THE INDEPENDENT CITY GUIDE

SETTLE SEOUL

Living. Working. Belonging.

2027

Seoul after dark | Photography from the Settle Seoul collection

YOUR FIRST WEEK

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

WORK & TEACHING

NEW: SEOUL ON FOOT

Four hiking pages, practical routes and a calmer way to discover the city.

REVISED 03 OCTOBER 2026

Open the contents

OFFICIAL CITY RESOURCE

Meet MY SEOUL+

Your city. A clearer starting point.

Seoul’s foreign-resident portal brings city information, support programmes and resident services together. Begin with the task you need to complete, then check the responsible organisation’s current notice.

Find the right service

• Search for resident centres and practical living information.

• Check languages, eligibility, booking requirements and the date of the notice.

Prepare one clear question

• State your visa or residence status when relevant.

• Keep your deadline, district and documents ready.

• For city information, you can also call 120.

OPEN THE OFFICIAL PORTAL

global.seoul.go.kr

Scan in print, or tap the QR code in the digital edition.
Official links and more QR codes are on page 82.

WELCOME

Make Seoul feel manageable

A note from Ben, founding editor

Welcome to Seoul. A phone number can unlock identity checks, which in turn affect banking and online services. Your address, work and health insurance each bring their own paperwork. The city becomes easier when you understand which step comes next.

Settle Seoul focuses on the questions newcomers ask most often: where to begin, what to prepare, what can go wrong and where to get a current answer.

This edition pairs everyday guidance with worked examples, public-service contacts and photographs from our Seoul collection. The new hiking section offers four different ways to find space above the city.

The 2027 label describes the edition. The review date tells you when a page was checked. Before a deadline, payment or application, confirm the requirement with the linked authority.

OUR EDITORIAL TEST

Can you see your next step?

Can you find the source?

Can you tell an example from a real offer?

Ben

Founding editor, Settle Seoul

MAKE IT YOURS

Start with the checklist on page 11. Save the digital edition offline and keep your personal documents in a separate, secure folder.

HOW TO USE

Use this guide as a route, not a rulebook

Use the four action prompts on the left and the four reading signals on the right. Blue underlined text opens a source or another page in this PDF.

01 Do this first

The safest immediate action when a process feels overwhelming.

02 Bring these

A compact preparation list. Confirm the final document set with the responsible office.

03 Common snag

A predictable point of failure and the most sensible next place to ask.

04 Check the live route

Use the official source shown on the page before any deadline, payment, or appointment.

05 Stable

Orientation and context that normally changes slowly. Review annually.

06 Review regularly

App workflows, transport products, and service routes. Re-check every few months.

07 Check before acting

Immigration, tax, eligibility, fees, and office procedures. Verify each time.

08 Commercial labels

Sponsored placements must carry a clear label. This edition lists public services and does not rank paid providers.

IMPORTANT

Start at MY SEOUL+ (global.seoul.go.kr) for city support. For legal, tax, immigration, financial or medical decisions, confirm with the responsible authority.

MY SEOUL+

NAVIGATE

Find the page you need

Tap a section. Use CONTENTS at the top of a page to return here.

02 MY SEOUL+

06 Essential numbers

07 Safety & emergency help

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KEEP THIS PAGE

The numbers worth saving

For immediate danger, call first. Give your location, then say what is happening and ask for language support.

112

Police

Immediate danger, crime or urgent police help.

119

Fire, ambulance & rescue

Medical emergencies, fires and rescue.

1345

Immigration

Status, applications, registration and reporting.

02-120

Seoul city information

Press 9, then follow the language menu. Foreign-language support: weekdays 09:00-18:00, excluding holidays.

1330

Travel help

Tourism information and interpretation. Use 112 or 119 for an emergency.

1577-1366

Danuri

Multilingual support for multicultural families and migrant women.

BEFORE YOU NEED HELP

Save your address in Korean, the building entrance, a nearby landmark and a trusted contact. Keep a copy available offline.

Emergency help 120 Dasan Danuri

SAFETY / 01

If something goes wrong

A simple response plan is easier to use under stress. Save the essential numbers and your accommodation address before you need them.

112
Police

119
Ambulance, fire, rescue

1. Give the location

Read the Korean address, building name or nearby landmark. Say which floor or entrance responders should use.

2. Explain the immediate problem

Keep it short: what happened, whether anyone is injured and whether the danger is still present.

3. Ask for English support

Stay on the line and follow the operator’s instructions. Ask someone nearby to help with the location if needed.

SAVE OFFLINE

Address in Korean: _____ Floor / unit: _____
Trusted contact: _____

Emergency help Seoul Safety Nuri

SAFETY / 02

Check the day before you go

Open the live source for local warnings, weather or air quality. Some official sites work best in a browser and may initially display Korean.

Seoul Safety Nuri

Local alerts, safety information and shelter-finding tools. Open settings to select available language notifications.

Open official resource

Korea Meteorological Administration

Weather forecasts and severe-weather information. Check the destination as well as central Seoul.

Open official resource

AirKorea

Air-quality information to help plan outdoor activity. Choose the relevant location.

Open official resource

Emergency and medical contacts

Korea Tourism Organization’s emergency page includes public helplines and international medical-centre contacts.

Open official resource

A SMALL BACKUP PLAN

Carry a charged phone, a payment backup and your Korean address. Follow local closure signs and official instructions during severe weather.

Seoul Safety Nuri KMA weather AirKorea

START HERE

Your first 48 hours

A first journey on the Seoul Metro

You do not need to solve Seoul in one day. Prioritise safety, connectivity, money, transport and a reliable document trail.

- Secure a working phone and a way to pay for transport.
- Confirm where you are staying and keep proof of the address.
- Create one folder for every official document and receipt.

MY SEOUL+

START HERE

A calm arrival sequence

Complete these in order where possible. A temporary workaround is fine until your residence card and local identity systems are active.

At the airport

- Connect to Wi-Fi and share your arrival plan.
- Keep passport, entry documents, address, and employer or host contact together.
- Choose an airport route that ends close to your actual accommodation.

On the first evening

- Confirm the building entrance code and exact unit address.
- Buy or charge a transport card if you have not already done so.
- Locate the nearest convenience store, pharmacy, and 24-hour help route.

On day one

- Arrange a Korean phone number or suitable temporary SIM.
- Ask your employer, school, or host which registration steps they support.
- Photograph meter readings and the condition of your accommodation.

During the first week

- Book any required immigration visit early.
- Prepare banking and residence-card documents.
- Check health-insurance status and payroll deductions once employment begins.

DO THIS FIRST

Write your complete Seoul address in a format you can show a taxi driver, emergency service, bank, clinic, and immigration officer.

MY SEOUL+

FIRST-WEEK CHECKLIST

Build the foundations

These tasks unlock many of the systems that make everyday life easier.

01 **Confirm your address**

Keep the signed lease, accommodation confirmation, or other accepted proof available.

02 **Get connected**

Choose a phone plan that matches your visa timeline, device, and need for identity verification.

03 **Start your document file**

Store passport copies, contracts, receipts, booking confirmations, and official messages.

04 **Map essential journeys**

Test the route to work, immigration, your bank, and the nearest clinic before deadlines.

05 **Plan immigration early**

Confirm your filing deadline and route. Book a visit if required, then save the actual application receipt.

06 **Prepare banking proof**

Bring identification plus evidence of the account purpose, such as an employment contract.

07 **Check payroll setup**

Confirm salary date, account deadline, deductions, and who handles insurance registration.

08 **Join one useful network**

Choose a resident centre, professional group, or local community that can answer practical questions.

KEEP EVIDENCE

When a requirement is unclear, record the office, date, channel, and answer you received. Procedures can vary in practice.

MY SEOUL+

FIRST-WEEK CHECKLIST

Pack one administration folder

A small amount of organisation prevents repeated trips and helps you explain your situation consistently.

Identity

- Passport and copies of the photo and visa pages.
- Residence card when issued.
- Recent photo only when an application specifically asks for one.

Address

- Signed lease or accommodation confirmation.
- Landlord or host details where required.
- A Korean-format address saved separately for daily use.

Work and study

- Signed contract and employer registration details.
- School or university documents.
- Pay statements, tax certificates, and insurance notices as they arrive.

A reliable record

- Appointment confirmations and application receipts.
- Screenshots of online submissions.
- Names, dates, and reference numbers from official calls.

COMMON SNAG

A digital copy may be useful but not accepted as the final document. Bring originals when the responsible office says they are required.

MY SEOUL+

PHONE & IDENTITY

Your phone becomes part of your identity

Everyday Seoul, whatever the weather

A local number can unlock banking, delivery, reservations and online services once it is properly linked to your identity.

- Choose a plan that can remain active beyond the first month.
- Ask how the subscriber name will match your residence record.
- Do not assume every prepaid or tourist SIM supports local verification.

PHONE & DIGITAL IDENTITY

Set up verification with patience

The exact workflow depends on your phone company, visa record, bank, app, and the spelling of your name.

Before choosing a plan

- Check handset compatibility and whether the device is unlocked.
- Ask whether the plan supports identity verification for registered foreign residents.
- Confirm contract length, early termination rules, and required payment method.

Name matching matters

- Use the same identity details held by immigration.
- Small differences in spacing or ordering can interrupt automated checks.
- Ask the provider to show how your name is stored if verification repeatedly fails.

PASS and similar services

- These services can provide mobile identity checks where supported.
- Eligibility and onboarding can vary by carrier and residence record.
- Use the carrier's current guidance rather than an old online tutorial.

If verification fails

- Re-check the phone subscriber name and residence-card details.
- Try the service's foreign-resident support route.
- Keep a second way to pay or book while the issue is corrected.

COMMON SNAG

Do not repeatedly alter spellings across services. First identify which record is authoritative, then align the others to it.

MY SEOUL+

ACCOUNTS & APPS

Start with four useful categories

Install only what solves a real task. Permissions, account rules, and language support change, so treat app names as examples rather than guarantees.

Navigation and transport

- A Korean mapping app for addresses, buses, and walking routes.
- A subway app for transfers and station information.
- T-money or the relevant transport-pass app for your device.

Communication

- KakaoTalk for messages and service notifications.
- A dependable translation tool with image and conversation modes.
- Your mobile carrier's account app or web portal.

Money and administration

- Your bank's app after branch setup.
- HiKorea for immigration routes and bookings.
- Government24, Hometax, NHIS, and NPS when relevant to your situation.

Everyday life

- Delivery or shopping only after identity and payment are working.
- Local weather and air-quality alerts.
- Emergency Ready or current official disaster-alert services.

PRIVACY CHECK

Use official app-store links, review permissions, and avoid giving identity documents to unofficial intermediaries.

MY SEOUL+

ACCOUNTS & APPS

Make your accounts recoverable

A lost phone should be inconvenient, not catastrophic. Set up recovery before you depend on an app.

01 **Use a durable email**

Keep an address you control independently of your employer or Korean mobile plan.

02 **Add recovery methods**

Where supported, add a backup email, trusted device, or recovery code.

03 **Protect your SIM**

Set a device lock and understand how your carrier replaces a lost SIM.

04 **Store key numbers**

Keep bank, carrier, immigration, and accommodation contacts outside the phone.

05 **Back up documents**

Use a secure location for copies, but keep originals protected separately.

06 **Check account names**

Record the exact name format each high-value service uses.

07 **Avoid shared logins**

Do not rely on an employer, partner, or agent to control your personal accounts.

08 **Review permissions**

Remove access from apps you stop using, especially location, contacts, and identity data.

> **DO THIS FIRST**
>
> Write down the exact English name shown on your passport and residence record before creating finance or government accounts.

MY SEOUL+

RESIDENCE & VISAS

Your status of stay

Keep the permissions, deadlines and evidence together.

01 **Permitted activity**

Check the exact work or study activity before starting.

02 **Expiry date**

Keep the date visible while planning any application.

03 **Required reports**

Address and other changes can have separate deadlines.

04 **The handling office**

Confirm the route and keep evidence of its answer.

HiKorea Immigration guide

Sources checked 13 Sep 2026

RESIDENCE & VISAS

Your immigration record and next application

Start with the status and permitted period in your own record. Booking a visit, submitting an application and receiving approval are different stages.

First registration

- For most arrivals staying over 90 days, registration is required within 90 days of entry. Exceptions apply.
- Ask for your status-specific document list. Start early enough to obtain missing evidence.

Prepare your application file

- Common items include the application form, passport, residence card and accepted address evidence.
- Add the documents required for your exact status and application. Retain the receipt and follow-up requests.

Before the expiry date

- The immigration guide says extensions can normally be filed from four months before expiry.
- It gives an earlier deadline for eligible online filing: the day before expiry. Confirm current service hours.

Work and travel changes

- Before starting a new activity, check whether permission or reporting is required.
- If an application is pending, ask the handling office what departure would do to that application and your re-entry position.

ASK THIS

"For my current status and expiry date, what must I file, by when, and what evidence confirms that you accepted it?"

HiKorea Immigration guide

HIKOREA & REPORTING

A booking is not a filing

Keep separate evidence of the appointment, the submitted application and the final decision.

Before booking

• Select the service and responsible immigration office for your actual task.

• Keep your permitted stay and filing deadline in view. A reservation alone does not extend your stay.

Online filing

• Use e-application only when your status and service are eligible.

• Check maintenance notices, retain the receipt and monitor requests for further documents.

At the appointment

• Bring the current form, originals, copies and fees required for your status.

• Keep the confirmation and proof of address. Confirm the accepted payment method.

When the route is unclear

• Call 1345 with your status, expiry date, address and intended change ready.

• If appointments are unavailable near expiry, ask the responsible office about filing; do not assume a walk-in exception.

A SAFER ROUTE FROM A PROTECTIVE FACILITY

Since the Ministry of Justice’s 4 September 2026 announcement, eligible victims of violence, abuse or trafficking in protective facilities may apply for stay permission through that facility’s immigration jurisdiction. Ask the facility or 1345.

HiKorea Immigration guide Protective-facility route

HIKOREA & REPORTING

Report changes before they become problems

Different changes have different deadlines and routes. Address changes are a particularly common source of avoidable penalties.

Change of place of stay

- Registered foreign residents generally have 15 days to report a change of place of stay.
- Confirm the accepted reporting channel and proof of address. Keep evidence of the completed report.

Typical evidence

- Lease agreement, purchase contract, or another document proving the move.
- Residence card and passport when the route requires them.
- Additional accommodation evidence if your name is not on the main lease.

Workplace and affiliation

- Your status determines whether a change requires permission, a report, or neither.
- E-2 instructors have specific workplace-reporting obligations.
- Do not begin an additional role until the immigration route is clear.

Other record changes

- Passport renewal, name, nationality, school, or organisation changes may need reporting.
- Update connected services after the immigration record changes.
- Keep proof that the report was accepted.

CURRENT RULE

Ask specifically for a "change of place of stay" report. A lease-related filing or an update to your bank address does not automatically complete it.

HiKorea Immigration guide

HOUSING

The apartment is only half the decision

A traditional interior from the collection; not a rental listing

Deposit risk, contract terms, building management, commute, noise, utilities and proof of address deserve as much attention as the room.

- Understand the payment structure before viewing.
- Check the owner, property and contract before transferring money.
- Photograph condition, meters, keys and included items on day one.

Seoul housing

HOUSING

Understand the three numbers

Most Seoul rental conversations become clearer once you separate the deposit, monthly rent, and building-management charge.

Jeonse

- A large lump-sum deposit is provided instead of normal monthly rent.
- The deposit is intended to be returned at the end of the lease.
- The size of the financial exposure makes independent checks essential.

Wolse

- A deposit is combined with monthly rent.
- A higher deposit may sometimes be exchanged for lower monthly rent.
- Confirm which costs sit outside the advertised rent.

Gwanlibi

- A management charge may cover shared services or selected utilities.
- Ask for the typical monthly amount and exactly what it includes.
- Heating, electricity, gas, water, internet, and parking may be separate.

The contract payment

- A portion of the deposit is commonly paid when the contract is signed.
- Do not transfer money simply to hold a viewing.
- Use a clear written receipt and verify who is entitled to receive the payment.

DO THIS FIRST

Set a total monthly housing budget that includes rent, management, utilities, internet, transport, and the cost of tying up a deposit.

Seoul housing Deposit protection

BEFORE SIGNING

Check the property, the person, and the promise

A beautiful room does not compensate for a weak contract or an unsafe deposit.

01 **Confirm the owner**

Check the current property record and the identity of the contracting party.

02 **Use a licensed agent**

Verify the office and keep the brokerage information and receipt.

03 **Read every special clause**

Add verbal promises to the contract in clear written language.

04 **Check existing claims**

Ask a qualified adviser to explain mortgages, priority claims, and deposit exposure.

05 **Define every payment**

State deposit, rent, management, utilities, brokerage fee, and payment dates.

06 **Inspect the building**

Check mould, water pressure, heating, ventilation, noise, locks, windows, and appliances.

07 **Confirm registration use**

Make sure the address and contract can support the residence paperwork you need.

08 **Plan the exit**

Understand notice, early termination, restoration, renewal, and deposit-return steps.

HIGH-STAKES

For a large deposit, obtain independent legal or specialist review before signing or transferring funds.

Seoul housing Deposit protection

BEFORE SIGNING

Deposit protection: the steps that matter

Complete the protection steps for your own lease. A signed contract and a transfer receipt alone do not establish every legal protection.

Before paying

- Match the owner and property record to the contract and the person receiving payment.
- Ask for independent review of secured debt, priority claims and eligibility for a deposit guarantee.

After taking possession

- For foreign residents, the relevant foreigner registration or address report can provide the legal effect of resident registration.
- Ask the local community centre about obtaining a fixed date on the lease. Possession, registration and a fixed date work together.

During the lease

- Keep the contract, payment evidence and a written repair record.
- Retain proof of your address filing and fixed date. Ask for advice before changing anything that supports your protection.

When the deposit is unpaid

- Seek advice before moving out or giving up possession.
- If the lease has ended, a court-ordered leasehold registration may preserve protection. Confirm completion and your next steps before leaving.

NEVER RELY ON

A fixed date helps establish repayment priority with the other required conditions. It does not guarantee recovery of the deposit.

Seoul housing Deposit protection

WORKED EXAMPLE

Reading a Seoul rental listing

Fictional listing and amounts for learning. These are not market estimates, a property offer or a guarantee of eligibility.

WOLSE / ONE-ROOM

1,000 / 70

Listing units: KRW 10,000
Management: 8

1,000

KRW 10,000,000 deposit

This is money tied up in the lease. Check the owner, claims and protection route before transferring.

70

KRW 700,000 monthly rent

Confirm the due date and exact bank account in the signed contract.

8

KRW 80,000 management fee

Ask for the included items in writing. Utilities, internet or parking may be separate.

RECURRING TOTAL IN THIS EXAMPLE

KRW 780,000 a month + anything excluded

Deposit, brokerage and moving costs sit outside that monthly total.

Seoul housing Deposit protection

MOVING & UTILITIES

Make moving day evidence-friendly

A simple visual and written record makes later disputes about condition, contents, and utilities far easier to resolve.

Before the truck arrives

- Confirm lift use, parking access, and building protection rules.
- Check whether the moving company includes packing, disposal, disassembly, and insurance.
- Reserve bulky-waste disposal through the correct district route.

Create the condition record

- Film each room before placing furniture.
- Photograph damage, mould, fixtures, appliances, and included items.
- Capture electricity, gas, and water readings where applicable.

Connect services

- Confirm which utilities are individual and which are building-managed.
- Arrange gas safety or activation appointments when required.
- Keep account numbers and payment routes with the lease documents.

Update your address

- Complete the required immigration report within the current deadline.
- Update your employer, bank, insurer, delivery accounts, and other essential services.
- Redirect or monitor mail from the previous address.

PRACTICAL TIP

Keep one box accessible with bedding, chargers, medicine, toiletries, documents, cleaning supplies, and a change of clothes.

Seoul housing Deposit protection

HOUSING / REPORTING

Two reports to put in your diary

A lease report and an immigration address report serve different purposes. Check both when you move.

01 / Housing lease report

• In Seoul, report a qualifying lease within 30 days of signing when the deposit exceeds KRW 60 million OR monthly rent exceeds KRW 300,000.

• New and renewed contracts are covered; renewals with unchanged amounts are excluded.

How to file

• Use the property’s local community service centre or the official real-estate transaction system.

• Landlord and tenant report jointly; one party may file with the contract attached. That route also grants a fixed date.

02 / Change of residence

• Registered foreign residents generally must report a new place of stay within 15 days of moving.

• Confirm the route and supporting accommodation documents with HiKorea or 1345. Keep the acknowledgement.

Protect the deposit

• Lease reporting does not replace every deposit-protection step. Confirm the effect of actual possession, residence reporting and a fixed date for your case.

• Before transferring a large deposit, check ownership, prior claims and guarantee eligibility.

KEEP THE EVIDENCE

Save the signed contract, transfer receipts, both filing acknowledgements and any deposit-guarantee documents. Ask for help before a deadline passes.

Lease reporting / MOLIT Immigration guide Seoul housing

MONEY

Open the account you actually need

A bank may ask for identification and objective proof of the account's purpose. Requirements can vary by branch and product.

Bring a strong document set

- Passport and residence card when issued.
- Employment contract, certificate of employment, or other proof of purpose.
- Korean phone number, address, and tax-residency information when requested.

Explain the purpose

- Salary deposits, everyday spending, remittance, rent, and savings can require different functions.
- Without sufficient proof, a new account may have transaction limits.
- Ask which limits can be reviewed later and what evidence will be needed.

Choose the branch carefully

- Language support and familiarity with foreign-resident accounts vary.
- A branch near work or home can make follow-up easier.
- Confirm app access, transfer limits, debit card, transport function, and overseas use.

Protect access

- Never share one-time passwords or security certificates.
- Use official phone numbers and apps.
- Treat urgent calls about frozen money, prosecutors, or safe accounts as potential fraud.

BEFORE YOU VISIT

Call the chosen branch and ask for the current foreign-resident document list for the exact account and service you need.

MY SEOUL+ National Tax Service

MONEY

Compare remittance on total cost

The cheapest-looking fee is not always the cheapest transfer once exchange rate, receiving charges, limits, and timing are included.

Compare like with like

- Amount the recipient will actually receive.
- Exchange-rate margin as well as the stated fee.
- Sending limit, processing time, receiving-bank deduction, and cancellation route.

Bank transfer

- Useful for larger or fully documented transactions.
- The bank may request evidence of employment, income, or the purpose of funds.
- Recipient name, bank address, account number, and SWIFT details must be exact.

Specialist services

- Can be faster or cheaper for routine transfers.
- Check regulation, identity requirements, supported currencies, and customer support.
- Do not use a service solely because a social-media post offers a referral bonus.

Build an audit trail

- Keep transfer confirmations and exchange records.
- Record the source of large incoming funds.
- Ask a qualified adviser about tax or reporting implications for significant cross-border movements.

FRAUD CHECK

Pause any transfer involving secrecy, urgency, remote-control software, cryptocurrency conversion, or a request to move money into a 'safe' account.

MY SEOUL+ National Tax Service

TAX, PENSION & PAYSLIPS

Read the payslip as a monthly health check

Your payslip should help you reconcile the contract, bank deposit, tax withholding, and social-insurance deductions.

Check every month

- Gross salary, allowances, overtime, bonuses, and deductions.
- Pay period and actual payday.
- Employer name and your recorded personal details.

Tax

- Foreign residents may be affected by residence, treaty, income type, and available deductions.
- Employees commonly complete year-end settlement through the employer.
- Use the National Tax Service English guidance for the correct year.

National pension

- Coverage and refund eligibility depend on nationality, visa, employment, and social-security agreements.
- Do not assume every foreign worker can take a lump-sum refund.
- Confirm your contribution record directly with NPS.

Keep these records

- Monthly payslips and bank credits.
- Employment and withholding certificates.
- NHIS, NPS, employment-insurance, and tax notices.

IF SOMETHING DIFFERS

Ask payroll for a written explanation promptly. Unexplained or missing deductions are easier to resolve while the employment record is current.

National Tax Service National Pension Service NHIS support

MONEY DIRECTORY

Use specialists for the question, not the sales pitch

Financial help is most useful when the adviser clearly states their qualifications, fee, scope, and conflicts of interest.

Everyday banking

- Branches experienced with foreign residents
- English-language customer service
- Debit, transfer, and account-access support

Tax and payroll

- Tax accountants serving foreign residents
- Year-end settlement and global-income guidance
- Payslip and withholding-document support

International transfers

- Bank remittance desks
- Regulated transfer providers
- Currency and receiving-cost comparison

Pension and insurance

- Official NPS and NHIS centres
- Social-security agreement guidance
- Independent regulated advice for private products

ASK BEFORE PAYING

Who regulates you? How are you paid? What do you not cover? Will I receive the advice and fee in writing?

MY SEOUL+ National Tax Service

HEALTHCARE

Know where to start before you feel unwell

A quieter moment beside the water

A neighbourhood clinic is often a practical first stop. Larger hospitals may involve referrals, higher patient costs and more complex navigation.

- Check health-insurance status and contribution notices.
- Save one nearby clinic, pharmacy and emergency route.
- Carry a short medication and allergy record.

NHIS eligibility NHIS support

HEALTH INSURANCE

Which health-insurance route applies?

Confirm your actual NHIS eligibility date. Employment, dependent coverage and residence-based enrolment follow different rules.

Through a covered workplace

- Covered foreign employees generally enter through employment. Do not apply the six-month residence rule to every employee.
- Ask payroll for the reported start date, then confirm the record with NHIS.

As a family dependent

- Dependent coverage requires an eligibility check, including family relationship, income and property conditions.
- Ask NHIS about the residence-period requirement and exemptions, including those for a subscriber’s spouse and children under 19.

As a local subscriber

- Many eligible foreign residents become compulsorily insured after six months of residence.
- Status-specific rules and exceptions can change the date. Confirm your category and current contribution directly.

When a job or status changes

- Ask NHIS what coverage follows the workplace end date, and whether a dependent application or another filing is needed.
- Confirm any gap, bill and new start date before relying on insurance for treatment.

NHIS ENGLISH SUPPORT

033-811-2000. Have your employment dates, current status and family situation ready. Ask for the applicable category and effective date.

NHIS eligibility NHIS support

USING HEALTHCARE

Choose the right level of care

Starting at the appropriate clinic can save time and money while helping you reach specialist care when it is genuinely needed.

Neighbourhood clinic

- Often the best first stop for common symptoms, prescriptions, and routine care.
- Search by specialty: internal medicine, ENT, dermatology, orthopaedics, paediatrics, or women's health.
- Call ahead if English support is important.

Hospital

- Tertiary hospitals generally need a referral for the usual NHIS route, with exceptions. Check before booking.
- Ask international centres about language support, referral documents and any additional charges.

Emergency

- Call 119 for ambulance, fire, or rescue.
- Give the address and immediate danger first.
- Take identification, medication information, and a contact person if possible.

Before treatment

- Ask whether the service is covered by NHIS.
- Request an estimate for non-covered tests, materials, or rooms.
- Keep the itemised receipt and prescription details.

NOT A DIAGNOSIS

This guide helps you navigate services. A qualified clinician must assess symptoms and treatment decisions.

NHIS eligibility NHIS support

USING HEALTHCARE

Make the appointment easier

A short, structured explanation is more useful than a long story when language, time, or stress is limiting communication.

Prepare four facts

- Main symptom and exact location.
- When it started and whether it is worsening.
- Medication, allergies, conditions, and recent treatment.
- What you are most worried about or need to do next.

At the pharmacy

- Show the prescription and check dose, timing, and duration.
- Ask whether a medicine may cause drowsiness or interact with current medication.
- Keep the pharmacy label and do not share prescriptions.

Useful records

- Passport or residence card and health-insurance information.
- A translated medication list.
- Previous results or imaging when relevant.
- Receipts needed for reimbursement or private insurance.

If you need interpretation

- Ask the provider about language support before booking.
- Use a professional interpreter for complex or sensitive decisions where possible.
- Do not let an app replace informed consent or an urgent clinical assessment.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Write one sentence each for symptom, timing, severity, medication, allergy, and the help you need.

NHIS eligibility NHIS support

WALKTHROUGH

Your first neighbourhood clinic visit

An example of navigating a routine appointment. If you need urgent medical help, call 119 instead of waiting for a routine booking.

01 Before leaving

Call about opening hours, the right specialty and English support. Confirm NHIS eligibility and take accepted identification, medication and allergy details.

02 At reception

Ask whether you need an appointment and how long the wait is. Show your identity document and confirm how the clinic will apply your insurance.

03 With the clinician

Explain the main symptom, when it started and what has changed. Mention medicines and allergies. Ask what the next step is and when to seek further help.

04 At payment and the pharmacy

Request an itemised receipt. Take any prescription to a pharmacy and check the dose, timing, duration and important cautions.

A SHORT EXPLANATION TO PREPARE

"My main symptom is ____. It started ____. It is getting ____.
I take ____. I am allergic to ____."

NHIS support Emergency help

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

Ask for help before the problem becomes a crisis

Moving countries can intensify isolation, anxiety, relationship strain, work stress, and existing mental-health difficulties.

Find the right level

- Counselling for support, adjustment, patterns, and coping.
- Clinical psychology for structured assessment and psychological treatment.
- Psychiatry for medical evaluation, diagnosis, and medication where appropriate.

Ask a provider

- Qualifications, registration, supervision, and experience with your concern.
- Language, confidentiality, records, fees, cancellation, and emergency boundaries.
- Whether online sessions are legally and clinically suitable across your location.

Low-cost routes

- Seoul foreign-resident centres periodically offer multilingual counselling programmes.
- Universities and employers may provide confidential assistance.
- Programme eligibility and dates change, so use the current MY SEOUL+ listing.

Immediate danger

- Call 112 or 119 when there is immediate danger or urgent medical need.
- Contact a trusted person and move away from means of harm.
- Use a crisis service appropriate to your language and location.

YOUR SAFETY MATTERS

If you may harm yourself or someone else, seek immediate emergency help now rather than waiting for a routine appointment.

MY SEOUL+ Emergency help

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

Build a Seoul support map

Resilience is easier when support exists before you urgently need it.

01 **One local person**

Someone who can meet you, interpret context, or help with an urgent practical problem.

02 **One person at home**

Agree how often you will check in without turning every difficult day into a crisis.

03 **One professional route**

Save a clinic, counsellor, employee programme, or university service you would genuinely use.

04 **One community**

Choose a group built around an activity, identity, neighbourhood, faith, or profession.

05 **A sleep boundary**

Protect a regular wind-down period from work messages and late-night scrolling.

06 **A movement routine**

Use Seoul's parks, mountains, river paths, gyms, or classes consistently.

07 **A money buffer**

Even a small emergency fund can reduce the pressure of job or housing uncertainty.

08 **A crisis plan**

Write who to call, where to go, and what helps you stay safe when overwhelmed.

NOTICE THE PATTERN

Persistent changes in sleep, appetite, concentration, mood, substance use, or functioning are reasons to seek professional assessment.

MY SEOUL+ Emergency help

WORKING IN KOREA

The contract is the beginning, not the whole job

Inside the city’s working day

Your visa, actual duties, working hours, payroll, insurance, workplace culture and exit terms all affect whether a role is sustainable.

- Match the role to the activity your status permits.
- Keep a signed contract and monthly payroll record.
- Raise discrepancies in writing while evidence is fresh.

MOEL HiKorea

CONTRACTS & LABOUR

Turn the offer into testable terms

A good contract makes salary, time, duties, benefits, and exit conditions clear enough to verify later.

Identity and term

- Correct legal employer and work location.
- Start date, end date, probation, renewal, and visa responsibility.
- Job title and the permitted activity connected to your status.

Time

- Working days, start and finish times, breaks, teaching or client-contact hours.
- Preparation, meetings, events, travel, weekend work, and overtime.
- Annual leave, public holidays, closure days, and approval process.

Money

- Gross salary, allowances, housing, deposit, bonus, deductions, and payday.
- Overtime or extra-duty calculation.
- Tax and social-insurance treatment.

Exit

- Notice, final pay, severance eligibility, housing departure, documents, and property return.
- Who pays immigration, recruitment, flight, training, or relocation costs.
- Any repayment clause and whether it is lawful and proportionate.

BEFORE SIGNING

Ask the employer to explain any difference between the advert, interview, handbook, and contract. Put the agreed answer in writing.

MOEL HiKorea

WORK / REFERENCE

The numbers behind your pay

Your worker status, workplace size and contracted hours affect which provisions apply.

2026 / IN FORCE

KRW 10,320

minimum hourly wage

2027 / FROM 1 JANUARY

KRW 10,700

Announced 5 August 2026

The 2027 monthly equivalent is KRW 2,236,300 on the ministry’s 209-hour basis (40 contracted hours per week). This is a calculation basis, not every worker’s monthly entitlement.

Written terms & payslips	Keep wage items, hours, holidays and leave in writing. Ask for an itemised wage statement.
Five or more employees	The Labour Standards Act generally applies at this workplace-size threshold; smaller workplaces still have obligations.
Under 15 hours a week	Articles 55 and 60 exclude employees averaging under 15 contracted weekly hours over four weeks. Count all contracted work, not only teaching.
Annual leave	Where Article 60 applies, 80% annual attendance generally earns 15 days; in the first year, a fully attended month generally earns one day.
Retirement benefits	Service under one year and average weekly hours under 15 over four weeks are generally excluded. Ask which scheme applies.

CHECK THE CALCULATION

For a pay or benefit dispute, keep the contract, work schedule and payslips together. Contact MOEL (1350) or a qualified labour adviser.

Minimum-wage notice Labour Standards Act Retirement benefits

FINDING WORK

Search by fit, not only by title

A role can sound ideal but fail on visa eligibility, hours, location, housing, management, or the actual daily work.

Define the non-negotiables

- Permitted work under your status.
- Maximum commute and schedule boundaries.
- Minimum compensation after housing and transport.
- Age group, duties, and professional direction.

Use several channels

- Direct employer pages and established job boards.
- Professional networks, universities, associations, and resident communities.
- Recruiters who disclose the employer, contract, and fee relationship clearly.

Research the organisation

- Legal business identity and location.
- Recent staff experience from more than one source.
- Curriculum, enrolment, turnover, leadership, and financial warning signs.

Keep an application record

- Advert, job description, salary, contact, and date.
- Documents sent and personal data shared.
- Interview answers, promised follow-up, and final contract changes.

A BETTER QUESTION

What would make a capable person leave this role within six months? Ask the employer - and yourself - before accepting.

MOEL HiKorea

FINDING WORK

Interview the employer too

Specific questions make it harder for an unsuitable role to hide behind a friendly conversation.

01 **Why is the position open?**

Ask where the previous employee went and how long people usually remain.

02 **What fills the working day?**

Separate teaching, preparation, meetings, supervision, events, and administration.

03 **How is performance judged?**

Request concrete expectations, observation processes, and support during probation.

04 **Who manages the role?**

Clarify reporting lines, decision authority, and day-to-day communication.

05 **How does leave work?**

Ask how dates are chosen, recorded, and handled during closures.

06 **What changes at busy times?**

Discuss camps, events, enrolment periods, tests, and parent meetings.

07 **Can I speak to staff?**

A private conversation with a current and, if possible, recent employee is valuable.

08 **What supports the visa?**

Confirm who prepares documents, pays fees, and reports workplace changes.

RED FLAG

Pressure to sign immediately, refusal to provide a complete contract, or instructions to work before permission is clear should stop the process.

MOEL HiKorea

WORK ADMINISTRATION

Make the first month auditable

The first payslip and insurance records reveal whether the job is being administered as promised.

Before day one

- Keep the final signed contract.
- Confirm permitted workplace and any immigration filing.
- Submit only the identity and bank information genuinely required.

During the month

- Record actual start, finish, break, and extra-duty time.
- Keep schedules, messages, and approved leave.
- Ask for written changes to duties or location.

At payday

- Match gross pay and allowances to the contract.
- Reconcile the net deposit with every deduction.
- Obtain the written wage statement. Ask for an explanation of missing items or calculation methods.

Check registration

- Confirm NHIS and pension records where applicable.
- Review immigration workplace reporting.
- Correct names, dates, and address discrepancies early.

SIMPLE HABIT

Save one PDF folder per month containing the schedule, payslip, bank credit, and any approved overtime or leave.

MOEL HiKorea

WORKED EXAMPLE

From gross pay to the bank deposit

Illustrative arithmetic only. Every deduction below is invented to show the reading method; none is a statutory rate or a personal payroll estimate.

ITEM	EXAMPLE KRW
Base salary	2,800,000
Housing allowance	500,000
Gross pay	**3,300,000**
Pension deduction (illustrative)	150,000
Health + long-term care (illustrative)	130,000
Income + local tax (illustrative)	70,000
Other lawful deduction (illustrative)	20,000
Total deductions	**370,000**
Net pay / expected bank credit	**2,930,000**

3 checks before filing it away

Match each earning to your contract and any agreed extra work.

Ask what each deduction covers and how it was calculated.

Check that gross pay minus deductions equals the bank credit.

Also check the pay period, payment date, employee identity and recorded hours. Keep personal copies of both the statement and bank entry.

Labour Standards Act National Tax Service NHIS support

WORK ADMINISTRATION

Escalate with evidence and the right authority

Start with a clear written question when safe. Move to official or professional help when the issue involves wages, safety, discrimination, immigration, or retaliation.

Write the issue precisely

- What the contract or law appears to require.
- What actually happened, with dates and amounts.
- The specific correction or answer you are requesting.

Preserve evidence

- Contract, payslips, bank records, schedules, messages, photos, and witnesses.
- Keep personal copies outside an employer-controlled account.
- Do not secretly record or publish material without understanding legal and privacy risks.

Choose the route

- MOEL 1350 for employment and labour guidance.
- 1345 for immigration consequences.
- Police or emergency services for immediate danger or crime.
- A qualified lawyer or labour attorney for individual representation.

Protect your status

- Do not resign, stop attending, or start another job without understanding contract and immigration effects.
- Ask how final pay, housing, insurance, and workplace reporting will be handled.
- Keep proof of every submission and handover.

URGENT

Immediate danger, violence, confinement, document seizure, or threats may require police or emergency help rather than an internal workplace process.

MOEL HiKorea

TEACHING PATHWAYS

Choose the teaching system, not only the school name

Hagwons, public schools, private schools, international schools, universities, and corporate teaching offer very different working lives.

Hagwon

- Private academy with schedules shaped by enrolment and parent expectations.
- Roles range from early years to exam preparation and adult instruction.
- Check teaching load, preparation, events, curriculum ownership, and staff turnover.

Public and private schools

- Structured school calendar and broader institutional setting.
- Direct hire and programme roles differ in duties, pay, housing, and co-teaching.
- Confirm after-school classes, camps, desk-warming, and vacation expectations.

International schools

- Often require recognised teaching credentials and relevant school experience.
- Curriculum, safeguarding, assessment, and extracurricular expectations are substantial.
- Eligibility rules for foreign schools and individual recruitment standards vary.

University and specialist roles

- University language teaching, testing, curriculum, publishing, AI-language work, and corporate training can suit experienced educators.
- Qualifications, research record, availability, and contract structure differ widely.
- Read the actual workload and renewal criteria carefully.

CAREER LENS

The best next role should improve at least two of these: teaching quality, professional learning, time, pay, stability, or future opportunity.

MOEL HiKorea

TEACHING PATHWAYS

Compare the whole teaching package

These are tendencies, not guarantees. The individual contract and leadership team matter more than the label.

Hagwon

- Strength: fast classroom experience
- Check: hours, prep, events, turnover
- Best for: teachers who value active delivery and clear student groups

International school

- Strength: curriculum and professional progression
- Check: credentials, safeguarding, workload, extracurricular duties
- Best for: licensed teachers with relevant experience

Public school

- Strength: school calendar and institutional setting
- Check: co-teaching, camps, placement, renewal
- Best for: teachers comfortable with collaboration and variable role definition

University / specialist

- Strength: autonomy or focused expertise
- Check: contact hours, research, split shifts, renewal, benefits
- Best for: qualified educators building a specialist profile

VISA NOTE

The immigration status and permitted activity must match the actual employer, workplace, and teaching duties.

MOEL HiKorea

CHOOSING AN EMPLOYER

Run a teaching-employer due-diligence check

A polished advert is not evidence of a well-run school.

01 Legal employer

Confirm the registered business or institution and the actual work locations.

02 Current timetable

Request a realistic sample showing teaching, planning, breaks, meetings, and events.

03 Curriculum reality

Ask what is supplied, what teachers create, and how materials are reviewed.

04 Class conditions

Check ages, levels, size, support, assessment, and behaviour procedures.

05 Leadership

Identify who makes academic, scheduling, payroll, and discipline decisions.

06 Staff voice

Speak privately with current teachers and seek recent, specific experience.

07 Child safety

Expect clear safeguarding, supervision, reporting, and staff-conduct standards.

08 Exit history

Ask how recent departures, final pay, housing, and documents were handled.

BEST EVIDENCE

A complete timetable, written policy, consistent staff accounts, and a contract that matches the interview are stronger than reassurance.

MOEL HiKorea

CHOOSING AN EMPLOYER

Recognise the warning pattern

One imperfect detail may be fixable. Several of these together often signal deeper operational problems.

Before signing

- Employer identity or location is vague.
- The advert, interview, and contract use different salary or hours.
- You are asked to pay a recruiter or surrender original documents.
- The role begins before the correct immigration route is complete.

About the work

- Breaks exist on paper but not in the timetable.
- Unpaid events, meetings, bus duty, or preparation are described as voluntary.
- Duties expand without written agreement.
- Teachers are blamed for systemic curriculum or enrolment problems.

About people

- High turnover is dismissed without explanation.
- You cannot speak privately with staff.
- Managers use threats involving visas, housing, references, or pay.
- Safeguarding concerns are minimised.

About money

- Late or irregular salary.
- No clear payslip or unexplained deductions.
- Insurance registration does not match the employment record.
- A large housing or training penalty discourages lawful departure.

PAUSE

If you feel pressured to ignore a contradiction now, assume the contradiction will be harder to resolve after moving, starting work, or changing status.

MOEL HiKorea

EDUCATION & KOREAN

Choose education by eligibility, language, and daily fit

Foreign children may attend Korean schools, while foreign and international schools have their own eligibility, admissions, and fee structures.

Korean schools

- Public and private options are available, with local enrolment processes.
- Korean proficiency and transition support can shape the child's experience.
- Contact the school and Seoul Office of Education for current requirements.

Foreign and international schools

- Eligibility can depend on parent nationality, overseas residence, or naturalisation history.
- Schools set their own applications, tests, interviews, documents, and fees.
- Prepare previous school, health, identity, and academic records early.

Adult Korean learning

- Foreign-resident centres offer practical classes across Seoul.
- University language institutes provide intensive structured study.
- Online King Sejong and other public resources support flexible learning.

Choose a realistic course

- Match intensity to work and family commitments.
- Prioritise daily-life listening and speaking as well as test preparation.
- Use the language immediately in one repeated context each week.

CURRENT LISTINGS

School admissions and class schedules change. Confirm directly with the institution and the relevant official education route.

Foreign schools MY SEOUL+ Danuri

TEACHING / JOB OFFERS

Keep a record of the offer

Read the employer’s original advert. Confirm the final terms and work eligibility before accepting.

The facts to collect

• Legal employer, authorised recruiter and exact workplace.

• Age group, timetable, paid preparation and administrative duties.

• Salary, housing, benefits, start date and contract term.

Check eligibility

• Match your visa and permission to the actual duties, location and employer.

• Ask 1345 about any permission or report needed before starting or changing workplaces.

Before sending documents

• Verify the employer and why each sensitive document is needed.

• Use the confirmed application route and keep the original advert.

• Check the deadline; reposted vacancies may already be closed.

Before signing

• Resolve conflicting salary, housing or hours information in writing.

• Keep every version of the offer and the final signed contract.

• Ask to speak privately with a current or former teacher.

COMPARE THE WHOLE WEEK

A low number of classroom hours can still mean a long working week. Ask for a sample timetable showing lessons, preparation, meetings, breaks and travel between sites.

MOEL HiKorea

GETTING AROUND

Choose for the trips you make

Start with your residency, usual routes and monthly travel pattern.

Occasional trips	T-money or a compatible pay-as-you-go card. Keep enough balance and tap consistently.
Short stay in Seoul	Compare the remaining short-term Climate Card passes with your exact route and stay length.
Registered Seoul resident	Check Modu Card / K-Pass and Seoul’s Climate Pass benefit rules, registration and eligible journeys.
Airport or intercity travel	Check the operator, terminal, fare and ticket separately. A city pass is not a universal ticket.

READ THE OCTOBER POSITION

The old 30-day Climate Card route has ended. Page 54 explains the transition and the registration step that unlocks resident benefits.

Seoul card Q&A K-Pass Official route map

GETTING AROUND / OCTOBER 2026

The Climate Card transition

Check the live terms when choosing a pass. A card that still taps may no longer carry its old benefits.

The old monthly cards

• Prepaid 30-day Climate Cards ended by 29 September 2026.

• Postpaid Climate Cards became ordinary transport cards on 1 October. The temporary enhanced high-fuel-price discounts ended on 30 September.

Short-term cards remain

• The 1-, 2-, 3-, 5- and 7-day Climate Cards continue.

• Coverage is Seoul plus Incheon Airport exit. Former neighbouring-city coverage is excluded. Confirm the exact line, station and service before buying.

Resident benefits

• Climate Pass adds Seoul benefits to Modu Card / K-Pass. Seoul’s youth category is 19-39.

• Foreign residents need a foreigner registration number and supported identity verification. Card-issuer requirements also apply.

Register before relying on it

• Obtain a participating card and complete K-Pass registration. Prepaid products also need issuer registration and a refund account.

• Seoul’s Q&A; says registered use is assessed in that same calendar month. Refund payment timing is separate.

IF IDENTITY VERIFICATION FAILS

Confirm the spelling and number against your residence record and phone account. Use K-Pass support (031-427-4415) or the card issuer for the step that is failing.

Seoul Q&A / September update Foreign-resident registration K-Pass

KTX & AIRPORTS

Plan the last transfer first

For airports and intercity trains, the stressful part is often the final connection, luggage, or time buffer rather than the headline journey time.

High-speed and intercity rail

- Use official Korail or other operator routes for current schedules and reservations.
- Check the exact Seoul station, train type, carriage, and ticket conditions.
- Allow time for large stations and holiday-period demand.

Airport rail

- All-stop and express services have different stopping patterns and ticketing.
- Check which terminal your airline uses.
- Plan station lifts and walking time when carrying luggage.

Airport bus

- Can reduce transfers when a stop is near home or the hotel.
- Traffic makes the journey time less predictable.
- Confirm stop location, timetable, luggage policy, and payment method.

Taxi or booked vehicle

- Useful for groups, heavy luggage, very early departures, or inaccessible routes.
- Use a legitimate dispatch or taxi service.
- Confirm tolls, late-night surcharge, terminal, and pickup point.

DEPARTURE BUFFER

Build the plan backwards from the airport or platform deadline, then add realistic time for elevators, queues, traffic, and a wrong exit.

Official route map Public transport MY SEOUL+

ACCESSIBLE & LATE-NIGHT TRAVEL

Design a journey around the person, not the map

A route with fewer transfers, reliable lifts, or a staffed connection may be better than the mathematically fastest option.

Accessibility

- Check lift location at both the boarding and destination stations.
- Allow for long interchanges and platform gaps.
- Ask 120 or the transport operator about current support and facilities.

With children or luggage

- Avoid the busiest interchange where a direct bus or taxi is practical.
- Keep one hand free and label essential bags.
- Confirm stroller, suitcase, and car-seat needs before a booked ride.

Late at night

- Last-train times vary by line, station, and day.
- Night buses cover selected corridors, not every neighbourhood.
- Use official or established taxi dispatch and verify the destination before moving.

If stranded

- Move to a well-lit staffed location.
- Share your live location with a trusted person.
- Use 1330 for travel help, 120 for Seoul information, or emergency services when needed.

PLAN B

Save enough phone battery and payment capacity for one unexpected taxi ride when travelling late, with dependants, or beyond your normal route.

Official route map Public transport MY SEOUL+

EVERYDAY SEOUL

The city works through small routines

Neighbourhood shopping, close to home

Deliveries, recycling, building notices, repairs, shopping and neighbourhood etiquette are where Seoul shifts from destination to home.

- Learn your building’s waste system before the first bag.
- Keep delivery instructions short and your address consistent.
- Use the district or 120 route when a local rule is unclear.

MY SEOUL+

EVERYDAY SYSTEMS

Learn the building before the city

Your apartment manager, landlord, noticeboard, and neighbours often explain the rules that vary by building or district.

Waste

- Use the correct general-waste bags for your district.
- Separate recyclables according to the building schedule.
- Food waste uses designated bags, bins, or RFID systems depending on the property.

Food-waste basics

- Remove excess moisture and non-food material.
- Hard shells, large bones, pits, tea grounds, and similar items may belong in general waste.
- Follow the current district or building instruction when uncertain.

Building communication

- Translate notices about inspections, water, lifts, pest control, and parking.
- Ask how repairs are requested and who pays for different faults.
- Keep emergency access and management numbers.

Noise and shared space

- Use considerate hours for vacuuming, laundry, moving, and exercise.
- Do not leave objects in corridors or emergency routes.
- Raise repeated concerns calmly through the correct management route.

COMMON SNAG

Waste rules can differ by district and building. Copying what one neighbour did once is not a reliable disposal policy.

MY SEOUL+ 120 Dasan Seoul Safety Nuri

SHOPPING & HOME

Choose the shop that solves the next problem

Seoul offers almost everything, but the best buying route depends on urgency, language, return rights, delivery, and installation.

Convenience stores

- Quick essentials, transport-card services, parcel functions, and simple food.
- Services vary by chain and branch.
- Useful as a first-week bridge, not always the cheapest regular option.

Markets and supermarkets

- Traditional markets offer produce, prepared food, household items, and local rhythm.
- Large supermarkets simplify labelled comparison and bulk shopping.
- Check delivery, membership, closing days, and bag policies.

Online shopping

- Often requires local identity, phone, address, and payment setup.
- Check seller, return address, shipping fee, installation, and warranty.
- Be cautious with imported electrical items and unclear certification.

Second-hand

- Useful for furniture, appliances, children's items, and short stays.
- Meet safely, test the item, and keep the platform record.
- Avoid advance payment to an unverifiable seller.

BEFORE CHECKOUT

Confirm the Korean delivery address, unit, building-access instruction, phone number, return route, and installation requirement.

MY SEOUL+

HOUSEHOLD SERVICES

Buy time carefully

The best household service is one that states the task, price, arrival window, responsibility, and complaint route clearly.

Cleaning and laundry

- One-off move cleaning
- Regular home cleaning
- Dry cleaning, coin laundry, and pickup services

Delivery and parcels

- Building access and safe-drop instructions
- Parcel lockers and collection points
- Same-day courier and moving-small-items services

Repairs and installation

- Landlord or building-managed repair route
- Appliance and manufacturer service
- Independent repair with written scope and price

Mobile and internet

- Carrier plans and installation
- Contract length and cancellation
- Router, device, support language, and final bill

SERVICE CHECK

Get the price, included work, extra-charge triggers, arrival window, cancellation, and damage responsibility in writing.

MY SEOUL+ 120 Dasan Seoul Safety Nuri

FOOD & ORDERING

Start with the ordering logic

The cuisine is easier to explore when you understand portions, shared dishes, minimum orders, side dishes, and how the restaurant wants customers to order.

Read the menu structure

- Price may be per person, per portion, or per dish.
- Some barbecue, stew, or set-menu items require a minimum number of portions.
- Rice, noodles, drinks, and extras may be separate.

Shared food

- Many meals are designed for the table rather than one individual plate.
- Side dishes may be refilled, but not every item is unlimited.
- Ask before moving serving utensils between dishes.

Ordering in person

- Pointing and confirming quantity is acceptable.
- Use simple language and repeat the final item count.
- If a kiosk has no English, photograph the menu and ask staff for the relevant category.

Delivery

- Check minimum spend, delivery fee, disposable items, and address note.
- Secure-payment and account access vary by platform.
- Keep the order record until missing or incorrect items are resolved.

USEFUL PHRASE

'Igeo hana juseyo' means 'Please give me one of this.' Confirm the item and quantity by pointing.

MY SEOUL+

FOOD & DIETARY NEEDS

Explain what must not be included

A preference and a medically necessary restriction are not always understood in the same way. Be specific about ingredients and cross-contact risk.

Allergy or medical restriction

- Carry a professionally translated allergy card.
- Name the ingredient and explain that even a small amount may be dangerous.
- Ask about broth, sauces, seasoning powders, marinades, garnish, and shared cooking surfaces.

Vegetarian and vegan

- A dish without visible meat may contain anchovy, fish sauce, meat stock, egg, or dairy.
- Describe the ingredients you avoid rather than relying only on one label.
- Specialist restaurants are easier for strict needs.

Religious requirements

- Ask about meat source, alcohol in cooking, gelatin, stock, and preparation area.
- Use recognised specialist providers where assurance is important.
- Do not assume a translated menu proves certification.

Markets and labels

- Packaged food can make ingredient checking easier when the label is clear.
- Translation tools can miss technical or compound ingredients.
- When the risk is serious, contact the manufacturer or choose a verified alternative.

SAFETY

When an allergy may cause a severe reaction, carry prescribed medication, share the plan with companions, and know the emergency route.

MY SEOUL+ 120 Dasan Seoul Safety Nuri

LEARNING KOREAN

Learn the phrases that remove friction

Romanisation is only a bridge. Listen to native audio and confirm Hangul spelling before relying on a phrase in a high-stakes situation.

01 **Annyeonghaseyo**

Hello. A polite default greeting for shops, offices, colleagues, and neighbours.

02 **Juseyo**

Please give me... Combine with pointing or the item name.

03 **Eolmayeyo?**

How much is it? Useful in markets and small shops.

04 **Eodi-yeyo?**

Where is it? Add the place or show the address.

05 **Yeongeo dwaeyo?**

Is English possible? Ask early and politely.

06 **Dasi malhae juseyo**

Please say it again. Slow the conversation before guessing.

07 **Jal moreugesseoyo**

I am not sure / I do not understand well.

08 **Dowajuseyo**

Please help me. In danger, call the relevant emergency number too.

BEST METHOD

Choose one repeated context - coffee, taxi, work, market, or building management - and practise the same small language set there.

MY SEOUL+

LEARNING KOREAN

Choose a course you can sustain

The fastest course is not useful if work, commuting, or family life makes regular attendance impossible.

Foreign-resident centres

- Seoul operates practical Korean classes through resident-support centres.
- Courses can range from beginner and daily life to TOPIK preparation.
- Locations, schedules, eligibility, and registration change by term.

University institutes

- Structured intensive programmes with a clear progression.
- Useful for study-focused learners able to commit significant time.
- Compare tuition, schedule, visa implications, and assessment style.

Online public resources

- Online King Sejong and other public platforms support flexible study.
- Combine lessons with real listening and speaking.
- Track a small number of useful patterns rather than collecting apps.

Language exchange

- Agree the time split and learning goal before meeting.
- Choose a public venue and protect personal information.
- A friendly conversation partner is not automatically a trained teacher.

A USEFUL TARGET

Aim first to handle introductions, numbers, dates, addresses, transport, shopping, appointments, and one recurring work conversation.

Foreign schools MY SEOUL+ Danuri

COMMUNITY

Build belonging around an activity

The most durable friendships often begin with repeated participation rather than one large expat event.

Neighbourhood

- Foreign-resident and Global Village centres.
- Libraries, sports centres, classes, markets, and local festivals.
- Resident groups connected to your gu or dong.

Interest

- Running, hiking, cycling, music, games, crafts, photography, cooking, or books.
- Professional and alumni groups.
- Faith and cultural communities.

Language and culture

- Korean classes and exchange groups.
- Museum, history, food, and neighbourhood programmes.
- Volunteer roles with a clear organisation and safeguarding process.

Choose well

- Look for a consistent organiser, clear expectations, public information, and respectful moderation.
- Protect personal and immigration information.
- Leave groups that use pressure, secrecy, harassment, or financial manipulation.

SMALL GOAL

Attend the same low-pressure activity three times before deciding whether Seoul feels socially closed.

MY SEOUL+

COMMUNITY

Find people through trusted starting points

Begin with public or established organisations, then follow the interests and relationships that feel genuinely reciprocal.

Public support

- Seoul Foreign Resident Center
- Seoul Global Center
- Foreign Resident and Global Village centres

Professional

- Industry and educator networks
- University and alumni communities
- Chambers, associations, and specialist events

Activities

- District sports and culture centres
- Libraries and museums
- Hiking, cycling, running, arts, and language groups

Volunteering

- Registered charities and community centres
- Animal, environmental, education, and welfare projects
- Roles with clear supervision, safeguarding, and visa suitability

VISA CHECK

Unpaid does not always mean unrestricted. Confirm whether a formal volunteer role is compatible with your status and circumstances.

MY SEOUL+

FAMILIES & LIFE EVENTS

Map the systems around the household

School, childcare, immigration, healthcare, housing, work, and civil records often intersect during major life events.

New child or childcare

- Confirm registration, nationality, immigration, insurance, and employer-notification routes.
- Compare public, private, workplace, and international childcare.
- Prepare vaccination and previous-care records.

School transition

- Contact the local school or intended international school early.
- Collect transcripts, enrolment records, health information, and identity documents.
- Ask about language support, transport, meals, after-school care, and fees.

Marriage and partnership

- Civil registration, immigration, embassy, translation, and document requirements depend on nationalities and place of marriage.
- Confirm the exact order before obtaining time-limited documents.
- Keep certified copies and translations as required.

Separation, bereavement, or crisis

- Seek qualified legal and consular guidance where rights cross jurisdictions.
- Protect identity, bank, housing, immigration, and child records.
- Use multilingual support services when safety or coercion is involved.

PLAN THE SEQUENCE

For any life event, list every system it touches, then identify which document or approval must happen first.

Foreign schools MY SEOUL+ Danuri

FAMILIES & LIFE EVENTS

Use specialist routes for specialist moments

Major life events are not the time to rely on an anonymous forum answer written for someone else's nationality, visa, or district.

Families

- Childcare and schools
- Family centres and parenting support
- Paediatric, maternity, and counselling services

Pets

- Veterinary clinics and emergency care
- Registration, transport, boarding, and grooming
- Import, export, and airline documentation

Documents

- Embassies and consulates
- Certified translation and notarisation
- Civil-registration and immigration offices

Safety and legal support

- Danuri multilingual support
- Qualified family and immigration lawyers
- Police, emergency, and victim-support services

CHECK THE EXACT CASE

Nationality, visa, marital status, parentage, and location can change the route. Ask the responsible authority before paying for documents.

Foreign schools MY SEOUL+ Danuri

NEIGHBOURHOODS

Choose the life between the landmarks

Make time to explore the streets around your next home

The right area makes ordinary weekdays work: commute, groceries, exercise, friends, healthcare and the journey home at night.

- Test the rush-hour commute in both directions.
- Walk the area after dark and on a quiet morning.
- Compare the building as carefully as the neighbourhood name.

Official route map MY SEOUL+

NEIGHBOURHOODS

Use a commute-first shortlist

Seoul neighbourhood labels cover large, varied areas. Judge the exact station exit, bus route, hill, street, and building.

Central and connected

- Useful for multi-direction commuting and city access.
- Expect smaller spaces or higher cost in popular zones.
- Check late-night noise, older buildings, and tourist footfall street by street.

University and creative districts

- Strong food, culture, nightlife, and younger communities.
- Some streets are lively while nearby residential pockets are quiet.
- Consider weekend noise and steep walks from stations.

Riverside and eastern Seoul

- Access to parks, cycle paths, newer apartments, and major commercial hubs.
- Cross-river or line changes can dominate the commute.
- Compare express and local transport patterns.

Outer Seoul and nearby Gyeonggi

- More space or lower rent may be available.
- Pass coverage, late-night travel, and intercity boundaries matter.
- Calculate time door to door, not station to station.

THREE VISITS

See the exact block at your normal departure time, after work, and on a weekend before committing.

Official route map Public transport MY SEOUL+

WHERE TO BEGIN

Four areas to put on your shortlist

This schematic shows relative positions only. It is not to scale and cannot provide walking routes, boundaries or journey times.

A station name is a starting point

Compare the exact building, station exit and walk home. Nearby streets can differ in noise, hills, road crossings and useful shops. Test the journey at the time you would actually travel.

Open Seoul’s official route map

Compare the four areas on page 72

A PLACE TO LIVE

Compare the weekday, not the postcode

These are scouting prompts, not rankings or rental-price estimates. Use the route map and visit the exact block before deciding.

A / Hongdae & Yeonnam

Start at Hongik University

A useful starting point for university, creative and social life. Compare quieter residential streets with the main entertainment routes.

Check late-night noise and the walk from your chosen exit.

B / Jongno

Start at Jongno 3-ga

A central base to investigate if your regular journeys lead to the old city or central business areas.

Check older-building condition, stairs and evening street activity.

C / Wangsimni

Start at Wangsimni

Worth testing for journeys using Lines 2 or 5, Gyeongui-Jungang or Suin-Bundang.

Time the interchange and the walk from the platform to the actual building.

D / Gangnam

Start at Gangnam Station

Consider it when work or study regularly takes you to the southern business districts.

Test peak-hour crowds, road crossings and the full accommodation cost.

YOUR TEST ROUTE

Door to door: ____ min Transfers: ____ Walk / hills: ____
Last return option: _____ Total monthly housing cost: _____

Official route map Public transport MY SEOUL+

WEEKENDS

Leave room for a slower day

Choose one anchor activity, one meal and one open-ended walk.

A palace garden: a different pace in the middle of the city

Old Seoul

Combine a palace or museum with one traditional neighbourhood, then pause for tea. Check reservations, opening days and photography rules.

River Seoul

Choose one Hangang park and arrive by public transport. Check weather, air quality, cycle hire and the last journey home.

Neighbourhood Seoul

Start at one station and explore a market, bookshop, cafe or gallery. Respect residential streets and keep noise low.

Mountain Seoul

The next four pages help you choose a forest walk or a more demanding climb. Match the route to fitness, conditions and remaining daylight.

Hiking around Seoul / page 75 MY SEOUL+

DAY TRIPS

Pick the trip that fits the day

Weather, reservation rules, travel time, and the final local connection matter more than the distance on a map.

History

- Suwon and Hwaseong Fortress
- Royal tombs and heritage sites
- Incheon historic districts and port areas

Coast and islands

- Incheon coastal areas
- Ferry-linked islands with weather-sensitive schedules
- Seafood, beaches, and walking routes

Nature

- Bukhansan and city-edge mountains
- Riverside and wetland routes
- Seasonal parks, gardens, and arboretums

Plan well

- Official opening and reservation rules
- Last return connection
- Weather, clothing, payment, and meal options
- Accessibility and language support

DO NOT STRAND THE DAY

Check the last bus, train, or ferry before departure, then save the Korean destination and return stop.

Official route map Public transport MY SEOUL+

HIKING AROUND SEOUL

A different city above the streets

Four ways to start, from a forest loop to a full mountain day.

At the foot of Inwangsan: the mountain is part of the neighbourhood

ANSAN

Gentler forest walking

A 7 km loop; choose a shorter section if you prefer.

INWANGSAN

City wall and rocky views

A rewarding climb with steps and exposed rock.

ACHASAN

An approachable ridge outing

Build a short out-and-back around your fitness.

BUKHANSAN

A demanding mountain day

Choose a named route; prepare for steep terrain.

Seoul Hiking Tourism Center National-park closures

HIKING / FOREST & CITY WALL

Start gently. Or follow the wall.

Choose the whole route, including the approach from the station and your return journey.

01 / ANSAN JARAKGIL

Forest first

The official route is a 7 km circular, mostly decked forest trail. It is a good place to begin without making a summit your goal. Walk a section and retrace your steps if a full loop is too much.

Getting there: Dongnimmun, Hongje or Sinchon stations are approach options. Use the official access guide to choose the entrance.

ACCESS CHECK

The trail is described as barrier-free, but approaches from the stations can be steep. Wheelchair and stroller users should plan the entire journey, including the entrance and assistance needed.

02 / INWANGSAN CITY WALL

A climb through the city’s history

Official route: Donuimun Gate site to Changuimun Gate, 4 km, about 2 hours 30 minutes. Allow extra time for photos, stops and travel.

Getting there: Seodaemun Station (Line 5), Exit 4, is close to the Donuimun start. Plan a separate journey home from Changuimun.

Choose dry conditions: steps and rocky sections make this more demanding than its modest height suggests. Avoid slippery rock and take particular care in winter.

Ansan / official access guide Inwangsan / official wall route

HIKING / RIDGE & NATIONAL PARK

Two very different mountain days

Start early, save the route offline and decide your turnaround time before setting off.

03 / ACHASAN

A shorter ridge outing

Make it manageable

Start from the Achasan Ecological Park side. Use the signed route towards the fortress and viewpoints, then return by the same path. Add distance only while energy and daylight allow.

Access & time

Achasan Station (Line 5), Exit 2, is about 1 km from the park; Gwangnaru, Exit 1, is another approach. Allow roughly 2-3 hours for a modest outing. This is an editorial planning allowance, not an official route time.

04 / BUKHANSAN

A proper mountain day

Baegundae reaches 836.5 m. The official Baegundae-Ui Gugok circuit is 9.98 km and rated advanced, with a listed average of 4 hours 20 minutes. Give it a full day including access, rest and a safety margin.

Access: Bukhansan Ui Station (Ui-Sinseol Line) is a useful starting point. The nearby hiking centre is not the trailhead; allow for the approach to your selected route.

Steep rock, handrails and queues near the summit can slow progress. First-time hikers should choose a lower, clearly marked route or seek guidance rather than commit to the summit.

Achasan / Visit Seoul Baegundae-Ui Gugok / official route

HIKING / BEFORE YOU GO

Pack for the walk back down

A popular city mountain still deserves preparation.

Bukhansan’s fortress walls and granite landscape

Check the day

• Read the weather, air-quality and trail-closure notices.

• Avoid exposed ridges in thunderstorms and slippery rock after rain or ice.

• Respect barriers and turn back when conditions change.

Carry the basics

• Grippy footwear, water, food, layers and rain protection.

• A charged phone, offline route, power bank and small first-aid kit.

• A torch for delays; plan to finish in daylight.

seoulhiking.or.kr

NEED GEAR OR LOCAL ADVICE?

Seoul Hiking Tourism Centers operate at Bukhansan, Bugaksan and Gwanaksan. Check rental eligibility, reservations, closing days and return times before going.

Emergency: 119. Give the mountain, trail or rescue-marker number and your location. Tell someone your route and expected return before setting out.

Hiking centres KMA weather AirKorea Park closures

PUBLIC-SERVICE DIRECTORY

The right place to ask

Named institutions, clear roles and direct links.

City support	Local information, programmes and resident centres.
Your official record	Immigration, health insurance, pension and tax.
Specialist help	Workplace questions, legal assistance and family support.

These listings are public-service routes, not paid recommendations. Eligibility, languages and booking arrangements vary by service.

DIRECTORY / 01

City, immigration and health

Open the named institution’s website. Prepare a short description of the question and the documents or dates that matter.

MY SEOUL+

Foreign-resident information and city support programmes. Start with its centre and service listings.

Website

120 Dasan Call Center

City services and district questions. Dial 02-120, press 9 and follow the language menu.

Website

Korea Immigration Service / HiKorea

Applications, appointments and status-related guidance. Call 1345 for the route appropriate to your case.

Website

National Health Insurance Service

Eligibility, contributions and insurance records. English support: 033-811-2000.

Website

URGENT HELP

112 for police. 119 for fire, ambulance or rescue. These take priority over routine information and appointment routes.

MY SEOUL+ 120 Dasan HiKorea NHIS support

Sources checked 13 Sep 2026

DIRECTORY / 02

Work, money and family support

Use the institution responsible for the issue. Ask about eligibility, language support and any appointment requirement before visiting.

Ministry of Employment and Labor

Employment and wage questions. 1350 is the labour guidance route; check current language support.

Website

National Pension Service

Pension coverage, contribution records and any nationality-specific benefit questions.

Website

National Tax Service

Tax guidance, income records and the official route to tax services.

Website

Danuri

Multicultural-family and migrant-women support. Helpline: 1577-1366.

Website

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Korea Legal Aid Corporation can explain available legal-support routes. Check eligibility and language arrangements on its website before booking.

MOEL National Pension Service National Tax Service Danuri Legal Aid Corporation

Sources checked 13 Sep 2026

OFFICIAL HELP / IN PRINT

Keep the live sources close

Tap the name in the digital edition, or scan the QR code from a printed copy.

MY SEOUL+

City services and resident support

global.seoul.go.kr

HiKorea

Immigration applications and notices

hikorea.go.kr

NHIS

Health insurance and eligibility

nhis.or.kr/english

Seoul Hiking

Routes, centres and rental information

seoulhiking.or.kr

BEFORE SUBMITTING

Check the domain before entering personal details. Pages 80-81 identify the organisations for city, immigration, healthcare, work, money and family questions.

ABOUT & STANDARDS

About this edition

Settle Seoul is an independent newcomer guide. This 2027 edition was revised on 3 October 2026.

Sources & dates

• Official links lead to the authority or institution responsible for the subject.

• “Sources checked” refers to principal guidance on that page. “Editorial revision” records editing. Retained pages show their earlier review date.

• Check live requirements before paying, applying or travelling.

Photography & examples

• Photographs are from the publisher-supplied Settle Seoul collection. They illustrate everyday life and do not endorse a property or service.

• The rental listing and payslip are fictional teaching examples. The neighbourhood locator is schematic.

What changed

• Selected original photographs replace the earlier editorial illustrations.

• Added four hiking pages with routes, access, preparation and official sources.

• Updated transport timing, lease reporting, immigration help and the minimum-wage reference.

• Added QR codes for readers using print.

Independence & corrections

• The directory lists public-service routes, not paid recommendations.

• Any future sponsored placement must be labelled beside the listing.

• For a correction, keep the edition date and page number and share the authoritative source with the publisher.

USE THE GUIDE ALONGSIDE YOUR OWN RECORD

Your visa, contract, household and insurance circumstances determine the answer. A practical example helps you ask the right question; it does not establish eligibility.

Official city starting point

SETTLE SEOUL

Make Seoul feel manageable.

Small discoveries are part of settling in.

YOUR FIRST WEEK, ONE STEP AT A TIME

Start with the checklist on page 11. Save the digital edition offline and use the official sources alongside it.

Open the first-week checklist

global.seoul.go.kr