

Name: A M R A

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Flight

Asiana, in cooperation with the Korean Studies of the Goethe University, organize a competition once a semester. This competition is called the Asiana flying scholarship, and it consists in writing a motivation letter. This scholarship allows you to travel for free to Korea, in other words, you can fly with Asiana for free. In this letter you write why it should be you winning this tickets. The only thing the winner needs to pay is a fee of around 300€ for the flying taxes. In comparison with paying /at least 900€ for the flight, 300€ is quite acceptable.

Visa

To get a Visa I went to the Consulate General of the republic of Korea in Frankfurt am Main. You can find its exact location and everything you need for the Visa on the Internet. Once you delivered all the needed documents, you will need to pay a fee (the price varies depending on your nationality). Upon arriving in Korea, students have in total 90 days to submit a request for an ARC (Alien Registration Card). Your Visa only allows you to stay in the country for 3 months, so an ARC is required for a longer stay. The university I visited told me what documents were needed to request an ARC, but you can also find that information on the internet. You can pick your ARC one week after.

Korea is officially still at war with North Korea, so therefore its recommendable that you inform your respective consulate how long you're going to stay in Korea, also give them your address and your contacts so that in case of emergency you can be informed about an evacuation.

For European Citizens: Should your state not be represented in South Korea or if you can't find your consulate or it is too far away, you can in case of an emergency go to the consulate/ embassy of other European Union members and get help from them according to Article 23 of the "The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union".

Eu citizen rights: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:12012E/TXT>

First week in Korea

I spent my first night in Seoul at a motel that a friend booked for me.

Please Note: Goshiwons sometimes are really cheap but they aren't in the best shape and the rooms can be really small without windows and air-conditioner. (If you never were in Korea before and you have Korean friends, it might be good to ask them to help you find a place to stay for a few days or at least give you some advices).

I moved to the student's dorm on my second day in Seoul. In comparison with the dorms I saw in Frankfurt, the Korean dorms are quite modern, have a lot of space and are very well equipped and very clean.

During our orientation, our buddies and guides showed us all the buildings and everything else that we might need and use during our stay in the University.

A buddy is a student from the university which you are going to visit and he will be responsible to help you. They are very nice people and they always help you when you have serious problems. Of course not all buddies are that much dedicated but if that's the case with your buddy, you can ask to get a new one.

The university campus in Korea is sometimes really big so it will take some time until one knows where and how to get to classes. Some students don't help you when you're looking for a way because they are afraid to speak English which happened sometimes to me. But you'll always find someone who will help you and sometimes they even take you personally to the place that you want to go.

The International Office of the Ewha University is very kind, sometimes they even help you with matters which aren't really their concern. If you are having problems finding the foreigners registration office where you can apply/pick up your visa card, you can ask the international office for directions.

Courses

In Ewha you can choose between a wide range of courses. Most courses in which exchange students can choose are in English. Each course offers a certain amount of seats for exchange students. If you need, want to enter in a certain course, the best thing that can be done is to wake up early on the first day where you can apply for the courses and do it as fast as possible. The registration started at 9am and 3 minutes later many courses were completely booked, so waking up on time in order to register in the courses you want as quickly as possible is of the essence.

Transportation

There is no discount for students when using public transports. The fee although is in comparison with Germany really cheap, while you pay in Germany almost 2,50€ for a one way ticket, in Korea you pay around 1500Won (about 1,10€). All lines are somehow combined and it is really easy to change from one line to the other, it took me only a few days to understand how the entire train system works. Using a Taxi is something more

different, the starting fee is always 3000 Won (2,20€). The taxi drivers in Korea hate to drive people who live nearby their starting point because that way they can't make any profit. If you are for example in Hongdae and you want to take a taxi back to Ewha or Yonsei, they will say no if you ask them, but if you enter first and then tell them where you want to go, they usually have to take you there. ADVICE: take off your University jacket if you want to take a taxi, because if they recognize the university on your jacket and if the university is nearby, they won't even stop.

Also be careful if you take a Taxi alone or when you are drunk. Since you might not know the city and the routes very well, Taxi drivers will try to fool you by taking the longer routes in order to get more money from you. Once a friend took a taxi alone and drunk, while we walked home, and a bill that should be only about 5000Won, became a 30000 Won bill. He even came home later than we did, although he departed earlier.

Restaurants

You will find a huge abundance of Restaurants and Streetfood tents spread all over Seoul. Many of them are open sometimes until 4 or 5am. Another good point is that these places are very cheap and you can get a lot to eat. Sometimes you can get for 5000won an entire meal. Water is always free.

Travel

Travel around Korea is quite cheap. You can use buses and/or trains. The price varies from destination to destination. If you want to go to Busan by bus, you pay about 23000 Won. Train price is about the same amount as buses. The only land transportation that is really expensive is the KTX, the fastest train in Korea. You can also use airplanes for inland trips. In case you plan to go to Jeju, I recommend that you go by airplane, it's more comfortable and faster. You can find in all cities Goshiwons and other kind of places to stay while visiting other cities. Each place is more expensive or cheaper than others, depending on how much comfort you need. Cities that I recommend you to visit are Busan, Jeonju and Gyeongju. All of these cities are full with temples, palaces and other interesting things to see. Other places you should visit are for example Suwon, a city near Seoul that contains a Fortress which is also a UNESCO world cultural heritage, the DMZ and Soraksan, a mountain on the east Coast which contains beautiful temples and an amazing view.

Seoul itself is so big, that you will need weeks if not months to see all tourist attractions. I recommend you to go to Bukhansan national park, which contains the highest mountain around Seoul. You will have a beautiful view of the city from there and the park itself is really big so you will have a lot to see. Other things you can see are for example the shopping streets, the gates of the old city wall spread through the city and the big amount of palaces and temples nearly all over the city.

There are things in Korea that you should be ready to deal with. When Koreans collide with you (this happens mostly in the train/ subway stations), they won't say sorry even though sometimes it's their fault. They will stare at you quite a lot. It might or it will make you feel uncomfortable but they don't care about it. If it is really uncomfortable for you, than you should stare at them as well and usually they'll stop doing it. Especially small children and old people will stare at you a lot because they are not used to see many foreign people.

But putting these things aside, Koreans are very people kind and they try their best to help you when you need help with directions or something else.