



Settle. Seoul

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Before you arrive in Seoul.

A calm pre-departure checklist: what to settle before you board so your first 48 hours in Seoul are about arriving, not scrambling.

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Contents

1. Visa and your document folder
2. Where you will stay, and how you get there
3. Phone, money and apps
4. Health, packing and contacts
5. Sources & verification

Links in this PDF open the official source or the online guide. Opening hours, prices, programmes and access rules change — confirm with the responsible operator before you travel.

THE ESSENTIALS

- Confirm your visa or entry permission and carry the originals of every document your school, employer or immigration office asked for.
- Know exactly where you are sleeping on night one and how you will get there from the airport.
- Have a working phone plan, at least two ways to pay, and the key apps installed before you land.

Official routes: Your first 48 hours · Visas · Forms & documents.

4–8 WEEKS BEFORE

Visa and your document folder

Requirements differ by visa, nationality and sponsor. Follow the instructions from your consulate, university or employer — this list is a prompt, not a rulebook.

Confirm

- Visa issued or entry permission confirmed (check Visa Portal for your status).
- Passport valid well beyond your intended stay, with blank pages.
- Whether you need K-ETA or an e-Arrival Card for your nationality and visa type.

Pack in one folder

- Originals plus copies of degree, apostilles, criminal-record check or admission letter — whatever your sponsor requested.
- Contract or certificate of admission, and passport photos (3.5 × 4.5 cm).
- Proof of accommodation address, insurance and any medical records.

Back up

- Scan everything to secure cloud storage you can open offline.
- Share copies with someone you trust at home.

After landing

Residence-card (ARC) registration, health checks and immigration appointments come later — see the Visas guide and Health checks article.

2–4 WEEKS BEFORE

Where you will stay, and how you get there

A confirmed first address makes almost everything else easier — phone registration, deliveries and paperwork all ask for one.

Accommodation

- Confirm the booking, check-in time and the address in Korean as well as English.
- Save the address as a screenshot and in Naver Map or Kakao Map.
- If you arrive late, confirm self check-in or a late arrival arrangement.

Airport to door

- Choose AREX, airport limousine bus or taxi in advance and note the last departure times.
- Check whether your school or employer arranges pickup.
- Budget for a taxi if you land late with heavy luggage.

Phone, money and apps

Sort connectivity and payment before you fly so you can call, navigate and pay from the moment you land.

Phone

- Check your phone is unlocked and supports eSIM if you plan to use one.
- Buy a short-term eSIM or arrange airport SIM pickup to bridge the gap until you can open a local plan.

Money

- Tell your bank you are travelling and check foreign-transaction fees.
- Carry two cards from different networks plus some won or cash to exchange.
- Plan a first-month budget: deposit, transport, food and setup purchases.

Install before you fly

- Naver Map or Kakao Map, Papago, KakaoTalk.
- Kakao T for taxis; your airline and accommodation apps.
- Some apps need a Korean number to finish signing up — install now, register later.

THE FINAL WEEK

Health, packing and contacts

Final checks for medicine, luggage and the numbers you may need in your first days.

1. **Check** — Re-open your document folder and confirm nothing is missing.
2. **Charge** — Phone, power bank (carry-on only) and offline maps downloaded.
3. **Carry on** — Keep passport, documents, medication and one change of clothes in your hand luggage.
4. **Land** — Then open Your first 48 hours for transport cards, a SIM, money and your first days.

Health

- Bring prescriptions in original packaging with a doctor's letter; check Korea Customs rules for restricted medicines.
- Arrange travel insurance to cover the gap before national health insurance applies.
- Note your vaccination records and allergies in English.

Pack vs buy

- Pack: medicines, any specific toiletries, clothing for the season, a plug adapter (Type C/F, 220V).
- Buy in Seoul: bedding, kitchen basics, cleaning supplies — see Shopping & setting up home.

Contacts to save

- Your embassy, school or employer contact, accommodation host.
- 1345 Immigration Contact Centre, 120 Dasan call centre, 112 police, 119 fire/ambulance.

Next step

Everything after you land is in Your first 48 hours — this guide stops at the arrivals hall.

SOURCES

Sources & verification · Before you arrive in Seoul

Reviewed 15 October 2026. Check the official links before relying on dates, fees or rules.

- **Visa Portal (Ministry of Justice, official)**
<https://www.visa.go.kr/>
- **HiKorea immigration services (official)**
<https://www.hikorea.go.kr/>
- **Korea e-Arrival Card (official)**
<https://www.e-arrivalcard.go.kr/>
- **Incheon Airport: transport to Seoul (official)**
<https://www.airport.kr/ap/en/tpt/pblcTpt.do>
- **Korea Customs Service: traveller guidance (official)**
<https://www.customs.go.kr/english/main.do>

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