the observatory if you like. Cable car round trip 15,000 won per adult; observatory 29,000 won per adult.

Getting there: Line 2 Seongsu to Dongdaemun History & Culture Park, Line 4 to Myeongdong (2 stops), then walk uphill about 10 minutes to the cable car · about 40 min

Hours: Cable car 10:00-23:00 (last round-trip ticket 22:30); observatory 10:00-22:30 on weekdays, 10:00-23:00 on weekends, last entry 30 minutes before closing · source · Checked on 21 Nov 2026

Naver Map | Google Maps

Tip: The cable car can stop in bad weather, and evening lines can be long. Namsan circular buses 01A and 01B (1,500 won with T-money) also go up to the tower. A taxi back to Jongno from the cable car station takes about 15-20 minutes, depending on traffic. Cable car hours: namsancablecar.com

If it rains: The Secret Garden is an outdoor walk, and the palace can change or limit visits for safety in bad weather, so check the Changdeokgung notices that morning. In the afternoon go to the National Museum of Korea (Ichon Station, Line 4 / Gyeongui-Jungang Line; the permanent galleries are free in 2026) instead of walking Seongsu, and skip the tower if visibility is poor. Read our guide

Opening hours, prices and transit can change after the checked-on date. Check the official page the day before you go.

SAMPLE PLAN

DAY 4 · SAT, DEC 19, 2026

Deoksugung and Jeongdong-gil, Myeongdong lunch, fly home

MORNING

Deoksugung Palace and Jeongdong-gil 덕수궁·정동길

Check out and leave your bags at the hotel front desk. Deoksugung mixes traditional halls with Western-style stone buildings. Watch the free Royal Guard Changing Ceremony at Daehanmun Gate (11:00, also 14:00; no ceremony on Mondays; weather permitting), then walk the stone-wall road (Deoksugung Doldam-gil) and Jeongdong-gil. Entry 1,000 won per adult.

Getting there: Line 1 Jongno 3-ga to City Hall (2 stops), Exit 2 · about 15 min

Hours: 09:00-21:00, last entry 20:00; closed Mondays · source · Checked on 21 Nov 2026

Naver Map | Google Maps

Tip: Saturday is fine for Deoksugung; only Mondays are closed. Guard ceremony details: mediahub.seoul.go.kr/archives/2011787

AFTERNOON

Myeongdong 명동

Last lunch in Myeongdong: kalguksu and dumplings at a long-running noodle house, or a bowl of naengmyeon nearby, roughly 11,000-15,000 won per person. Pick up snacks and cosmetics, then collect your bags.

Getting there: Walk from Deoksugung, or Line 2 City Hall to Euljiro 1-ga (1 stop) · about 15 min

Hours: Shop hours vary; check the place you pick on Naver Map · Naver Map search · Checked on 21 Nov 2026

Naver Map | Google Maps

Tip: Aim to reach the airport about 3 hours before an international flight, so leave Myeongdong about 4-4.5 hours before departure (bags, Seoul Station, then the train).

EVENING

Incheon International Airport 인천국제공항

Back to the airport: hotel to Seoul Station, then AREX. If you shopped tax-free and did not get the refund in the store, keep your receipts, refund forms and passport. Tell the airline at check-in if the items are in your checked bag, then use the tax refund kiosks in the duty-free area after security (Terminal 1 near Gate 28, Terminal 2 near Gate 253).

Getting there: Taxi or subway to Seoul Station, then AREX Express or All-Stop · about 75 min

Hours: Open 24 hours · source · Checked on 21 Nov 2026

Naver Map | Google Maps

Tip: Check whether your flight leaves from Terminal 1 or Terminal 2; AREX stops at both.

If it rains: Keep Deoksugung short and go inside: the MMCA Deoksugung art museum is inside the palace grounds (its own ticket on top of palace entry; check what is showing), and the Seoul Museum of History is about a 15-minute walk away (free, 09:00-18:00, closed Mondays).

Opening hours, prices and transit can change after the checked-on date. Check the official page the day before you go.

SAMPLE PLAN

Rainy-day options

- National Museum of Korea (Ichon): large galleries, permanent exhibition free in 2026; half a day indoors.
- National Palace Museum (free permanent galleries) and National Folk Museum of Korea (free), both by Gyeongbokgung.
- Insadong tea houses and Ssamziegil, an indoor-friendly shopping lane.
- Starfield Library at COEX Mall (Line 2, Samseong Station): free and indoors, good for photos.

Good to know

- This is a sample plan for a fictional couple. A real plan is made for your dates, interests and pace.
- Opening hours, prices and event dates can change; check the official page the day before.
- Prices are approximate, per person, in Korean won, as of the checked-on date.
- This is an information product. You make all bookings yourself.
- Emergency: 112 police, 119 fire and ambulance. Korea Travel Hotline: 1330 (English, 24 hours; +82-2-1330 from a foreign phone).
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- Prices, opening hours and links were checked on the dates shown. Check the official page the day before you go.

Questions or changes

Email seoulexpress88@gmail.com. We reply within 1 business day (Korea time). To ask for changes, reply to our delivery email within 7 days of delivery (see our Terms & refund policy).

> We use our own planning tools and guides, and every plan is personally reviewed and edited by John Kim and Bomi Lee, locals who live in Seoul.

SAMPLE PLAN

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