

An Introduction to South Korea

Fast Facts

Name: Republic of Korea

Capital City: Seoul

Language: Korean

Money: Won



History

South Korea is located on a peninsula between the Yellow Sea and the Sea of Japan (East Sea). Archaeologists believe people have been living in Korea for over 10,000 years and migrated to the area from Mongolia and Siberia. Korea was originally split into three regions of control, but Japan took control of Korea in 1894. Japan lost control of Korea after World War II when all of its territories were taken away. The peninsula of Korea was essentially split into two parts. The northern region was controlled by the Soviet Union and the southern region was occupied by the United States.



South Korean Flag

The Korean War

The Korean War began when the northern region invaded the southern region. Each region believed their form of government was best for the people of Korea. North Korea wanted the people of South Korea to join their communist government, while South Korea wanted to maintain principles of capitalism. The bulk of the fighting occurred from 1950 to 1953 and over two million people were killed. Nations from all over the world were involved in the conflict. Even though the height of the war long ago passed, the war never officially ended. Tensions remain high between North and South Korea.

Korean Culture

The family unit is extremely important in South Korea. People maintain strong connections to their families and feel a sense of duty to serve and care for one another. Education is also very important. Many students attend tutoring and additional lessons before and after school. South Korea believes in freedom of religion, and many people follow Confucianism, Buddhism or Christianity.



Food

Many famous and delicious foods come from South Korea. The national dish of South Korea is called kimchi. It is made with fermented vegetables, like cabbage, and lasts for a long time. Kimchi is served on almost everything! Another famous dish is called bibimbap. It is a bowl of rice served with red pepper paste, soy sauce and meat. People usually put a raw or fried egg on top before mixing it together and enjoying!

Words to Know:

Communism: the government is responsible for giving the people what they need.

Capitalism: a system of government where businesses and people are allowed to work and compete for what they need.