



THE ASSOCIATION
MAGAZINE

SEOUL

**SPECIAL MICE
DESTINATION REPORT**



BRIEF UPDATES ON **SEOUL** ACCOMMODATION

Throughout the pandemic, the city of Seoul remained active and committed to supporting its local industry partners and overall environment. With the hotel industry facing a steep decline, Seoul was the exception to the rule by attracting new investments and renewing its hotel capacity. Despite the roadblocks and pandemic challenges, famous global hotel chains have decided to expand their business by bucking the hard times and increasing their portfolio – proving once again the upward trajectory of the Korean capital and its potential in the hotel and events business.

The French multinational Accor has strengthened its presence with the opening of two new flagship hotels in Seoul, among other signature acquisitions. The Marriott Group has also expanded its portfolio with several hotels and resorts in a wide range of prices:



In February 2021, the **Fairmont Ambassador Seoul** opened its doors in the business district of Yeouido, with its 326 well-equipped guest rooms offering panoramic views of the Hangang River. Located in the Parc.1 complex, the hotel also features three restaurants, the M29 rooftop bar, a spa and a fitness centre, 10 meeting rooms and a Grand Ballroom (675m², 280 seats) and two more conference rooms. Fairmont Ambassador Seoul is 55 minutes by car from **Incheon International Airport**, and 30 minutes from **Gimpo International Airport**.



Located in the eastern part of the city, the French-inspired **Sofitel Ambassador Seoul** is Korea's first luxury brand to have a hotel and serviced residences in one location. A first-class luxury space that connects elegant and delicate French art de vivre with modern reinterpretations of Korean cultural traditions, the property boasts 403 hotel rooms and 160 residences among several exquisite suites. It also comprises the Sofitel Fitness, Sofitel Spa by *Beauté BR* and three venues for business meetings and private events.

Right in the heart of Gangnam and within walking distance of the **COEX MICE Cluster**, the **Josun Palace** still preserves its centennial legacy clad in timeless and luxurious design with incredible views of the city. It has 254 rooms and suites complemented by a heated indoor pool, a sauna, fitness centre and three large, medium and small event spaces spanning over 971sqm – where you can check-in for your event or welcome delegates with a cocktail reception.

Furthermore, the new **Four Points by Sheraton** in Myeong-dong invites you to discover Seoul in the footsteps of a local, and the Paraspara Seoul, situated in one of the nearby mountains will allow you to escape the turbulent city life.

It is worth mentioning that most venues, such as convention centres and hotels, have gone through the digitisation process to become all-rounders by enhancing them on-site with state-of-the-art technology for a hybrid format.

SEOUL GOES **VIRTUAL** TO BOLSTER YOUR **MICE HYBRID EVENT**

In the age of technology, associations, organisers and exhibitors increasingly rely on many digital solutions and software packages designed to help manage their business and increase the productivity of their event. In the case of MICE management tools and platforms, there are many resources that can help buyers plan and run events and on-site inspections remotely, contributing to the end-goal of the interaction you wish to create.

Seoul Convention Bureau has stepped up to the plate with a wide range of resources aimed at offering comprehensive assistance to events hosted in the Korean capital, from cross-cutting event platforms to cutting-edge team building programmes.

Virtual Seoul 2.0

Virtual Seoul 2.0 is designed to discover the city's key MICE features by simulating its focal points – COEX, Nodeul Island, Seoul City Hall and Seoul Tourism Plaza – as a metaverse platform capable of covering most types of events. SCB has made available this revamped 3D MICE events platform to provide updated features in e-conferencing, virtual exhibitions, PSA meetings, networking between participants, and entertainment events. Organisers can easily and conveniently customise their online business event with a new Content Management System by choosing four new virtual venues and more than 20 virtual event functions.



- **E-conference broadcasting:** Broadcast various types of online conferences through live streaming and VODs and run several breakout sessions simultaneously.
- **Virtual exhibition function:** Register promotional contents in the exhibition booth and use various features such as hosting livestreaming shopping and showcasing products. One to one chat and video consultation between visitors and exhibitors are also available.
- **PSA meetings and networking:** Offer PSA meetings (1:1 business meeting) through pre-matching between buyers and sellers.
- **Event branding function:** Upload videos to be used for a virtual tour and an event branding space for attendees. The PR booth will also allow intensive exposures of promotional contents of the event, organiser and sponsor.

Among the success stories is **ACOMS 2022**, an international medical symposium held in a hybrid format, physically at Osstem Implant Research Institute and as an online event using Virtual Seoul 2.0. The platform allowed not only the online participation of delegates but also live streaming as well as recorded broadcasting after the sessions finished.

Virtual Seoul Tour & Site Inspection

The Virtual Seoul Tour is an immersive and experiential content that lets you explore Seoul's top MICE facilities and venues in virtual reality. Experience and navigate MICE Seoul vividly and truthfully with 360 VR videos covering Seoul's landmarks, convention centres, unique venues, hotels and team-building sites. More than sixty 360 VR videos are available for virtual site inspections and possible tours – organised into 8 categories including locations, attractions, activities, as well as Seoul's partner cities across the country.



PLUS SEOUL: A HELPING HAND TO MAKE YOUR EVENT RUN SMOOTHLY!



We all know how challenging and stressful it can be to organise a conference without technical assistance or boots-on-the-ground. Seoul wants your corporate events to be safe and unblemished no matter what format they take, catering to your special requests and adding its knowledge capital. With that in mind, the **Seoul Convention Bureau**, together with the **Seoul MICE Alliance (SMA)**, has launched its revamped version of PLUS SEOUL 2022, a personalised business events experience that aims to bring greater satisfaction and fulfilment to event organisers by driving authentic experiences to all MICE attendees – whether the event is online or in person.

With this new meeting and incentive package, PLUS SEOUL offers a new range of options and services for clients who meet eligibility criteria at different stages of development.

What kind of support is there for holding an international conference in Seoul?

If you are a member of an international association with at least 100 participants, 50 foreign participants from 5 different countries and a 1-day event, you can apply for the programme. Financial support ranges from the conference attraction plan to the hosting period. Comprehensive support is also extended during the bidding process and at later stages with on-site MICE support that will provide a Seoul photo booth, VR Seoul tour booth and a city tour programme for events with more than 50 international participants.

What kind of support is for international exhibitions in Seoul?

The financial support by growth stage can reach KRW 210 million (approximately €157,000) from the planning stage to the actual exhibition abroad. You can also take advantage of innovation-driven consulting, where you can ask for online marketing or IT technology strategies, and live commerce operations. Internationally accredited exhibitions held in Seoul (accreditation by AKEI included) or exhibitions on key new industries are eligible.

Support is also available for corporate meetings and incentive tours?

This package can include all groups visiting Seoul for business meetings or incentive trips at their companies' expense – with more than 10 international participants, 2 consecutive overnight stays, and two services used by SMA members (one service charged). Support comprises safety at work, venue hire – chosen from the SMA venues category – local experience support with team building programmes, and attraction/admission – chosen from the SMA Entertainment category.

SCB also guarantees MICE Safety Care Services – with medical and travel assistance, airport concierge, language and insurance services – in addition to a MICE Safe Zone Service – upholding the cleaning and disinfection of the space, and providing a quarantine gate and various personal hygiene items- for all conferences, exhibitions and corporate meetings and incentives.

SEOUL'S ALTERNATIVE **HYBRID PLATFORMS**



Since its opening in March 1979, **Coex** has established itself as a hub for exhibitions, congresses and conferences in Seoul, and a global exchange platform for people and business in Korea. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, this MICE centre has pushed the envelope of its digital transformation by creating a Broadcast Studio equipped with state-of-the-art facilities for seamless virtual and hybrid events.

Studio 159

This new service ushers in a new era for meetings and events in the Republic of Korea as the first purpose-built broadcast studio for the industry. Its 500-inch curved LED screen that spans 12 metres wide and 3.7 metres high is the crux that will enable immersive video presentations and as a backdrop for both hybrid and live events. From recording a podcast to distributing high quality audiovisual content or launching a product online, studio 159 is the perfect resource to provide all sorts of digital production, streaming, and broadcasting.

Coex LIVE

Coex also owns a live streaming service that provides event organisers access to state-of-the-art equipment, ultra-stable and fast internet network, dedicated streaming platform services and pop-up broadcast studio rental as well as experienced technicians to accompany you on this journey.

Digital Display

Launched in July, the new Lean and Green Xpace digital display panels are designed to highlight corporate messages, product launches, fashion shows, and any

signage appropriate to the movement of any conference or exhibition. The new Xpace signage for example has helped the venue cut 21,000m² of old-style promotional banners annually, the rough equivalent of three football pitches.

The Seoul Metropolitan Government also opened its permanent video conferencing studio "**Seoul ON**" at Dongdaemun Design Plaza (DDP) – a state-of-the-art video studio ranging from high-resolution video equipment to sound and lighting equipment, as well as a 35-meter LED display exclusively for video conferencing - the largest of any public institution in Korea.

This studio is equipped with advanced audio and video systems for all online/offline events, including talk shows, conferences, forums and lectures. And there is still room to set up to 120 seats so that events like these can be held in person after the pandemic. Seoul ON will enable users to save rental fees for video conferencing and virtual events with a moveable layout to arrange the space according to the needs of the planners and the characteristics of the event.

Seoul ON measures 726 m² – comprising the main video studio and other areas such as the video conference room and interpretation room – and its interior features a curved design befitting the DDP's neo-futuristic architecture. It is accessible by metro lines 2, 4 and 5, and is conveniently located to anywhere in the city



SEOUL CARES ABOUT YOUR WELLBEING

The South Korean capital has flourished over the years as an East Asian cultural reference with first-class architecture, renowned museums and an influential art scene making it a model for many international cities. But it is also because of its human value that Seoul is proving to be a real international attraction, as evidenced by their rather unique code of social behaviour. *Annyeong* (안녕) for example, corresponds not only to a greeting but also means “to be well” – a sentiment SCB wants to convey to all delegates and instil in its events at all stages.

Seoul has a portfolio of sites to suit all tastes from picturesque islands, meditative temples to nature trails. Let’s find out a few of them:

Seoul Hiking Tourism Center

Seoul’s mountains boast stunning landscapes captivating the hearts of hikers and tourists alike. Opened in June 2022, the **Seoul Tourism Center** is a five-minute walk from Bukhansan Ui station and is a perfect place to showcase the charms of nature near the city. The centre provides hikers and visitors with hiking information, trails with multilingual information options, free booking of hiking equipment, a lounge room and a variety of convenient facilities and services.



Nodeul Island

Linking Dongjak-gu and Yongsan-gu districts, **Nodeul Island** reopened in September 2019 as a multi-purpose event space thought to be environmentally friendly. Converging architecture with nature, its main facilities include the Nodeul Live House, Nodeul Bookstore, Music Lounge Ryu, as well as the Multi Hall “Soop” (Forest). Due to its easy accessibility, the islet is an ideal area for holding international conferences and cultural events such as concerts and festivals. Nodeul has hosted events such as the 2021 h.eco forum, the 2021 Art & Tech Week or the 2020 ASEAN-Korea Music Festival.

Jinkwansa (Temple Stay)

Jinkwansa Temple is a secular Buddhist temple located in Bukhansan National Park consisting of several notable buildings. It also operates temple stay programmes where visitors can experience Buddhist culture first-hand. Jinkwansa Temple is also famous for its temple food dating back to the Joseon Dynasty. Highly known for its tofu dumplings, steamed dishes, hot pots, and glazed tofu bites, the temple’s secret recipe is heartfelt, according to which “food is nature that incorporates the mind”.

A further tip for your event

Located on Sebitseom, a historic and man-made island in the Hangang River, the **Floating Island Convention** (featured left) is a stunning convention facility designed for various MICE events. The location next to the Banpo Bridge magnifies the impact of its 45m screen and high-quality image and sound equipment system. A wide range of corporate banquets can be brought to your delegates’ tables, offering various cuisines including Western, Korean, halal, and vegetarian menu items.

WHEN TIME STOPS IN SEOUL

Beyond standing out as one of the top convention destinations in Asia, Seoul also offers a unique blend of history, culture and scenery naturally for leisurely breaks in your stay. With unforgettable sites, top team building activities and incentive tours, Seoul offers a myriad of reasons to extend any business traveller’s experience relying on an impressive portfolio of temples, palaces and monuments and natural wonders.

It is impossible to remain indifferent to the diversity of museums, historical monuments and urban routes that make up the leisure charm of Seoul. That is why we have selected some of the most interesting places to visit so that you can enjoy the South Korean capital to the full:

Seoul Baekje Museum

Seoul started its historical journey in southwestern Korea as the capital city of the ancient kingdom of Baekje for about 500 years. The **Seoul Baekje Museum**, located in the Olympic Park, is a time machine that revisits the ancient culture and history of a foundational era for all Koreans. The exterior of the museum resembles the outline of the Mongchon fortress, designed in the shape of a ship representing the Hanseong-Baekje dynasty, a maritime power that developed trade between China and Japan. The museum offers free guided tours of the collection led by exhibition curators or professionally trained volunteers.

The Five Grand Palaces

One of the most cherished activities for any traveller seeking a glimpse into the history of the Joseon Dynasty are the five palaces sitting in the centre of Seoul. **Changdeokgung Palace**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a must visit being the best-preserved palace of them all, and **Gyeongbokgung Palace**, arguably the most beautiful, remains the largest of all five palaces. As admission fee is waived for those who are wearing hanbok when entering any palace, many people visit rental shops near palaces to take advantage of the same as well as for the fuller experience. How about strolling through a beautiful palace like the royals of the Joseon Dynasty?

Euljiro Alley Tour

Alleyways in Seoul are still very popular for a local vibe centred on history and trendy venues right in the heart of the city. Each is home to a cluster of attractions creating a characteristic uniqueness that represents each neighbourhood or district. Euljiro, or “Hipjiro” – a combination of the words *hip* and Euljiro – is a great example to welcome visitors by inviting them to explore old 50-year-old hardware, pottery and tile shops during the day. At night, when the shutters close and the neon lights start flashing, young millennials change the atmosphere between trendy cafes and pubs that blend effortlessly with old shops and make Hipjiro a truly “instagrammable” place in Korea.



SEOUL MEDICAL AND WELLNESS GUIDE

The Korean reputation in the areas of health and wellness is very much in the minds of visitors as a result of the experience and wisdom of its unique traditional medicine. In 2019, 497,464 medical tourists from 200 countries visited Korea, and 320,284 (65%) of them chose Seoul as their healing destination. Thousands of foreign patients are offered multiple healthcare services - including treatment for serious diseases, skin and beauty, and traditional Korean medicine - at some 1,650 health centres. There are 1,467 medical institutions in Korea that attract foreign patients, with 901 of these institutions located in Seoul.

Moreover, Seoul ticks all the boxes when it comes to cutting-edge medical technology, a world-class healthcare system, renowned experts and infrastructure, with various contributions to the international community. Hailed as a city of advanced medical technology, it boasts 13 world-class general hospitals and accounts for 61.4% of all medical tourism across Korea. In this regard, the Seoul Metropolitan Government features various organisations such as health centres, medical tourism agencies and hotels as its strategic partners within its medical tourism alliance.

On the other hand, Seoul's Wellness Tourism Resource Discovery Programme also promotes quality wellness destinations in five segments: Healing/Meditation; Nature/Forest Therapy; Beauty/Spa; Superfood; and Fitness/Yoga. Discover Seoul's 70 distinct Wellness Spots, from meditation temples, natural cosmetics and tea therapy shops, to healing journeys through beauty spas, yoga centres and natural resorts. You can also choose from 7 courses to enjoy your Seoul Medical Tour in an even more meaningful and extensive way, from total health check-ups to those special wellness experiences you can only find here. There's a world of options at your fingertips!

A Seoul Committed to Everyone

Within Seoul's vision is also the promise to shape a city that everyone can enjoy, promoting an accessible tourism environment and a destination where everyone can travel at ease. **Danurim Accessible Tourism City Seoul** is the platform overseeing Seoul's universal tourism scheme, implementing strategies to improve the city's physical environment, tourism services with the latest information and encouraging a new social awareness of tourism. Included in the implementation plan are: service operations using internal and external capabilities; services through external cooperation; and a public-private cooperation system in Seoul.

Seoul Danurim Accessible Tourism Service

The STO has been operating wheelchair accessible buses (bus and mini-van) to help foreign residents and visitors to Seoul fully enjoy Seoul, regardless of disability or age. Wheelchair accessible vehicles are available to promote activities for all, running 5 days a week (Tuesday to Saturday) and including major tourist attractions for one day only. Eligible users include disabled people, elderly people with limited mobility, pregnant women and children under 8 years old.

The STO also provides foreign residents and visitors with a travel assistance device rental service to help them fully enjoy Seoul, regardless of disability or age. This service is free of charge with refundable deposits. Rental items include wheelchairs, shower chairs, portable ramp, patient lift and strollers.

Find out all this information at: www.seouldanurim.net/



SEOUL'S INDUSTRIAL ID

Seoul boasts several industrial spots that tell the story of a spectacular economic growth leveraged by various industries and professional sectors. The Seoul Convention Bureau has put together an industrial tour guide drawing on five key categories that make up the socio-economic fabric of the city:

Industrial Heritage

Industrial Heritage Conservation in Seoul champions the cultural and historical significance of spaces that have been milestones in the city's economic transition. The **National Aviation Museum of Korea**, the **Money Museum** and the **Korea Territorial Development Museum** seek historical, aesthetic and economic uplift in line with events in the city. Education on the history of land development, aviation and currency and coinage will be on display with conforming technological advances.

Eco Space

As the city devotes great efforts to building a sustainable environment, its Eco Spaces offer a wide range of services from water management to recycling facilities. In Seoul, you can find several eco-friendly spaces such as the **Mapo Resource Recovery Facility** and the **Ttukdo Arisu Water Purification Center/Waterworks Museum** with education on waste treatment and resource recycling process, the **Seoul Upcycling Plaza** and

the **Innisfree Green Upcycle Store** on promoting recycling companies and creative studios, and the **Seoul Energy Dream Center** on renewable energy and energy conservation.

K-Beauty

The beauty sector has been attracting a lot of global attention these days to Seoul. Places like **AMORE Seongsu** or **Seongsu Handmade Shoes Street** are fun spots for a lighter stroll where visitors can take free cosmetic and health tests, create customised make-up products or simply enjoy the techniques of the master shoemakers at work.

K-Culture & Entertainment

South Korea is one of the countries in the world that has paid the most attention to its cultural economy as a potential world exporter through its pop culture, entertainment, music, television dramas and films. In Seoul, you can find **KBS On** to get in touch with the history of Korea's broadcasting industry, the **Esports Hall of Fame** with VR exhibits on the global influence of the e-sports industry, and **HYBE INSIGHT** where you can discover the past, present and future of K-pop culture and your favourite artists.

Digital Technology

Seoul is considered one of the world's leading smart cities and a spearhead in innovation, being the first city to intersect with the Metaverse through the development of a virtual communication ecosystem. It is also about to launch a Virtual Tourist Zone, which will allow registered users with VR headsets to view the city's main attractions. Cutting-edge hubs such as **T Factory**, **G Valley 4th Industrial Experience Center**, **Tum** and **Smart Seoul Exhibition Hall** (featured left) will immerse you in the ICT industry, the 4th industrial revolution, future telecommunications and digital transformation.





A PLEASANT JOURNEY THROUGH SEOUL'S SENSES

Korean cuisine has developed over the centuries through agricultural traditions, trade and the blending of the various ancient civilisations of the Korean peninsula in a constant and complex interaction between the natural environment and cultural traditions. From ancient to modern, this country's cuisine never ceases to reinvent itself, and is one of the healthiest in the world due to the extensive use of natural and seasonal components of its food sources such as tofu, bean rice, noodles, garlic, and its all-natural *kimchi*.

More recently the international media have amplified an even greater interest in Korean food, sparked by a rather particular phenomenon called *mukbang*. A mukbang or meokbang, also known as an eating show, is an online audiovisual broadcast in which a host consumes various quantities of food while interacting with the audience. It became popular in South Korea in 2010, and has since become a major spreader of *Hallyu*, along with K-Beauty, K-pop, and Korean drama, earning its status as a global trend. The purpose of mukbang is also sometimes educational, introducing viewers to regional specialities or gourmet spots. For this reason, it is not uncommon to find someone outside of Korea cooking or simply enjoying Korean food on a video sharing or social media platform.

In Seoul's case, the city has also become a favorite spot for foodies and gourmands from around the world with its incredible array of restaurants. Come and visit some of these "temples" to enjoy the authentic Korean food culture in Seoul:

When food brings you peace of mind

- **A Flower Blossom on the Rice** is a Korean organic food restaurant with a Michelin Green Star that is located in In-sa dong. Ninety-five percent of the ingredients come from regional farms that are certified organic, sustainable and pesticide-free. Traditional jang (Korean fermented soy sauce) is used to enrich the flavour in a healthy way. One of the most popular dishes not to be missed is Bojagi Bibimbap: steamed rice and an assortment of sautéed vegetables, delicately wrapped in an egg omelette and tied with a seaweed ribbon.
- Temple food is the food of the practice that shares the 1,700-year history of Korean Buddhism, and **Balwoo Gongyang** is the only restaurant serving this centuries-old tradition inherited from Korean roots. Run by the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, it was opened to promote the culture of Korean temple food in accordance with the balance between a healthy body and mind. Foreigners account for over 30% of its clientele and the restaurant currently offers menus in four different languages.

A heavenly dining experience

- Michelin 1-star **BICENA** on the 81st floor of Hotel Signiel Seoul, provides a unique Korean culinary experience combining oriental beauty with elegant contemporary decor. A Michelin Guide Seoul for five years, BICENA stays true to the spirit of traditional Korean fine dining by respecting the most fundamental details of slow cooking like Jang and kimchi - the result of time and nature doing its work. Operated by the Kwangjuyo Group, the space aims to spread knowledge of Korean cultural assets such as ceramics, food, drinks and architecture. With unparalleled views, the restaurant can host special gatherings in 5 private rooms with seating for 4-12 people.
- The modern European-style restaurant **Mariposa**, located on the 29th floor of Fairmont Ambassador Seoul, features an interior design inspired by the shape of a butterfly and a main dining hall flanked on each side by outdoor terraces offering panoramic views of the Han River and central Yeouido. Enjoy eclectic gourmet experiences on menus of fresh contemporary dishes celebrating local seasonal ingredients. Dishes made from local ingredients and fresh fish from Noryangjin, are complemented by a carefully curated wine list. And don't forget to visit the rooftop M29 bar while sipping a signature cocktail.

Other experiences to snack on

- You don't have to head to a fancy restaurant to experience the true vibe of Korean cuisine. Koreans love KFC – no, we're not talking about the famous American chain, but **Korean Fried Chicken**. When visiting Seoul, you can find a fried chicken restaurant in any major block. The most popular way to eat it is with a sweet and spicy coating called "yangnyum", along with an ice-cold beer. Popular places to try Korean chicken are all over the city, and you can even request a delivery to Hangang River Park while admiring the view around you.
- **Dalgona** is a Korean street biscuit that is made with only 2 ingredients: sugar and baking soda. Just after World War II, many children got used to the chocolates handed out by American soldiers, so street food vendors tried to fill that void by making dalgona sweets. They make it by pouring the typical brown, caramel-colored liquid onto a flat surface and stamping it with different molds in the shape of a star, heart, car, or triangle. This sweet candy took the world by storm in 2020, starting as a Dalgona Coffee trend on TikTok and culminating with an appearance on the popular Netflix show Squid Game.



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*Studio 159 : Professional Broadcast studio located at Coex