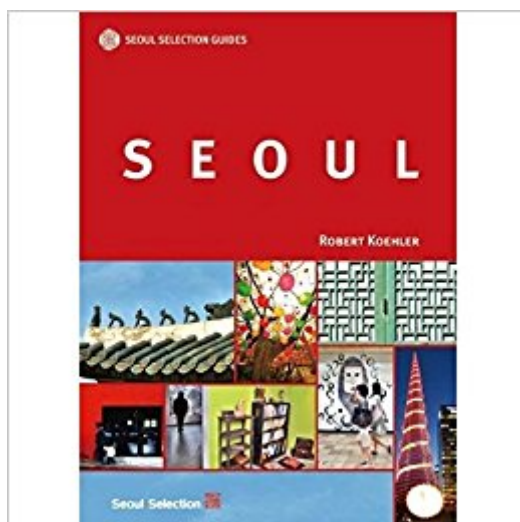


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Seoul (Seoul Selection Guides)



Synopsis

Korea's capital for the last 600 years, Seoul is an energetic, pulsating city where the ancient and modern coexist in dramatic contrast. With its grand royal palaces, quaint old alleyways, ancient temples, colorful markets, neon shopping districts, and verdant mountains, you'll never run out of things to see and do. The most comprehensive guidebook to the city of Seoul ever released, *Seoul Selection* contains 464 pages of in-depth travel information, helpful tips, background information on culture and history, detailed maps, and beautiful photographs. Making full use of Seoul Selection's vast knowledge of the city, the guidebook is perfect not only for tourists visiting Seoul on holiday, but also for veterans of the metropolis looking for a deeper understanding of its history and culture.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Robert Koehler is a 34-year-old (as of 2009) executive editor of a Seoul-based culture and lifestyle magazine. A native Long Islander and a graduate of Georgetown University, Robert has lived in Korea since 1997, mostly as an English teacher, graduate student and newspaper translator. When he's not at work, Robert can usually be found at his home in Seoul's multicultural Itaewon neighborhood spending quality time with his loving wife Solongo or traveling around Korea snapping photos--he has a particular fondness for early-modern and colonial-era architecture.

There are pros and cons. Despite the cons, I would recommend this book because it comes packed

with wonderful information. Pros: -First part of the book contains information on places. Second part contains information on Seoul, getting around, some basic vocabulary and phrases. -Has a general map of Seoul with general locations and landmarks at the beginning. There are smaller maps throughout the book that cover those areas in more detail. -Includes a subway map. -Lots of details about the many of the bigger, main areas of interest. Includes historical tidbits and background information to give you a better idea if the place is worth visiting. -Lots of hidden finds as well. One of my favorites was Sungkyunkwan University, which doesn't even show up in TripAdvisor. -Separate Seoul's Best lists for history, the arts, scenic spots, things to eat, shopping, and things to do are great to help prioritize what you want to do. Cons: -General map should be pull out map. I couldn't see the middle because it's caught in the binding and while trying to read the middle, I loosened the pages. I can see the map now but have to be careful about not letting it fall out of the book. -I was disappointed in the lack of reference to the Hallyu/Kpop/KDrama scene. Some locations are mentioned, like COEX Mall, without referring to anything Kpop. The official Seoul tourist websites themselves put a lot of emphasis on their Hallyu industry and so see a Seoul guide book just completely ignore it was unexpected.

I just returned from a trip to Seoul, and I'd recommend this guide with some caveats. The best aspect of this book is its thorough description of different neighborhoods in Seoul with pictures that help give a flavor of different parts of the city. Maps are overall helpful (more on Seoul maps below) and I appreciated the "best of" lists at the beginning of the book. This is the best guidebook for Seoul based on my experience with other other Seoul travel guides (Lonely Planet, Moon) that other family members purchased, none of which came even close in terms of the depth found in Koehler's guide. However, as much as I enjoyed reading Koehler's guide, the practicality of the book is a problem. First, before I left, I reviewed the language section with a Korean-speaking coworker, and she was not impressed. Although the book provided "useful expressions," saying them was another problem as the author did not describe how to pronounce different vowel combinations or consonants used in the romanization of hangeul. Second, the book lacks logistic details. For example, hotel descriptions were weak and details regarding visiting the DMZ were lacking compared to other guidebooks. I'd refer to other guidebooks or the internet to plan the logistics of your travel. Third, although Koehler provides "best of" lists, I don't think he was critical enough about his description of things to see or do in Seoul that you felt you could prioritize neighborhoods or sightseeing locales. As much as his book has a lot of depth, you may not have a great idea of what to do or see first beyond the "best of" lists provided by the author. Finally, let's talk about food. For

many foreigners, their major entry into Korean culture is through food, and I know for me, I was excited about trying authentic cuisine. I would've greatly appreciated a list of recommended restaurants and tourist traps to avoid. The book provides a description of different types of Korean cooking, but there was no recommendation for places to try these foods. Sadly, I went to the concierge at my hotel instead. I know my list of caveats is not short, but this is simply the best book out there on Seoul. If you are bilingual, I recommend you look into other, Asian guidebooks. I'd look into a Japanese guidebook, for example, as there seems to be more Japanese travelers to Korea than from other English-speaking countries. My recommendations: 1. Korea House. Very entertaining dancing and performances, but don't eat there. The food was overpriced and frankly not very good. My sister picked up a useful pamphlet here, too, which had some helpful recommendations for major neighborhoods. 2. Take the USO tour of the DMZ. Probably the most relevant part of my trip. You leave with a sense of shock over the sophomoric behavior of North Korea (really, competing flag poles?) and the very real and palpable tension between the two countries in a small confined space. Be sure to plan ahead. You'll need at least 48 hours to schedule a spot on the tour and there is a dress code. 3. Eat Korean BBQ at Samwon Garden. I couldn't stop eating! They cook the beef over red-hot wood right at your table with a ton of condiments. A note on maps of Seoul: Most books and pamphlets about Seoul use the same map, including Koehler's book, which consists of a combination of traditional map and cartoon drawings of different important landmarks and shopping/eating spots. Be warned: many streets aren't named and only major streets are shown. Overall, however, the maps were helpful.

Dear Lord, now I want to go to Seoul, shop 'til I drop and try some rather yummy sounding doggy stew. The food in general does sound wonderful, especially if you like things spicy.

This book is amazing. The amount of information it contains is great, and the all color manual truly shows the beauty of Seoul. One of my favorite parts are the beautiful, easy to read color maps. But besides the usual travel destinations nicely outlined, it goes out of its way to also introduce many other aspects such as a whole section on Korean Food. I am a foodie, and I found this section very nice with great pictures. I also enjoyed that they mentioned theater performances, and the non-verbal ones mentioned looked especially interesting. I thought Seoul would be just a bustling metropolis, but this book showed me that there is much, much more to Seoul. In summary, you will not be disappointed with this book. I wish all travel guides were this good. I can't wait for my trip to Seoul!

If you plan on taking a vacation to Seoul, South Korea anytime soon, you NEED to invest in this book!!!! This book tells you all about popular touristy places, such as history, opening/closing times, cost for the event, guided tours in whatever language you want, and neat little tidbits that a tour guide pamphlet won't tell you. Provides pictures, great restaurant information, cultural information, before you get to Korea helpful information, hotel stuff, maps, literally everything you would need! I believe it also has common translation phrases too!! This book is so helpful that even my Korean friend, who grew up in Seoul, bought it!! She actually recommended it to me! I did notice that you can buy this same book in Korea, at the Gyeongbokgung palace, in the museum, but they charge somewhere like 60,000won for it, so roughly \$60USD...but I bought it on for roughly \$20 :)

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