

Q1 2021

Explore the History of Korea

The country's many World Heritage Sites bring thousands of years to life
by Korea Tourism Organization (Paid Content)

PHOTO CONTENT BY

Changdeokgung Palace

PHOTO BY KOREA TOURISM ORGANIZATION

Korea's rich history can be found dotted across its landscape. Palaces, fortresses, and religious shrines showcase elaborate styles and powerful dynasties that define the country's past. Many of these buildings have been recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, ranking them as some of the most significant landmarks across the globe. Designated for special protection, these locations are preserved to be enjoyed for thousands of years to come. Here are five extraordinary sites you'll want to add to your must-visit list.

Changdeokgung Palace

Located in bustling Seoul, Changdeokgung Palace housed both living quarters and offices for the Korean monarchs for over 500 years. The palace's architecture and gardens are a beautiful blend of perfect harmony with nature.

Jongmyo Shrine

PHOTO BY GERNAL

Jongmyo Shrine

The ceremony of Jongmyo Jerye is still performed at the Jongmyo Shrine. Combining music, song, and dance, the traditional performance includes orchestral arrangements using authentic Korean instruments. This historic shrine is where the other Confucian rituals were performed by the queens and kings of the Joseon Dynasty, which ruled Korea from 1392 to 1910.

Haeinsa Temple

PHOTO BY KTO

Haeinsa Temple Janggyeong Panjeon

Travel to Gyeongju National Park to find Haeinsa Temple, which houses the world's most complete collection of Buddhist texts. Created back in the 13th century, the texts were engraved on over 80,000 woodblocks as a means to Buddha for protection from Mongol invasions. Great care has been taken to preserve these blocks, considered exceptional works of art themselves. Their

Baekje Historic Areas

PHOTO BY KTO

Baekje Historic Areas

These sites date all the way back to the late Baekje Kingdom from 475 to 660 AD, a critical period of ancient East Asian history. Eight different archaeological sites include royal tombs, Buddhist temples, stone pagodas, and fortresses. The architectural styles and relics that still survive today represent a unique period of cultural, religious, and artistic interchange between Korea and the kingdoms of China and Japan.

Hwaseong Fortress

PHOTO BY KTO

Hwaseong Fortress of Suwon City

This impressive historic fortress, dating back to 1794, stretches over three-and-a-half miles. It was constructed toward the later part of the Joseon Dynasty, when King Jeongjo moved his father's tomb to Suwon and surrounded it with a state-of-the-art fortress meant to protect against enemy forces. Defensive elements like floodgates, observation towers, and secret gates were all designed by an influential military architect of the time.

Ready to take a deeper dive into Korea's rich history? Visit the country's famed World Heritage Sites and get a firsthand look for yourself!

[Click here to learn more about Korean history, and start planning your visit!](#)

See Your Member Benefits

Get the Most From Your Membership

- Hundreds of discounts programs and services
- Subscription to "AARP The Magazine"
- Free membership for your spouse or partner

[VIEW BENEFITS](#)

[Get Card](#) | [Edit Info](#) | [Update Interests](#)