



Settle. Seoul

START HERE · PRACTICAL GUIDE

Your first 48 hours.

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

Online guide · Reviewed October 2026 (digital edition revised 3 October 2026) · Read online: www.settleseoul.com/articles/your-first-48-hours

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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

- 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.

Adapted from the Settle Seoul 2027 digital edition, pages 9, 10, 11, 12. Official routes: Seoul Foreign Portal · Seoul emergency contacts · Seoul public transportation · Seoul Foreign Resident Center.

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.

FIRST-WEEK CHECKLIST

Build the foundations

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

1. **Confirm your address** — Keep the signed lease, accommodation confirmation, or other accepted proof available.
2. **Get connected** — Choose a phone plan that matches your visa timeline, device, and need for identity verification.
3. **Start your document file** — Store passport copies, contracts, receipts, booking confirmations, and official messages.
4. **Map essential journeys** — Test the route to work, immigration, your bank, and the nearest clinic before deadlines.
5. **Book immigration** — Check whether your task requires a reservation, online filing, or in-person visit.

6. **Prepare banking proof** — Bring identification plus evidence of the account purpose, such as an employment contract.
7. **Check payroll setup** — Confirm salary date, account deadline, deductions, and who handles insurance registration.
8. **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.

Your arrival checklist.

The same 19 items as www.settleseoul.com/start#checklist, grouped by step, with official government links.

BEFORE YOU FLY → FIRST 90 DAYS

Visas

- ☐ Visa issued or entry permission confirmed for your nationality and purpose.
- ☐ Checked whether you need K-ETA or an e-Arrival Card.
- ☐ Residence card (ARC) appointment booked on HiKorea within your deadline.
- ☐ Health check booked if your visa or employer requires one.

[Visa Portal \(Ministry of Justice\) →](#)

[HiKorea immigration services →](#)

[K-ETA →](#)

[Korea e-Arrival Card →](#)

BEFORE YOU FLY → FIRST MONTH

Housing

- ☐ First-night address confirmed, saved in Korean and in Naver or Kakao Map.
- ☐ Airport-to-door route planned, including last train or bus times.
- ☐ Lease and deposit terms understood before you sign or pay.
- ☐ Address reported once you move in (usually as part of ARC or a change of address).

[Incheon Airport: transport to Seoul →](#)

[Government24 \(address reporting\) →](#)

FIRST WEEKS

Banking

- ☐ Two cards from different networks plus some cash for the first days.
- ☐ Korean bank account opened (usually after your ARC).
- ☐ Chosen a way to send money home and compared fees.

[Financial Supervisory Service \(English\) →](#)

BEFORE YOU FLY → FIRST WEEK

Phones

- ☐ Phone unlocked; eSIM or airport SIM arranged for arrival.
- ☐ Naver Map or Kakao Map, Papago, KakaoTalk and Kakao T installed.
- ☐ Local phone plan in your name once you have an ARC.
- ☐ Transport card bought and topped up.

[Seoul Metro →](#)

Documents

- ☐ Passport plus originals your sponsor asked for (degree, apostilles, record check or admission letter).
- ☐ Passport photos (3.5 × 4.5 cm) for ARC and other applications.
- ☐ Everything scanned to storage you can open offline, and shared with someone you trust.
- ☐ First 30 Days checklist and Korean address card printed.

Korea Customs Service: traveller guidance →

Visa Portal (Ministry of Justice) →

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