

THIS IS WHO WE ARE

Formerly, Korea was a unified nation but after the Second World War it was occupied by the Soviet Union and the United States. The so-called allied armies who had won the war decided to separate Korea into two independent states with different political systems. This division still exists today: the Southern part is the Republic of Korea with a democratic system. The Northern part is the so-called Democratic People's Republic of Korea controlled by a socialistic party.

About 48 million people live in South Korea. It is one of the most densely populated regions in the world. The capital of South Korea is Seoul with about 10 million inhabitants. South Korea is in a temperate zone, which means that it has four seasons. The landscape is mostly dominated by mountains. The highest mountain is Hallasan with a height of around 1950 meters on the island of Jeju.



Skyline of Seoul
(Picture: Flickr/Bcody80)



Mountain Hallasan
(Picture: Flickr/KipJones)

THIS IS HOW WE LIVE



The Korean New Year known as “**Seollal**” is the first day of the lunar calendar and an important holiday in South Korea. Usually it is held in January or February and lasts for three days. It is a family holiday. Many South Koreans come together to visit their ancestor’s graves and perform the ancestral ritual known as charye offering food, fruits, and wine, and finally take bows in front of the food. Young people show respect to older people with a bow, which is called “**Sebae**”. For this occasion, many South Koreans dress up in the traditional, colourful hanbok.



Children at Seollal
Picture: Flickr/catimagee



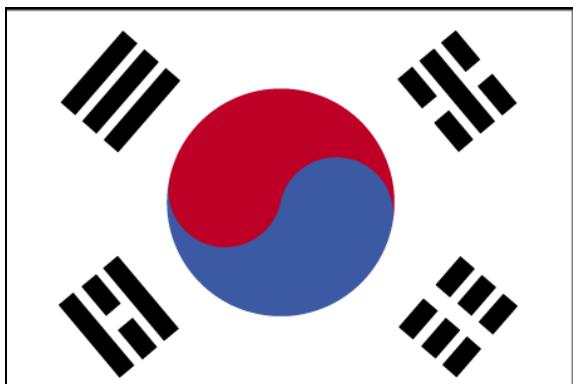
Traditional women's hanbok
Picture: Wikipedia/CaspianBlue



Traditional hanboks
Picture: Flickr/taiyu

THIS IS HOW WE LIVE

The national flag of South Korea is called “Taegeukgi”. On a white background (white is the traditional colour of the Korean nation) you will find a red and blue symbol in the centre, the T'aeguk. It represents the two poles of the universe, similar to the yin yang symbol. In addition, there are four signs in the corners symbolizing the four universal elements: Heaven (☰), Earth(☷), Fire (☲) and Water(☵).



Experiment with coloured flowers

The colours on the flag of Korea are white, blue and red. With an easy experiment you can create a “Korean-Colour-Flower”!

What you need:

White flower (i.e. lily, pink, rose)
 Blue and red ink
 Water

Take two glasses of water. Put red ink in one glass, and blue ink in the other. Cut the stem of a white flower lengthwise with a knife. Put one end of the stem into the glass with red water and the other end into the glass with blue water. After a while you will observe that the flower dyes red on one side and blue on the other. This is because little pipes in the stem, called vascular system, transport the water to the blossom. Then, the water dries up and the colour remains.





THIS IS OUR SCHOOL

In South Korea school attendance is obligatory for 9 years. In Korean culture, education is the key to success in life. Therefore, many parents will make tremendous (also financial) sacrifices to let their children get the best education possible. For example, many parents choose to send their children to additional private educational institutions called *hagwon* after school. Due to these additional activities children sometimes return home very late.

Hangeul is the Korean writing system. Similar to the Latin alphabet each individual symbol represents a sound and not a whole word or idea as the Chinese characters do. Hangeul has 24 characters and is written from left to right. But the composition of characters is different from the ones in the Roman alphabet: instead of each symbol being written next to each other on the same horizontal line, the letters are combined together into syllable blocks:

저는



Activity: Meet a friend from Korea!

If you meet somebody in Korea you say “Annyong haseyo” which means “Hello”. And this is how it’s written in Hangeul:

안녕하세요

Now try to present yourself introducing your name:

“My name is _____” in Korean is “Chonun _____ imnida”. Maybe you want to try to write it in Korean:

저는 _____ 입니다.

THIS IS OUR FAVOURITE DISH

One of the most typical and unique dishes in Korea is “Kimchi”. It comes as a side dish and is a kind of pickled, spicy Chinese cabbage. It is said that the name “Kimchi” originates from the word “shimchae”, which means salting of vegetable. There are a lot of different versions and recipes for preparing Kimchi. You can even have it on pizza!



Recipe for traditional Kimchi

What you need:

Chinese cabbage, sliced radishes, garlic, red chilli powder, scallions, salt



(Picture: Flickr/Emily Barney)

For the filling:

Cut the radishes and scallions into pieces and mix them with minced garlic and red chilli powder.



(Picture: Flickr/Emily Barney)

Then wash the cabbage and cut it in half. Now salt it and leave it in water for one night. The next day you rinse it and drain the rest of water away.



Picture: Flickr/tentakelsalat



Picture: Flickr/gwenwasley



Picture: Flickr/gwenwasley

Now you can place the prepared stuffing between the cabbage leaves. At the end wrap the whole cabbage with the outermost leave.



Picture: Flickr/emily barney

Then the Kimchi has to ferment for 1 to 2 weeks.



Picture: Flickr/gwenwasley

THIS IS OUR FAVOURITE DISH



Recipe for Rice Cake

What you need:

1/2 cup glutinous rice flour, 1/2 tsp. salt, 2
1/2 cup water

1/2 cup sugar, 1 knob ginger, raisins, pine
nuts, 1 apple, 1 plum, 1 peach



Rice Cake
(Picture: Wikipedia/lesterhead)

Mix rice flour and salt with hot water and knead it into a soft dough. Divide the dough into pieces, add pine nuts and raisins. Shape the pieces into round balls.

Boil the balls in hot water and rinse them with cold water afterwards.

Syrup

Boil water with sugar and ginger to create a syrup and let it cool down. After that, remove the ginger. Slice the fruits into bite-sized pieces.

Put the fruit and rice balls into a bowl and pour the syrup on top.



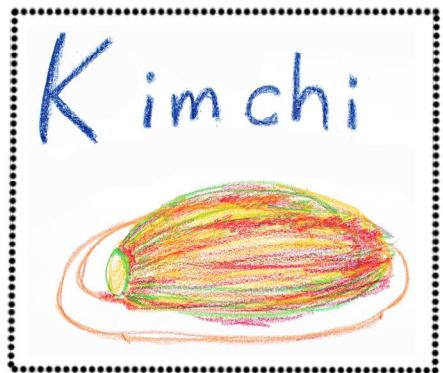
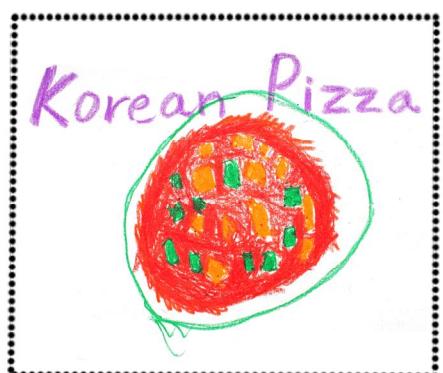
Activity: Korean Memory

Korea is famous for Ginseng, a slow-growing plant. Its roots are used for activating and improving the memory. How fit is your memory? With this game you can test it!

Game Instructions:

Cut all the pictures out and stick them on cardboard pieces of the same size. Put all cards with the pictures facing down on a table and mix them up. "Memory" is a card game for two players. On each turn, a player turns over two cards (one at a time) and keeps them if they match. If they successfully match, that player also gets to take another turn. When a player turns over two cards that do not match, those cards are turned face down again and it becomes the next player's turn. The player with the most pairs of cards wins.





THIS IS OUR FAVOURITE GAME

Respect is very important in Taekwondo: Every fight has to begin with a bow and the salutation of the combatant.

In Taekwondo you are not only supposed to train your body skills but also to train your mind. There are 5 aims to train your mind:

INTEGRITY - be honest in word and deed

MODESTY - be humble and respectful

PERSEVERANCE - be patient and keep trying

SELF-CONTROL - be in control of your mind and your body

INDOMITABLE SPIRIT - have a positive spirit that remains focused and cannot be defeated



Picture: Flickr



Picture: Flickr/Ted Abbott

THIS IS OUR FAVOURITE SONG

A traditional genre of South Korean music is Pansori. It is a vocal and percussion music performed by one sorikkun (a singer) and one gosu (a drummer playing a barrel drum called buk). The lyrics tell one of five different stories. But the story is individualized by each performer telling jokes and involving the audience.



Picture: Wikipedia/Steve46814

A more modern and very popular variety of music in South Korea is the so-called K-pop (Korean-pop). It is similar to English pop music with influences of R&B, Hip-Hop, Electronic and Dance. K-pop became popular beyond the borders of South Korea: its artists and groups are popular all over Asia.

Gyuri-Kim and her friends perform:

A tadpole song

*Tadpole in the brook
Swimming in the brook
Wriggle wriggle swimming in the brook*

*Hind legs out, fore legs out
Hopping hopping turn into a frog
Wriggle wriggle wriggle*

*Wriggle wriggle tadpole in the brook
Hind legs out, fore legs out
Hopping hopping turn into a frog*