

SEOUL MOUNTAINS

# SEOUL HIKING TOURISM GUIDE BOOK

## SEOUL HIKING TOURISM GUIDE BOOK

BUKHANSAN MOUNTAIN  
INWANGSAN MOUNTAIN  
BUGAKSAN MOUNTAIN  
GWANAKSAN MOUNTAIN



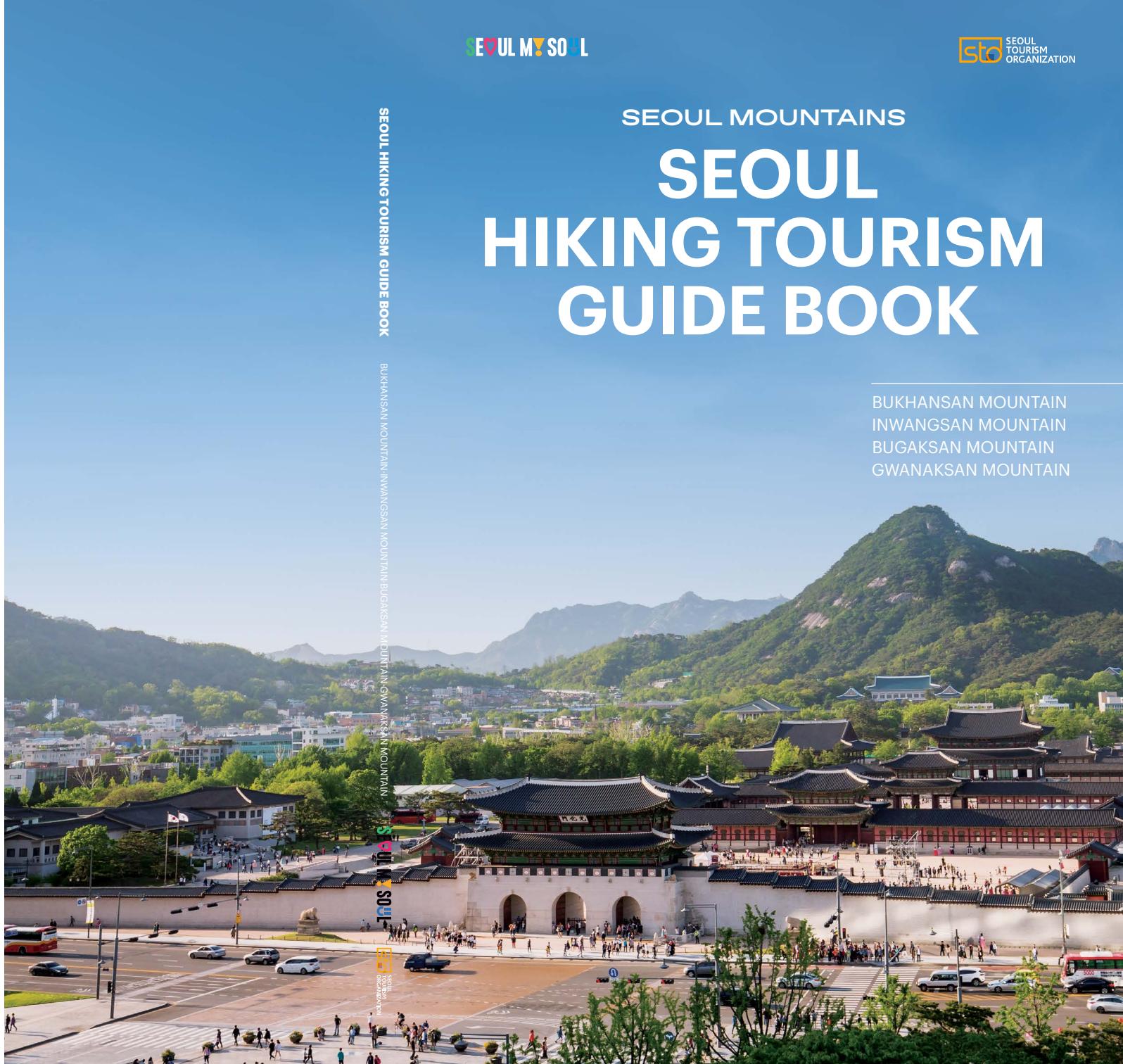
SEOUL HIKING TOURISM GUIDE BOOK

BUKHANSAN MOUNTAIN INWANGSAN MOUNTAIN BUGAKSAN MOUNTAIN GWANAKSAN MOUNTAIN

SEOUL MY SOUL

STO SEOUL TOURISM ORGANIZATION

BUKHANSAN MOUNTAIN  
INWANGSAN MOUNTAIN  
BUGAKSAN MOUNTAIN  
GWANAKSAN MOUNTAIN



# CONTENTS

002 **ALL ABOUT SEOUL HIKING TOURISM**  
An Ideal Setting for Leisurely Hikes

## PART. 1

### Bukhansan Mountain

- 004 **INTRO**  
Natural Treasure Trove in the Heart of the Metropolis
- 010 **HIKING COURSE MAP**  
Bukhansan's 8 Trails
- 012 **COURSE 01**  
Baegundae–Ui Gugok Trail
- 014 **COURSE 02**  
Bukhansanseong–Daenamun Trail
- 016 **COURSE 03**  
Samobawi–Bibong Trail
- 018 **COURSE 04**  
Samcheonsa Trail
- 020 **COURSE 05**  
Complete Tour of 12 Bukhansanseong Gates
- 024 **COURSE 06**  
Dobongsan–Sinseondae Trail
- 026 **COURSE 07**  
Dobongsan Main Ridge Trail
- 028 **COURSE 08**  
Bukhansan Dulle-gil: Uiryeong-gil
- 030 **EDITOR'S PICK**  
Crisscrossing between Nature and the City
- 036 **COLUMN**  
Messengers of Spring Guarding Bukhansan Mountain

## PART. 2

### Inwangsan Mountain

- 038 **INTRO**  
Sweeping Views of Seoul
- 044 **HIKING COURSE MAP**  
Inwangsan's 8 Trails
- 046 **COURSE 01**  
Seonbawi Trail
- 048 **COURSE 02**  
Seoul City Wall (Hanyangdoseong) Trail
- 050 **COURSE 03**  
Hongjimun Gate–Tangchundaeseong Fortress Trail
- 052 **COURSE 04**  
Buam-dong Trail
- 054 **COURSE 05**  
Inwangsan Jarak-gil Trail
- 056 **COURSE 06**  
Inwangsan Forest Trail
- 058 **COURSE 07**  
Inwangsan Dulle-gil Trail: Seodaemun Section
- 060 **COURSE 08**  
Inwangsan Dulle-gil Trail: Jongno Section
- 062 **EDITOR'S PICK**  
Journey of Artistic Inspiration
- 068 **COLUMN**  
Inwang jesaekdo: The Story behind the Painting

## PART. 3

### Bugaksan Mountain

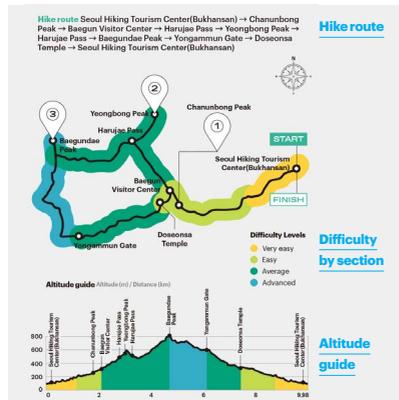
- 070 **INTRO**  
Mountain Therapy for Healing Mind and Body
- 076 **HIKING COURSE MAP**  
Bugaksan's 8 Trails
- 078 **COURSE 01**  
Changuimun–Baegakmaru Trail
- 080 **COURSE 02**  
Cheong Wa Dae–Samcheong Park Trail
- 082 **COURSE 03**  
Cheong Wa Dae Observatory–Chunchugwan Trail
- 084 **COURSE 04**  
Changuimun–Hyehwamun Trail
- 086 **COURSE 05**  
Changuimun Gate–Malbawi Rock Trail
- 088 **COURSE 06**  
Yeoraesa Temple–Hogyeongam Rock Trail
- 090 **COURSE 07**  
Bugak Haneul-gil Trails
- 092 **COURSE 08**  
Baeksasil Valley–Seonggyungwan Trail
- 094 **EDITOR'S PICK**  
Mental Healing and Nourishment
- 100 **COLUMN**  
Viewing Bugaksan Mountain via Feng Shui

## PART. 4

### Gwanaksan Mountain

- 102 **INTRO**  
An urban oasis brimming with vitality that leaves you feeling refreshed
- 108 **HIKING COURSE MAP**  
Gwanaksan's 8 Trails
- 110 **COURSE 01**  
Yeonjudae A Trail
- 112 **COURSE 02**  
Yeonjudae B Valley Trail
- 114 **COURSE 03**  
Jaunam Ridge Trail
- 116 **COURSE 04**  
Hakbawi Ridge Trail
- 118 **COURSE 05**  
Dolsan Trail
- 120 **COURSE 06**  
Samseongsan Trail
- 122 **COURSE 07**  
Dorimcheon(Sillim) Valley Trail
- 124 **COURSE 08**  
Seoul Dulle-gil Trail 12
- 126 **EDITOR'S PICK**  
A Moment to Recharge Your Urban Spirit
- 132 **COLUMN**  
Hechi, a Royal Symbol of the Joseon Dynasty

## Course Map



## Level of Course Difficulty (Easy / Average / Advanced)

Overall difficulty of each trail

### Difficulty Levels

- Very easy** This refers to generally flat and paved courses easily traveled with children (stroller friendly) and elderly people.
- Easy** These sections consist primarily of relatively flat dirt roads with limited rocky sections. Children wearing light sneakers can also hike here.
- Average** Hiking boots and proper wear are necessary. Most of the trail is made up of dirt roads, with many steps and a considerable number of rock faces and outcrops.
- Advanced** Hikers must come fully equipped with proper gear. Most of the trail is made up of rocky roads, with rock faces and outcrops that have ladders and ropes installed on them.

All rights to this guide belong to the Seoul Tourism Organization (STO). Unauthorized use of content without the written consent of the publisher is subject to legal action and prosecution. All information contained in this guide has been researched and edited to be accurate as of December 2024. The STO shall not be liable for any loss, damage, injury, or inconvenience arising in relation to this guide.

**Publication Date** December 2024  
**Issuer** Seoul Tourism Organization (STO)  
**Publisher** Seoul Tourism Organization (STO)  
**Consultation** Kim Woo-sun, Jung Jong-won, Jin Woo-seok, Kim Seom-joo, Hellyotrekking  
**Coverage, Shoots, and Design** ag communications Ltd.  
**Photography** Kim Jeong-ho, Oh Choong-seok, Kim Nam-woo, Kim Hyun-min  
**Designed by** Myungjin C&P

# An Ideal Setting for Leisurely Hikes

The secret behind Seoul's beauty is thanks to its surrounding mountains, both small and large. Seoul's "Outer Four Mountains," which seemingly encompass the city from all four directions, include the majestic Bukhansan Mountain, Deogyangsan Mountain, Gwanaksan Mountain, and Yongmasan Mountain, along with the "Inner Four Mountains" of Bugaksan Mountain, Inwangsan Mountain, Namsan Mountain, and Naksan Mountain that harmonize with the urban landscape. Let's follow the stunning blend of city and nature and enjoy a relaxing hiking trip.

※ Business hours of the Seoul Hiking Tourism Center may vary. Please refer to our website before visiting.



### SEOUL HIKING TOURISM Bugaksan Center

📍 88 Samcheong-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
 ☎ 9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. (Closed every Tuesday and on Seollal and Chuseok)  
 ☎ 82-1533-2158 🌐 seoulhiking.or.kr



### Checklist before going

- Hiking can be a physically intense activity. Bring at least a liter of water or sports drink to stay hydrated.
- Phones are known to consume larger amounts of power on mountains, where reception can be poor. Make sure to bring a portable power bank.
- For roundtrip hikes taking four hours or longer, proper hiking wear made of functional fabrics is preferred over cotton garments.
- Crampons are essential from winter to early spring, as many sections of a trail can freeze over and get slippery.
- Bring a bag for collecting trash to throw away at home.



### SEOUL HIKING TOURISM Gwanaksan Center

📍 23 Sillim-ro, Gwanak-gu, Seoul (inside Gwanaksan Station on the Sillim Line)  
 ☎ 9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. (Closed once a week and on Seollal and Chuseok)  
 ☎ 82-1533-2162 🌐 seoulhiking.or.kr



### SEOUL HIKING TOURISM Bukhansan Center

📍 5F, 52 Samyang-ro 173-gil, Gangbuk-gu, Seoul  
 ☎ 9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. (Closed every Monday and on Seollal and Chuseok)  
 ☎ 82-1533-2608 🌐 seoulhiking.or.kr

PART. 1

# Bukhansan National Park

**Natural Treasure Trove in the Heart of the Metropolis**

Bukhansan National Park, sitting directly above the nation's capital, is one of the in-city natural parks rarely found around the world. See pristine natural woodland and reach the summit to experience breathtaking views.





**Journey of healing  
in the forest**

Breathtaking walks along the  
Gureumjeongwon-gil



**Joys of nature**

Cugi Valley: Crystal-clear  
water cascading down  
jagged rock formations



**Historical marker  
at the summit**

Monument Commemorating  
the Border Inspection by  
King Jinheung on Bibong Peak



**“Bukhansan is a rugged mountain, nevertheless frequented by those captivated by its grandeur. Ascending Insubong Peak is like a rite of passage for the rock climber. The trails and ridge lines of Bukhansan and Dobongsan are incredibly numerous and complex; choosing the right course according to physical condition and circumstances is important.”**

Kim Woo-sun (director, Baekdudaegan Humanities Research Institute)

## Awe-inspiring Majesty

Bukhansan is the tallest mountain in Seoul and boasts over 2,000 years of Korean history. According to the *Samguk sagi* (*History of the Three Kingdoms*), the founder of the Baekje Kingdom (18 BCE–660 CE) climbed Bukhansan to find a site for the capital. The Hangang River basin fell to the rival Silla Kingdom (57 BCE–935 CE) in the mid-sixth century, and a monument commemorating a border patrol by Silla King Jinheung was erected on the mountain. Bukhansan was also the site of the greatest Buddhist temples of the Goryeo Dynasty (918–1392) and played an important role in the founding of the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910).

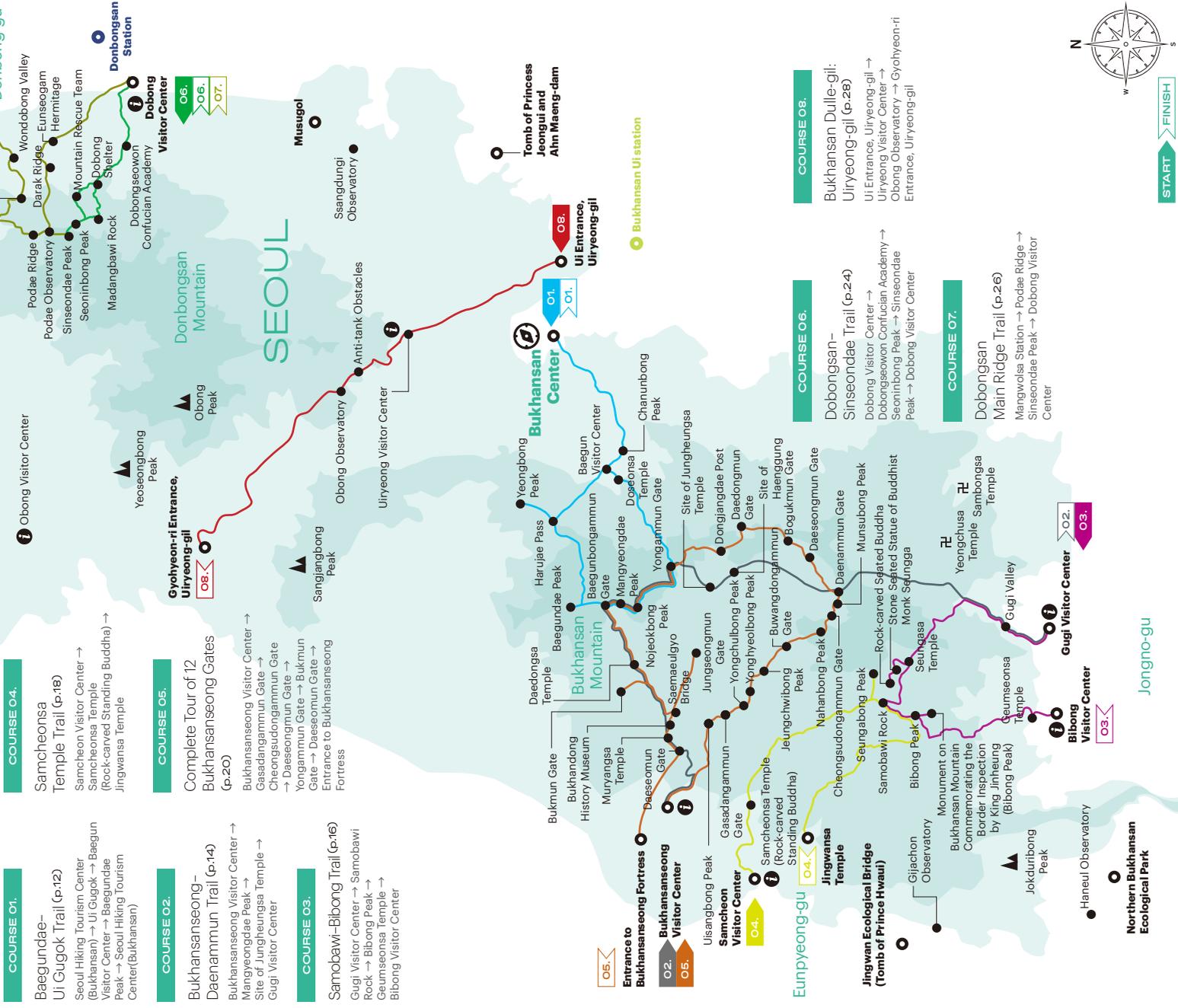
Bukhansan (elevation of 835.6 meters) is a rare nature park in a city that is surrounded by urban development. Designated Korea's 15th national park in 1983 with that of Dobongsan Mountain, the area has seen modern mountaineers develop numerous routes to the mountain's rock face. Insubong Peak on Bukhansan and Seoninbong Peak on Dobongsan are must-climb destinations for all rock climbers. Yet the casual hiker will feel just as home on the mountain thanks to its many easier trails and ridges depending on physical ability and circumstances.

The summit offers truly awe-inspiring views. Baegundae Peak boasts unobstructed 360-degree views of all of Seoul and parts of Gyeonggi-do. Bukhansan was once called Samgaksan, or "Three-horned Mountain," with the peaks of Insubong, Baegundae, and Mangyeongdae comprising the three horns. Yeongbong Peak, with views no less spectacular, is a viable alternative for those who find Baegundae too challenging.

©Jung Jong-won

# Bukhansan's 8 Trails

Bukhansan National Park straddles the metropolis of Seoul and the surrounding Gyeonggi-do, covering 76,922 square kilometers. Uiryong Pass divides the park into two zones: Bukhansan to the south and Dobongsan to the north. Bukhansan's summit is Baegundae, with an elevation of 835.6 meters. While conquering the mountain is quite a challenge, many less difficult trails for casual hikers crisscross the mountain. All of Seoul and even parts of Gyeonggi-do can be seen from Baegundae.



**COURSE 01.**

**Baegundae-Ui Gugok Trail (p.12)**

Seoul Hiking Tourism Center (Bukhansan) → Ui Gugok → Baegun Visitor Center → Baegundae Peak → Seoul Hiking Tourism Center (Bukhansan)

**COURSE 04.**

**Samcheonsa Temple Trail (p.18)**

Samcheon Visitor Center → Samcheonsa Temple (Rock-carved Standing Buddha) → Jngwansa Temple

**COURSE 02.**

**Bukhansanseong-Daenamun Trail (p.14)**

Bukhansanseong Visitor Center → Mangyeongdae Peak → Site of Jungheungsa Temple → Gugui Visitor Center

**COURSE 05.**

**Complete Tour of 12 Bukhansanseong Gates (p.20)**

Bukhansanseong Visitor Center → Gasadangmun Gate → Cheongsudongammun Gate → Daeseongmun Gate → Yongammun Gate → Bukmun Gate → Daeseongmun Gate → Entrance to Bukhansanseong Fortress

**COURSE 03.**

**Samobawi-Bibong Trail (p.16)**

Gugui Visitor Center → Samobawi Rock → Bibong Peak → Geumseonsa Temple → Bibong Visitor Center

**COURSE 06.**

**Dobongsan-Sinseondae Trail (p.24)**

Dobong Visitor Center → Dobongseowon Confucian Academy → Seoninbong Peak → Sinseondae Peak → Dobong Visitor Center

**COURSE 07.**

**Dobongsan Main Ridge Trail (p.26)**

Mangwolsa Station → Podae Ridge → Sinseondae Peak → Dobong Visitor Center

**COURSE 08.**

**Bukhansan Dulle-gil: Uiryong-gil (p.28)**

Ui Entrance, Uiryong-gil → Uiryong Visitor Center → Obong Observatory → Gyoheon-ri Entrance, Uiryong-gil

Sweeping views of Seoul

# Baegundae-Ui Gugok Trail

This is the shortest trail up to Baegundae Peak, the summit of Bukhansan. The section from Harujae Pass to Yeongbong Peak is extremely steep. Atop Yeongbong Peak at 604 meters, hikers are greeted by the majestic rock face of Insubong Peak. At the 835.6-meter-tall summit, a 360-degree panoramic view of Seoul unfolds.

Total travel distance: **9.98 km** Average travel time: **4 hours 20 minutes** Difficulty: **advanced**



## SPOTS



①

Ui Gugok

The name originated from *Udong gugokgi* written by Hong Yang-ho (1724-1802), which named and described nine scenic spots of the Ui-dong valley. The magical scenery here is walled in by granite rock faces with jagged rocks and stones scattered about.



②

Yeongbong Peak

Yeongbong Peak (604 meters) is reached by following Ui Ridge from Baegun Visitor Center past Harujae Pass. Easily reachable even by novice hikers, the peak stands opposite Insubong Peak, a popular rock face climbing attraction.



③

Baegundae Peak

The summit of Bukhansan stands 835.6 meters tall, flanked by Insubong Peak to the north and Mangyeongdae Peak to the south. Climbers atop Baegundae Peak can enjoy unobstructed views of all of Bukhansan's peaks. Enjoy views of the Seoul city center beneath and clear blue skies above.

## About the trail

- The section from Harujae Pass to Yeongbong Peak is steep and slippery. Sufficient safety gear such as hiking poles and gloves is thus a must and be sure to grip the handrails installed along the path.
- The path down from Baegundae to Yongammun Gate goes past Baegunbongammun Gate, with a fork in the trail less than 100 meter down. Take the left path to go to Daedongmun Gate and the path on the right leads to Yaksuam Hermitage.

## Shelter and hiking tips

- No shelters are installed along the path, so get sufficient rest at Harujae Pass before going up to Baegundae Peak.

## Transportation

- Take Exit 2 at Bukhansan Ui (Doseonsa) Station, the last stop of the Seoul LRT Ui-Sinseol Line, and walk for about five minutes toward the Seoul Hiking Tourism Center(Bukhansan). An alternative is to grab a taxi at the station and get off at the Baegun Visitor Center.

## More info

- The Seoul Hiking Tourism Center(Bukhansan) provides hiking information for domestic and foreign tourists. Additionally, hiking gear such as hiking shoes, clothes, sticks, and gloves can be rented (with a charge). With a lounge, changing rooms, shower facilities, and luggage storage services, the center provides convenience to make visiting Seoul's mountains easier.

### Seoul Hiking Tourism Center(Bukhansan)

5F, Gwanglim Building, 52, Samyang-ro 173-gil, Gangbuk-gu, Seoul  
82-1533-2608 seoulhiking.or.kr



Hikers' favorite

# Bukhansanseong-Daenamun Trail

This trail marked by beautiful scenery and historical sites is a hikers' favorite. It is also popular among foreigners as it passes through the main castle of the Bukhansanseong Fortress and historical palace sites. The wildflowers that bloom throughout the four seasons add to the beauty of the trail.

Total travel distance: **10.2 km** Average travel time: **4 hours 10 minutes** Difficulty: **advanced**



## SPOTS



① Site of Jungheungsa Temple

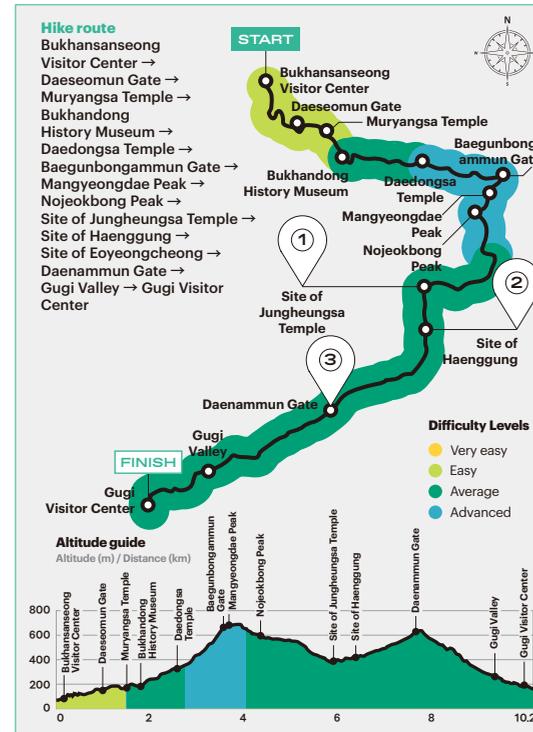
The former site of Jungheungsa Temple is found at the southern base of Nojeokbong Peak between the peaks of Janggunbong and Guambong. The original temple has been restored after being destroyed by flooding in 1915. Surviving artifacts include a temple bell from 1103 and a Buddhist incense holder (used in the sanctum) from 1344.



② Site of Haenggung

After Japanese and Qing invasions in 1592 and 1636, King Sukjong reinforced the capital's defenses with Bukhansanseong Fortress. A temporary palace (*haenggung*) was built at the base of Sangwonbong Peak. The original *haenggung* was destroyed in a landslide in 1915.

## COURSE MAP



③ Daenamun Gate

One of the gates of Bukhansanseong Fortress, Daenamun provides access to and from all major points in Bukhansan Mountain. The gate is connected to Baegundae Peak, Harujae Pass, and Yeongbong Peak to the north and Bibong Peak to the west. Gugi Valley lies south of the gate, which leads to Kalbawi Ridge in the east. The roundtrip from the valley to the gate is also popular among hikers.

## INFORMATION

### About the trail

From Bukhandong History Museum and past the gates of Jungseongmun and Yongammun, take a detour toward Mangyeongdae Peak. While this means a longer hike, the trail is less steep, easing the journey up to Baegunbongammun Gate and Baegundae Peak.

### Shelter and hiking tips

The trail spans over 10 kilometers of steep climbs and drops. At least 10 minutes of rest for every hour traveled is thus recommended. Rest and recover at Yaksuam Hermitage past Daedongsa Temple before moving on.

### Transportation

Take bus No. 704 at Exit 2 of Gupabal Station, Seoul Metro Line 3. Get off at the entrance of Bukhansanseong Fortress. Bukhansanseong Visitor Center is located about 700 meters up the road.

### More info

Gugi Valley's pristine nature makes it a prime habitat for the Chinese minnow, which is only found in Grade 1 water (biological oxygen demand of 1ppm or less). Gugi Ranger Station enforces a strict no-access policy for the stream until 2026 to protect the ecosystem.



## Hiking through history

# Samobawi-Bibong Trail

This trail is optimal for enjoying the pristine mountain streams and blue skies on a clear day. On the trail is a monument commemorating the border inspection by King Jinheung of the ancient Silla Kingdom, as well as the path taken in 1968 by 31 North Korean commandos on their mission to assassinate South Korean President Park Chung-hee. The top of the trail offers an open panoramic view.

Total travel distance: **6 km** Average travel time: **3 hours** Difficulty: **average**



### SPOTS



1 Seungasa Temple

Sitting halfway up the mountain around 1 kilometer east of Bibong, this temple is dedicated to and named after the Indian monk Seungga (Sengqie). Born in 640, the priest dedicated 53 years to spreading Buddhism in Tang China.



2 Bibong Peak

With a name meaning “monument peak,” Bibong, at 560 meters, is lower than Baegundae Peak but its views are no less impressive. At the top of the peak, there is a monument produced in the Silla period by King Jinheung. The monument is currently conserved at the National Museum of Korea.

### COURSE MAP



### INFORMATION

#### About the trail

- The gravel path heading up the mountain from Seungasa Temple splits in two directions, with the left path leading to Bibong Peak and the right ending at Samobawi Rock. The trip from Bibong to Samobawi requires a lot of back-tracking, and visiting the rock first before heading to the peak is recommended.

#### Shelter and hiking tips

- Clear and clean water from the Bukhansan summit trickles down the mountain streams along the path to Seungasa Temple, forming small and cool pools. Dipping one's feet in them is a great way to recover from a grueling hike.

#### Transportation

- Take bus No. 7212 at the bus stop across the street from Exit 2 of Bulgwang Station, Seoul Metro Line 3. Get off at the entrance of Seungasa, cross the street at Lycee International Xavier, and walk up Bibong-gil. Gugi Visitor Center is about 800 meters up the road.

#### More info

- There is an inscribed monument at the summit of Bukhansan, which the greatest calligrapher of the Joseon Dynasty Kim Jeonghui (pen name Chusa) deciphered in 1816 to reveal that it was erected to commemorate a border inspection by King Jinheung of the Silla Kingdom following his conquest of the Hangang River Basin. Currently conserved at the National Museum of Korea, the granite monument is 154 centimeters tall and 69 centimeters wide, and inscribed with King Jinheung's achievements.



3 Geumseonsa Temple

The Buddhist monk Muhak, an important figure in the founding of the Joseon Dynasty, set up Geumseonsa Temple after discovering the energy of Samgaksan (former name of Bukhansan). Past the double centenarian pine tree and the 108 steps is Daejeokgwangjeon Hall, housing the Vairocana Buddha. Geumseonsa is also popular for temple stays.



Path for peace of mind

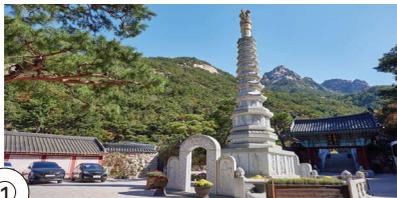
# Samcheonsa Trail

This trail starts and ends at Buddhist temples each more than 1,000 years old. Samcheonsa was founded in 661 during the Silla period and Jingwansa in 1011, during the Goryeo period. Seungabong Peak, the highest point on the trail, is named after Seungasa Temple that sits beneath it. The temples along the trail offer rest and peace of mind.

Total travel distance: **7.33 km** Average travel time: **2 hours 40 minutes** Difficulty: **average**



## SPOTS



① Samcheonsa Temple

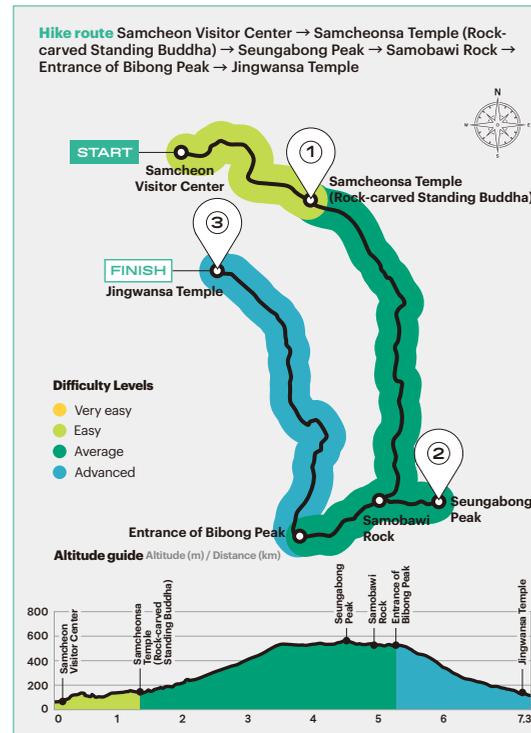
Founded by the Buddhist monk of Silla Wonhyo in 661, this temple gets its name from the legend saying it housed more than 3,000 practicing monks (*samcheon* means 3,000 in Korean). Engraved on a giant boulder to the back of Daeungjeon Hall is a standing Sakyamuni Buddha statue believed to date back to the early Goryeo Dynasty.



② Seungabong Peak

This 567-meter-high peak stands between Samobawi Rock and Munsubong Peak on Bibong Ridge. East of Seungabong are the peaks Baegundae, Insubong, Munsubong, and Bohyeonbong and west are Samobawi Rock and Bibong. The splendid view from the top makes the peak a popular photo spot.

## COURSE MAP



③ Jingwansa Temple

This 1,000-year-old temple was built in 1011 by King Hyeonjong, the 8th monarch of the Goryeo Dynasty. Together with Buramsa in the east, Sammaksa in the south and Seungasa in the north, Jingwansa is one of the four great temples in the Seoul region. Jingwansa is also famous at home and abroad for its temple food developed by its abbot Gyehe.

## INFORMATION

### About the trail

- The path down from Samobawi Rock to Jingwansa Temple is extremely steep. Hikers are advised to wear gloves and descend slowly while firmly grasping the hand rails and cables.
- Beware of steep cliffs along the descending path in the valley from Jingwansa Temple.

### Shelter and hiking tips

- The flagstone in front of the rock-carved standing Buddha statue at Samcheonsa Temple and the tea house on the Jingwansa grounds are great for resting and recharging one's strength.

### Transportation

- Take bus No. 7723 at the bus stop behind Exit 3 of Gupabal Station, Seoul Metro Line 3. Get off after seven stops at Hana High School, Samcheonsa, and Jingwansa and turn right toward Samcheonsa. Samcheon Visitor Center is about a nine-minute walk up the road.

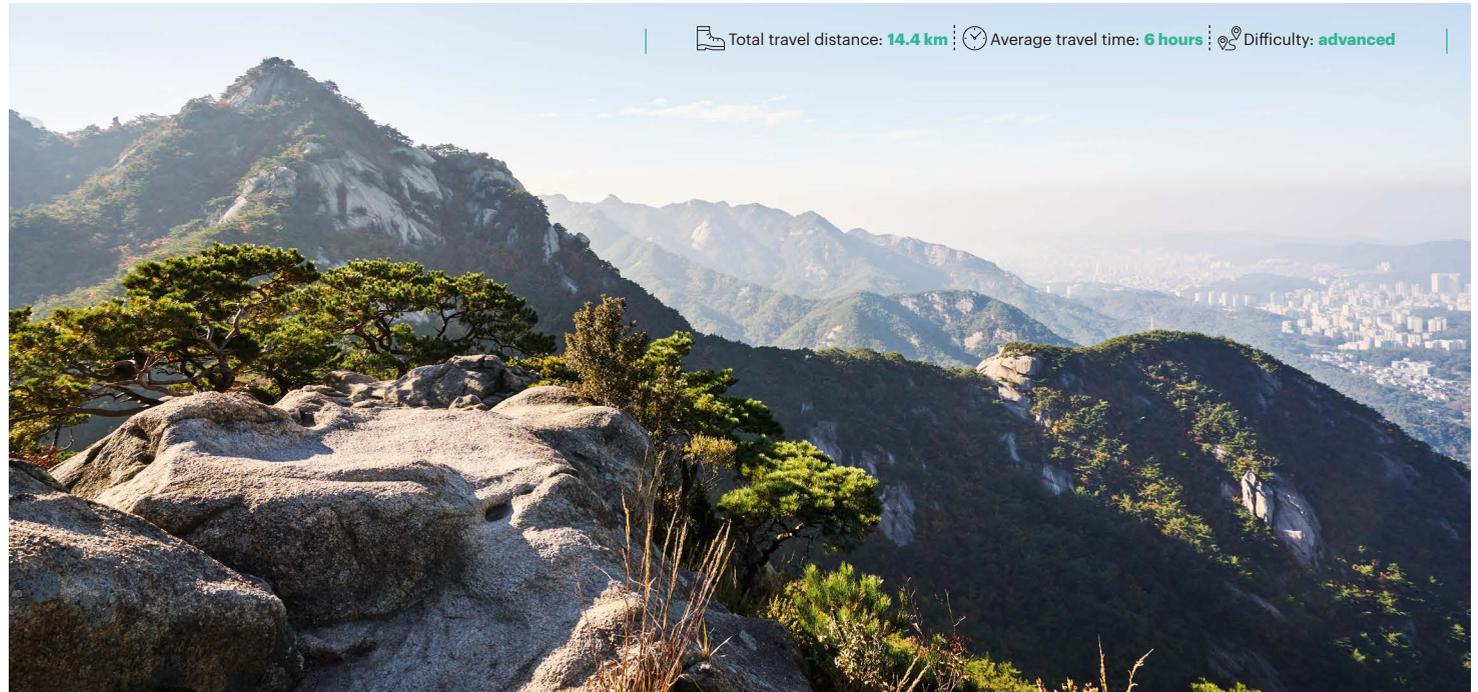
### More info

- Jingwansa Temple is also known for keeping the tradition of Korean temple food alive. Deeming the process of cooking and eating part of ascetic practice, it carries out a temple stay program incorporating an alms bowl meal. This program is popular among foreign tourists seeking to purify their mind and body through temple stay and food.



Best of Bukhansan scenery

# Complete Tour of 12 Bukhansanseong Gates



Bukhansanseong Fortress was built in 1711, the 37th year of the reign of King Sukjong of the Joseon Dynasty, to defend the capital Hanyang (today's Seoul). The structure uses the rough topography of Bukhansan and extends for 11.6 kilometers. This trail goes through the five main gates Daedongmun, Daeseongmun, Daenamun, Daeseomun, and Bukmun and the seven hidden gates Seomun, Baeugunbongmun, Yongammun, Bogukmun, Cheongsudongmun, Buwangdongmun, and Gasadangammun along the fortifications, as well as Uisang Ridge (made up of Uisangbong, Yongchulbong, Jeungchwibong, Nahanbong, and Munsubong peaks) known to be Bukhansan's most challenging section. The reward for this punishing course awaits at the summit: great views of Bukhansan scenery along the ridge line.

SPOTS



①

Buwangdongammun Gate

One of the hidden gates (*ammun*) installed when Bukhansanseong was built in 1711, this gate was strategically placed on the path linking the temples of Samcheonsa and Jungheungsa. Hidden gates were used to bring weapons, food, and reinforcements into the fortress during an emergency.



②

Munsubong Peak

Marking the end of Uisang Ridge, this peak towers over and is named after Munsusa Temple, which was built during the Goryeo Dynasty. The ridges of Uisang, Sanseongju, and Bibong meet at Cheongsudongammun Gate. Legend has it that those who pray on the toad-shaped boulder at the tip of the peak will beget a son.



③

Daseongmun Gate

The southeast gate of Bukhansanseong was built in 1711 along with the main structure. As the closest access point to Bukhansanseong from Changdeokgung Palace, Daeseongmun was reopened to the public in 2018 after columns at the gatehouse and roof tiles were repaired.

## COURSE MAP

**Hike route** Bukhansanseong Visitor Center → Uisangbong Peak → Gasadangammun Gate (Gate 1) → Yongchulbong Peak → Yonghyeolbong Peak → Jeungchwibong Peak → Buwangdongammun Gate (Gate 2) → Nahanbong Peak → Cheongsudongammun Gate (Gate 3) → Munsubong Peak → Daenamun Gate (Gate 4) → Daeseongmun Gate (Gate 5) → Bogukmun Gate (Gate 6) → Daedongmun Gate (Gate 7) → Dongjangdae Post → Yongammun Gate (Gate 8) → Nojeokbong Peak → Wimun Gate (Gate 9) → Daedongsa Temple → Bukmun Gate (Gate 10) → Saemaulgyo Bridge → Jungseongmun Gate (Gate 11) → Daeseomun Gate (Gate 12) → Entrance to Bukhansanseong Fortress



## SPOTS



4 Dongjangdae Post

A full view of the ridges of Bukhansanseong unfolds at the top of Dongjangdae, which served as generals' command post in the Joseon Dynasty. The dirt and forest paths stretched slightly below the fortress walls in the Bogukmun-Gate-to-Yongammun-Gate section, which includes Dongjangdae in the middle, offer the joy of variety. A short break at Dongjangdae might also be a good idea.



5 Daeseomun Gate

The main gate of Bukhansanseong has the lowest elevation of the fortress' 16 gates. The royal procession of King Sukjong entered this gate in 1712. Daeseomun was also the main access point for villagers living within the fortifications.

## INFORMATION

### About the trail

- The steep slopes and challenging terrain of Uisang Ridge stretching west from Munsubong and the main ridge of Bukhansan might be too difficult for novice hikers.
- The section from Baegunbongammun Gate over Baegundae Peak past Wonhyobong Peak to Bukmun Gate is particularly dangerous, requiring full rock-climbing gear. Those without the proper equipment must descend toward Daedongsa Temple, take the path from the temple to Bukmun, and return to Daedongsa.

### Shelter and hiking tips

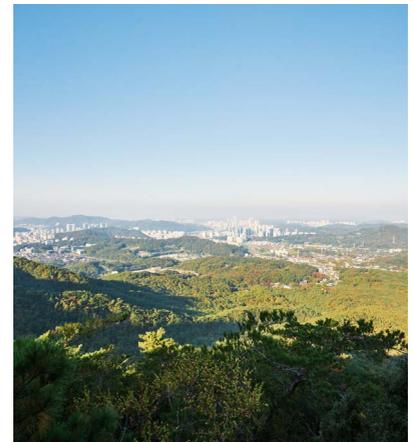
- This trail through 12 Bukhansanseong gates can be exhausting so take every opportunity to rest and recover. Broad boulders appear every six or so peaks for sitting and resting.

### Transportation

- Take bus No. 704 at the bus stop outside Exit 2 of Gupabal Station, Seoul Metro Line 3. Get off at the entrance to Bukhansanseong Fortress and walk up Daeseomun-gil Road for about 900 meters. On the right are steps and a sign reading "Uisangbong Peak." Follow this road to reach Uisang Ridge.

### More info

- Making way through steep rocks can be challenging, but the view of Bukhansan encountered at the end of this trail is one of a kind. The intense and dynamic hike offered by the rocky ridge has hikers return for more. The view from the rocks will leave hikers feeling like a Taoist hermit.



Sunrise spot greeting the day

# Dobongsan-Sinseondae Trail

Jaunbong Peak (740.2 meters) is the tallest peak of Dobongsan Mountain, but access to the steep rock cliffs is restricted. Sinseondae Peak, standing opposite Jaunbong, is considered the de facto summit of the mountain. This trail is the shortest way up to Sinseondae, a favorite spot to see the sunrise among early morning hikers.

Total travel distance: **6.3 km** | Average travel time: **2 hours 30 minutes** | Difficulty: **advanced**



## SPOTS



①

Dobongseowon Confucian Academy

Dobongseowon, founded in 1573, is Seoul's only seowon (Confucian academy). It honors the Joseon-era neo-Confucian scholar Jo Gwang-jo. Spirit tablets of Jo and philosopher and politician Song Si-yeol are enshrined here. The academy was razed in 1871 under a decree abolishing all seowon, but was restored in 1971.

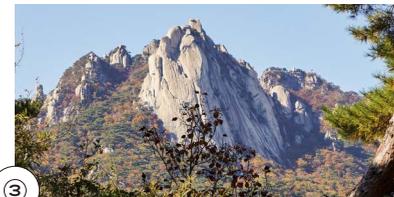
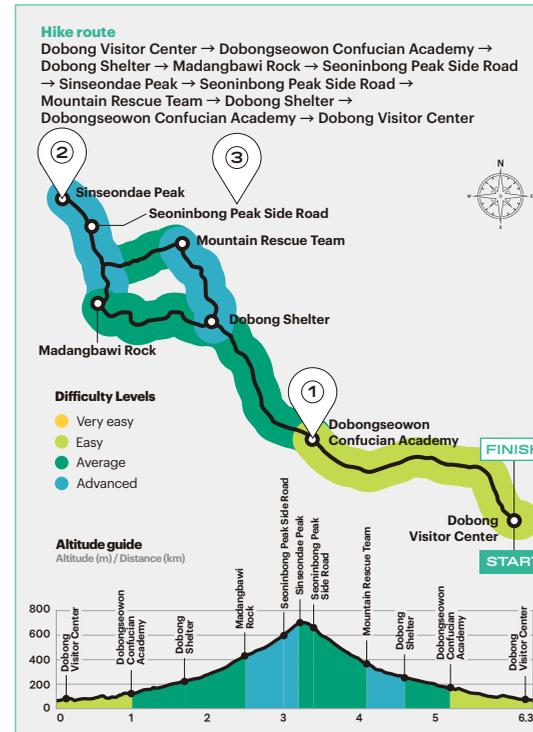


②

Sinseondae Peak

Standing opposite Jaunbong, this peak at the top shows the scenery of Dobongsan Mountain meld with views of downtown Seoul. The climb up to Sinseondae is steep, so hikers are advised to use the installed handrails. Sinseondae is also popular spot to see the sunrise.

## COURSE MAP



③

Seoninbong Peak

Standing 708 meters high, this granite peak has a sheer rock face of around 200 meters high and 500 meters wide. Seoninbong is one of the "three brother peaks" together with Jaunbong and Manjangbong. With a name meaning "a peak where Taoist hermits undergo spiritual training," Seoninbong requires rock-climbing equipment to climb.

## INFORMATION

### About the trail

- The climb from Seonin Shelter to Sinseondae Peak is extremely steep. Elderly hikers and those with weak knees or ankles are advised to exercise caution on this course.
- The line of hikers waiting to scale Sinseondae can be up to 50 meters long on weekends and public holidays. So going on a weekday is highly recommended.

### Shelter and hiking tips

- Take sufficient time to recover at Seonin Shelter before ascending Sinseondae Peak, as the crawl up the steep rock face can be exhausting.

### Transportation

- Take Exit 1 at Dobongsan Station, Seoul Metro Line 1 (Gyeongwonseon), and walk about 20 minutes toward the Dobongsan Station Intersection to reach Dobong Visitor Center.

### More info

- The peaks of Dobongsan—Manjangbong, Seoninbong, Jubong, Obong, Uiam, and Jaunbong—attract numerous rock climbers.
- One of the 35 mountain cabins built around Korea in the 1970s, Dobong Shelter used to be called the "Dobongsan Mountain Cabin." Among the cabins built around the time, it is the only civilian-occupied cabin that accommodates hikers. The place is currently also used as a hiking school.



Discover hidden beauty among ridges

# Dobongsan Main Ridge Trail

The main ridge of Dobongsan stretches from the Uinam Ridge, past Uiam Rock, and up to Sinseondae Peak via Jubong. Including the ridges of Podae and Sapae, the entire ridge line measures some 11 kilometers. The relatively challenging climb starts with a gentle uphill that gradually increases in slope past Mangwolsa Temple. Those who make it to the top are rewarded with unobstructed panoramic views and the beauty of the valleys and streams hidden between the ridges.

Total travel distance: **9.32 km** Average travel time: **6 hours** Difficulty: **advanced**



## SPOTS



①

Wondobong Valley

The “won” in Wondobong means “original.” Also known as Mangwolsa Valley, Wondobong Valley stretches from Jaunbong Peak past Mangwolsa Temple, Deokje Spring, and Ssangyongsa Temple all the way down to Wondobong Visitor Center. Midway between Ssangyongsa and the spring is Dukkeobibawi, a boulder projecting from the rock face that is said to resemble the head of a toad.

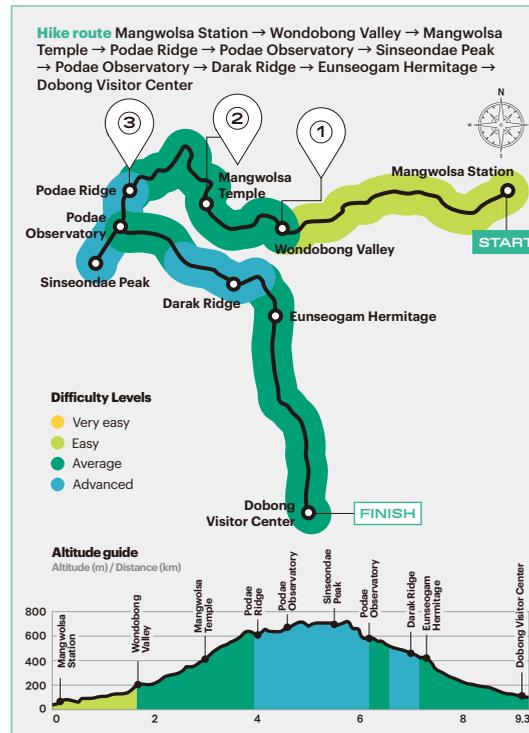


②

Mangwolsa Temple

Founded by the Buddhist monk Haeho in 639 under orders from Queen Seondeok of the Silla Kingdom, this temple gets its name from *mangwol*, which means to “gaze at the moon.” A rabbit-shaped boulder to the east of the Daeungjeon Hall stares at the moon-shaped boulder to the west.

## COURSE MAP



③

Podae Ridge

Stretching north from Jaunbong Peak, the summit of Dobongsan, this ridge got its name, which literally means “artillery battery,” from the anti-aircraft artillery installed here during the Korean War. Podae connects to Wondobong Valley in the north and Dobong Valley and Obong Ridge in the south.

## INFORMATION

### About the trail

- The path down Darak Ridge from Podae Observatory can be hard to find. Take the left narrow path down from Podae Observatory and make a left at the entrance to the boardwalk. Go around the boulder while holding the handrails.

### Shelter and hiking tips

- The trail is physically demanding so hikers should pace themselves and take regular breaks.

### Transportation

- Take Exit 3 at Mangwolsa Station, Seoul Metro Line 1, and walk about 20 minutes down the path to the right to reach Wondobong Visitor Center, then hike toward Wondobong Valley from there.

### More info

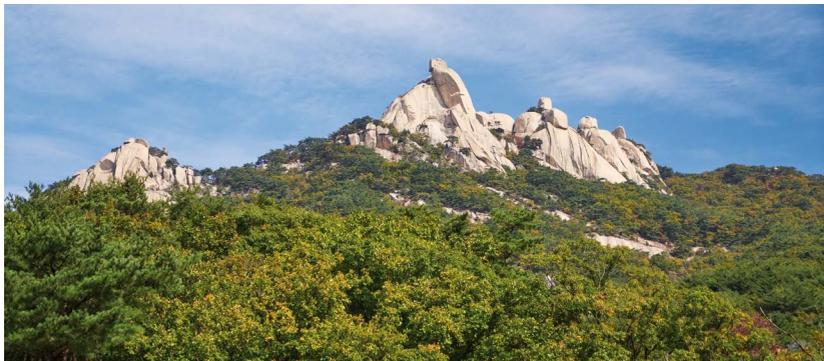
- King Gyeongsun, the last monarch of the Silla Kingdom, was preparing to surrender to Goryeo. His son, Crown Prince Maui, was vehemently opposed to surrendering the millennium-old kingdom. With his life in danger, the prince went into hiding at Mangwolsa Temple on Dobongsan Mountain. His father eventually surrendered to Goryeo King Taejo. Lamenting the loss of his kingdom, Maui spent the rest of his days eating wild shrubs and grass as a hermit.
- Dobongsan purportedly nurtured Um Hong-gil, the first person to climb the 16 highest points on Earth, and his mountaineering aspiration. As a child, Um honed his rock-climbing skills with professional mountaineers on the steep rock faces surrounding his home.

Nature-friendly mountain walk

# Bukhansan Dulle-gil: Uiryong-gil

Uiryong-gil is Section 21 of Bukhansan Dulle-gil Trail along unpaved paths between Bukhansan to the south and Dobongsan to the north. Public access to the path was restricted due to the thwarted 1968 mission by 31 North Korean commandos to assassinate South Korean President Park Chung-hee, but the path was reopened in July 2009 under a reservation system. The natural ecosystem on this path has been well-preserved through about four decades of no human contact, and the gentle ascents and descents make Uiryong-gil an easy walk.

Total travel distance: **6.42 km** Average travel time: **2 hour** Difficulty: **easy**



## SPOTS



①

Uiryong Visitor Center

This is the starting point of the hike along Uiryong-gil. Since public access was restricted, it has been reopened in July 2009 under a reservation system. Admission is allowed to visitors who make a prior reservation and present their IDs.

(Korea National Park Service Reservation System reservation.knps.or.kr ☎ Reservation Inquiry 1670-9201)



②

Anti-tank Obstacles

The anti-tank obstacles are a military installation designed to block advancing tanks. In case of emergency, the concrete blocks are dislodged from their supports to block the road. The road was created for military operations by the US Army Engineering Corps during the Korean War and was used to evacuate residents of Yangju and Paju, Gyeonggi-do, and as an accessway to Seoul.

## COURSE MAP



③

Obong Observatory

The highest point of Uiryong-gil, this observatory offers the finest views of Dobongsan's peaks. The five rocky pinnacles are perched precariously atop the summit ridge at 660 meters and commonly called the "five brothers" or "five fingers."

## INFORMATION

### About the trail

- Reservations are required at least a day in advance to enter Uiryong-gil. Access is permitted from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., with the last entry at 4 p.m. In winter, the last entry is at 3 p.m. Make sure to bring identification as it will be checked at the trailhead.

### Shelter and hiking tips

- Uiryong-gil offers several shelters for rest and snacks.

### Transportation

- Take the Ui-Sinseol Line to Bukhansan Ui Station and leave through Exit 1. Walk about 2 kilometers towards the Uiryong Forest Culture Village to reach Uiryong Visitor Center, where Uiryong-gil begins in earnest.

### More info

- Once called Sogwigogae Pass, Uiryong-gil was an important link between the capital and the northern Gyeonggi-do region. The road was used to transport agricultural produce and daily necessities. Uiryong-gil was used to evacuate Korean War refugees, and after the 1953 ceasefire, it was restricted for military use. It is famous for its autumn foliage.
- According to the legend of the five peaks, a magistrate's beautiful daughter was an only child. Five young men vying for her hand in marriage climbed the ridge opposite where the five peaks stand today to see who could throw the farthest. The boulders they hurled landed on the mountaintop, where they remain to this day.

# Crisscrossing between Nature and the City



Bukhansan Mountain is north of Seoul, with something to offer both novice and seasoned hikers. There is much to see and do after exploring the neighborhoods around the mountain. Crossing over from city to nature and back again is one of the great charms of Seoul.

## Bukhansan National Park: Two-day itinerary

**1:00 p.m.** Lunch at Woorikong Sundubu after hiking – 750 meters (3 minutes by car, 8 minutes on foot) → **1:45 p.m.** Virtual reality experience at UIDONG Mountain Culture H-U-B – 3.6 kilometers (11 minutes by car) → **2:50 p.m.** Coffee or tea at 419 Café Street – 18 kilometers (45 minutes by car) → **4:30 p.m.** Soak up culture at Eunpyeong History & Hanok Museum – 240 meters (1 minute by car, 4 minutes on foot) → **6:00 p.m.** Wind down at Eungjeongheon

The entrance to Book1, a bookstore-café

## Leave everyday problems behind and nurture the mind



### Hwagyesa Temple

Founded in 1522, this temple sits above a quiet residential neighborhood in the northern Seoul neighborhood of Suyu-dong. The lush forest surrounding the temple belies its proximity to the city below. Temple stays at this temple take guests on a journey to find their true selves in a wonderfully pristine natural setting featuring traditional meditation, ringing of the temple bell, and dialogue over tea with resident monks. The weekend program is geared toward experiencing Buddhist temple culture while the Tuesday program focuses more on rest and relaxation.

📍 177, Hwagyesa-gil, Gangbuk-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-10-4024-4326



### Geumseonsa Temple

Along Bibong Trail up Bukhansan Mountain stands a temple in the shadows of the mountains of Bugaksan and Inwangsan. Geumseonsa Temple was founded by the monk Muhak, who taught Yi Seong-gye, who founded the Joseon Dynasty as its first king. A Buddhist temple stay amid clear mountain streams and pristine valleys is a great way to make a hike more special. Leave behind the everyday grind and let go of all stress and suffering while concentrating entirely on the self, breath, and each step. For Temple Stays, the experience program and relaxation program are offered on the weekends (Fri., Sat.) and weekdays (Tue., Wed., Thu.) respectively.

📍 137, Bibong-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-2-395-9955

### Jingwansa Temple

This millennium-old Buddhist temple was founded in 1011 during the reign of King Hyeonjong of the Goryeo Dynasty. Buddhism dictates that the food one eats forms his or her physique and character, and Jingwansa is renowned for its temple food and baru gongyang (communal meal ceremony), all of which visitors can experience. This healthy meal is followed by chats over tea with resident monks. For those unable to visit in person, Jingwansa on Saturday mornings also offers a weekly online meditation program. Reservations can be made on the temple's website.

📍 73, Jingwan-gil, Eunpyeong-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-2-388-7999



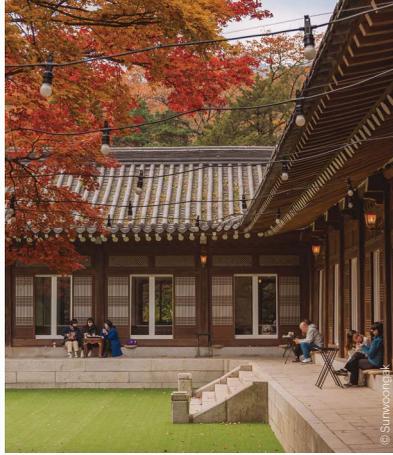
## Things to do in the foothills of Bukhansan



### 419 Café Street

A street lined with trendy and quaint cafés, this is a great place to stop by after a hike thanks to its array of coffee shops by major chains and trendy individual cafés. The name of this café street originated because it is located on the way to the April 19th National Cemetery, which honors the April 19 Revolution of 1960 against the regime of President Syngman Rhee and Modern History Memorial Hall. Those killed by police in this movement are buried in the cemetery.

📍 535-221, Suyu-dong, Gangbuk-gu, Seoul



### Sunwoongak

Sunwoongak is a Hanok café in the neighborhood of Ui-dong, harkening back to the Bukhansan Mountain of the past. Originally built in 1967 as an upscale gentlemen's club, Sunwoongak today is a popular café and a sought-after location for weddings and photo shoots. This is also the largest privately owned Hanok residence in Seoul, with well-managed stone walls and pleasantly manicured lawns. As a popular venue for weddings, photo shoots, and other functions, Sunwoongak is often closed to walk-in customers. Check the building's Instagram account (@café\_sunwoongak) before visiting.

📍 223, Samyang-ro 173-gil, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-0507-1399-1105 ☉ 12:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. (closed Wed.)



### Bukhansan International Climbing Center

This is an outdoor rock-climbing face on the way up Bukhansan Mountain from the Seoul Hiking Tourism Center. A safer way of rock climbing, the center offers both a monthly membership and a one-day pass. Its indoor climbing wall offers all-weather fun. The outdoor wall towers 15 meters high, while the indoor wall stands at an impressive 12 meters, making them perfect for expert climbers. People can shower there after a climb.

📍 80, Samyang-ro 173-gil, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-70-4167-7468 ☉ 9:30 a.m. - 9:30 p.m. Tue.-Fri. / 9:30-7:30 p.m. Sat. - Sun. (closed Mon., Jan. 1, Seollal [Lunar New Year's Day], Chuseok, Labor Day [May 1], public holidays, and substitute holidays)



### Eunpyeong History & Hanok Museum

Located on the foothills of Bukhansan Mountain, this museum has exhibits on the history of Seoul's Eunpyeong-gu district and the Hanok architecture the area is famous for. Expect fabulous views of Eunpyeong Hanok Village against the backdrop of Bukhansan Mountain from the rooftop observation deck. The museum is also great for children with an interactive learning center and mini and toy libraries.

📍 8, Yeonso-ro 50-gil, Eunpyeong-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-2-351-8556 ☉ 9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. (closed Mondays, Jan. 1, Seollal [Lunar New Year's Day], and Chuseok)



### UIDONG Mountain Culture H·U·B

This multi-purpose space for alpine culture combines alpine experiences, culture, and communities. One exhibition commemorates Um Hong-gil, world-renowned mountaineer and the first person to conquer all 16 Himalayan peaks, and offers general alpine information and training. Other features include courses in basic mountaineering including those on selection of the proper attire and boots for a hike and a virtual reality trip up Insubong Peak.

📍 B2, 689-1, Samyang-ro, Gangbuk-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-2-994-8848  
☉ 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. (break 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m./VR Center opens until 5:30 p.m.) (closed Mondays, Jan. 1st, Seollal [Lunar New Year's Day], and Chuseok)



### Celadon Kiln Site Experience Center

Situated at the foot of Bukhansan Mountain, the Celadon Kiln Site Experience Center is where you can experience the charm of traditional ceramic ware. This is a small but valuable historical site that holds the key to the ceramics production system during the period of transition from the Goryeo to Joseon dynasties. It offers a range of ceramic ware experience programs for all visitors from children to grownups including pottery wheel spinning, hand building, and painting. This is an ideal spot to enjoy relaxation after hiking and experience the therapeutic pottery making.

📍 26-148 Samyang-ro 181-gil, Gangbuk-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-2-997-9997  
☉ Wed. - Sun., closed on national holidays, Jan. 1 and May 1

## Made slow and healthy with love: eateries near Bukhansan Mountain



### Woorikong Sundubu

A proper hike will lead to quite an appetite. Rich in protein and gentle on the stomach, warm tofu is the ideal way of replenishing energy expended on a mountain. Located next to Seoul Hiking Tourism Center(Bukhansan), Woorikong Sundubu serves tofu dishes made with prime Jangdan soybeans cultivated and harvested in Paju, Gyeonggi-do Province. The most popular dishes are the *sundubu* (curdled soft tofu) meal, highlighting the neat and gently sweet silkiness of freshly made tofu, *bijijigae* (soy pulp stew), and kimchi *bijijigae*. Pan-fried tofu (*buchim*) is a great food pairing with *makgeolli* (milky rice wine).

📍 46, Samyang-ro 173-gil, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-2-995-5918 🕒 9:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.



### Spoon & Fork Kitchen

Along the Uicheon Trail, a sweet smell wafting in the air greets you. Located in a secluded alley of the Ssangmun-dong neighborhood, Spoon & Fork Kitchen is a small bakery like the one from a fairytale, relieving your fatigue from hiking in the sweetest way possible. The white bread, bagels, scones, and sweet cookies baked by the owner every morning are perfect for soothing your body and mind after hiking. Although there are few varieties of baked goods, the menus are faithful to the basics. The white bread in particular is available in a number of types and is much loved by the locals. The flavorful Cheese Focaccia and Croissant Bun are also popular.

📍 1F, 483 Uicheon-ro, Dobong-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-10-4321-1818  
🕒 12:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri., closed Sat. and Sun.



### Ellim Deulkkae Sujebi Kalguksu

Noodle lovers should not miss this restaurant, which specializes in bowls with a generous portion of *kalguksu* (knife-cut noodles) in a hearty broth made with perilla seeds freshly toasted each morning. The simple menu of just three items—*kalguksu*, *suyuk* (sliced boiled pork), and *mandu* (dumplings)—betrays the depth of flavors on offer. Ellim is always packed with locals and hungry hikers; long lines outside before it opens are not uncommon even on weekdays. A portion is generous as an order of *kalguksu* is accompanied by a bowl of barley rice and a few slices of *suyuk*.

📍 177, Samgaksan-ro, Gangbuk-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-2-996-2583  
🕒 11:30 a.m. - 8:30 p.m. Mon. - Sat. / break from 3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. (closed Sun.)

## Long overdue timeout



### Ui-dong Family Camping Ground

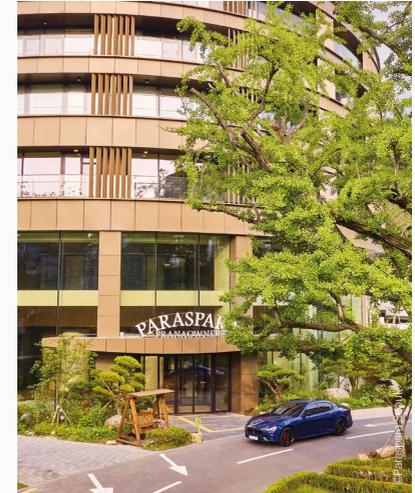
As an ideal setting for outdoor family excursions, this extremely popular area has boarded decks for pitching tents as well as "glamping" (glamorous and camping) facilities equipped with proper beds, refrigerators, firepits, and cooking utensils. A convenience store, showers, and room to dust off and clean camping gear are also available. Reservations can be made through the Interpark ticketing site at 2 p.m. on the 10th of each month. Competition is fierce for reservations as this facility is exceptionally managed.

📍 28, Samyang-ro 181-gil, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-2-944-2941  
🕒 Check in 2:00 p.m., check-out 11:00 a.m. (closed Tue.)

### Eungjeongheon

Located in Eunpyeong Hanok Village, Eungjeongheon is a Hanok accommodation built entirely from natural building materials. This place only receives one team of guests per day and guests who stay here can enjoy a private break. Antique furniture and interior accessories placed throughout the space, such as the rooms, yard, and hall, add to the place's rustic atmosphere. A picnic box provided at check-in, a hearty breakfast, illustrations rendered from photos of visitors, and a follow-up letter sent to each guests on the one-year anniversary of their visit ensure that the stay is both relaxing and special. Jingwansa Temple and a pleasant mountain stream are all within walking distance.

📍 19, Yeonseo-ro 50-gil, Eunpyeong-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-0507-1417-3270  
🕒 Check in 3:00 p.m., check out 11:00 a.m.



### Paraspara Seoul

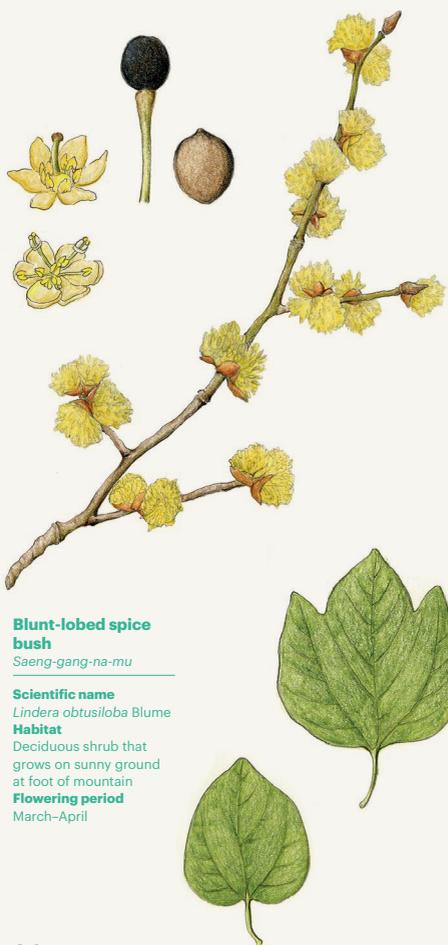
Paraspara Resort Seoul is a healing destination surrounded by lush pine forests on the foothills of Bukhansan National Park. The well-equipped guestrooms are decorated extensively with wood to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Facilities include indoor and outdoor pools, Jacuzzis, baths, and saunas, and a fully-equipped gym. The panoramic views of the peaks of Insubong and others like it on Bukhansan Mountain from the rooftop garden are not to be missed.

📍 689, Samyang-ro, Gangbuk-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-2-3408-5000  
🕒 Check in 3:00 p.m., check out 11:00 a.m.

# Messengers of Spring Guarding Bukhansan Mountain

Inhabiting Bukhansan Mountain, which is considered "the lungs of Seoul," are over 3,000 species of organisms and 635 of plants. The messengers of spring guarding the mountain greet visitors with beautiful blossoms.

Written by Kim Jin Ohk (curator at Seodaemun Museum of Natural History)  
Illustrated by Lee Soyoung (botanical illustrator)



## Blunt-lobed spice bush

*Saeng-gang-na-mu*

### Scientific name

*Lindera obtusiloba* Blume

### Habitat

Deciduous shrub that grows on sunny ground at foot of mountain

### Flowering period

March–April

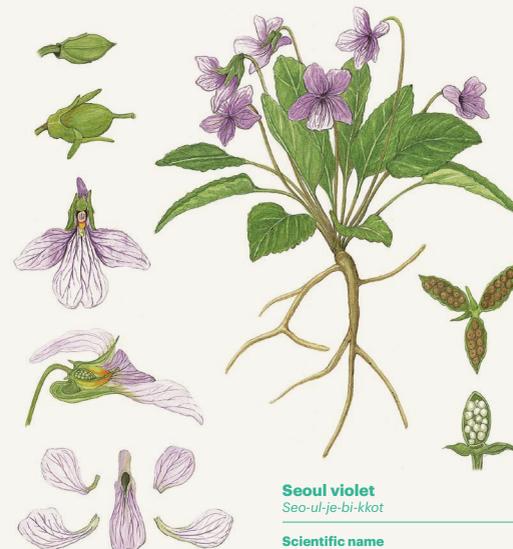
Bukhansan Mountain is a rare national park in the heart of the Seoul covering 76.922 square kilometers across the capital and the surrounding Gyeonggi-do. A combined 635 plant species grow on the mountain, with huge granite peaks and the valleys formed between them creating a beautiful harmony. Plants on Bukhansan blossom from early spring to announce the beginning of a new season.

## Blunt-lobed spice bushes

The first to bloom are the yellow flowers of blunt-lobed spice bushes. In March, tiny flowers of such bushes appear throughout Bukhansan to herald the coming of spring. Its Korean name, which literally means "ginger bush," is derived from the scent of ginger produced when the branches and leaves are rubbed. Brewing their branches in water produces a fragrant tea, to which the dried yellow flowers of the bushes can be added. In September, the berries from the bushes sport a spicy scent. In the nation's southern region long ago, the oil squeezed from the berries was used as hair oil by women along with camellia oil.

## Seoul violets

Around the time flowers fully bloom, Seoul violets start to blossom on sunny grounds. The violets, whose multiple leaves and flowers grow directly from the roots because of the lack of stem, blossom from early spring and thus have fluff covering the peduncles and leaves. This species grows nowhere else in the world except the Seoul metropolitan area and was designated a new species in 1918. Its Korean name, which literally means "swallow flower," is derived from the migratory bird swallow whose return to Korea after a cold winter coincides with flowers blossoming around spring. Other types of violets bloom on Bukhansan such as downy golden, Namsan, and *viola rossii*.



## Seoul violet

*Seo-ul-je-bi-kkot*

### Scientific name

*Viola seoulensis* Nakai

### Habitat

Perennial plant that grows on sunny field

### Flowering period

April–May



## Old-fashioned weigela

*Bulgeunbyeongkkotnamu*

### Scientific name

*Weigela florida* (Bunge) A.DC.

### Habitat

Deciduous shrub growing on sunny ground around valleys or forests

### Flowering period

May–June

## Old-fashioned weigelas

In May, old-fashioned weigelas start to blossom in mid-spring on the mountain's rocky ridges and valleys. These trees, whose Korean name literally means "bottle flower tree," bear buds that resemble a gourd-shaped bottle and flowers redder than those of regular Korean weigela. Unlike the latter, whose flowers blossom yellow and turn red, old-fashioned weigelas produce red flowers. The contrast of red five-lobed corolla against the green leaves when in full bloom in May is eye-catching.

# Inwangsan Mountain

**Sweeping Views of Seoul**

**Inwangsan Mountain features relatively gentle terrains, making it an easy climb even for novices. As an attractive hiking destination, the mountain features a brisk hike and picturesque views of the Seoul city center and many chic cafés nearby.**



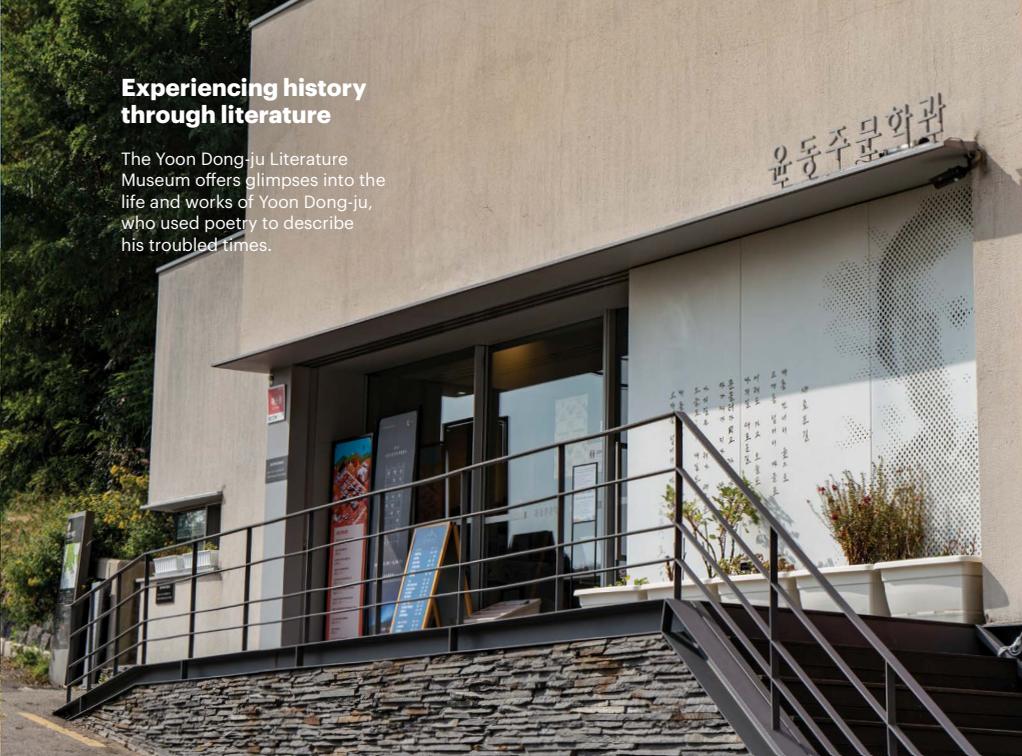


**Valley immortalized in ink and watercolor**

Suseong-dong Valley, as seen in Jeong Seon's *Jang-dong palgyeongcheop* (Album of Eight Scenic Sites of Jang-dong)

**Experiencing history through literature**

The Yoon Dong-ju Literature Museum offers glimpses into the life and works of Yoon Dong-ju, who used poetry to describe his troubled times.



**Artist Park No-soo's workshop between Seochon and Inwangsan**

Preservation of his artistic spirit at Park No-soo Art Museum



# Beautiful Coexistence of Natural and Concrete Forests

The "Inwang" in Inwangsan Mountain was derived from the name of one of the guardian gods of Buddhism as the mountain was believed to guard the Joseon Dynasty. Inwangsan was infamous for its large tiger population, mentioned in the old saying "No tiger in Joseon doesn't know its way around Inwangsan." According to feng shui, a properly placed building is flanked on the right by a white tiger and on the left by a blue dragon. Inwangsan was incorporated into the capital as the white tiger of the royal palace of the Joseon Dynasty. Standing 338.2 meters high, the mountain is made entirely of granite. While most of Korea's celebrated mountains have multiple peaks, Inwangsan has just one peak and summit. The typical roundtrip hike takes no more than three hours and hence is relatively light. Centuries ago, the Joseon literati gathered on the mountain to mingle and conduct scholarly or cultural exchanges, and Inwangsan was also a sacred spot for Buddhism and folk religions. *Inwang jesaekdo* (Scene of Inwangsan Mountain after Rain), a painting by famed Joseon artist Jeong Seon, depicts the mountain as seen from Suseong-dong Valley. Hiking up the valley feels like walking straight into this painting. A tip for visiting is to go on a clear day with fair weather and under blue skies to see the real Seoul, a harmonious mingling of green and grey. Between Bukhansan to the north and the Seoul landmark Lotte World Tower to the southeast, hills and trees alternate with concrete and high rises. Inwangsan sports a different charm as the sun begins to set. The illuminated Seoul City Wall climb the slope from Sajik Park to the summit and make a great spot to snap the Seoul nightscape. The multi-faceted charm of Inwangsan is best appreciated slowly and at a leisurely pace.

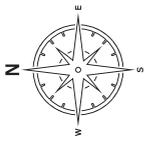


**"Inwangsan is a relatively low mountain and a great place for leisurely hiking on foot. Following the political, cultural, and religious keywords hidden throughout the mountain further enriches your journey. The nearby neighborhoods of Seochon, Bukchon, and Ikseon-dong are full of quaint cafés and great eateries to rest, lounge, and recover."**

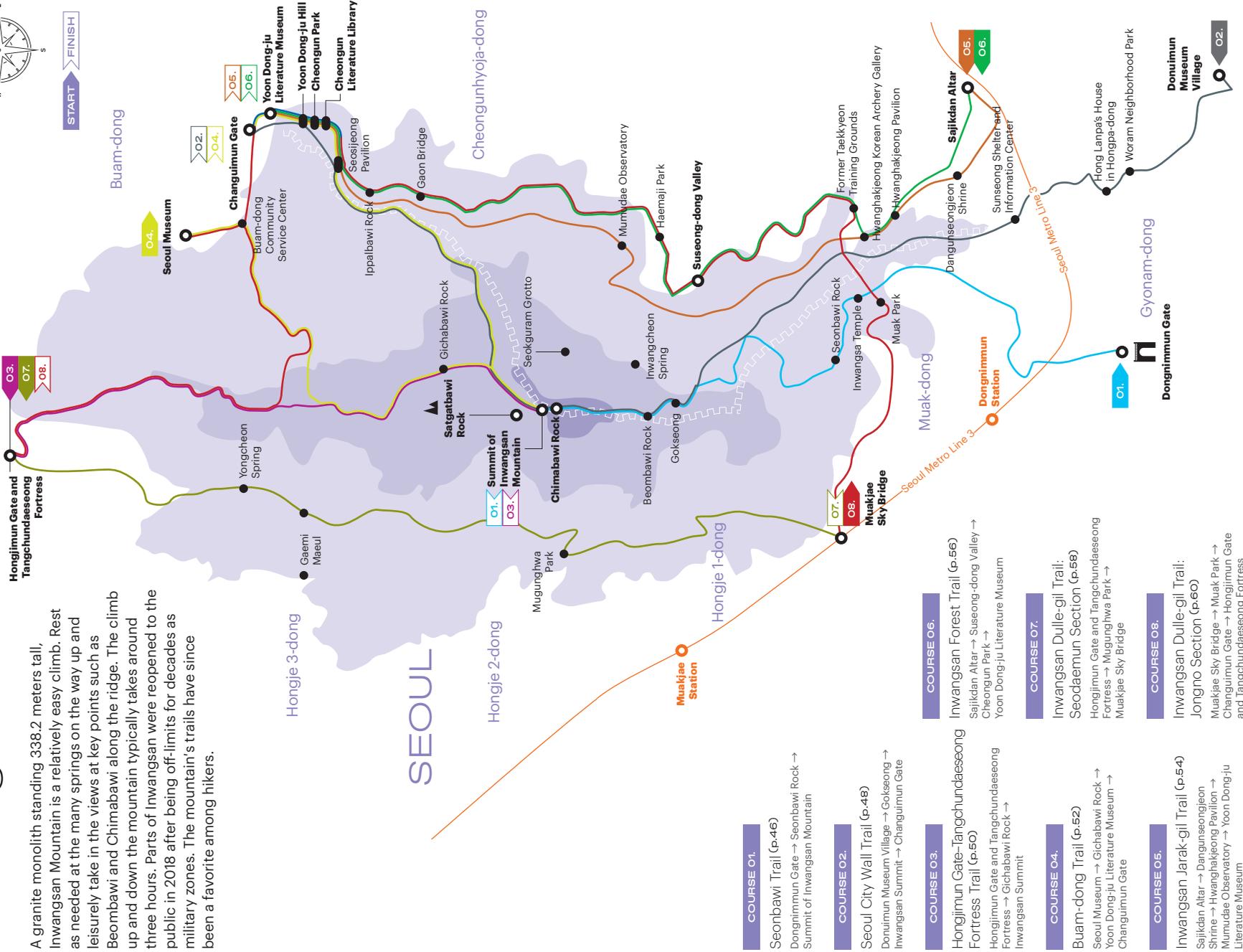
Kim Mi-hyun (travel news editor)

# Inwangsan's 8 Trails

A granite monolith standing 338.2 meters tall, Inwangsan Mountain is a relatively easy climb. Rest as needed at the many springs on the way up and leisurely take in the views at key points such as Beombawi and Chimabawi along the ridge. The climb up and down the mountain typically takes around three hours. Parts of Inwangsan were reopened to the public in 2018 after being off-limits for decades as military zones. The mountain's trails have since been a favorite among hikers.



START → FINISH



**COURSE 01.**

Seonbawi Trail (p.46)  
Dongnimmun Gate → Seonbawi Rock → Summit of Inwangsan Mountain

**COURSE 02.**

Seoul City Wall Trail (p.48)  
Donuimun Museum Village → Gokseong → Inwangsan Summit → Changnimun Gate

**COURSE 03.**

Hongjimun Gate-Tangchundaeseong Fortress Trail (p.50)  
Hongjimun Gate and Tangchundaeseong Fortress → Gichabawi Rock → Inwangsan Summit

**COURSE 04.**

Buam-dong Trail (p.52)  
Seoul Museum → Gichabawi Rock → Yoon Dong-ju Literature Museum → Changnimun Gate

**COURSE 05.**

Inwangsan Jarak-gil Trail (p.54)  
Sajikdan Altar → Dangunseongjeon Shrine → Hwanghakjeong Pavilion → Mumdae Observatory → Yoon Dong-ju Literature Museum

**COURSE 06.**

Inwangsan Forest Trail (p.56)  
Sajikdan Altar → Suseong-dong Valley → Cheongun Park → Yoon Dong-ju Literature Museum

**COURSE 07.**

Inwangsan Dulle-gil Trail: Seodaemun Section (p.58)  
Hongjimun Gate and Tangchundaeseong Fortress → Mugunghwa Park → Muakjae Sky Bridge

**COURSE 08.**

Inwangsan Dulle-gil Trail: Jongno Section (p.60)  
Muakjae Sky Bridge → Muak Park → Changnimun Gate → Hongjimun Gate and Tangchundaeseong Fortress

See incredible rock formations

# Seonbawi Trail

This classic trail features the notable boulders and rock formations of Inwangsan Mountain, a giant mass of granite. Witness the wonder of the boulders Seonbawi, Beombawi, Haegolbawi, and Satgatbawi as well as breathtaking panoramic views of the heart of Seoul on this hour-long one-way journey.

Total travel distance: **1.84 km** | Average travel time: **1 hour 10 minutes** | Difficulty: **average**



## SPOTS



①

Dongnimmun Arch

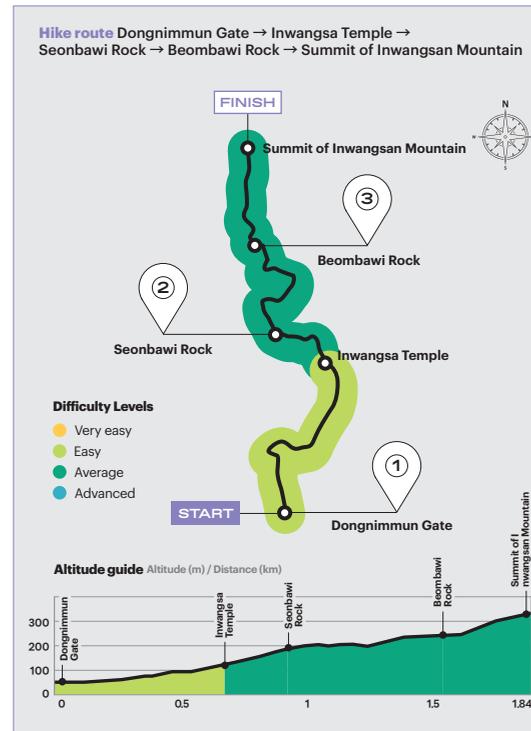
This commemorative gate was built by the Independence Club between 1896 and 1897 to proclaim the country's autonomy and independence. Pioneering reformer and independence fighter Soh Jaipil devised the plans based on photos of the Arc of Triomphe in Paris in a project funded by public donations.



②

Seonbawi Rock

This rock formation sits on the west edge of Inwangsan Mountain. Ladies seeking to bear children often prayed for blessings here. The boulder is said to resemble a robed monk in deep prayer, hence the name *seon* (zen).



## About the trail

- Beombawi Rock is more popular than the summit as a spot to see the sunrise and sunset. The path from this rock formation to the summit is narrow so proceed with caution.
- Follow the trail past Seonbawi Rock onto other boulders like Haegolbawi Rock and Mojabawi Rock. The climb up to Inwangsa Temple is arduous but the main trail is a less-demanding walk through nature.

## Shelter and hiking tips

- The mountain has no restrooms after the ones next to Inwangsa Temple. Beombawi and the old Seoul fortress walls make a great place to sit and rest.

## Transportation

- Walk toward Muak-dong Community Center from Exit 2 of Dongnimmun Station, Seoul Metro Line 3.

## More info

- There are murals painted on either side of the stairs leading to Seonbawi Rock. The painting of the Inwangsan Tiger sporting intense colors makes for a perfect photo spot.



③

Beombawi Rock

*Beom* is a Korean word meaning “tiger.” and the tiger crouching in this boulder is easy to see. Legend says a tiger who lost his mate smashed his own head in and died in sorrow here. The howling of the winds over the rock are said to be the cries of the beast in distress.

Tracing Seoul's history

# Seoul City Wall (Hanyangdoseong) Trail

The trail starts at the former site of Seodaemun Gate and follows the Seoul City Wall past Gyeonggyojang House, home of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea during Japanese occupation, and ends at Changuimun Gate. Public access to the old fortress walls was barred after the 1968 North Korean raid on the presidential compound of Cheong Wa Dae, a ban that lasted until 1993. The fortifications mark the boundaries of Hanyang, Seoul's name during the Joseon era.

Total travel distance: **4.1 km** | Average travel time: **2 hours 10 minutes** | Difficulty: **average**



SPOTS



Woram Neighborhood Park

Connected to the Seoul City Wall (Hanyangdoseong-gil), Woram Neighborhood Park is a popular spot for family outings where nature and history can be enjoyed in the heart of the city. The 140 m fortress wall restored by Seoul City in 2011 is a treasured historical monument illustrating the changing trends of fortress wall architecture during the Joseon Dynasty.



Gyeonggyojang House

This facility was the residence of Kim Koo, president of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea, and headquarters of this administration after its return from exile. Gyeonggyojang House hosted cabinet meetings and was the base of the Anti-trusteeship Campaign in the chaos that followed national liberation.



About the trail

- A three-way split is on the road past Sunseong Shelter and Information Center, with the left path leading to Muakjae Sky Bridge and the right to Inwangsan Urban Nature Park. The summit is at the end of the middle path, and the last section before the summit involves light rock climbing, so please be careful.
- Inwangsan is a rocky hiking gear is essential when climbing in winter.

Shelter and hiking tips

- A convenience store is next to Sunseong Shelter and Information Center. Benches line the path down from the summit to Changuimun Gate.

Transportation

- Donuimun Museum Village is a five-minute walk from Exit 4 of Seodaemun Station, Seoul Metro Line 5. Follow the road signs to Kangbuk Samsung Hospital.



Hong Lanpa's House in Hongpa-dong

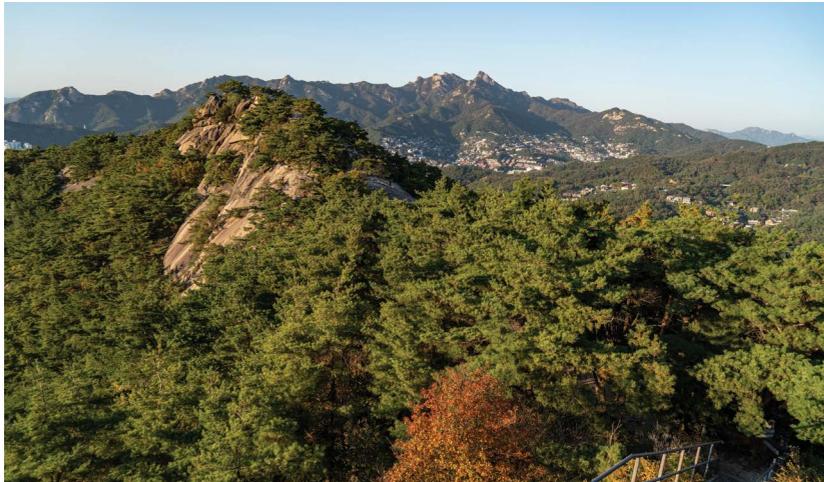
Composer Hong Lanpa, who wrote the Korean folk song, "Spring in My Hometown," lived his final years in this modern Western-style residence built by a German missionary in 1930. An epitaph and bust commemorating Hong are in front of the house. The place is open on weekdays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Picturesque views from Inwangsan Mountain

# Hongjimun Gate– Tangchundaeseong Fortress Trail

The path from Hongjimun Gate along Tangchundaeseong Fortress is relatively less traveled by hikers. This is the perfect way to peacefully and quietly enjoy the scenery of the mountains of Bugaksan and Bukhansan below. The stunning panoramic view at Gichabawi Rock stops many hikers in their tracks.

Total travel distance: **2 km** ; Average travel time: **1 hour 20 minutes** ; Difficulty: **average**



## SPOTS



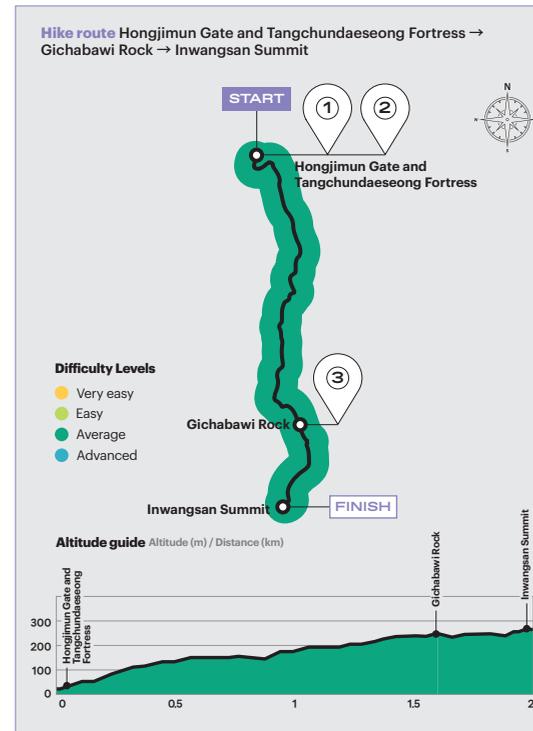
① Hongjimun Gate

A gate in the northern fortifications of Hanyang, Hongjimun is said to have been named by King Sukjong of the Joseon Dynasty. The gate was the de facto northern entrance of Hanyang instead of Sukjeongmun, which was closed in 1413. Hongjimun collapsed in a flood in 1921 and was restored in 1977.



② Tangchundaeseong Fortress

This fortress links the Seoul City Wall to Bukhansanseong Fortress, with construction beginning in the 44th year of King Sukjong (1718), and it was completed the following year. The structure stretches four kilometers from Changuimun Gate to Bibong Peak on Bukhansan Mountain. In addition to reinforcing the defenses of the city wall and outer walls, Tangchundaeseong also stored military provisions.



③ Gichabawi Rock

This spot offers one of the best views from Inwangsan Mountain and got its name from its long shape (*gicha* means “train”). Safety ropes are installed on both sides of the rocky ridge line. The slippery rock face beyond the ropes creates an exciting walk.

## About the trail

- The section along Tangchundaeseong Fortress includes steep uphill stretches. Hikers are advised to bring crampons in the winter. A pair of gloves is handy for gripping the safety ropes up the many boulders.
- Many paths down from the summit take hikers past Changuimun Gate, Suseong-dong Valley, and Muakjae Sky Bridge.

## Shelter and hiking tips

- Many hikers sit here to rest and enjoy the city view before climbing Gichabawi Rock.

## Transportation

- Take bus No. 7018 at the bus stop 320 meters straight ahead from Exit 3 of Gyeongbokgung Station, Seoul Metro Line 3. Get off at Hongjimun Gate and follow the signs to Tangchundaeseong Fortress along Inwangsan Dulle-gil Trail.

## More info

- Tangchundaeseong Fortress was apparently named after Tangchundae, a pleasure place for the king built by the 10th monarch of the Joseon Dynasty King Yeonsangun on a nearby hill. Tangchundaeseong Fortress was also known as the West Fortress as it was to the west of the Seoul City Wall.
- In the late Joseon Period, after the Japanese and Qing invasions in 1592 and 1636, King Sukjong extensively reinforced the city walls and built Bukhansanseong Fortress. Tangchundaeseong Fortress links Seoul City Wall to Bukhansanseong Fortress. With these constructions, there was a solid capital defense system in place.

Arts and crafts

# Buam-dong Trail

The neighborhood of Buam-dong, home to Seoul Museum, is full of art galleries and other artsy sights. Touring the neighborhood's craft shops, eateries, and cafés is every bit as enjoyable as a hike up the mountains. Also here are the Yoon Dong-ju Literature Museum and a hill named after the poet.

Total travel distance: **3.36 km** Average travel time: **2 hours 10 minutes** Difficulty: **average**



SPOTS



①

Seoul Museum

Seoul Museum was founded as part of broad support for creating an arts and culture environment in Korea and the world where the traditional and contemporary coexist. It has become a unique cultural space that adds a more vivid color to the identity of Seoul, the hub of diverse cultures. Seokpajeong, the vacation home of Prince Regent Heungseon Daewongun, was acquired by the museum and sits behind it.

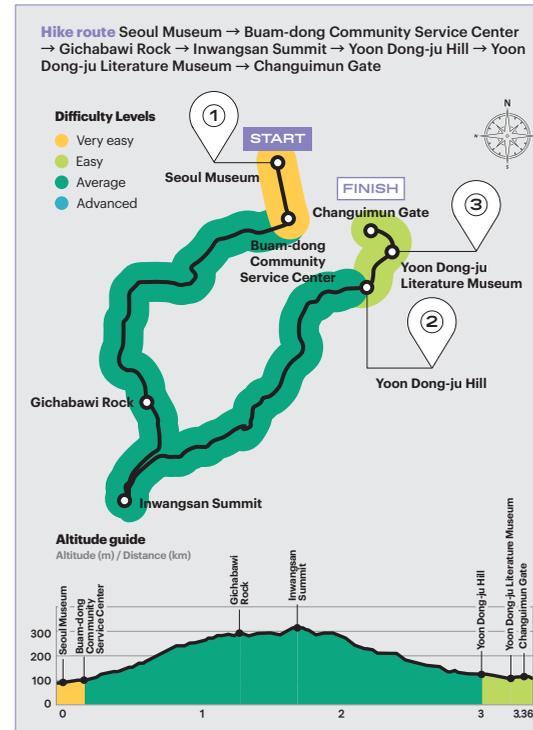


②

Yoon Dong-ju Hill

This park marking the poet's literary spirit is on the western tip of Inwangsan Mountain. While attending Yonhi College (now Yonsei University), Yoon frequently strolled the neighborhood in search of poetic inspiration. A large monument inscribed with his immortal poem "Seosi" (Foreword) stands atop the hill.

COURSE MAP



INFORMATION

About the trail

- The path splits at Buam-dong Community Service Center. Follow the alley between the laundromat and convenience store. At the road sign, take the left path up to the summit and be careful not to slip while climbing the substantial incline.

Shelter and hiking tips

- No restrooms are available from Seoul Museum to the summit of Inwangsan and Changuimun Gate. For restrooms, from the entrance of Yoon Dong-ju Hill, walk towards Cheongun Literature Library.

Transportation

- Take bus No. 1020, 1711, 7016, 7018, 7022, or 7212 outside Exit 3 of Gyeongbokgung Station, Seoul Metro Line 3, or 1020, 1711, 7016, or 7018 outside Exit 2 or 3 of Gwanghwamun Station, Seoul Metro Line 5. Get off at Jahamun Tunnel.

More info

- The walk down from the summit to Changuimun Gate leads to the Seoul City Wall. While walking, take note of the shapes of the stones and consider the construction methods of each period. The castle stones all differ slightly in shape and color, from the rough-hewn natural stones piled up during the reign of King Taejo, the corn-shaped stones during the reign of King Sejong, to the square stones after King Sukjong's reign.



③

Yoon Dong-ju Literature Museum

Poet Yoon Dong-ju lived in a boarding house in the neighborhood, writing from time to time. The defunct Cheongun Pumping Station was remodeled into a literary museum in his honor. The museum hosts an annual literary festival, exhibitions, and interactive learning programs.



Breathtaking nightscape

# Inwangsan Jarak-gil Trail

This trail traverses along the foothills of Inwangsan Mountain, with spectacular evening views of Seoul. The nightscape from the observation deck is quite a sight. The trail is well maintained and managed and an easy walk for people of all ages.

Total travel distance: **2.73 km** Average travel time: **1 hour 10 minutes** Difficulty: **easy**



## SPOTS



①

Dangunseongjeon Shrine

Dedicated to Dangun, the mythical god-king who founded the Korean nation, Dangunseongjeon Shrine was built in the Hanok style in the 1960s during the restoration of Sajikdan Altar. Displayed here are a portrait of Dangun and the spirit tablets of the early kings of the ancient Three Kingdoms era. A commemorative offering is made to the shrine every year on October 3, Gaecheonjeol (National Foundation Day).



②

Hwanghakjeong Pavilion

This national heritage and archery range was established in 1899 by Emperor Gojong at Gyeonghuigung Palace to promote traditional archery and was later moved to its present location during the Japanese occupation. The name Hwanghak, meaning "a yellow crane," was given to the pavilion as Emperor Gojong is said to have been as graceful as a crane when wielding his bow and arrow in his imperial yellow robe.



③

Mumudae Observatory

This is the halfway point of Inwangsan Jarak-gil Trail. Hikers flock to this point on Jan. 1 each year to watch the year's first sunrise. The "mu" in Mumudae refers to the Chinese script 無, meaning "nothing." Indeed, this point contains nothing but beauty, and the shimmering lights of the city below are brilliant at night.

## About the trail

- A series of boardwalks and dirt trails appears with gentle ascents and descents. Hiking boots are not necessary but bringing drinking water is highly recommended because no stores are along the way.

## Shelter and hiking tips

- Restrooms are available just past Hwanghakjeong Pavilion. The broad observation deck is great for sitting and resting, as is the bookstore and café The Forest Chosochaekbang.

## Transportation

- From Exit 1 of Gyeongbokgung Station on Line 3, move toward Sajikdan. If you follow the signpost on the way to Hwanghakjeong Pavilion after passing through the main gate of Sajikdan Altar, and then take the gentle uphill road, you will find Dangunseongjeon Shrine.

## More info

- The Forest Chosochaekbang, located between Mumudae and Seosijeong, was transformed from a police guard post to a café and bookstore. The great forest scenery makes it a popular spot for dates.



Lush greenery with flowery scents

# Inwangsan Forest Trail

This trail boasts picturesque views of Seoul from quiet dirt trails through lush forests and over babbling brooks. The path is especially breathtaking in spring, when cherry blossoms are in full bloom, and in summer with its lush greenery. This trail weaving between forest and city is a treat for the senses: a cool breeze, warm sun, and whispering sounds and scents of nature.

Total travel distance: **2.9 km** Average travel time: **1 hour 30 minutes** Difficulty: **average**



## SPOTS



①

Sajikdan Altar

A place to make offerings to the gods of the soil and grain, this altar was built around the founding of the Joseon Dynasty, alongside the palace and Jongmyo Shrine for the new capital. Rituals praying for rain or a good harvest were performed here, and offerings were made in times of national hardship.



②

Haemaji Park

As Inwangsan Mountain's best spot to watch the sunrise, Haemaji Park is located on a mountain west of Gyeongbokgung Palace. In Korean geomancy, the west is associated with the tiger and the color white. Legend has it that Inwangsan's white tiger basks in the morning sun here.

**Hike route** Sajikdan Altar → Former Taekkyeon Training Grounds → Suseong-dong Valley → Haemaji Park → Gaon Bridge → Ippalbawi Rock → Cheongun Park → Yoon Dong-ju Literature Museum



### About the trail

- Inwangsan Forest Trail is a series of casual walking trails with numerous forks in the road. Follow the road signs to avoid getting lost.
- The section between Haemaji Park and Gaon Bridge offers can't-miss views. The stairs leading up and down from the bridge are quite steep so caution is urged to avoid slipping and falling.

### Shelter and hiking tips

- There are symbolic facilities and information panels related to the location between courses. The area is spacious and there are wooden chairs, making it a great place for sitting, resting, and snacking.

### Transportation

- The trail starts at the entrance to Sajikdan Altar 300m from Exit 1 of Gyeongbokgung Station, Seoul Metro Line 3.

### More info

- Sitting west of Gyeongbokgung Palace, Inwangsan Mountain was originally called Seosan (West Mountain). The mountain was renamed "Inwang" after Geumgangshin, a guardian of Buddhism, to imply its symbolic importance as a protector of Joseon.
- The narrow path between the swinging bridge and Ippalbawi Rock was a favorite practice spot for Jeong Yak-dae, the greatest daegeum player of the Joseon era. He is said to have placed a grain of sand in his shoe for each time he practiced and refused to descend the mountain until his shoe was full.



③

Gaon Bridge

This swinging bridge is found about midway through the trail. The term *gaon* is a pure Korean word referring to "middle" or "center." The name thus suggests that visitors find physical and mental balance while crossing the swinging bridge.

Hidden and contemplative forest trail

# Inwangsan Dulle-gil Trail: Seodaemun Section

Strolling on the deck around the spur of the mountain is like walking on clouds. This place of healing features the sounds of waters trickling beneath the rocks, singing of the birds, and evergreen pines and humble flowers on the edges of the path.

Total travel distance: **3.43 km** Average travel time: **2 hours** Difficulty: **average**



SPOTS



1 Yongcheon Spring

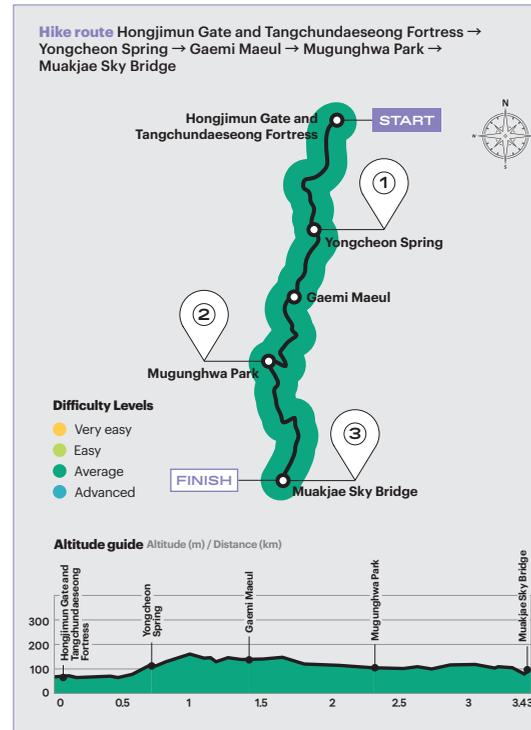
This spring lies past a short stone bridge along a forest trail amid the songs of birds. The views from the pavilion next to the spring offer a quaint beauty. The sound of the waters flowing beneath the bridge cleanses the mind.



2 Mugunghwa Park

Planted with Korea's national flower *mugunghwa* (rose of Sharon), the hill is also a neighborhood park and public space for residents of the Hongje-dong neighborhood. Also here are exercise machines and a pavilion where people can sit and rest.

COURSE MAP



3 Muakjae Sky Bridge

This eco-bridge links the mountains of Inwangsan and Ansan, whose previous connection was severed when a road was built in between them. The eco-bridge facilitates movement of wildlife between the two mountains and promotes biodiversity. Access to the bridge is restricted at night to protect the wildlife.

INFORMATION



About the trail

- The trail alternates between forest trails lined with wildflowers, stone steps, dirt paths, and well-kept boardwalks. Daily walking shoes instead of hiking boots will do fine here.
- Here is a great photo spot when the blossoms are in full bloom. Remember not to be too loud when passing through the residential neighborhood between the hill and Muakjae Sky Bridge.

Shelter and hiking tips

- The pavilion at Yongcheon Stream is a nice break spot, with restrooms about 50 meters from the pavilion. Restrooms are also available next to the multi-purpose ballpark on Mugunghwa Park.

Transportation

- Take bus No. 7016 or 1711 outside Sookmyung Women's University Station, Seoul Metro Line 4. Get off at Sangmyung Univ to reach Hongjimun Gate and Tangchundaeseong Fortress within 5 minutes on foot.

Combination of forest walk and mountain hiking

# Inwangsan Dulle-gil Trail: Jongno Section

Total travel distance: **5.71 km** Average travel time: **3 hours 10 minutes** Difficulty: **average**



## SPOTS



1 Muak Park

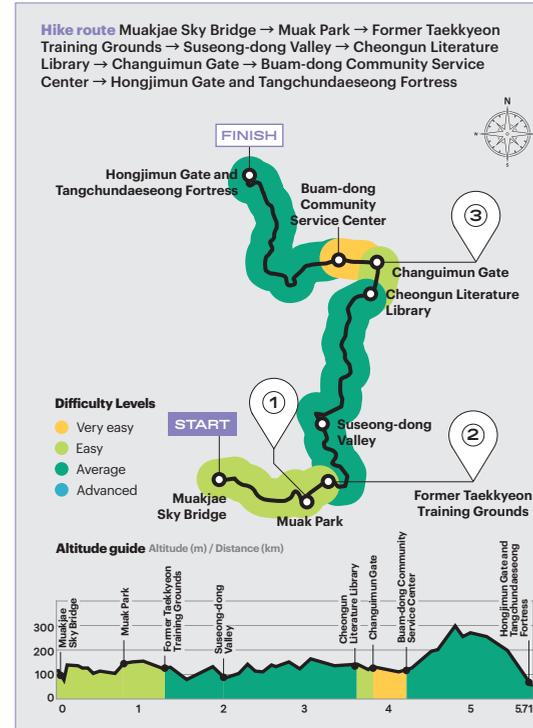
This flowery and wooded retreat is not far from the urban center. The flowers lining the pathways make for a pleasant stroll. Muak Park is great for family outings with a children's playground containing a maze, climbing wall, and log bridge.



2 Former Taekkyeon Training Grounds

During the Joseon era, practitioners of the traditional martial art *taekkyeon* honed their skills and sparred at these training grounds. In November 2011, *taekkyeon* became the first traditional martial art added to the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Travel from the mountain of Inwangsan to that of Ansan by crossing Muakjae Sky Bridge and wander the tranquil forested path to the babbling brook in Suseong-dong Valley. The substantial climbs and descents make this relaxing walk feel like a proper hike at times.



3 Changuimun Gate

Also called Jahamun, this gate marks the border between the mountains of Inwangsan and Bugaksan and is the only surviving gatehouse among those of Seoul's four minor gates built during the Joseon era. Lost to fire during the Japanese invasion of 1592, the gatehouse was rebuilt in 1741.

### About the trail

- The steep climb from Buam-dong Community Service Center to Hongjimun Dulle-gil Trail leads to the alleys of a quiet residential neighborhood. Follow the alley between the laundromat and convenience store toward Seongdeoksa Temple.
- The path along the bunker beneath the military base on the descent to Hongjimun is rough and can be dangerous, so caution while walking is advised.

### Shelter and hiking tips

- Plenty of shelters line the forest walk. Dipping one's feet in the waters of Suseong-dong Valley is also a nice way to rest and recover.

### Transportation

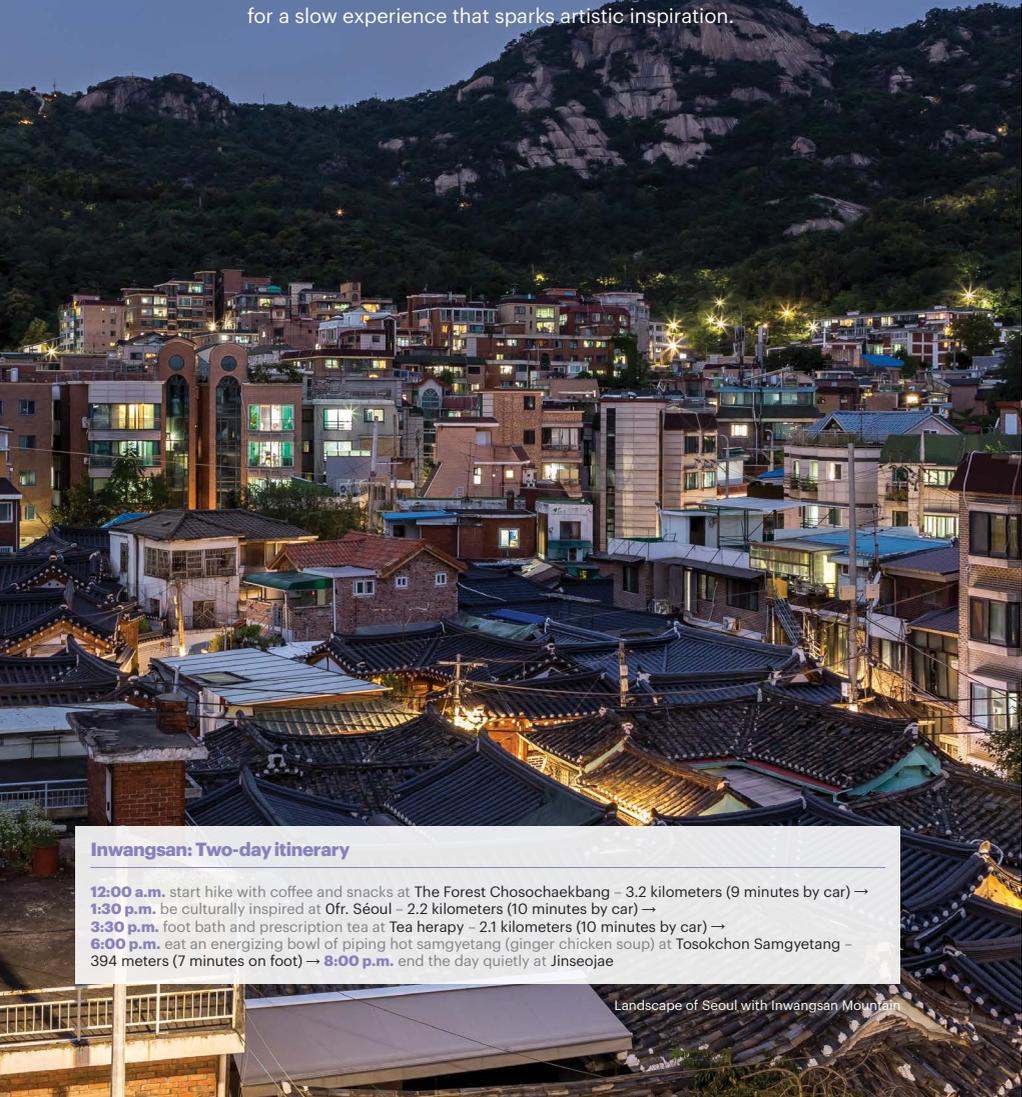
- Muakjae Sky Bridge is 644 meters straight ahead from Exit 5 of Dongnimmun Station, Seoul Metro Line 3.

### More info

- Suseong-dong Valley has been a favorite spot for many Korean artists. Master contemporary painter Lee Jung-seop is said to have bathed in the valley's waters every morning before spending all day drawing. A poem by surrealist poet Yi Sang and portrait by painter Gu Bon-ung are on display at Dulle-gil Shelter. Gu drew the portrait of Yi Sang, and the latter returned the favor by dedicating a poem to Gu.
- The painting *Inwang jesaekdo* (Scene of Inwangsan Mountain after Rain) by Joseon painter Jeong Seon when he was 75 is designated a natural treasure. The work was inspired by the view of the eastern face of Inwangsan as seen from the present-day neighborhood of Hyoja-dong.

# Journey of Artistic Inspiration

The picturesque trails through and around Inwangsan can easily wow even the novice hiker. An early morning climb leaves the afternoon open for exploring the city. Follow the itinerary below for a slow experience that sparks artistic inspiration.



## Inwangsan: Two-day itinerary

- 12:00 a.m.** start hike with coffee and snacks at The Forest Chosochaekbang – 3.2 kilometers (9 minutes by car) →
- 1:30 p.m.** be culturally inspired at Ofr. Séoul – 2.2 kilometers (10 minutes by car) →
- 3:30 p.m.** foot bath and prescription tea at Tea herapy – 2.1 kilometers (10 minutes by car) →
- 6:00 p.m.** eat an energizing bowl of piping hot samgyetang (ginger chicken soup) at Tosokchon Samgyetang – 394 meters (7 minutes on foot) → **8:00 p.m.** end the day quietly at Jinseojae

Landscape of Seoul with Inwangsan Mountain



## Hong Geon-ik's House

The merchant Hong Geon-ik bought this site in the Pirun-dong neighborhood in 1934 and built the structure for two years. The home has quarters for the main gate, servants, men, and women, an annex, and garden. The inner and outer quarters are separated by a gate and another leads to the garden. The elevated garden has an ice shed built into the ground below. Designated Seoul Folklore Cultural Heritage No. 33 in 2013, the residence is also a venue for cultural programs and archive exhibitions as a living and integral part of the neighborhood.

📍 14-4, Pirundae-ro 1-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
 ☎ 82-2-735-1374 🕒 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. (Closed on the actual days of Lunar New Year and Chuseok)



## Jogyesa Temple

Sitting at the heart of the metropolis, the temple has a spacious yard, traditional architecture, and elements Korean Buddhist culture. The temple grounds offer a unique charm every season, attracting visitors and devotees year-round: lanterns in spring, lotus flowers in summer, and chrysanthemums in fall. Through temple stay, visitors can gain a deeper understanding of Buddhist culture. It offers a one-night, two-day experience program called "A Pause" and a one-day program called "Always."

As you become a one-day ascetic, calm yourself, and slowly stroll through the temple, you will encounter the peace and wisdom that have already been dwelling inside you.

📍 55, Ujeongjuk-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
 ☎ 82-2-768-8660

## Tea Therapy

This program occupies a remodeled corner of the residence of President Yun Po-sun and offers traditional Korean teas tailored to a visitor's individual physical constitution and energy. Yulmu (pearl barley) tea is prescribed for a heavy detox and gugija (goji berry) tea to relieve tired eyes and heavy stress. One can enjoy the slowly extracted teas that are both deeply warming and soothing, with their strong yet gentle aromas forming the essence of tea therapy. The mini foot bath outside the café is also great for healing and relaxation.

📍 74, Yunboseon-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul.  
 ☎ 82-2-730-7507 🕒 10:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m. Mon.–Sat. / 10:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m. Sun.



## Seochon's artistic attractions



### The Forest Chosochaekbang

This bookstore and café opened in 2020 sits midway up Inwangsan Mountain. Formerly a police guard post, the building was remodeled in glass to offer 360-degree views of the natural scenery of Inwangsan. The bookstore on the ground floor offers books on nature, meditation, and life lessons. Pick a book and beverage before heading up to the second floor. Engage in literary contemplation surrounded by Inwangsan on all sides.

📍 172, Inwangsan-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-2-735-0206 ☰ 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. (last order at 9:30 p.m.)



### Ofr. Séoul

Starting as a bookstore in the Le Marais quarter of Paris, Ofr has since expanded into a studio and publisher thanks to its popularity among the French capital's creative people. Its Seoul branch has moved from Seongsu-dong to resettle in Seochon, and this detached house remodeled with liberal artistic sensibilities has merchandise irregularly arranged inside among torn-down walls for visitors to freely wander through. Ofr. Séoul is full of art literature, trendy design posters, and other goods including echo bags sporting the Ofr logo.

📍 1F, 11-14, Jahamun-ro 1-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-2-111-1110  
☰ 11:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. (Closed on Mondays and every last Thursday of the month)



### Makefolio Seochon

A lifestyle shop featuring sustainable lifestyles, this store showcases handcrafted Korean liquor and spirits from obscure makers, with considerable time and effort devoted to bringing out the flavor of each. Take home a bottle to unwind as the perfect way to spend a post-hike evening. The shop offers a plethora of eco-friendly merchandise with natural and recycled materials, with the space's keywords being earthenware teapots and cups, vegan soaps, and incense holders chiseled from humble rocks.

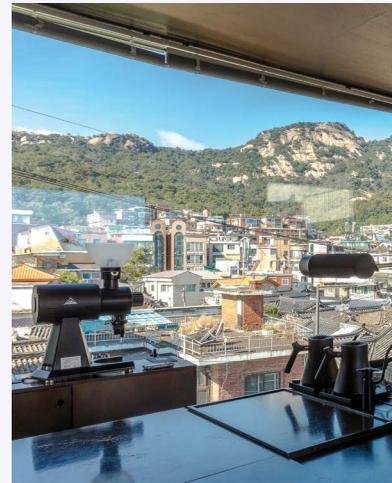
📍 1F, 17, Jahamun-ro 9-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-70-5158-9013 ☰ 12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. (Wed. – Thu.) / 11:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. (Fri. – Sun.). Closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.



### Inwangsan Daechung Park

This building seemingly without purpose has a simple facade void of color or scent, ironically making the structure one of the most interesting in the Seochon neighborhood. Daechung Park melts naturally into the hood with a fluid arrangement of interior spaces. Glimpses of the neighborhood while ascending the labyrinth-like steps to the fourth-floor café are intriguing. Daechung Park does away with the giant espresso machines of most cafés and serves hand-dripped cups made from specialty beans, with two types of beans served each week. Take a seat on the veranda facing Inwangsan to take in the view while sipping.

📍 4F, 46, Pirundae-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-70-7807-5640  
☰ 12:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. (last order at 9:30 p.m.), closed on the actual days of Lunar New Year and Chuseok



### Park No-soo Art Museum

The museum sits at the residential quarters among alleyways where many painters and poets from yesteryear lived. The former home of artist Park No-soo was built in 1937, and he lived and worked there from 1973 to 2011. He donated his house to the city of Seoul, which reopened it as a museum in 2013. Exhibitions from the artist's private collection are held here for artists and casual visitors alike.

📍 34, Ogin 1-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-2-2148-4171  
☰ 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. (closed Mon., Jan. 1, Seollal [Lunar New Year's Day], and Chuseok)



## Rich flavors matured and perfected over time



### Seochon Blues

For visitors wanting a sip of an early-afternoon drink accompanied by good music, Seochon Blues is perfect. Climb the steep stairs up to the second floor to find an old-school area packed with vinyl records and CDs. Request a song by writing the name on a piece of paper, hand it over to the DJ, and grab a seat and wait. Seochon Blues is all about nostalgia for the analog and often hosts exciting folk and jazz music.

📍 2F, 17-1, Jahamun-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-70-8878-1412  
⌚ 3:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m. (must enter before 11:00 p.m.) (closed Sun.)



### Tongin Market

A small pavilion at the western entrance to Tongin Market is where villagers used to gather to chat and mingle. The market only measures 200 meters from end to end, with 80 tiny stores crammed tight but has must-try foods like trademark light-fried *tteokbokki* (spicy rice cake), grilled buckwheat crepes, and giant chicken skewers. Dosirak Café Tong, located midway through the market, has seats and tables to eat the street foods in comfort. Pick up a tray here and fill it with grub while roaming the market.

📍 18, Jahamun-ro 15-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-507-1378-0940  
⌚ 9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. (Varies by store). Closed on the third Sunday of each month, Dosirak Café Closed on Tuesdays



### Tosokchon Samgyetang

*Samgyetang* (ginseng chicken soup) is a great way to recover energy after a long day's hike. Opened in 1983, Tosokchon Samgyetang has served profound flavors of this dish for 40 years near Gyeongbokgung Station. The *samgyetang* here is especially sought after during the peak of summer, as a Korean secret to surviving the heat is to "fight fire with fire." Succulent, fall-off-the-bone chicken in a thick and hearty broth is this area's hallmark. The chicken is stuffed with sticky rice, flavorful ginseng, pumpkin seeds, chestnuts, jujubes, and ginkgo.

📍 5, Jahamun-ro 5-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-2-737-7444  
⌚ 10:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m., last order at 9:00 p.m.

## Tranquility and rest at a traditional Hanok

### Hanok Essay Seochon

This humble residence occupies a corner of a tiny alley deep inside the Nuha-dong neighborhood, with a quality that makes the mundane precious. The garden greets visitors followed by a patterned wall with steppingstones. The lounge offers healing and music amid the warmth of a wood-fire stove. Relax the mind and body in the modern sunken bathtub while focusing on the self. The garden is especially beautiful when the crepe myrtle tree is in full pink bloom.

📍 12, Pirundae-ro 3-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-0504-0904-2431  
⌚ Check in 4:00 p.m., check out 11:00 a.m.



### Of.Onebookstay

As its name suggests, Of.Onebookstay is designed around "stay" and "book" at a private Hanok (traditional Korean home) for quiet reading and contemplation. A footbath, scented candles, and playing of slow tunes are great for visitors while they gaze into the sky above through the old birch tree in the courtyard.

📍 11-1, Pirundae-ro 3-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-0504-0904-2313  
⌚ Check in 6:00 p.m., check out 2:00 p.m.



### Jinseojae

A night at Jinseojae, a traditional Hanok whose original woodwork has been meticulously preserved, is truly special with its name literally meaning "Where the light creeps in." The blue sky is visible between the eaves of the opposing quarters and through the skylights in the master bedroom's ceiling. Completing the space is a modern dining space and bathroom. Jinseojae is conveniently located near Tongin Market and a stone's throw from major attractions.

📍 17-17, Pirundae-ro 6-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-1544-5931  
⌚ Check in 3:00 p.m., check out 11:00 a.m.

# Inwang jesaekdo: Story behind the Painting

Seochon, a village west of Gyeongbokgung Palace and situated at the foot of Inwangsan Mountain, was the home of Jeong Seon (pen name Gyeomjae), the founder and master of true-view painting, a genre unique to the Joseon Dynasty. He painted *Inwang jesaekdo* (Scene of Inwangsan Mountain after Rain) with sincere get-well wishes for a dear friend of six decades who was bedridden with illness.

Written by Park Hyuntaek (director of the Pencil Museum)

## Mountain as Guardian of Seoul

Wishing peace in the dynasty, the royal court of the Joseon Dynasty designated Bugaksan the primary mountain for the main royal palace Gyeongbokgung and Naksan Mountain as the Blue Dragon on the left (east) and Inwangsan Mountain as the White Tiger on the right (west). Inwangsan was named “west mountain” from the early Joseon era and got its name, which literally means “mountain of virtuous king(s),” from King Sejong (r. 1418–1450), who reflected his will to guard the dynasty. Mostly covered with granite, the mountain has many rocks of eccentric shapes due to weathering. Weathering pits and joints are frequently found there as well as rocks with all sorts of names such as skeleton, hat, and tiger.

## True-view Landscape: Painting Genre Unique to Joseon

Jeong's most famous painting, *Inwang jesaekdo*, portrayed the skirt-shaped rock on Inwangsan from Gyeongbokgung and showed the mountain after rain. Referring to the colors of the mountain or sky after rain or snow has cleared, the term *jesaek* was frequently used by literati in both China and Joseon in their prose and poetry, which represented the spiritual objective of neo-Confucian scholars who aimed to cultivate a pure spirit. So why does the mountain in the painting not resemble the one in real life? Since ancient times, artists have deemed nature the archetype of beauty and expressed it in a diversity of ways. Real-scenery landscape refers to a landscape painting genre that recreates a real-life landscape as is. However true-view landscape, though also based on real-life landscape, adds the artist's subjectivity through reinterpretation in presenting a landscape different from the real thing. Unique to Joseon, this genre had Jeong as its inventor and master. At age 76, he is known to have painted a landscape for his friend of 60 years, Yi Byeong-yeon (pen name Sacheon), reflecting his get-well wishes for his ill bedridden friend. They were both born in the same neighborhood of Seochon and lived there for the rest of their lives. True-view landscape was an artistic style unique to Korea created by Jeong and Yi's consciousness at the time. Both were from the families of the Old Doctrine faction, which championed the belief of putting Joseon as the world's cultural center. While the mountain after rain might stress brightness, Jeong's painting presents a tense mood with a contrast between intense ink and clean blank space. The screen exudes depth as the mountain peak is presented at a low angle, while the roof-tiled house at the foot of the mountain is shown at a high angle. The black peak is cut at the top to give a strange sense of pressure, and the wriggling features of the mountain and cloud and fog swirling around appear dynamic. Though certain opinions say this painting had a bit of political implication as it was painted against the backdrop of the illness of Jeong's political and philosophical comrade, grasping all the meanings within the work is difficult. What is certain is that Jeong added the ideal to reality to complete *Inwang jesaekdo*, through which the mountain appeared even more divine.



*Inwang jesaekdo*, Jeong Seon

©National Museum of Korea

# Bugaksan Mountain

## Mountain Therapy for Healing Mind and Body

A journey to Bugaksan Mountain in any season results in peace of mind and body. The grand landscapes of the mountain reminiscent of the painting *Irworobongdo* (Painting of the Sun, Moon, and Five Peaks) provide the perfect setting for quiet contemplation.



**Mountains filling  
one's field of view**

Inspiring natural landscapes from Gokjang



**Four main gates of  
old Seoul fortifications**

Sukjeongmun, main north gate of  
capital and corridor for yin energy.



**Blessings inscribed  
in rock**

Maneje Dongbang Spring gushes  
from beneath a rock inscription  
praying for the prosperity of the king.



**Historical archives**

Chunchugwan, historical  
archive of Goryeo and  
Joseon dynasties

# Taking It Slow

Bugaksan Mountain is a monolith of sheer rock faces and granite outcrops, with its rocky terrain and steep inclines reputed among hikers as a challenging course. If reaching the summit is too much, Bugaksan Dulle-gil Trail is a great alternative to enjoy the mountain. Instead of focusing on reaching the top, take time to appreciate the joy of experiencing the mountain and nature. Among the numerous routes up the summit, the trails of Samcheong Park and the Seoul City Wall Trail along the old Seoul walls are relatively easy climbs and perfect for the solo traveler. Bugaksan was off-limits to the public until recently, so the woods here have retained their primordial state after decades of no human contact. Since the Joseon era, the beauty of Bugaksan—also known as Baegaksan and Myeonaksan—has inspired many a poem and painting. Few hikers who scale the mountain leave unimpressed with its awe and beauty.

**“Bugaksan stands just 342.5 meters high but its ridges are far from easy to climb. Enjoying a mountain hike isn’t always about reaching the summit. Take your time, don’t rush, and remember that it’s about enjoying the journey.”**

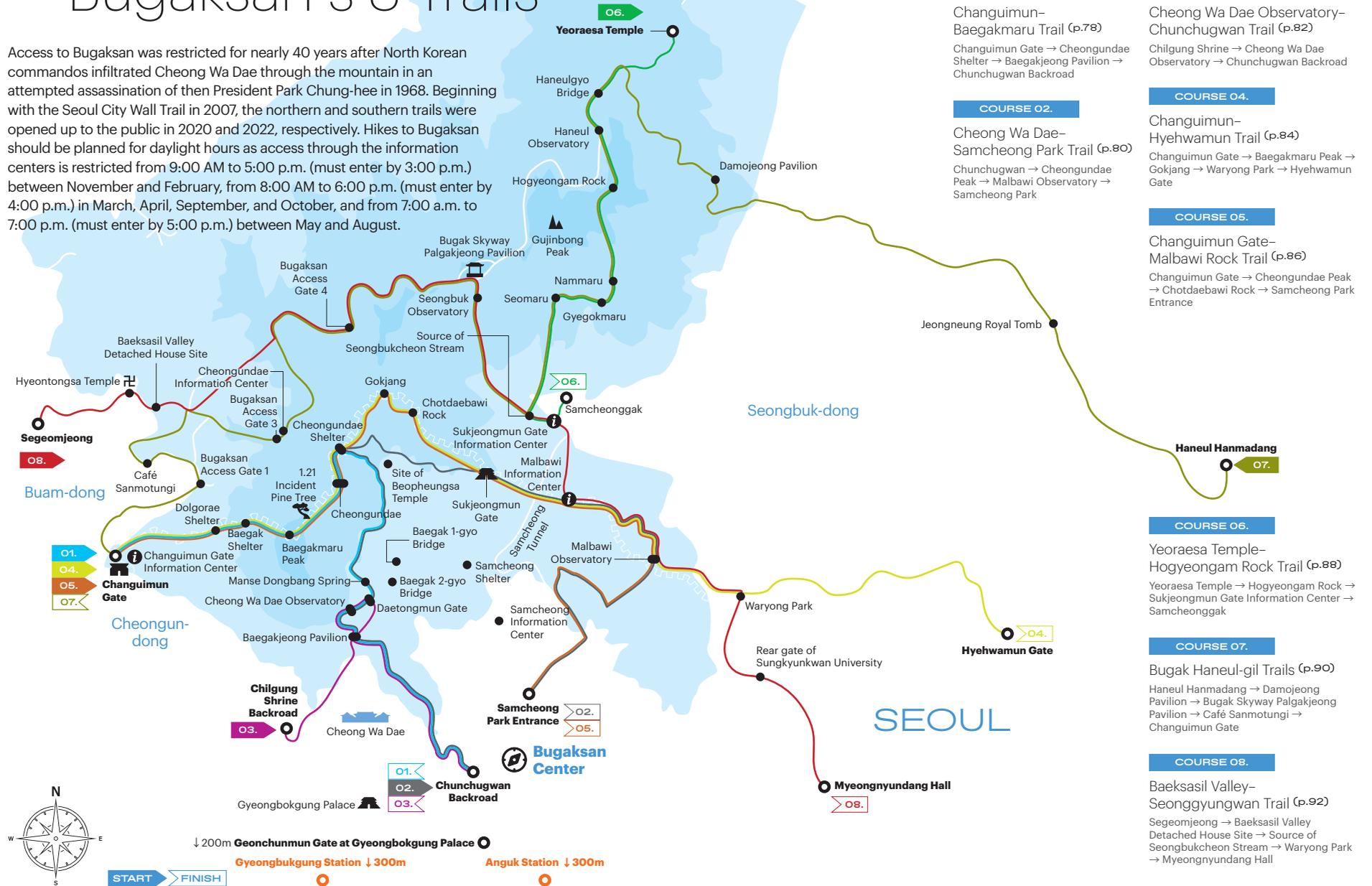
Kim Seom-ju (hiking evangelist)



HIKING COURSE MAP

# Bugaksan's 8 Trails

Access to Bugaksan was restricted for nearly 40 years after North Korean commandos infiltrated Cheong Wa Dae through the mountain in an attempted assassination of then President Park Chung-hee in 1968. Beginning with the Seoul City Wall Trail in 2007, the northern and southern trails were opened up to the public in 2020 and 2022, respectively. Hikes to Bugaksan should be planned for daylight hours as access through the information centers is restricted from 9:00 AM to 5:00 p.m. (must enter by 3:00 p.m.) between November and February, from 8:00 AM to 6:00 p.m. (must enter by 4:00 p.m.) in March, April, September, and October, and from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (must enter by 5:00 p.m.) between May and August.



Views over Cheong Wa Dae

# Changuimun– Baegakmaru Trail

This section of the trail is popular for its numerous observation points from which travelers can enjoy a sweeping view of Seoul's skyline. The descent after a steep uphill climb from Changuimun Gate to Baegakmaru Peak brings travelers down to the new trail behind Cheong Wa Dae, the former presidential compound that was opened to the general public in May 2022. The spectacular views of the Seoul metropolis in green hues are the prime attraction of this trail.

Total travel distance: **3.32 km** Average travel time: **1 hour 30 minutes** Difficulty: **average**



## SPOTS



①

Changuimun Gate

This gate stands between Bugaksan and Inwangsan mountains. Also called Bukmun (North Gate), it was one of the four minor gates of the original city walls of Hanyang (now Seoul) built in 1396. During a coup in 1623, rebels are said to have entered through this gate, ousting King Gwanghaegun and enthroning King Injo as the new Joseon king.



②

Baegakmaru Peak

The 342.5-meter-high peak of Bugaksan is marked by a stone stele reading "Baegaksan (白岳山)." A shrine to the mountain spirit Baegak was on the mountain during the Joseon era, and ritual offerings were made to the spirit after whom the mountain was named. A mass of granite projects upward from one side of the summit overlooking downtown Seoul.



③

Cheongundae Peak

From 293 meters high, Cheongundae Peak offers picturesque views of Seoul's buildings against the backdrop of ridge lines leading to the mountains of Ansan and Inwangsan. On clear days, Gyeongbokgung Palace and Gwanghwamun Gate, and even the Hangang River and Gangnam commercial district beyond N Seoul Tower, can be seen.

## About the trail

- The descent from Manse Dongbang Spring to Chunchugwan is rather steep, so those with bad knees are advised to use hiking sticks.
- The climb from Changuimun Gate to Baegakmaru Peak is grueling. Firmly grab the handrails installed along the path for safety.

## Shelter and hiking tips

- Two shelters (Dolgorae and Baegak) are along the city walls between Changuimun and Baegakmaru.
- Bring plenty of drinking water as the way has no stores or water fountains.

## Transportation

- Take bus No. 1020 outside Exit 3 of Gyeongbokgung Station, Seoul Metro Line 3. Get off at the stop Jahamun Pass and Yoon Dong-ju Literature Museum and climb the stairs to reach Changuimun Gate Information Center.

## More info

- The trail from Cheong Wa Dae Observatory through Baegakjeong Pavilion to Chunchugwan was opened in 2022, the most recent opening among any other Bugaksan Mountain Trails. The Cheong Wa Dae Observatory is a photo spot that overlooks the entire Seoul city.



Stroll through the fresh forest

# Cheong Wa Dae-Samcheong Park Trail

This trail begins at Cheong Wa Dae Chunchugwan and leads down to Samcheong Park, the name of which means "a place with refreshingly clean water and forest." Once closed for security reasons, this newly opened trail near Cheong Wa Dae offers hikers an open view of Seoul city. The tranquil view of the forest that leads to Samcheong Park also brings peace of mind.

Total travel distance: **5 km** | Average travel time: **1 hour 50 minutes** | Difficulty: **average**



## SPOTS



①

Chunchugwan

Chunchugwan got its name from Yemun Chunchugwan, a government office during the Joseon Dynasty for keeping historical records. This annex to the former presidential complex of Cheong Wa Dae was used by the Cheong Wa Dae media corps and hosted media briefings until the presidential office was moved to Seoul's Yongsan-gu District.



②

Sukjeongmun Gate

Originally called Sukcheongmun, Sukjeongmun was one of the four major gates of old Seoul. Its position and orientation give the gate the nature of yin (water). Rain ceremonies were held here during droughts, and the gates were closed to stem the flow of water energy and prevent floods during the rainy season. Sukjeongmun is typically crowded with hikers on weekends, so visit during the week for a leisurely hike.



③

Samcheong Park



This urban nature park, located on the hills of Bugaksan Mountain northeast of Gyeongbokgung Palace, features mountain streams meandering among the old pine trees of the park. Also here are a children's playground, eco-park, and small library.

## About the trail

- Bring hiking sticks as certain parts of the trail are quite steep. The section from the road behind Chunchugwan to Baegakjeong Pavilion is paved but has a steep incline. Baegakjeong Pavilion to Manse Dongbang Spring is the most challenging leg, with steep climbs and numerous stairs.
- For those who have previously visited Cheongundae Observatory, take a shortcut from Manse Dongbang Spring to Sukjeongmun Gate. Hikers who wish to avoid climbing up and down steep stairs should head directly to this gate.

## Shelter and hiking tips

- Take in the views of downtown Seoul while catching your breath at Cheongundae. One can see both N Seoul Tower and Lotte World Tower from the peak on a clear day.

## Transportation

- Take bus No. 1711 (green) outside Exit 3 of Gyeongbokgung Station, Seoul Metro Line 3. Get off at the stop Hyoja-dong. Make a right turn at Hyoja-ro Road and go straight for 911 meters. The building across the street is Chunchugwan.

## More info

- Once in Samcheong Park at the end of the hike, a look around Samcheong-dong is mandatory. The old Hanok-turned-shops, cafés, and galleries clustered around the narrow alleys boast a hip vibe. The neighborhood is also a popular destination for foodies with celebrated restaurants at every corner.

Best views from Bugaksan Mountain

# Cheong Wa Dae Observatory— Chunchugwan Trail

This relatively short and leisurely trail makes for easy walking. Follow the one-way road on the right side of Daetongmun Gate up to Cheong Wa Dae Observatory, the highest point of the trail. The boarded deck offers a panoramic view of downtown Seoul from Cheong Wa Dae, with Gyeongbokgung Palace to Gwanghwamun Gate and Seoul City Hall unfolding before you like a painting.

Total travel distance: **2.18 km** ; Average travel time: **50 minutes** ; Difficulty: **easy**



## SPOTS



①

Baegakjeong Pavilion

This pavilion is great for taking a quick break before making the climb to Cheong Wa Dae Observatory. N Seoul Tower is visible over Cheong Wa Dae walls from Baegakjeong Pavilion, which is flanked by commemorative zelkova and hornbeam trees planted by past presidents.

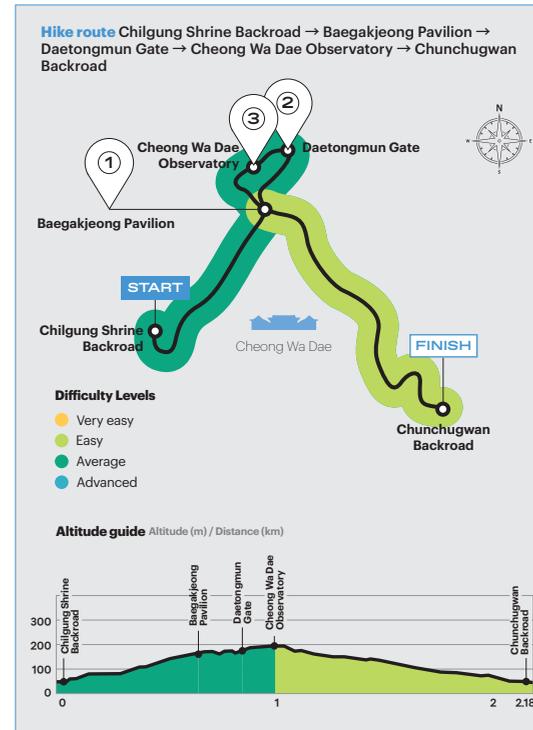


②

Daetongmun Gate

This gate stands along the path from Cheong Wa Dae Observatory to the summit, but has limited opening hours. Those arriving after hours must turn left toward Samcheong Park, passing the Baegak 1-gyo and Baegak 2-gyo bridges.

## COURSE MAP



## INFORMATION

### About the trail

- Steep stone steps link Chilgung Shrine to Baegakjeong Pavilion. A pair of hiking sticks make the climb far easier.

### Shelter and hiking tips

- Take a seat at Baegakjeong Pavilion and look south beyond the Cheong Wa Dae walls. Visible beyond Namsan Mountain are the peaks of Cheonggyesan Mountain south of the Hangang River and to the right is Gwanaksan Mountain.

### Transportation

- Take bus No. 1711 outside Exit 3 of Gyeongbokgung Station, Seoul Metro Line 3. Get off at Hyoja-dong, and walk 300 meters toward Sihwamun. If you go straight along Changmuin-ro between Sihwamun and Mugungwha Park, you will come across Chilgung Shrine. The road behind Chilgung Shrine leads to the Bugaksan Trail.

### More info

- Gyeongbokgung Palace was built in 1395, and the Cheong Wa Dae grounds were originally its backyard. When Cheong Wa Dae was first built in 1939, it was called "Gyeongmudae" (the palace police station), and from when the government of the Republic of Korea in 1948 was established until recently, it was used as the official residence of the president. Cheong Wa Dae took on its current name during the term of the fourth president Yun Po-sun, and it has been open to the public since May 2022.
- Looking up at Bugaksan Mountain from the main gate of Cheong Wa Dae, a pair of boulders called Buam Rock or Haetaebawi Rock projects above the roof line. The haetae is a mythical unicorn-lion that was believed to ward off evil spirits and symbolize the energy of water. The watery energy of Haetaebawi on Bugaksan to the north counters the fiery energy of Gwanaksan Mountain to the south, striking a harmonious balance.



③

Cheong Wa Dae Observatory

The great views of downtown Seoul from Cheong Wa Dae Observatory impress all who visit and provide a great spot for taking panoramic photos. Looking south from the deck, Namsan Mountain can be seen on the left and Gwanaksan Mountain on the right. Even Lotte World Tower at Jamsil can be seen on a clear day.

Along the Seoul City Wall Trail

# Changuimun-Hyehwamun Trail

This route takes travelers along the old Seoul City Wall, which are 5-10 meters high and were erected to defend against marauding tribes in the north during the Joseon period. The Seoul City Wall Trail is 18.6 kilometers long and passes through Namsan Mountain and Inwangsan Mountain until it reaches Bugaksan Mountain. In particular, the path from the gates of Changuimun to Hyehwamun is packed full of Bugaksan's beautiful scenery.

Total travel distance: **5 km** Average travel time: **2 hours 10 minutes** Difficulty: **average**



## SPOTS



①

Chotdaebawi Rock

Located 400 meters northeast of Sukjeongmun Gate is Chotdaebawi (Candlestick) Rock, a 13-meter-high rock. At the foot of the rock is a rest area with a wooden deck surrounded by the healing scent of pine trees.

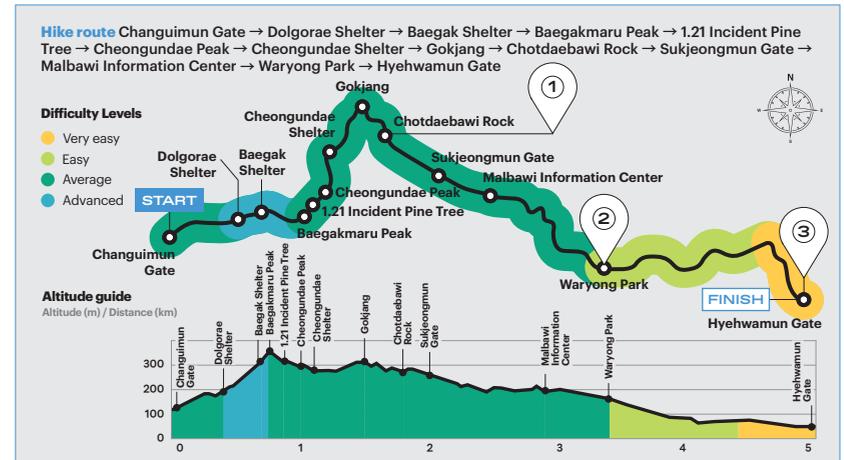


②

Waryong Park

The name "Waryong" means "lying dragon," and the park's name was inspired by the long and winding shape of the castle walls. This section of the trail is surrounded by trees, many of which were planted by residents of nearby neighborhoods as part of a massive tree-planting campaign.

## COURSE MAP



## INFORMATION

### About the trail

- Bring the appropriate safety gear such as hiking poles and firmly grip the handrails installed along the steep rocky path from Changuimun Gate to Baegakmaru Peak.

### Shelter and hiking tips

- The 1.6-kilometer section from Waryong Park to Hyehwamun Gate takes around 30 minutes. It would be a good idea to take a moment to recharge at Malbawi Observatory.

### Transportation

- Take bus No. 1711 or 7212 outside Exit 3 of Gyeongbokgung Station, Seoul Metro Line 3. Get off at the stop Jahamun Pass and Yoon Dong-ju Literature Museum and climb the stairs to reach Changuimun Gate Information Center.

### More info

- In Asian folklore, the phoenix is considered the king of the birds. A pair of phoenixes was painted on the ceiling over Hyehwamun Gate to ward off birds that often ruined the grain harvest outside the gate.
- Seoul City Wall Trail is a path that follows the old Hanyang (Seoul) city walls that marked the boundaries of the Joseon capital and kept out invaders. In the 5th year of King Taejo's reign (1396), fortresses were built along the ridges of Seoul's "four inner mountains"- Bugaksan, Naksan, Namsan, and Inwangsan- and underwent several renovations.



③

Hyehwamun Gate

Four large and four small gates were originally installed when the Hanyang (now Seoul) city walls were first erected. Commonly called Dongsomun, or literally "small east gate," Hyehwamun was a lesser gate between the east and north gates of the Seoul City Wall. Past the gate is the Naksan section of the Seoul City Wall Trail.

Classic Bugaksan hiking course

# Changuimun Gate-Malbawi Rock Trail

Walk down from Baegakmaru Peak along the ridge line to Malbawi Rock past Gokjang to see the Samcheong-dong neighborhood, which was considered the most beautiful neighborhood in Seoul by the Joseon nobility. This section is one of the oldest hiking trails on Bugaksan Mountain. Before the backroads of Chilgung Shrine and Chunchugwan were opened to the public, many hikers took the Malbawi detour along the ridge line.

Total travel distance: **4 km** ; Average travel time: **1 hour 50 minutes** ; Difficulty: **average**



SPOTS



① 1.21 Incident Pine Tree

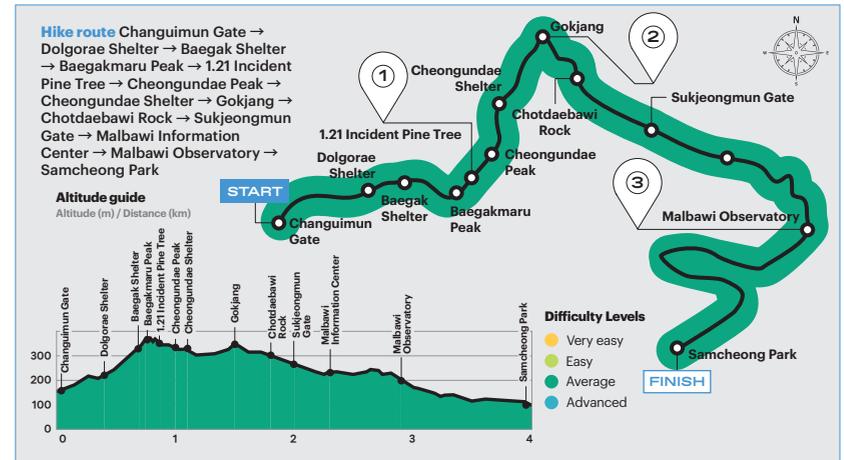
On January 21, 1968, 31 armed North Korean commandos sought to infiltrate Cheong Wa Dae and assassinate South Korean President Park Chung-hee. The attempt failed as South Korean police and armed forces engaged them in a shootout. Taking 15 shots during the gunfight, the pine tree still clearly bears the battle wounds as a witness to the so-called 1.21 Incident.



② Gokjang

A gokjang is an outward-projecting tower strategically located to observe and repel enemy forces. Unobstructed views in all directions make this a great observation spot. Visible from here are Gyeongbokgung Palace to the south, Baegakmaru Peak and Inwangsan Mountain to the east, and the mountains of Bukhansan and Dobongsan to the north.

COURSE MAP



INFORMATION

About the trail

- The section from Changuimun Gate to Baegakmaru Peak is a long series of steep hills. Firmly grab the handrails while climbing the stairs or use a pair of hiking sticks.

Shelter and hiking tips

- The path from Malbawi Observatory to Samcheong Park is fraught with steps. Hikers are advised to take a break at the Malbawi Information Center or Malbawi Observatory.

Transportation

- Take bus No. 1711 or 7212 outside Exit 3 of Gyeongbokgung Station, Seoul Metro Line 3. Get off at the stop Jahamun Pass and Yoon Dong-ju Literature Museum and climb the stairs to reach Changuimun Gate Information Center.

More info

- The Samcheong-dong neighborhood is located at the eastern foothills of Bugaksan Mountain, noted for its lush forest and clean water. The word *samcheong* means "three times clean" and refers to the mountain, water, and people. In a ritual to "cleanse" themselves of evil spirits and bad energy, women in the past ascended to Sukjeongmun Gate through the valleys of Samcheong-dong and went down again three times before the first full moon of the lunar year.



③ Malbawi Observatory

Dignitaries and high-ranking officials during the Joseon era are said to have ridden their horses up to this rock to rest in nature and recite poetry. Malbawi Rock is known for its views of the city's Jongno-gu District. On clear days, Namsan Mountain can be seen far in the distance.



Witness to history

# Yeoraesa Temple- Hogyeongam Rock Trail

Popularly known as the Kim Shin-jo Route, named after one of two North Korean commandos who survived the 1968 raid on the presidential office in Seoul, this is the second of the Bugak Haneul-gil Trails. It's at Haneulgyo Bridge and passes Hogyeongam Rock and Nammaru Observatory on the way to the source of Seongbukcheon Stream. On January 21, 1968, 31 North Korean commandos took this route to infiltrate Cheong Wa Dae in an attempted assassination of then President Park Chung-hee. Hogyeongam Rock is covered with dozens of bullet marks from the firefight in that incident.

Total travel distance: **2.48 km** Average travel time: **1 hour 30 minutes** Difficulty: **average**



## SPOTS



①

Yeoraesa Temple

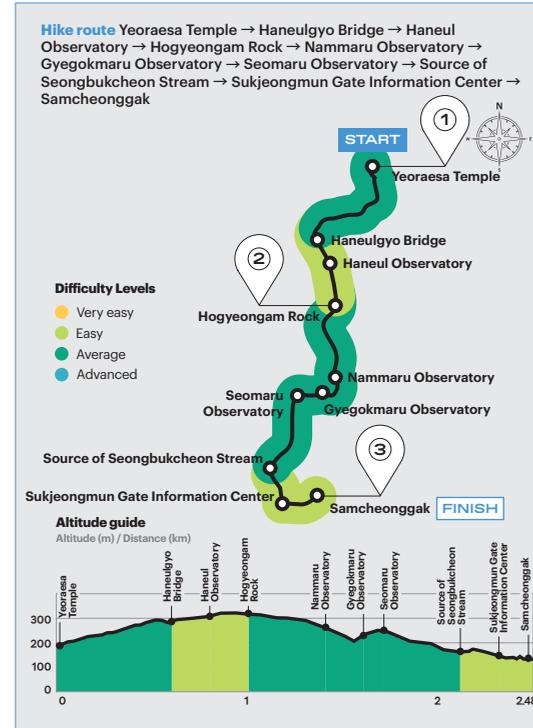
This temple houses the spirit tablets of many pro-independence fighters. Most of them had no children or their remains were never found. A combined 373 of the patriots are enshrined here including Yi Jun, who was sent as a secret emissary in 1907 to The Hague to declare as invalid the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1905.



②

Hogyeongam Rock

Intercepted by police, the 31 North Korean commandos in 1968 fled to the hills behind Gujinbong Peak and the neighborhood of Seongbuk-dong. Law enforcement officers discovered the commandos hiding near Hogyeongam Rock, killing three, and the rock is pockmarked with bullet holes from the exchange.



③

Samcheonggak

Sitting at the entrance to Samcheong Tunnel, Samcheonggak is a *hanjeongsik* (traditional Korean full-course dinner) restaurant specializing in cuisine once served to Korean nobility and royalty with a modern touch. This is also an arts and culture space hosting functions and gatherings. It consists of traditional hanok buildings that allow you to enjoy a meal in a vintage atmosphere.

## About the trail

- Because the way from Hogyeongam Rock to the source of Seongbukcheon Stream requires a steep descent, hiking sticks are highly recommended to distribute and balance body weight.
- Bugak Haneul-gil Trail No. 2 has numerous observation points offering views of the city. The peaks of Bukhansan—Bohyeonbong, Samobawi Rock, Bibong, and Hyangnobong—are clearly visible from Haneul Observatory.

## Shelter and hiking tips

- The bench at the Gyegokmaru Observatory and gurgling spring at the source of Seongbukcheon Stream are great for taking a rest.

## Transportation

- Take bus No. 1213, 7211, 171, or 163 at the stop Sungdeok Elementary School outside Exit 1 of Jeongneung Station, Ui-Sinseol Line. Get off at Kookmin University and walk up for five minutes toward Bugak Tunnel to reach Bugak Park Ranger Post. Walk 100 meters past the center toward the tunnel to reach the path to Yeoraesa Temple.

## More info

- There are numerous famous restaurants around Samcheonggak. From traditional Korean food to fancy restaurants, and bakery-slash-dessert-cafés, the choice is endless. A leisurely walk around the vicinity is highly recommended.

Hidden forest eco-paths

# Bugak Haneul-gil Trails

These trails link the foothills of Bugaksan Mountain with the ridges surrounding the former presidential compound of Cheong Wa Dae, and connect to the hiking trails in the depths of the mountain along the popular Bugak Skyway and trail. Decades of no human contact have left the pristine natural ecosystems flawlessly preserved. A tranquil and relaxed journey awaits with the magical energy of the deep forest.

Total travel distance: **9 km** | Average travel time: **2 hours 50 minutes** | Difficulty: **average**



## SPOTS



①

Source of Seongbukcheon Stream

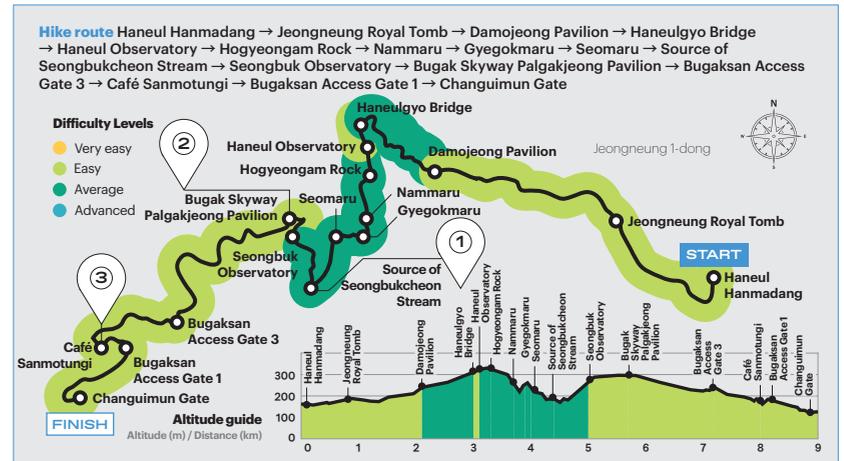
Seongbukcheon Stream is a tributary of the Hangang River, flowing down Bugaksan Mountain and merging into Cheonggyecheon Stream. Its source is at the end of Bugak Haneul-gil Trail 2. The source of Seongbukcheon Stream, located under the "Crayfish Swimming Bridge," is a habitat for various waterside plants, birds, and insects, and is used as an experiential ecological learning center.



②

Bugak Skyway Palgakjeong Pavilion

This octagonal structure that sports the traditional Hanok style 342 meters above sea level offers views of the Bukhansan Mountain peaks of Bohyeonbong, Munsubong, and Bibong to the north and those of Namsan Mountain and the Seoul metropolis to the south. The Bugaksan trails and observatories have limited opening hours, but Bugak Skyway Palgakjeong Pavilion is open 24 hours.



## INFORMATION

### About the trail

- The trail spans over 9 kilometers and is rather steep. Be extra careful when descending from Hogeongam Rock to the source of Seongbukcheon Stream and up from there to Bugak Skyway Palgakjeong Pavilion.

### Shelter and hiking tips

- Gyegokmaru Shelter has no noise, worries, and mobile phone coverage, making it a great place to clear the mind with the pure water above and hills below.

### Transportation

- Take the Seongbuk No. 1 bus at the bus stop Samseongyo Bridge and Seongbuk Cultural Center outside Exit 6 of Hansung University Station, Seoul Metro Line 4. Get off at the stop Seongbuk-gu Community Center, Building 201 front and walk up the road for 268 meters to reach Haneul Hanmadang.

### More info

- Once back at Changuimun Gate upon descent, continue to walk from Buam-dong to Inwangsan Dulle-gil to explore Inwangsan Course 2 around Seoul City Wall and Course 4 around Buam-dong.



③

Café Sanmotungi

This café on Bugaksan Mountain was the filming site of the popular K-drama Coffee Prince. The entrance is just short of Bugaksan Access Gate 1 on the way down from Bugak Skyway Palgakjeong Pavilion to Changuimun Gate. Visit at night to see the illuminated fortress walls on Bugaksan.



Secret urban garden

# Baeksasil Valley- Seonggyungwan Trail

The crystal-clear waters of Baeksasil Valley are a prime habitat for salamanders, Chinese minnows, and crayfish. Restrictions on development have helped preserve nature and wildlife here, earning the valley the nickname "Secret Garden." The scenery along the narrow forest path transforms with the coming and going of the seasons.

Total travel distance: **6.14 km** | Average travel time: **2 hours** | Difficulty: **average**



## SPOTS



1 Segeomjeong

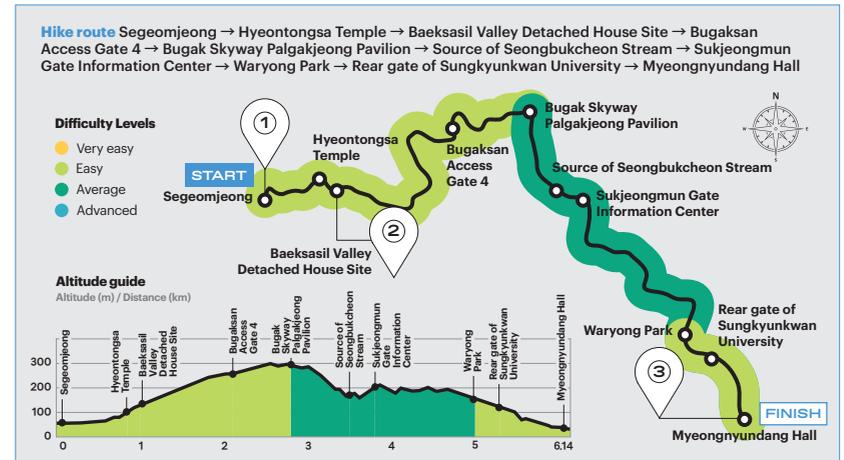
Segeomjeong is famous for its great scenery and crystal-clear valley streams. The tyrannical King Yeonsangun is said to have committed all manner of debauchery with court ladies here. King Yeongjo held archery competitions and selected military officials against the backdrop of Segeomjeong's scenery.



2 Baeksasil Valley

Beautiful Baeksasil Valley was a popular site for summer homes in the Joseon era and considered fit for the mountain spirit. Around the valley are numerous cultural sites including the site of the summer home of the late Joseon calligrapher and scholar Kim Jeong-hui (pen name Chusa).

## COURSE MAP



## INFORMATION

### About the trail

- A paved sidewalk connects Baeksasil Valley to the forest path and Bugak Skyway Palgakjeong Pavilion, with an easy walk on the gentle uphill path.

### Shelter and hiking tips

- Sit on the stone steps at the detached house site in Baeksasil Valley to recharge while listening to the gurgling mountain stream underneath the tree shade.

### Transportation

- Take bus No. 1020, 1711, 7016, 7018, 7022, or 7212 at Exit 3 of Gyeongbokgung Station, Seoul Metro Line 3, and get off at the stop Sangmyung University entrance and Segeomjeong Church.

### More info

- Myeongnyundang Hall offers various attractions, including a majestic ginkgo tree that becomes a vibrant sea of yellow leaves every autumn. Known as the "Ginkgo Tree of Munmyo Confucian Shrine, Seoul," this massive tree creates a stunning yellow canopy. While you can enjoy a good view from Myeongnyundang Hall, the most famous photo spot is behind Daeseongjeon Shrine.



3 Myeongnyundang Hall

Myeongnyundang served as the primary lecture hall of Seonggyungwan National Academy, the foremost educational institution during the Joseon Dynasty. The king would often visit this hall to provide encouragement, training, and even examine the scholars. You can find Myeongnyundang to the right of the main gate of Sungkyunkwan University.

# Mental Healing and Nourishment

Descending toward the Seoul neighborhood of Buam-dong and spending the evening in Seongbuk-dong is a great way to end a day of hiking on Bugaksan Mountain. The historical Seongbuk-dong area has attracted scholars and literati throughout the nation's history and is home to many renovated Hanok residences where visitors can recover and recharge.



## Bugaksan: Two-day itinerary

**12:00 p.m.** descent followed by lunch at Jaha Sonmandu - 7.1 kilometers (18 minutes by car) →  
**2:00 p.m.** quiet contemplation over tea at Suyeon Sanbang - 1.4 kilometers (4 minutes by car) →  
**4:00 p.m.** see traditional and antique Korean furniture at Korea Furniture Museum - 1.2 kilometers (3 minutes by car) →  
**6:00 p.m.** traditional dinner fit for nobility at Samcheonggak - 2.8 kilometers (11 minutes by car) →  
**8:00 p.m.** unwind at Hanok hotel Rakkojae

Peaceful scenery at Jeongyeonjae

## Soothing and recuperation for tired minds and bodies



### Tea at Heungcheonsa Temple

Heungcheonsa Temple stands at the entrance to Jeongneung Royal Tomb. While the temple has a collection of national heritage, the centerpiece is Geungnakbojeon Hall. The temple was built in 1853 by the monk Gubong Gyejang in the typical architectural style of the late Joseon Dynasty. The flower-patterned engravings above the doorways and dragon's head carvings atop the pillars attest to the ornate and functional architectural techniques of the time. After marveling at the technical sophistication of the structure, chat with resident monks over a cup of tea. This is a great opportunity to inquire about Buddhist culture or discuss the daily conflicts and hardships of modern life.

📍 29, Heungcheonsa-gil, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul  
 ☎ 82-2-929-6611

### Temple Stay at Gilsangsa Temple

Gilsangsa Temple lies just outside the commotion and congestion of the capital. The temple grounds are open to all who wish to meditate, contemplate, and pray. In the same context, the "Chamkkae Meditation" program with Monk Maga is held every second Tuesday of the month. Your mind will be calmly purified through just two hours of meditation. It is designed to enable even a beginner to participate with a light heart, so this precious opportunity to find the true self in a quiet mountain temple is for everyone.

📍 68, Seonjam-ro 5-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
 ☎ 82-2-3672-5945



## Trip around places imbued with the spirit of Korean literature



### Bukchon Hanok Village

Sitting on the foothills of Bugaksan Mountain, this village was a favorite neighborhood of the Joseon Dynasty's royalty, high-ranking officials, and elites. As you walk through narrow alleys, you will find antique tiles on the roofs and elaborately built wooden structures that form the true beauty of hanok. The number of Hanok homes here has exploded from around 30 to 1,400. To truly appreciate the 600-year history of the neighborhood, two must-visit places before exploring the village are Bukchon Cultural Center and Bukchon Hanok History Museum. The village also offers workshops in many traditional Korean handicrafts. Bukchon Village Library has a sizable collection of over 1,230 books donated by residents for reading by visitors.

📍 37, Gyedong-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul.  
☎ 82-2-2148-4161

🕒 Hour restriction system to be introduced starting March 2025 - 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. on Bukchon-ro 11-gil (fine of about 100,000 won after 5:00 p.m.)



### Korean Stone Art Museum

The Korean Stone Art Museum houses more than 1,250 masonry artifacts. The museum occupies a sprawling site of 18,182 square meters on the Seongbuk-dong hills between Bugaksan Mountain and the Seoul City Wall. Many *muninseok* stone statues sold or smuggled overseas are on display at the Recovered Artifacts Hall. These imposing replicas of civil officials, like those of military officials and guardians, were placed around tombs and graves to guard and protect the premises. In 2023, the indoor exhibit hall reopened as a complex cultural space called the Museum Wave where you can check out a variety of modern paintings and artworks.

📍 16, Daesagwan-ro 13-gil, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-2-986-1001

🕒 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday thru Friday, 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. on weekends and holidays (admission ends at 5:00 p.m.) (closed Mon.)



### Villa of Yi Jong-seok in Seongbuk-dong

This was a favorite gathering spot for noted modern Korean writers Yi Tae-jun, Jeong Ji-yong, Lee Hyo-seok, and Lee Eun-sang. The residence sits among the western hills of the neighborhood Seongbuk-dong and features cross-shaped holes in the outer walls designed to pass the wind through. The original owner was Yi Jong-seok, an affluent merchant from the late Joseon era who built his fortune selling salted shrimp in Mapo, the epicenter of waterborne transportation at the time. The gambrel roof and manicured landscaping attest to his vast wealth.

📍 131, Seongbuk-ro, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul  
🕒 10:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Tue.-Sun. (closed Mon.)



### Suyeon Sanbang

The archetypal text on syntax theory, *Munjang gangwha* (Diction on Writing), by novelist Yi Tae-jun remains a classic among Korean writers even now, after about 80 years. Suyeon Sanbang was the place Lee Tae-jun, whose pen name is Sang-heo, resided from 1933 to 1946 and where he wrote "Moonlit Night," "The Stone Bridge," and "Hwang Jini." This residence was also the headquarters of the literary community Guinhoe (Group of Nine) before being turned into a teahouse in 1998. The facility's name is loosely translated into "a home in the mountains for reading and scholarly gatherings." Thus, sit with a warm cup of ginger tea and soak up culture here.

📍 8, Seongbuk-ro 26-gil, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-2-764-1736

🕒 11:30 a.m. - 5:50 p.m. Wed. - Fri. / 11:30 a.m. - 7:40 p.m. Sat. - Sun. 12:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. on Mondays and Tuesdays (coffee orders only)



### Bugak Skyway Palgakjeong Pavilion

A leisurely drive along the 19-kilometer mountain road along the ridge of Bugaksan Mountain leads to Bugak Skyway Palgakjeong Pavilion, standing 342 meters above sea level and offering excellent views of Seoul's beautiful seasonal transformations. At night, this is a great vantage point amid city lights. Food and drink are available at Sky Restaurant inside the pavilion, which is also great for seeing views when the weather is too hot or cold.

📍 267, Bugaksan-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul.

☎ Restaurant: 82-2-6312-6602

🕒 Sky Restaurant: 11:30 a.m. - 11:30 p.m. (everyday)



### Manhae Han Yong-un Simujang

Built in 1933 during Japanese occupation, this structure faces north to shun the former headquarters of the Japanese Government-General in the south. The humble abode reflects the upright and thrifty nature of its builder, independence activist Han Yong-un. The name board in the study bears the name of the home as written by fellow independence activist and calligrapher Oh Se-chang.

📍 24, Seongbuk-ro 29-gil, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-2-2241-2652

🕒 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. daily

## Flavors and aromas crafted by time and tenacity



### Jaha Sonmandu

A Buam-dong institution since 1993, this restaurant is best known for its signature tri-color *tteok* (rice cake) and *mandu* (dumpling) soup, colored naturally using spinach, carrots, and beet. Jaha Sonmandu was featured by Michelin Guide Seoul for two years in a row in 2023 and 2024. The depth of flavor here owes to the homemade *jang* (fermented soybean paste) prepared once annually in winter using *meju* (boiled and crushed soybean) blocks sourced from Chungcheong-do.

📍 12, Baekseokdong-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul.  
☎ 82-2-379-2648  
🕒 11:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m. (last order at 8:00 p.m.) Tue.–Sun. (Closed on Mondays and on the actual days of Lunar New Year and Chuseok)



### Eum Teahouse

Eum Teahouse was originally an importer of Taiwanese teas and is now run by a tea curator who studied puer tea in China and managed tea gardens for the Taiwanese government. This landmark regularly brings a range of seasonal teas to Korea straight from the source. An in-depth tea tasting is offered to interested visitors. Teas are brewed using three varieties of tea leaves and served alongside stories on the flavors, aromas, and source garden of each.

📍 Suite 201, 3F, Building 2, 137, Changeumun-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-2-391-2010  
🕒 1:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m. Fri.–Mon. (closed Tue.–Thu.)



### Gyeyeolsa Chicken

This place serves old-style Korean fried chicken with hefty wedges of fried *sumi* (waxy) potatoes harvested in the highlands of Gangwon-do. The salt here is straight from the salt flats of Sinan, Korea's largest salt-producing region, and carefully stored for at least six years before being toasted to evaporate away any impurities. This results in a decidedly sweet and nutty flavor on the coarse grains of salt, amplifying the chicken's flavor. A popular side dish is *golbaengi* (sea snail) noodles, a classic *anju* (food to be eaten while drinking alcohol). The sea snails are tossed in a gently spicy sauce with apples, Korean pears, and sea grass and served with a mound of cold, thin noodles made from flour. The fresh taste added with low-key umami is one of a kind.

📍 7, Baekseokdong-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-2-391-3566  
🕒 12:00 p.m.–10:40 p.m. Tue.–Sat. / 12:00 p.m.–10:30 p.m. Sun. (closed Mon.)

## Spending the night next to the Bugaksan Mountain view



### Rakkojae

This 130-year-old traditional Hanok was remodeled by master carpenter Jeong Yeong-jin. A pavilion, pond, and an open wooden floor are arranged around the yard in the classical style in a throwback to Korea's past. The guest quarters are divided into five sections and the Pavilion Room provides a perfect space for drinking tea and quiet contemplation.

📍 218, Gahoe-dong, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-2-742-3410  
🕒 Check in 3:00 p.m., check-out 11:00 a.m.



### Boan Stay

For around 60 years since 1942, Boan Inn has been in place, serving as a home for many notable writers, including Seo Jeong-ju and Kim Dong-ni. Recognized as the birthplace of Korean literature, it was also the headquarters of a literary coterie magazine, *Siin burak* (Poet's Village). Boan Stay preserves the tradition of the old Boan Inn, occupying the third and fourth floors of what is now a cultural arts establishment called Boan 1942. Boan Stay is ideal for temporary lodging for cultural nomads. Rooms feature great contrasting views of the urban skyline and peaks of Bugaksan Mountain and are artistically decorated with works and furniture by contemporary designers.

📍 33, Hoyoja-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-02-720-8409  
🕒 Check in 3:00 p.m., check out 11:00 a.m.



### Jeongyeonjae

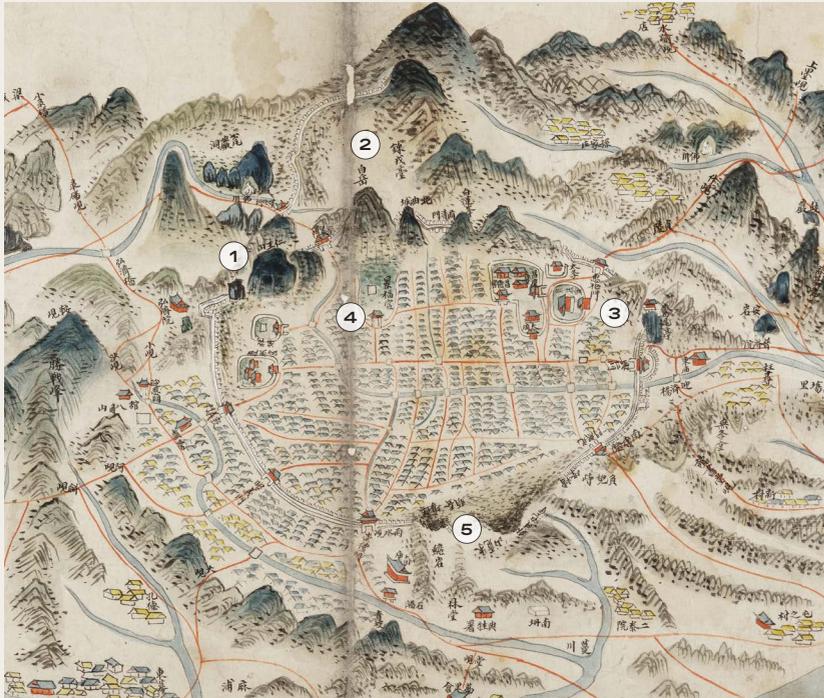
This Hanok residence is nestled in the old residential neighborhood of Samcheong-dong. Originally built in 1938, the premises were remodeled in May 2019. Its name loosely translates to "House of Comforting Acquaintances." This private accommodation also accepts just one guest or group at a time. The graceful and dignified interior is an ideal setting for conversations over tea. The signature outdoor bath here is closed for winter from December to February.

📍 19-14, Samcheong-ro 7-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-10-6837-2044  
🕒 Check in 4:00 p.m., check out 12:00 p.m.

# Viewing Bugaksan Mountain via Feng Shui

Yi Seong-gye, the founder of the Joseon Dynasty who was later crowned its first monarch, King Taejo, aimed to use the energy of the great mountain ranges of Baekdudaegan from Baekdusan Mountain and all the way down to Jirisan Mountain to connect it to Gyeongbokgung Palace through Bugaksan Mountain. The layout of the palace, which was geared to set Bugaksan in the background, symbolized the royal authority granted by heaven, an official philosophy that was used to justify the 600-year rule of the dynasty.

Written by Kim Wooseon (director of Baekdudaegan Humanities Research Institute)



"Doseongdo (Map of the Capital)," *Dongguk yeodo* (Map of Korea)

1. Inwangsan Mountain
2. Bugaksan (Baegaksan) Mountain
3. Naksan Mountain
4. Gyeongbokgung Palace
5. Namsan (Mongmyeoksan) Mountain

## Fundamental Energy Flowing through Baekdudaegan

Since ancient times, feng shui (*pungsu jiri* in Korean referring to Chinese geomancy), has considered the mountain range "paths through which energy flows" in its emphasis on the flow of energy (*qi*). The fundamental energy flowing down from Baekdusan, the starting point, passes through the mountains of Geumgangsan, Seoraksan, Odaesan, and Songnisan before finally reaching Jirisan. All of these are collectively referred to as the "great mountain range" of Baekdu (Baekdudaegan). Among the mountains of this range, the Hanbukjeongmaek range splits from the northern watershed of Geumgangsan and encompasses the mountains north of the Hangang River. Passing through the mountains of Dobongsan and Bukhansan, Bugaksan displays its majesty as the guardian mountain of the capital of Seoul. To cut off this energy, the Japanese colonial government exploited feng shui to its advantage during Japanese occupation of the Korean Peninsula and drove in iron stakes all over the nation's mountains. Chotdaebawi (Candlestick) Rock on Bugaksan acquired its name when the stakes were removed after Korea's independence and a candlestick was installed instead to wish for national development. This way, feng shui, which connects the flow of energy and terrain of the land to human fortune, was an important idea that formed the basis of traditional Korean culture.

People built shrines for Four Celestial Guardians in the four directions: Black Warrior in the north, Red Phoenix in the south, Blue Dragon in the east (left), and White Tiger in the west (right). Bugaksan has one of these four shrines. Seoul, the capital of Joseon, was surrounded by four inner mountains—Bugaksan, Inwangsan, Namsan,

and Naksan—and four outer mountains—Bukhansan, Deogyangsan, Gwanaksan, and Yongmasan. Usually called Baegaksan during the Joseon period as well as Myeonak (face rock mountain) for resembling a human face, Bugaksan is designated Historic Site No. 10 and Scenic Site No. 67.

## Magnificent Guardian of Seoul

Gyeongbokgung Palace has a more magnificent and outstanding presence thanks to Bugaksan, which contains a profound meaning. A power struggle between Buddhism and neo-Confucianism in the early Joseon period ended with the neo-Confucian camp winning. The victory led to the construction and layout of Hanyangdoseong (Seoul City Wall) and palaces under strict accordance to neo-Confucian interpretations. The exquisite arrangement resulted in one seeing the mountain in the back while facing Gyeongbokgung along with Gwanghwamun Gate and Geunjeongjeon Hall, but as one approaches the towering palace, the mountain disappears from view, leaving just the gate and hall. This was the result of the application of the political philosophy of authority granted by heaven flowing from Bugaksan to the palace. The shift of perspective from the magnificence of the mountain range to that of the palace symbolized the king's absolute authority as reflected in architectural structure. This is even more apparent when comparing photographs of the palace from up close and afar.

## Haetae and South Pond to Deter Fire and Evil Spirits

A *haetae* (mythical creature that symbolizes the water deity) statue was used as a remedy (*C. bibu*) based on feng shui. Gyeongbokgung suffered from frequent small and major fires, and people believed that the cause was the energy of fire embedded in Gwanaksan, one of the four outer mountains of Seoul. So more such statues were erected at the Office of Inspector General on the street of six ministries in front of Gwanghwamun Gate. Namji Pond was dug near Sungnyemun Gate. A pair of *haetae* is now moved to both sides of Gwanghwamun, from its original location of the Office of Inspector General.

## Imaginary Animal Haetae

The *haetae* is an imaginary animal that judges right and wrong and good and evil. Considered an auspicious animal that wards off fire or evil spirits, this creature has statues of itself decorate many traditional structures such as palaces.



# Gwanaksan Mountain

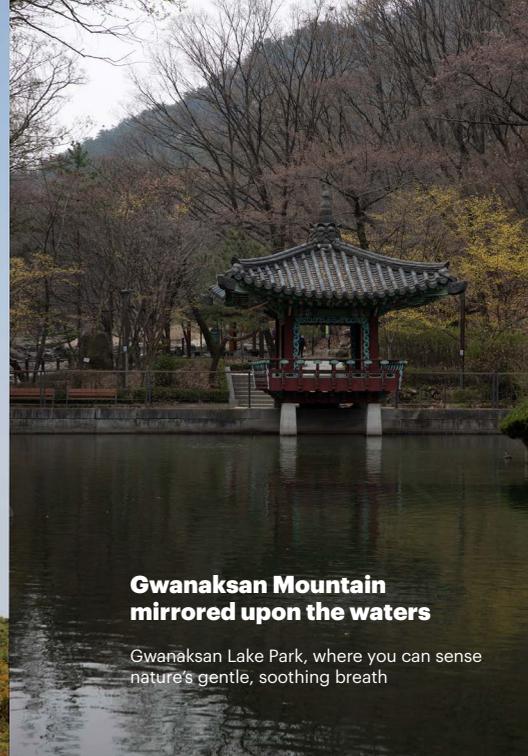
**An urban oasis brimming with vitality that leaves you feeling refreshed**

Gwanaksan Mountain will infuse you with powerful energy. Climb its rugged rocky ridges and feel the untamed power of nature. Then rest both body and mind at the summit as you bask in the exhilaration of the refreshing panoramic views. With each changing season, savor a new landscape and tailor your trek to your own individual rhythm and energy level for a personalized hiking experience.



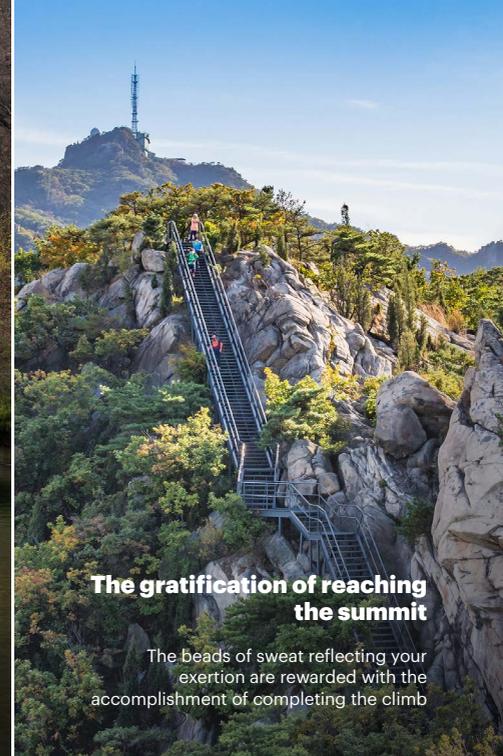
**Where sky and  
summit converge**

The scenery of Yeonjuam Hermitage,  
will linger in your heart  
like a moving line of poetry



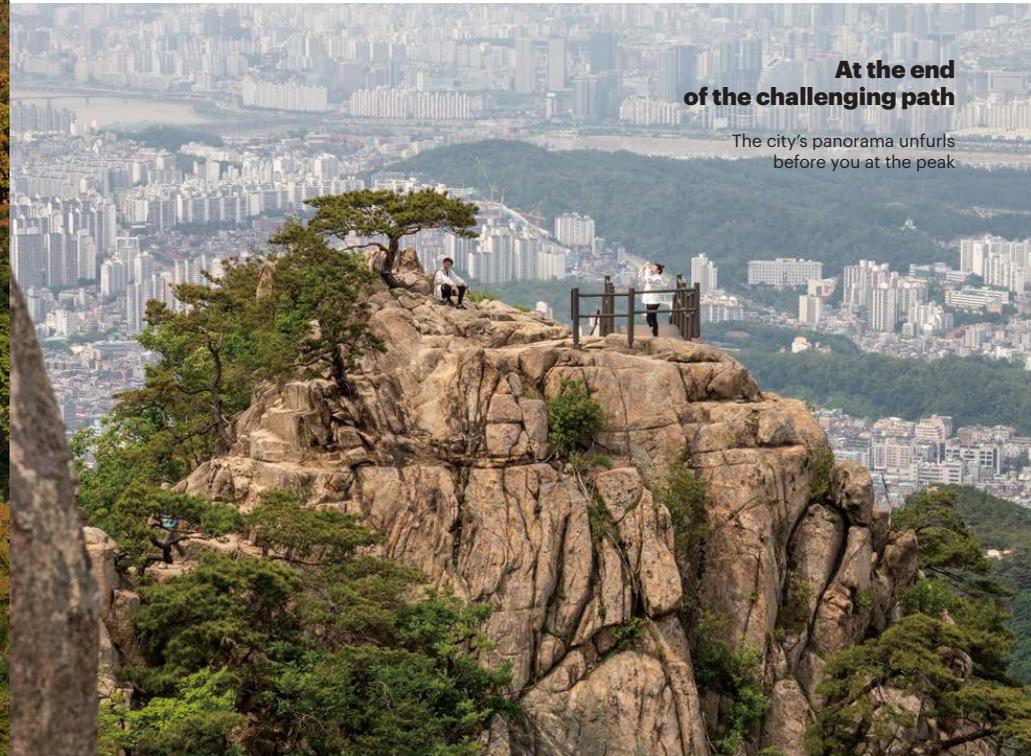
**Gwanaksan Mountain  
mirrored upon the waters**

Gwanaksan Lake Park, where you can sense  
nature's gentle, soothing breath



**The gratification of reaching  
the summit**

The beads of sweat reflecting your  
exertion are rewarded with the  
accomplishment of completing the climb



**At the end  
of the challenging path**

The city's panorama unfurls  
before you at the peak

"Gwanaksan Mountain might seem like a straightforward hike, yet there are plenty of tricky sections en route to the summit, intensifying its unique appeal. Each ascent feels distinct, shaped by the season, your companions, and your own perspective. With its diverse, conveniently accessible trails, Gwanaksan Mountain is nothing short of a blessing for hikers. Just gear up and set out—that's all it takes."

- Kim Jin-hyeon (Author)  
"Stories of the 100 Great Mountains Selected by the Korea Forest Service"



## Vibrancy Felt Even within the Profound Silence

Majestically embracing the southwest vistas of Seoul, Gwanaksan Mountain has long been a beloved haven not just for hiking enthusiasts but also for residents of the city and the greater metropolitan area. The name Gwanaksan—literally “Hat Peak Mountain”—comes from it being shaped like a traditional Korean hat; just as the name suggests, its rocky summits rise with regal might, projecting a bold, masculine strength. Though firmly rooted in the city, it boasts deep, dynamic mountain formations that give hikers a precious escape from everyday clamor, welcoming them into nature’s serene embrace.

From Yeonjudae Temple at the summit, you can take in sweeping, unhindered views stretching in every direction. At sunrise and sunset, the sky and earth alike glow crimson, merging into a breathtaking spectacle. Even in the silence, Gwanaksan Mountain radiates a lively energy, with sweeping views of numerous southern Seoul peaks from here heightening the awe and inspiration. Designated as an urban nature park in 1968, Gwanaksan Mountain features a multitude of trails that ensure that every hiker from novice to veteran can find delight here. In particular, the trail beginning behind Seoul National University is well-maintained; as hikers pass mid-mountain valleys and waterfalls, they can savor the invigorating freshness of the wild—an experience that draws visitors all year round. For the truly daring, there are rock climbing routes, beloved by those who crave a more challenging ascent. From leisurely strolls to bold, cliff-scaling adventures, follow these forest paths and uncover a new facet of Seoul’s allure, gracefully cradled within Gwanaksan Mountain.

© Korea Tourism Organization's PhotoKorea  
Park Jeong-a

# Gwanaksan's 8 Trails

Towering at 629 meters, Gwanaksan Mountain boasts stunning terrain sculpted by dramatic cliffs and ravines. Its proximity to and accessibility from the city combined with its demanding routes make it especially enticing for hikers who thrive on challenge. The section of Seoul Dulle-gil Trail that winds through here is immensely popular, inviting hikers to savor the pure joy of a leisurely walk without fixating on summiting. Another extraordinary pleasure that Gwanaksan Mountain offers is strolling along its lengthy ridge tracing the boundary between Seoul and Gyeonggi Province, while savoring the expansive panorama of the city spread out below.

**COURSE 01.**

**Yeonjudae A Trail (p.110)**  
 Institute of Construction and Environmental Engineering → Dorimcheon Valley → Summit of Yeonjudae Temple

**COURSE 02.**

**Yeonjudae B Valley Trail (p.112)**  
 Gwanaksan Station → The 4th Campground → Engineering Building (Upper) → Yeonjusaem Pond → Overlook at the 3rd Kkalttakgogae Ridge → The 3rd Kkalttakgogae Ridge → Summit of Yeonjudae Temple

**COURSE 03.**

**Jaunam Ridge Trail (p.114)**  
 Gwanaksan Station → The 4th Campground → Engineering Building (Upper) → Jaunam Ridge → Jaunam Gukgibong Peak → Summit of Yeonjudae Temple

**COURSE 04.**

**Hakbawi Ridge Trail (p.116)**  
 Gwanaksan Station → The 4th Campground → Muneomi Pass → Hakbawi Ridge → Yeonjuam Hermitage → Yeonjudae Temple

**COURSE 05.**

**Dolsan Trail (p.118)**  
 Gwanaksan Station → Waterwheel → Summit of Dolsan Mountain

**COURSE 06.**

**Samseongsan Trail (p.120)**  
 Gwanaksan Station → Square 1 → Square 2 → Gukgibong Peak → Summit of Samseongsan Mountain

**COURSE 07.**

**Dorimcheon (Sillim) Valley Trail (p.122)**  
 Gwanaksan Station → Red Clay Trail → Gwanaksan Mountain Adventure Forest and Water Playground → Gwanaksan Lake Park → Barrier-free Forest Walkway → Ongnyusaem Pond → The 4th Campground → Underwater Garden → Samgeori Mineral Spring

**COURSE 08.**

**Seoul Dulle-gil Trail 12 (p.124)**  
 Gwanaksan Station → Waterwheel → Gwanaksangyegok Camping Forest → Tomb of Yun Gil → Hoapsa Temple → Hoamsan Jannamu Forest Park → Hoamsan Waterfall → Hoamsan Forest Park → Seoul Metro Line 1 Seoksu Station



Along a refreshing valley stream

# Yeonjudae A Trail

This is the shortest and easiest route to Yeonjudae Temple, the summit of Gwanaksan Mountain, making it suitable even for novice hikers. Follow the cool sound of babbling water as you hike up Dorimcheon Valley, and you will eventually arrive at Yeonjudae Temple where you can enjoy wide-open views of Seoul.

Total travel distance: **2 km** Average travel time: **1 hours 30 minutes** Difficulty: **average**



## SPOT



①

Dorimcheon Valley

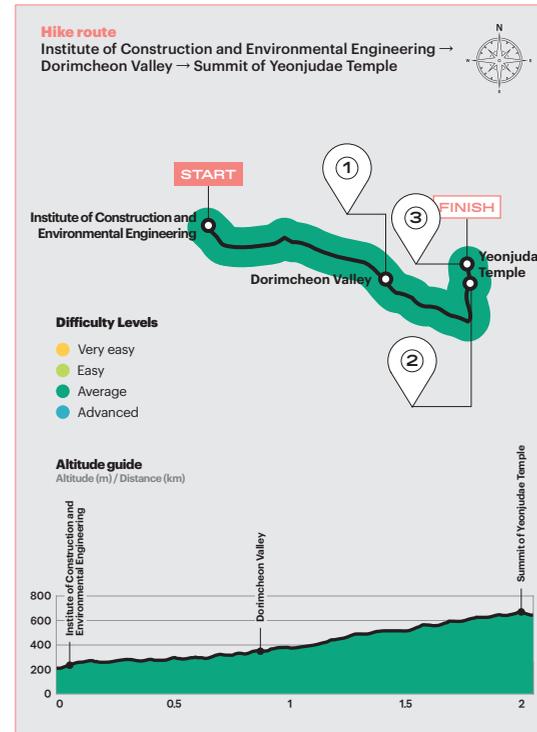
Originating from the eastern slopes of Gwanaksan Mountain and flowing toward Dorimcheon Stream, this valley's pristine waters run crystal clear all year round. With lush trees forming a canopy of soothing shade and stillness, it is the perfect spot for a quiet stroll or a gentle moment of repose.



②

Yeonjuam Hermitage

It is located just south of Yeonjudae Temple, the highest peak of Gwanaksan Mountain. Set amidst cliffside scenery worthy of a painting masterpiece, Yeonjuam Hermitage is said to have been relocated to its present site by Princes Yangnyeong and Hyoryeong in the 11th year of King Taejong's reign (1411), offering a powerful sense of Gwanaksan Mountain's vibrant spirit.



### About the trail

- Hikers can enjoy leisurely breaks during their hike thanks to the rest spots and benches set up along the trail. The trail is made up of relatively safe dirt paths and stairs, but the iron stairway near the summit is narrow and steep, so extra caution is advised.

### Shelter and hiking tips

- Midway along Dorimcheon Valley are many flat rocks where you can sit and rest while enjoying the soothing sound of babbling water.

### Transportation

- Take exit 3 from Seoul National University Station (Line 2), and then walk for about 200 meters to reach the bus stop. Take bus number 5513 and get off at the stop for the Institute of Construction and Environmental Engineering, and you will find a sign for the hiking trail right next to it.

### More info

- The name "Yeonjudae" is interpreted as a "platform for yearning for one's lord," symbolizing a place of longing for one's king. According to folklore, loyal retainers of the fallen Goryeo Dynasty—Gang Deuk-ryong, Seo Gyeon, and Nam Eul-jin—ascended here to mourn the old kingdom and its faithful subjects.



③

Yeonjudae Temple

Soaring 629 meters above sea level, Yeonjudae Temple crowns the northern cliffs above Yeonjuam Hermitage, reigning as Gwanaksan Mountain's highest peak. Legend has it that the great monk Uisang meditated here in the 17th year of King Munmu's reign (667) during the Silla Dynasty, and it was rebuilt in the first year of the reign of Joseon's King Taejo (1392).

The complete package featuring forest paths, valleys, and ravines.

# Yeonjudae B Valley Trail

This trail is well-loved by hikers as it offers beautiful seasonal landscapes as well as panoramic views from Yeonjudae Temple. The combination of flat paths and steep slopes offers diverse terrain, with rocks and small waterfalls enhancing the visual experience.

Total travel distance: **4.7 km** Average travel time: **2 hours 30 minutes** Difficulty: **average**



## SPOT



① Gwanaksan Nature Park

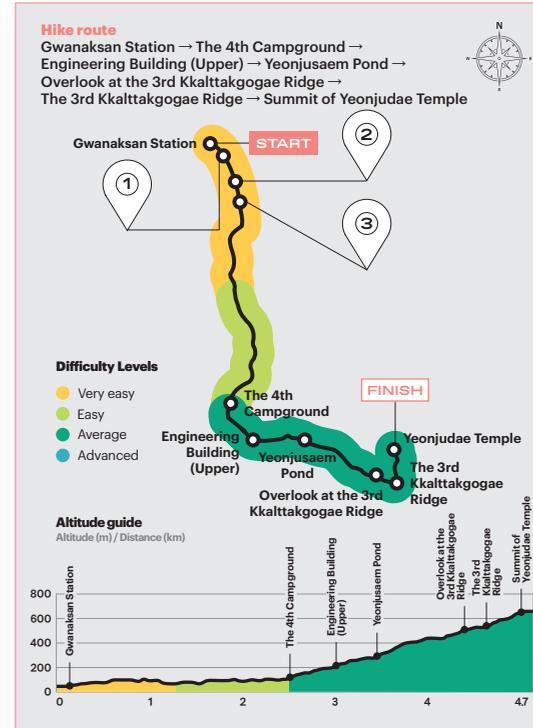
The Iljumun Gate of Gwanaksan Nature Park marks the starting point for every hiking trail departing from Gwanaksan Station. Designated as an urban nature park in 1968, it has since become a beloved landmark frequented by countless Seoul citizens. Here, visitors can also take part in forest healing programs including therapeutic walks, meditation sessions, and leisurely strolls.



② Gwanaksan Botanical Garden

Situated at the entrance of Gwanaksan Park, this outdoor botanical garden is a natural learning haven spanning about 1,000 square meters and is home to 19 types of crops and 1,630 individual plants. Organized into themed sections such as a rose garden, a shrub garden, and an azalea hillside, this place welcomes visitors who want to observe the seasonal transformations of flora year-round.

## COURSE MAP



③ Gwanaksan Lake Park

Beyond the Square 1 awaits Gwanaksan Lake Park, a nature-oriented retreat where the walking trails and a serene lake harmoniously converge. With pavilions, fountains, and lakeside stage, it offers hikers a tranquil place to pause and relax. There are also a forest ecology center and an outdoor botanical garden nearby.

## INFORMATION

### About the trail

- The trail starts with a level asphalt road that is perfect for a walk, but the stone paths and numerous stairs may put some strain on the knees. The trail divides into a rocky ridge and an alternate path after the 3rd Kkalttagogae Ridge right before Yeonjudae Temple, and it is recommended for beginners or those with less stamina to take the detour.

### Shelter and hiking tips

- Throughout the trail, you will find rest stops placed at key points to enable you to take a break. There are restrooms near the 4th Campground in the middle section of the trail and at Yeonjuam Hermitage.

### Transportation

- Coming out of Exit 1 at Gwanaksan Station on the Sillim Line brings you straight to the trail entrance. A large Iljumun gate inscribed with "Gwanaksan Park" welcomes visitors.

### More info

- Within Gwanaksan Park, barrier-free forest walkway caters to individuals of all abilities to ensure that people with disabilities, seniors, and anyone less confident on their feet can enjoy the mountain without difficulty. Two types of trails await: a circular forest path for a leisurely, stroll-like experience; and a climbing trail that follows a zigzag uphill route.



Follow scenic views spread over the ridge

# Jaunam Ridge Trail

Jaunam Ridge is known for its relentless, steep rocky ridges, offering a thrilling challenge for adventurous hikers. As you climb, you get to see the magnificent views of peaks like Samseongsan Mountain, Gukgibong Peak, and Janggunbong Peak, with panoramic views of Seoul opening up with each ridge crossed.

Total travel distance: **4.3 km** | Average travel time: **2 hours 30 minutes** | Difficulty: **advanced**



## SPOT



①

Jaunam Hermitage

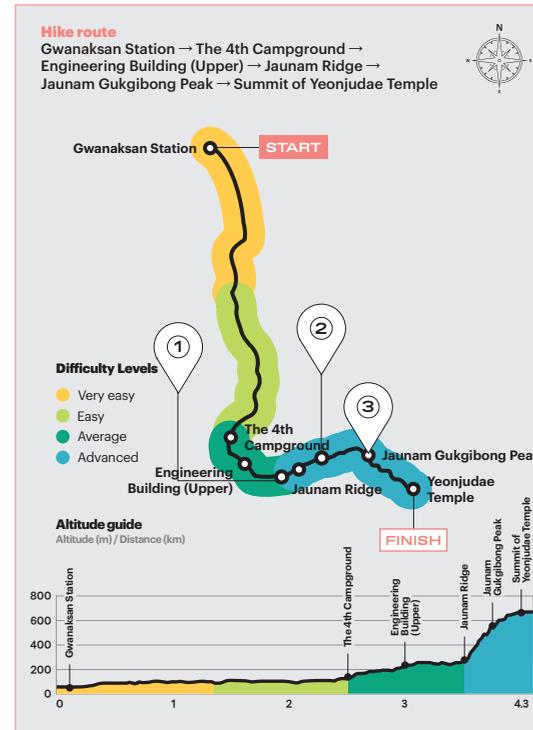
Nestled halfway up the valley behind Seoul National University's new engineering hall, Jaunam Hermitage was founded by the monk Muhak in the fifth year of King Taejo's reign (1396) during the Joseon Dynasty. According to records left by the monk Namheo, the temple was renovated in the 13th year of King Yeongjo's reign (1734), and it still preserves a memorial tablet created by King Seongjong in honor of his mother.



②

Face of Silence

Along the rocky ridge leading from Jaunam Ridge, you will encounter the renowned "Face of Silence" rock famed for its unique shape. It resembles a silent, closed-lipped visage, leaving a powerful, enduring impression on those making the ascent.



### About the trail

- With steep inclines throughout and three rock-climbing sections where you have to haul yourself up using metal railings and ropes, this can be difficult for beginners, although safety measures and detours are also available to ensure a relatively safe hike.

### Shelter and hiking tips

- There are no benches along the trail, but the ridge features many flat rocks for visitors to sit on during the hike. Just before the rocky ridge starts, the 4th Campground provides a great spot for a picnic.

### Transportation

- Take exit 1 from Gwanaksan Station on the Sillim Line to access the hiking trail directly.

### More info

- The Jaunam Ridge trail is renowned for its many photogenic spots. From here, you can take in the grand spectacle of nearby peaks like Samseongsan Mountain and Janggunbong Peak, and the staircase leading up to the summit of Jaunam Hermitage is well-suited for dynamic photography.



③

Jaunam Gukgibong Peak

Set along the Jaunam ridge, this special landmark rewards climbers with an overwhelming display of natural grandeur. Perched atop a massive boulder with a sheer drop looming behind, it delivers a dizzying, adrenaline-charged sensation. Reaching this point demands considerable courage and physical endurance.

The majestic beauty of nature, extending toward the sky.

# Hakbawi Ridge Trail

The valley with its pristine water at the beginning of the trail is a popular place for relaxing in the summer, and the rocky terrain extending from Muneomi Pass to Hakbawi Ridge adds to the hiking excitement. Climbing Hakbawi Ridge and Gukgibong Peak gives you a sweeping view of Seoul's major landmarks, like Namsan Mountain and Yeouido.

Total travel distance: **6 km** Average travel time: **3 hours 30 minutes** Difficulty: **advanced**



## SPOT



①

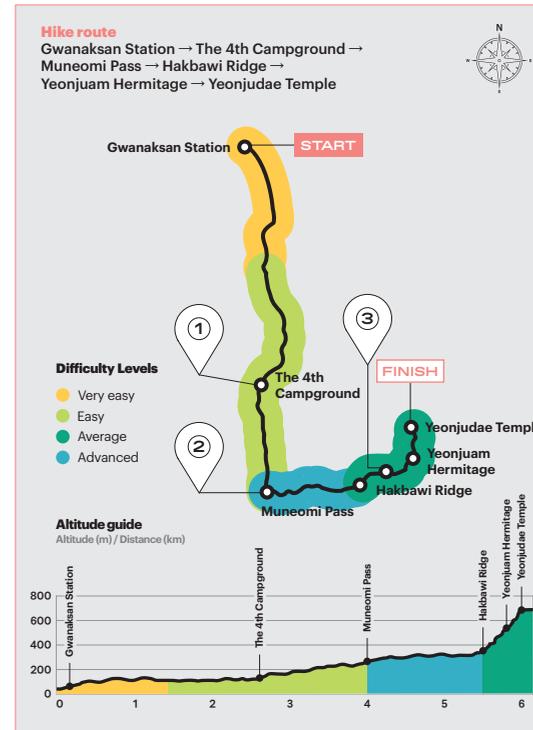
The 4th Campground

Midway along the hiking trail from Gwanaksan Lake Park to Yeonjudae Temple lies the 4th campground, a natural retreat where you can indulge in lush forests and clean air. Benches scattered throughout let hikers pause and relax, reviving themselves before continuing onward.

②

Muneomi Pass

Muneomi Pass marks the junction linking Gwanaksan Mountain and Samseongsan Mountain and connecting Seoul's Gwanak-gu district with Anyang. Valleys of exquisite beauty stretch out on both sides, making it an excellent choice for a summertime hiking route. On the Anyang side lies the Gwanak Arboretum, celebrated as a family-friendly ecological trekking destination.



### About the trail

- At the start, the trail is a gentle forest path through a campground, making it fairly easy; as you approach Hakbawi Ridge, however, the rocky terrain and narrow paths require hiking boots. Be extra careful for safety when navigating the narrow rocky paths.

### Shelter and hiking tips

- The 4th Campground is a suitable place for an initial break, and Muneomi Pass is another spot where you can regain your strength. Before climbing to Yeonjudae Temple, you are advised to rest at Yeonjuam Hermitage and savor the calm ambiance of the temple.

### Transportation

- Take exit 1 from Gwanaksan Station on the Sillim Line to access the hiking trail directly.

### More info

- The Hakbawi Ridge trail offers a breathtaking display of ever-changing natural landscapes throughout the seasons. Especially in spring, rare wildflowers like the red weigela and sorbus alnifolia blossom enhance the pleasure of hiking; in autumn, the crimson foliage sweeping across Palbong Ridge and Geobukbawi (Turtle Rock) Ridge below Hakbawi Ridge inspires pure admiration.

③

Gwanaksan Weather Station



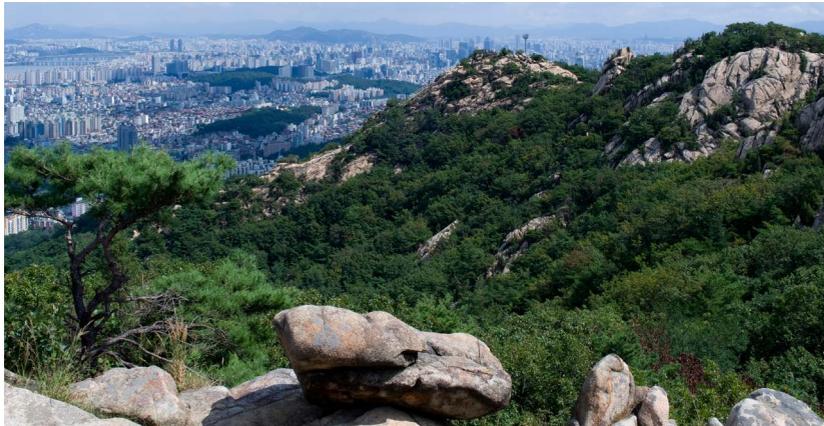
Visible from the summit of Hakbawi Rock, this weather observation facility stands tall at a vantage point that sweeps across Seoul, Gwacheon, Uiwang, and Anyang. It is a rare spot where breathtaking scenery merges with meteorological study.

A unique landscape awaits at the end of a humble looking path.

# Dolsan Trail

This trail is short with gentle inclines, making it easy for beginners and families. The rocky ridge near Dolsan Mountain poses minimal danger. At the summit of the Dolsan Mountain, the rocky ridges of Gwanaksan Mountain blend with expansive cityscapes to offer a remarkable sight.

Total travel distance: **1.5 km** ; Average travel time: **45 minutes** ; Difficulty: **average**



## SPOT



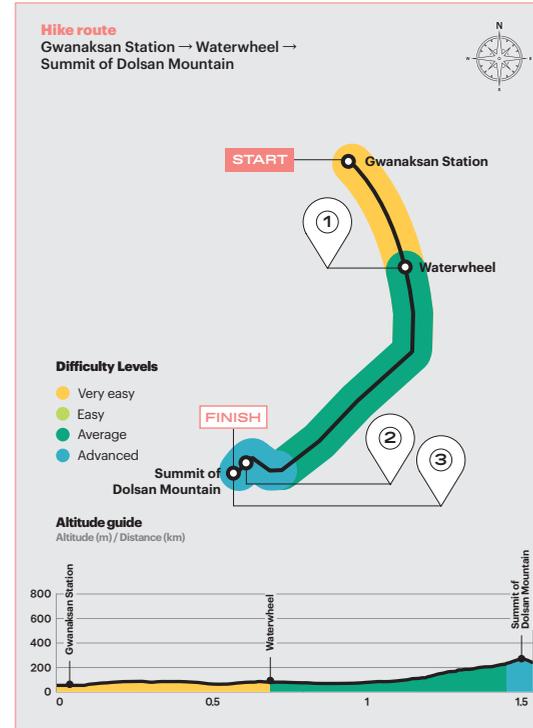
① Waterwheel

Following the gentle paved road from the entrance of Gwanaksan Park, you will encounter a traditional waterwheel that serves as the symbolic gateway and starting point of your true mountain adventure. At the heart of winter, you may even witness the water wheel completely frozen over. To reach Dolsan Mountain, you must take the right path at the waterwheel fork.



② Dolsan Mountain

As one of Gwanaksan's prominent peaks, Dolsan Mountain is adorned with numerous rocky formations; thus making it a beloved route among hikers. Its summit offers an exceptional panorama showcasing Seoul National University as well as the sweeping contours of Gwanaksan Mountain. The solitary pine tree standing at the peak is particularly striking.



③ Dolsan Gukgibong Peak

This is the flag-bearing peak you can reach in the shortest amount of time starting from Gwanaksan Station. Although its height is a modest 239 meters, the summit still commands a full, sweeping view of Seoul's cityscape. In springtime, you can capture both the blooming azaleas near the summit and the national flag in a single photograph.

### About the trail

- The trail from the waterwheel to the top of the Dolsan mountain features a relaxing dirt path as well as stone steps with a gentle incline. Around the summit of the Dolsan mountain are a few rocky sections, so hikers should take care not to slip.

### Shelter and hiking tips

- Around the waterwheel, benches and water fountains create a perfect place for rest. From the summit of the Dolsan mountain, you can sit on the rocks to rest and embrace the view of the city below.

### Transportation

- Exit number 1 at Gwanaksan Station takes you straight to the hiking trail. A 10-minute walk brings you to the waterwheel crossroads, where you need to turn right.

### More info

- Throughout the Gwanaksan Mountain, Samsongsan Mountain, and Hoamsan Mountain areas, a total of 11 flag peaks have been established. At some point, a trend emerged among hikers to complete a continuous route passing all of these flag peaks. This trail—exceeding 20 kilometers from Gwanaksan Station to Sadang Station—is recommended for intermediate and advanced hikers.

Another stunning view from Gwanaksan Mountain

# Samseongsan Trail

This trail lets you view all the major peaks of Gwanaksan Mountain and Samseongsan Mountain. The hike from Gukgibong Peak to Samseongsan Mountain is fairly short, allowing for a leisurely hike with breathtaking panoramic views of Seoul and neighboring mountains from each peak.

Total travel distance: **4.7 km** | Average travel time: **2 hours 30 minutes** | Difficulty: **average**



**SPOT**



① Samseongsan Mountain

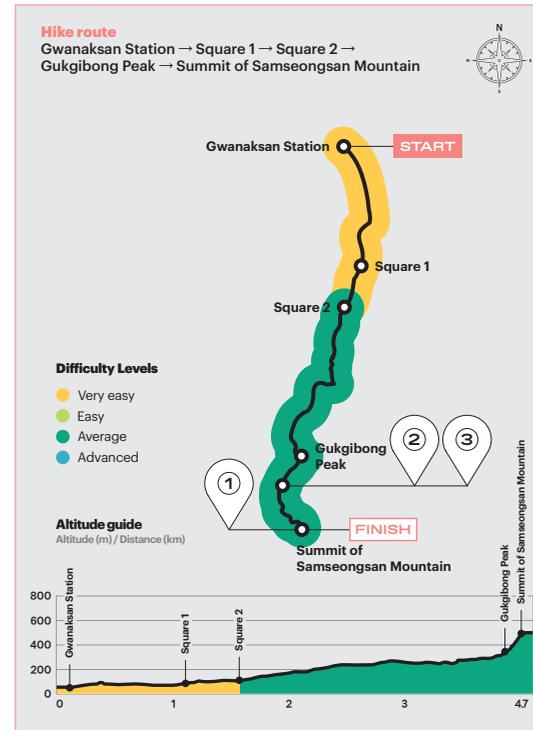
Rising to 481 meters and spanning the areas of Gwanak-gu and Geumcheon-gu in Seoul as well as Anyang in Gyeonggi Province, Samseongsan Mountain is a mountain steeped in rich history, culture, and arts. Within the mountain's embrace lie Sammaksa Temple and other monasteries along with cultural treasures like the Sammaksa Rock-Carved Buddha Triad and the Male-Female Genital Rocks.



② Sammaksa Temple

As one of the four great temples near Seoul, Sammaksa Temple rests halfway up Samseongsan Mountain's slopes. The temple's name dates back to the 17th year of the reign of Silla's King Munmu (677 AD) when three monks—Wonhyo, Uisang, and Yunpil—constructed a hermitage here to pursue spiritual cultivation. It houses a number of cultural relics including the Cheonbuljeon Hall (Hall of a Thousand Buddhas), Yukgwaneumjeon Hall (Hall of Six Avalokitesvaras), Myeongbujeon Hall (Hall of Judgment), and Manghaeru Pavilion.

**COURSE MAP**



**INFORMATION**

**About the trail**

- Standing relatively low at 481 m high, Samseongsan Mountain has comfortable dirt trails, but the trail leading to Gukgibong Peak becomes steeper, offering the thrill of a real hike. There are still rocky ridges scattered along the way, so beginners need to remain cautious in certain sections.

**Shelter and hiking tips**

- There are restrooms and benches in Square 1, allowing you to have snacks and water while taking a break. After arriving at Gukgibong Peak, take some time to appreciate the scenery and recover your strength.

**Transportation**

- At Square 2, the left path leads to the Barrier-free Forest Walkway, and the right path takes you to Samseongsan Mountain's hiking trail.

**More info**

- Entry to Sammaksa Temple is strictly prohibited for all vehicles not run by temple staff or which have no prior authorization. You must start from the Sammaksa public parking lot near the Gyeongin National University of Education campus entrance. It takes about one hour to walk along the paved road accessible to vehicles, and roughly 30 minutes to hike the trail.



③ Sammaksa Rock-Carved Buddha Triad

Carved into the natural rock face behind the main hall of Sammaksa Temple and situated midway up Samseongsan Mountain, this Buddha triad is a cultural heritage site of Gyeonggi Province. Created in the 39th year of King Yeongjo's reign (1763), this Chiseonggwang Yeorae (Buddha) rock carving serves as precious material for studying the art history of late Joseon.

A relaxing healing trail in the city

# Dorimcheon(Sillim) Valley Trail

This trail lets you immerse yourself in urban nature and features a cool, refreshing setting, making it an ideal choice for hot days. The babbling sound of the stream along the shaded trail adds a sense of freshness, and the walk wends past water play areas, lake parks, and other natural rest spots helping relieve tiredness.

Total travel distance: **3.4 km** Average travel time: **1 hours 15 minutes** Difficulty: **easy**



## SPOT



①

Red Clay Trail

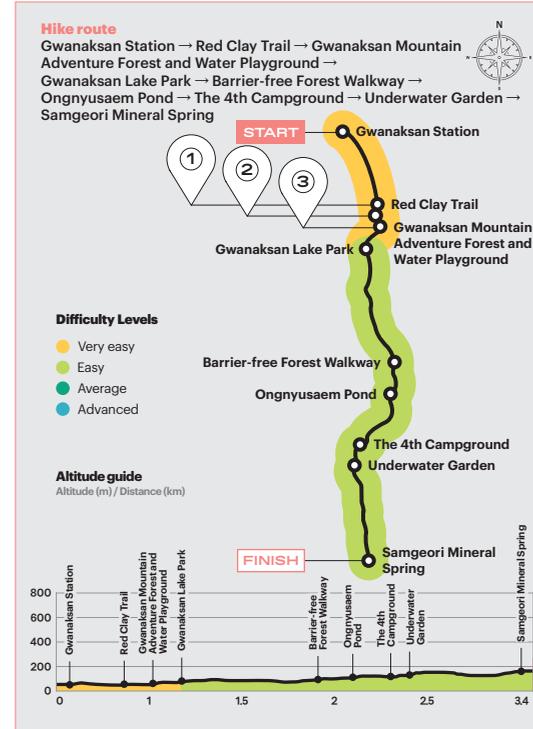
In September 2024, Gwanak-gu fully opened its newly established red clay walking trails across 11 parks and green spaces to enhance residents' overall health. The largest among them is the Sillimgyegok Valley District red clay path adjacent to a valley and a water play area, transformed into a cool, pleasant haven for relaxation.

②

Sillimgyegok Valley

Created in the natural learning area at the entrance of Gwanaksan Park, this 70-meter-long valley water park is an ideal spot for a break with children. Cool, shady trees shelter outdoor decks and canopies, with temporary changing rooms, dust-off stations, restrooms, and safety management office also in place to ensure comfort.

## COURSE MAP



## INFORMATION

### About the trail

- The trail consists mostly of flat paths and gentle inclines, making it accessible for people of all ages. From the barrier-free forest walkway's observatory, you can also admire a sweeping view of central Seoul.

### Shelter and hiking tips

- The right-hand side of the path leading from Gwanaksangyegok Camping Forest and the 4th campground to Samgeori Mineral Spring has a wide platform and a picnic area, providing an excellent spot for a break close to nature.

### Transportation

- Exit 1 of Gwanaksan Station puts you right at the entrance to the hiking trail.

### More info

- Each adventure trail in the Adventure Forest lasts 80 minutes per session, with 3 sessions offered daily. Guests under 139 cm in height, pregnant women, and the elderly are not allowed to participate. To join, you can either register online via the Seoul Metropolitan Government's Reservation for Public Service website (yeyak.seoul.go.kr) or sign up on-site.

③

Gwanaksan Mountain Adventure Forest



Developed by the Seoul Metropolitan Government within Gwanaksan Mountain, this special woodland adventure area is a forest leisure sports facility where you can engage in thrilling activities surrounded by nature. Its offerings range from beginner-friendly practice trails to more daring trails, allowing visitors to commune with nature as they savor adrenaline-charged experiences.

A path connecting Seoul's past and present.

# Seoul Dulle-gil Trail 12

Seoul Dulle-gil Trail 12 beginning from Gwanaksan Station and passing through the Tomb of Yun Gil, Hoapsa Temple, Hoamsan Waterfall, and Hoamsan Forest Park is a fascinating trail that is ideal for exploring cultural heritage with mythology, feng shui, and history as themes. It is relatively easy to access, making it suitable for families as well.

Total travel distance: **7.3 km** Average travel time: **3 hours 30 minutes** Difficulty: **average**



SPOT



①

Samseongsan Holy Ground

This is the resting place of the relics of Laurent-Joseph-Marius Imbert (the second Bishop of the Joseon Diocese), Pierre-Philibert Maubant, and Jacques-Honoré Chastan, all of whom were martyred during the Catholic Persecution of 1839. Its well-maintained walking paths connect to the hiking trails, and the area offers a serene, contemplative atmosphere.



②

Hoapsa Temple

Hoapsa Temple is a venerable monastery whose history is intertwined with the very founding of the Joseon Dynasty. Legend has it that it was established to subdue the formidable tiger energy emanating from Samseongsan Mountain as the royal palace (Gyeongbokgung Palace) was being constructed in the newly founded capital of Hanyang (Seoul). It is both a place of profound Buddhist practice and a site of great geomantic significance.



③

Hoamsan Jannamu Forest Park

This natural retreat lies tucked behind Hoapsa Temple Abundant in phytoncides and negative ions, it remains free from gnats and mosquitoes even at the height of summer to ensure a comfortably refreshing forest bathing experience. The Hoamsan Waterfall and Hoam Neulsol-gil (Forest Trail) connect here as well, making it a delightful place for a leisurely stroll.

**About the trail**

- Starting from Gwanaksan Station and passing through Dorimcheon Valley, the beginning of the route will see you immersed in a setting of serene nature. After passing the Tomb of Yun Gil, the trail continues with a gentle uphill path and a well-maintained forest trail leading to Hoapsa Temple to allow for a leisurely hike.

**Shelter and hiking tips**

- The scenic Hoamsan Waterfall makes for a great resting place during your hike, with the pine forest bath helping relieve fatigue through the effects of phytoncides.

**Transportation**

- Once you are at the waterwheel crossroads, take the path to the right.

**More info**

- As a principal center of Buddhist dissemination in southwestern Seoul, Hoapsa Temple hosts the "Hoamsan Temple Culture & Forest Trail Walking Festival" every autumn for the citizens of Seoul. A variety of programs await festivalgoers, including celebratory performances, forest walks, Hoapsa photo exhibition, photo zone activities, and traditional cultural experience booths.

# A Moment to Recharge Your Urban Spirit

Gwanaksan Mountain's charming valleys, rugged cliffs, and array of trails to suit every skill level captivate hikers of all kinds. After savoring the summit's sweeping views, descend toward the university district where the energy of youth intersects with the soul of an older city. Here in these vibrant alleys, you can immerse yourself in a unique cultural atmosphere that enriches the lingering afterglow of your hike.

## Gwanaksan: Two-day itinerary

**1:00 p.m.** After descending, enjoy a light lunch at Sillim-dong Sundae Town - 1.6km (6 minutes by car) → **2:20 p.m.** Tour the Horim Museum Sillim Main Hall - travel 4.1 km (15 minutes by car) → **4:30 p.m.** Stroll around Sharosu-gil and spend a tranquil afternoon at the Bookduckbang book café - 1.4 km (6 minutes by car or 14 minutes on foot) → **6:30 p.m.** Enjoy assorted Korean pancakes and a glass of makgeolli at Bonjujeon - 3.4km (10 minutes by car) → **7:30 p.m.** Wrap up the day at The Leap Seoul Sadang

The Cityscape as Viewed from Gwanaksan Mountain

## If you wish to focus on yourself amidst a silent forest

### Yeonjuam Hermitage

Perched atop the southern cliff of Yeonjubong Peak, Gwanaksan Mountain's highest peak, Yeonjuam Hermitage is a thousand-year-old temple said to have been founded by the monk Uisang in the 17th year of Silla's King Munmu (677 AD) and a key junction connecting all trails of Gwanaksan Mountain. Amidst its exquisite scenery, the hermitage offers temple stay programs that allow visitors to set aside worldly worries and find inner peace momentarily. Options include interactive programs where you can join in chanting services and meditation, as well as more restful stays where you can simply remain in quiet contemplation. Every Wednesday, a single-day program featuring midday meal offering and tea time with monks is also held.

📍 63 Jahadong-gil, Gwacheon-si, Gyeonggi-do  
☎ 82-2-504-3234



### Gwanaksan Healing Center

Nestled within the Gwanaksan Urban Nature Park, the Gwanaksan Healing Center offers a unique sanctuary where you can escape the city's hustle and bustle and restore both body and soul. Here, you can sense the forest's vitality and bond with nature through healing forest trail programs that encourage a wholesome, rejuvenating respite. Tailored healing sessions cater to various ages and needs: the "Vibrant Junior Healing Forest" for teens stressed from academic pursuits; the "Gwanaksan Healing Forest Package" for adults seeking well-being; and the "Barrier-Free Healing Forest" sensory program for individuals with disabilities. Everyone can find a special moment of restoration here.

📍 128 Gwanaksannadeul-gil, Gwanak-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-70-8869-9500  
🕒 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., closed Mondays



### Nakseongdae Park

Nakseongdae Park is a place at the heart of Seoul where you can step back in time and feel the pulse of history. Built around the birthplace of renowned Goryeo Dynasty general Gang Gam-chan, this historical park is a hidden gem where past and present coexist in harmony. Inside, you will find a statue commemorating the general's achievements along with walking paths, pond, and pavilions that allow you to savor nature's serenity fully. After finishing the 3-kilometer trail lined with birch, pine, oak, and aspen trees, you will experience an encompassing sense of peace gently settling in as nature's silence soothes the spirit.

📍 77 Nakseongdae-ro, Gwanak-gu, Seoul ☎ 82-2-879-6524



## An alley culture tour brimming with youthful energy



### Bookduckbang

Nestled along Sharosu-gil, Bookduckbang is a charming book cafe that serves as a gentle haven for those who cherish reading and reflection. Its soft lighting, whimsical decor, and lush greenery craft a cozy environment, ideal for settling in with a book or setting your mind at ease in quiet contemplation. Another one of its charms is that it lets you savor coffee and other drinks together with simple toast treats. Room 201 welcomes walk-ins, whereas Room 202 operates on a reservation-only basis. Because the closing days and operating hours frequently change, we recommend checking their Instagram (@bookduckbang) before visiting the place.

📍 Room 201, 2nd Floor, 544-1 Bongcheon-ro, Gwanak-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-0507-1346-7236  
🕒 12:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m., closed Tuesdays



### Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies at Seoul National University

Established in 1776 by King Jeongjo, Kyujanggak Library served as the Joseon's royal library and a scholarly research center, playing a pivotal role in nurturing scholarship and culture. Today, it resides on Seoul National University's Gwanak Campus, continuing its mission to study and preserve Korea's traditional knowledge heritage. The Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies holds precious ancient manuscripts, books, and numerous records from the Joseon era. In particular, visitors can encounter documents inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register such as the Ilseongnok and the Seungjeongwon Ilgi, reflecting King Jeongjo's reformist spirit. Regular special exhibitions offer immersive scholarly journeys to allow for deeper exploration of intellectual history.

📍 B1, Building 103, Seoul National University, 1 Gwanak-ro, Gwanak-gu, Seoul ☎ 82-2-880-6030  
🕒 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., closed on weekends, public holidays, and October 15 (Seoul National University Foundation Day)



### Seoul Museum of Art, Namseoul Branch

Within a historic stone building oozing with historic charm, Namseoul Branch of Seoul Museum of Art presents a broad spectrum of contemporary art's allure. Built in 1905 and a former Belgian Consulate, the building combines historical significance and aesthetic beauty. Its long corridor flanked by exhibition halls arranged freely on either side hosts inventive and experimental displays appealing to a wide range of visitors. Observing art against the backdrop of this elegant architectural style upgrades the cultural experience to new levels.

📍 2076 Nambusunhwan-ro, Gwanak-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-2-2124-8800  
🕒 10:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m. on weekdays, 10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. on weekends and holidays, closed every Monday and on January 1.

### Sillim Main Hall of Horim Museum

Nestled amidst a quiet residential area cleared of urban noise, the Horim Museum's Sillim Main Hall is a haven where you can encounter the timeless beauty of Korea's traditional culture. Founded in 1982 with artifacts collected by Horim Yoon Jang-seop, it now houses over 19,000 cultural treasures including ceramics, metal crafts, and calligraphic paintings. Beyond permanent relic displays, a diverse range of special exhibits lets you explore the depths of Korean art. Seasonal shows and lectures further enrich your appreciation of Korea's artistic heritage.

📍 53 Nambusunhwan-ro 152-gil, Gwanak-gu, Seoul  
☎ 82-2-858-2500  
🕒 10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. on Tue.–Fri. (closed on Saturdays, Sundays, Mondays, public holidays, Labor Day, last admission at 17:00)



### Sharosu-gil

Sharosu-gil, which branches out from Seoul National University Station, is a newly emerging hot spot where every narrow lane is brimming with its own unique charm. As suggested by its name, which combines "Seoul National University" and "Garosu-gil," this street fuses collegiate vitality with trendy flair. Here, you will find countless international eateries, soulful cafes, and delightful boutiques tucked closely together. This is a former traditional marketplace where remnants of old shops add a nostalgic, retro vibe. It is an ideal spot for celebrating a special occasion or simply savoring a moment of everyday relaxation.

📍 Around Gwanak-ro 14-gil, Gwanak-gu, Seoul



### Seoul Convergence Science Education Institute

The Seoul Convergence Science Education Institute is an engaging space designed to spark scientific curiosity and foster creativity. Here, visitors of all ages can naturally learn scientific principles as if playing a game thanks to interactive exhibits in the nature observation garden complete with science play area, ecological learning zones, crop gardens, and flower gardens featuring 21 hands-on displays. Particularly popular in the flagship Science Play Area is water-based interactive learning. Within the research and experiment building, visitors can grasp the principles behind exhibits like the Foucault pendulum and admire aquatic plants like iris and lotus in the central garden.

📍 101 Nakseongdae-ro, Gwanak-gu, Seoul ☎ 82-2-881-3000  
🕒 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. (closed Mondays, public holidays, on rainy days, and during winter months (Dec–Mar))

## Quaint eateries that evoke fond memories



### Sillim-dong Sundae Town

In the Sillim-dong area, an array of eateries specializing in sundae (Korean blood sausage) and makchang (grilled entrails) makes for a veritable paradise for sundae enthusiasts. Stuffed with fresh ingredients and secret seasonings, these sundae dishes deliver a gourmet delight beyond comparison. Their menu features white sundae, sundae gopchang (tripe), sundae soup, and sundae stir-fry, among others. Another allure is that they stay open late into the night. It is perfect for a late-night snack, or for simply quelling your hunger with a hearty bowl of sundae.

📍 14 Sillim-ro 59-gil, Gwanak-gu, Seoul



### Bonguijeon

After a hike, if the thought of savory, aromatic bindaetteok (mung bean pancakes) paired with a chilled glass of makgeolli makes your mouth water, Bonguijeon is the place to be. Steeped in history, this traditional eatery boasts of profound flavors. Here, you can enjoy a variety of classic Korean side dishes together with bindaetteok. Its assorted jeon platter—featuring chili pepper jeon, perilla leaf jeon, pollock jeon, and zucchini jeon—is a crowd favorite. Pairing them with spicy whelk salad or acorn jelly enhances the experience even further. You can even sample premium Haechang makgeolli here as another compelling reason to stop by.

📍 1F, 473-5 Bongcheon-ro, Gwanak-gu, Seoul  
 ☎ 2:00 p.m.–1:00 a.m. on weekdays,  
 1:00 p.m.–1:00 a.m. on weekends



### Jean Boulangerie Main Branch at Nakseongdae

Counted among Seoul's top five bakeries, the Jean Boulangerie Main Branch at Nakseongdae has delighted locals and hikers alike for nearly three decades since 1996. From the moment you step inside, the sweet aroma of baked goods envelops you. While its nostalgic Mammoth Bread and red bean buns are the best-known favorites, treats like cream cheese buns and chocolate-laden breads have also remained well-loved for their wonderful taste and affordable prices. Note that Mammoth bread is baked on a set schedule and limited to one per person. For the best chance at snagging one, time your visit to the bakery's baking schedule.

📍 8 Nakseongdaeyeok-gil, Gwanak-gu, Seoul  
 ☎ 7:00 a.m.–10:00 p.m. (closed on major holidays and the following day)

## Urban Healing Spaces to Melt Away Your Hiking Fatigue



### The Leap Seoul Sadang

This urban spa hotel is an ideal refuge to soothe your weary body and mind before or after hiking Gwanaksan. A special indulgence here is the half-body soak enjoyed against a backdrop of dazzling city lights seen through the hotel's expansive floor-to-ceiling windows. Its tasteful interior design and "small luxury" ethos have made it a renowned "staycation" destination, especially popular among the Generation Z seeking instagrammable accommodations. Its prime location offers easy access to Gwanaksan's trailheads and proximity to Sadang Station, making it highly convenient. With numerous restaurants and cafes nearby, it is perfect for a leisurely meal after your hike.

📍 66 Namhyeon 1-gil, Gwanak-gu, Seoul  
 ☎ 82-0507-1308-5801  
 ☎ Check-in 15:00, Check-out 11:00



### Gwanaksangyegok Camping Ground

If you long to spend a night surrounded by the gentle sound of crystal-clear mountain streams, the Gwanaksangyegok Camping Ground is an excellent choice. Outfitted with water play area, adventure forest for kids, and public restrooms, it generally serves as a daytime rest area. From June through September, however, it transforms into a seasonal overnight forest experience program. Participants can engage in various activities including observing endangered species and taking nighttime forest walks. Since cooking is not allowed, you must bring your own meals. Reservations are made on a first-come, first-served basis at the Seoul Metropolitan Government's Reservation for Public Service website (yeyak.seoul.go.kr).

📍 205-1 Sillim-dong, Gwanak-gu, Seoul ☎ 82-2-879-6514  
 ☎ Check-in 15:00, Check-out 11:00  
 (Open seasonally between June and September)

### Bongcheonyeonga

As a stylishly designed, ingeniously space-efficient standalone tiny guesthouse, Bongcheonyeonga has garnered fame through TV broadcasts and magazines. From its lounge to its bedrooms, terrace, and rooftop, it offers complete private space perfect for a quiet family retreat or a private party among friends. Amenities like projector, beanbag sofas, and camping tent provide various relaxation options, with the rooftop inviting you to have some leisurely, urban healing time. A kitchen equipped with induction stove, ample utensils, and capsule coffee machine allows for simple cooking or hosting a small gathering.

📍 26-1 Euncheon-ro 33-gil, Gwanak-gu, Seoul  
 ☎ Check-in 15:00, Check-out 11:00



# Hechi, a Royal Symbol of the Joseon Dynasty

From a geomantic perspective, the Joseon royal court regarded Gwanaksan Mountain as a “fire mountain,” prompting them to place symbolic guardians throughout the palace to prevent fires. Among them, the Hechi installed at Gwanghwamun Gate—the main gate of Gyeongbokgung Palace—not only suppressed fiery energy but also became a trademark of Joseon’s pursuit of a Confucian state.

Written by: Kim Yong-deok (Chief Researcher, Korea Traditional Art Institute)



Hechi depicted in “Sancal Tuhui” (Illustrations of the Three Powers), Ming Dynasty China, 1609

## What Kind of Creature is the Hechi?

Said to have appeared as far back as the legendary reigns of Yao and Shun in ancient China, the Hechi has long been regarded as a sacred, divine creature. In ancient texts like the “Yiwu Zhi (Record of Foreign Matters)” and “Lunheng (Discourses Weighed in the Balance),” it is described as “a single-horned sheep with a loyal nature, capable of discerning right from wrong, and ramming those who speak falsehoods.” With its power to distinguish good from evil, the Hechi served as a guide for rulers and officials in making the right decisions. In China’s Chu Dynasty, judges wore hats adorned with a Hechi emblem. In Joseon, the Saheonbu—an institution analogous to the modern prosecutor’s office—embroidered a Hechi on their official robes to encourage righteous governance. Thus, the Hechi came to represent the Confucian ideals of upright politics and moral virtue.

“Gwanaksan Mountain, when viewed from the capital, was believed to resemble the shape of fire and, from the perspective of Feng Shui, was thought to bring fiery misfortune. To ward off this fiery threat, Hechi (mythical guardian creatures) were placed in front of the entrances of major facilities within the capital.”



## The Newly Created Joseon-Style Hechi

After Gyeongbokgung Palace was destroyed in the Imjin War and lay in ruins for 270 years, it was rebuilt in 1867 by Heungseon Daewongun, the father of King Gojong. The Gwanghwamun Hechi statues were also created during this period, designed under the supervision of Lee Se-ok, the foremost sculptor of the time. The Gwanghwamun Hechi statues, instead of depicting the creature as a one-horned sheep, take the form of a lion as an unprecedented example in East Asian cultural history. In both China and Korea, the lion—a Buddhist symbol—traditionally guarded the entrances of sacred spaces. Striving to reconstruct an ideal Confucian nation, Heungseon Daewongun followed the tradition of having a lion guard the entrance, yet named it Hechi to embody Confucian principles; thus creating something entirely new. A lion-like Hechi could guard the palace gates while symbolizing the Confucian identity of Joseon—an ingenious innovation that killed two birds with one stone.

## The Fire-suppressing Hechi of Joseon

Today, we often hear that the Hechi symbolizes water and serves to pacify Gwanaksan Mountain, which is believed to harbor fiery energy. No ancient record supports this notion, however. The Hechi’s reputed ability to quell fire emerged anew during Gyeongbokgung Palace’s reconstruction. When Gyeongbokgung Palace—which was destroyed by fire—was being rebuilt, numerous blazes occurred, and people believed that Gwanaksan Mountain was summoning these fires. Although various water-related symbols were placed inside the palace, it was futile if the fiery energy was not blocked at the entrance. Thus, the Hechi guarding Gwanghwamun Gate was tasked with containing the fire, effectively sealing it off at the source. This way, the Hechi of Gyeongbokgung Palace came to represent Confucian Joseon as well as serve as a steadfast guardian suppressing destructive flames. Today, the Hechi you encounter at Gwanghwamun Gate and throughout the palace are purely Joseon-style creations unique to the royal family of that era.

# Trail Difficulties at a Glance

Mountain	Trail	Average travel time	Total travel distance	Difficulty
Bukhansan Mountain	1. Baegundae-Ui Gugok Trail	4 hours 20 minutes	9.98 km	Advanced
	2. Bukhansanseong-Daenamun Trail	4 hours 10 minutes	10.2 km	Advanced
	3. Samobawi-Bibong Trail	3 hours	6 km	Average
	4. Samcheonsa Trail	2 hours 40 minutes	7.33 km	Advanced
	5. Complete Tour of 12 Bukhansanseong Gates	6 hours	14.4 km	Advanced
	6. Dobongsan-Sinseonda Trail	2 hours 30 minutes	6.3 km	Advanced
	7. Dobongsan Main Ridge Trail	6 hours	9.32 km	Advanced
	8. Bukhansan Dulle-gil: Uiryong-gil	2 hours	6.42 km	Easy
Inwangsan Mountain	1. Seonbawi Trail	1 hours 10 minutes	1.84 km	Average
	2. Seoul City Wall (Hanyangdoseong) Trail	2 hours 10 minutes	4.1 km	Average
	3. Hongjimun Gate-Tangchundaeseong Fortress Trail	1 hours 20 minutes	2 km	Average
	4. Buam-dong Trail	2 hours 10 minutes	3.36 km	Average
	5. Inwangsan Jarak-gil Trail	1 hours 10 minutes	2.73 km	Easy
	6. Inwangsan Forest Trail	1 hours 30 minutes	2.9 km	Average
	7. Inwangsan Dulle-gil Trail: Seodaemun Section	2 hours	3.43 km	Average
	8. Inwangsan Dulle-gil Trail: Jongno Section	3 hours 10 minutes	5.71 km	Average

There are lots of things to consider to ensure you enjoy a safe hike, from choosing the right destination to preparing appropriate gear and assessing your level of fitness. Please make sure you understand the distinctive features unique to each hiking spot, and select a trail and difficulty level that perfectly suits you.



Mountain	Trail	Average travel time	Total travel distance	Difficulty
Bugaksan Mountain	1. Changuimun-Baegakmaru Trail	1 hours 30 minutes	3.32 km	Average
	2. Cheong Wa Dae-Samcheong Park Trail	1 hours 50 minutes	5 km	Average
	3. Cheong Wa Dae Observatory-Chunchugwan Trail	50 minutes	2.18 km	Average
	4. Changuimun-Hyehwamun Trail	2 hours 10 minutes	5 km	Average
	5. Changuimun Gate-Malbawi Rock Trail	1 hours 50 minutes	4 km	Average
	6. Yeoraesa Temple-Hogyeongam Rock Trail	1 hours 30 minutes	2.48 km	Average
	7. Bugak Haneul-gil Trails	2 hours 50 minutes	9 km	Average
	8. Baeksasil Valley-Seonggyungwan Trail	2 hours	6.14 km	Average
Gwanaksan Mountain	1. Yeonjuda A Trail	1 hours 30 minutes	2 km	Average
	2. Yeonjuda B Valley Trail	2 hours 30 minutes	4.7 km	Average
	3. Jaunam Ridge Trail	2 hours 30 minutes	4.3 km	Advanced
	4. Hakbawi Ridge Trail	3 hours 30 minutes	6 km	Advanced
	5. Dolsan Trail	45 minutes	1.5 km	Average
	6. Samseongsan Trail	2 hours 30 minutes	4.7 km	Average
	7. Dorimcheon(Sillim) Valley Trail	1 hours 15 minutes	3.4 km	Easy
	8. Seoul Dulle-gil Trail 12	3 hours 30 minutes	7.3 km	Average

# Seasonal Tips for Safe Hiking

Mountain conditions in Korea change drastically from season to season and have their fair share of deep ravines, loose boulders, and other hazards.

This accentuates the importance of being properly prepared—and dressed—for the journey.

Written by Albert Lee (president, Mountain Journal)

©Jung Jong-won

Winter in Bukhansan Mountain ©Lee Young-jun



## Attire

Hiking wear is important for two reasons: energy conservation and regulation of body temperature. Sweat-wicking, fast-drying, and waterproof fabrics are most preferred as they allow maintenance of body temperature amid temperature fluctuations on a mountain. Make sure to wear layers (innerwear, insulating layer, and outerwear), adding and removing layers as needed. Removing layers before breaking a sweat and adding them before feeling cold is a sure-fire approach. Be aware that hypothermia is a real danger on mountains, even in summer.



## Hiking boots

Hiking boots are roughly classified as light or heavy depending on use but for the rocky mountains around Seoul, the sole matters most. "Ridge shoes" with isobutylene isoprene rubber soles provide the best grip. Because substantial portions of Korea's mountains are solid granite, domestically made hiking shoes designed specifically for Korea's mountains provide better grip than multi-terrain imports. The right-size shoes will let the toes wiggle when worn over thick socks.



## Backpack

Legs do most of the work when hiking, but hands are essential for support at steeper sections. All belongings should be in a backpack, one with a 20- to 30-liter capacity for a one-day hike. Simple is best, as in avoid bags with too many outer pockets and ornaments. A backpack should contain survival items such as water, lanterns, clothes, food, and first-aid kit.



## Food

Hiking is an energy-intensive outdoor activity, so eating right is crucial. A day of hiking will burn twice the calories than that on a typical day, and one's diet must provide this energy.

So pack hiking food that is

- ▶ light and compact,
- ▶ quick and simple to prepare,
- ▶ resistant to spoilage and creates little waste,
- ▶ energy dense and easily digestible,
- ▶ properly packaged for transport, and most importantly to your taste.

Winter hiking is even more demanding and requires a high-calorie, carbohydrate-rich packed lunch. Food spoils easily in the summer, so snacks with low-moisture content that will not spoil are the best.



## Seasonal preparation

Certain seasons require better equipment. Even during spring in the city, winter lingers on the north face of a mountain. So bring crampons, hiking sticks, and plenty of warm layers in early spring and late fall. Summer hiking means lots of sweat and the potential for sudden downpours, so a change of clothes in a waterproof pack is a must.

## Seasonal hiking tips

### Spring

Hiking during the spring thaw from March is the most difficult and requires the most preparation. Conditions can vary wildly depending on if a section of the trail receives sunlight. Hard-soled winter hiking shoes, crampons, windbreakers, and well-insulated clothing are essential. Bring headlamps in a backpack, as spring weather can be fickle and hikers often fail to descend by sundown. Because of the hazard of falling rocks during the spring thaw, it's best to choose a course wisely with safety as the top priority.

### Summer

Summer and the vacation season bring many hikers out to the mountains, but this is also when many related accidents occur. Korean summers are prone to torrential rain and lightning strikes, so hikers must exercise caution. Stay away from mountain streams and valleys in heavy rain. Waterproofing is crucial in summer, and all equipment and supplies should be individually packed in watertight containers. Wearing the proper clothing is also important for maintaining body temperature. Many hikers suffer hypothermia by standing in the wind after a downpour. Wear a hat with a large brim to avoid heatstroke under the beating sun and bring plenty of drinking water.

### Fall

In fall, the weather can change in the blink of an eye. Typhoons are not uncommon and the sun begins to set earlier. Even amid still hot temperatures in September, properly insulated clothes are a must. Gloves and padded hats are recommended in late fall, and a good idea is to start and end a hike earlier than in spring and summer.

### Winter

Staying warm is the most important task when hiking during winter. Staying dry is the first step in avoiding hypothermia. Evaporating sweat robs the body of heat, so properly maintaining core body temperature when resting is the key to safe winter hiking. Remove layers before getting too hot and add layers before feeling cold. Wearing multiple layers of clothing is important as a thick parka over thin innerwear simply cannot maintain proper body temperature.

# Eco-friendly 'Clean Hiking'

Written by Lee Yeong-joon (president, Mountain Journal)



"Leave no trace" is a fundamental rule of hiking. Hiking is enjoyed on mountains and in forests, meaning this activity is only possible if the mountains and forests are preserved. So every hiker must take play a leading role in environmental preservation. This attitude dates back to the concept of "outdoor citizenship" proclaimed in 1876 by the Appalachian Mountain Club of the US. Climbers at Yosemite National Park in the 1960s embarked on a "Clean Climbing" campaign, urging hikers to leave nothing on the rocks. The International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation (UIAA) followed suit with the Kathmandu Declaration of 1980 and Tyrol Declaration of 2002, building a global consensus that environmental protection on

mountains should go beyond simply leaving no traces and include respecting all nature, people, and culture associated with mountains. In Korea, mountaineers have continued nature protection efforts since the 1978 Nature Protection Charter of the Korean Alpine Club. Today, plogging, or the practice of picking up trash while hiking, is a new trend among young hikers. Guidelines and instructions are being developed for hikers and mountaineers to monitor the many signs of climate change apparent on the mountains to further reduce carbon footprints left by humans. The seven practices proposed by the UIAA's "Respect the Mountains" campaign are as follows.

## RESPECT MOUNTAINS

### BOOK SMART

Why not explore a lesser-known mountain resort or range and travel there during low or off-season? This will have less impact on mountains during peak season.

### TRAVEL WISE

Carbon emissions begin the moment people leave home. Make it a habit to use public transportation or ride a bicycle.

### SUPPORT

Seek and support sustainable businesses for mountain tourism.



### BE RESPECTFUL

Attitudes toward mountains and other hikers reflect those toward their values and culture. Always treat people with respect.

### LEAVE NO TRACE

Remember that garbage thrown away on mountains negatively impacts the plants and wildlife there and always returns down valleys and streams.

### RRR&U

Practice the three "R's" and U: Reduce impact, reuse items, recycle what cannot be reused, and upcycle.

### SPREAD THE WORD

Promote these guidelines to everyone who loves mountains.



Seoul Hiking Tourism  
Instagram  
[@seoulhikingtourism\\_official](https://www.instagram.com/seoulhikingtourism_official)



Seoul Hiking Tourism  
Homepage  
[www.seoulhiking.or.kr](http://www.seoulhiking.or.kr)

