

MAY 23 - MAY 30/31 2020

Leica North Korea Photography Tour

A special on-tour Leica photographic workshop

Visit North Korea with Jeroen Hanselaer, a Leica-approved instructor, on this special 7-night tour

From 3,449 EUR per person

Overall

This North Korea photography tour is designed to give photographers the best chance to snap the best North Korea photos to show off.

With special permissions from North Korea, Koryo Tours brings you this exclusive, one-of-a-kind tour of the DPRK. This photography tour gives us special access to certain sites, extra time at monuments, and a specifically designed itinerary to capture the best North Korea photos, making sure we're catching the sunset from high up whilst it's hitting Pyongyang, and visiting rural locations whilst the Koreans are hard at work. All this, whilst being accompanied by a professional Leica approved photography instructor.

As well as allowing you to get the best pictures of North Korea, we will also spend our days visiting all of the main sites and learning about this unique country whilst accompanied by our North Korean and Western guides.

During the day, you will have Jeroen Hanselaer, our Leica approved instructor, to guide you and help you to get the best shots. Unlike many other tours, a lot of the time on this tour will be spent walking and not in a bus, ensuring you get the best photographs whilst exploring Pyongyang on foot. Evenings will be spent with relaxed photography consultations run by Jeroen with special access to slide-show equipment. Each participant of the tour is invited to show the best snaps of the day, and our professional photography instructor Jeroen will give tailored advice on how you can improve your photography skills throughout the tour.

We will also have access to Leica cameras during our time on the tour, so it is a great opportunity for you to have a go yourself on the Leica equipment.

Whether your interest lies in industrial, landscapes, architecture, everyday life, or portraits, this tour caters for all. The dystopian-style architecture in Pyongyang is surreal and unique and our centrally located hotel will allow you to capture the best that the city has to offer. Trips outside of the city to co-operative farms, factories, and the North Korean countryside offer a completely different insight into this mysterious country.

This tour is capped at 13 people maximum, in a group tour with other budding photographers. This allows more freedom when taking pictures and a better chance to get the perfect photos of North Korea.

Highlights

- Joined on tour by a Leica Photographic instructor as well as one of our experienced western tour leaders
- Extended visits to allow time for photography
- Full metro tour
- Walking tours of Pyongyang
- Extended visits to cooperative farms

Itinerary

Briefing Day – May 22 | Friday

AM

The recommended latest arrival in Beijing.

PM

Our group assembles for a mandatory pre-tour group briefing in Beijing in the afternoon - This briefing will last approximately one hour and is designed so that you will get the most out of your tour. It will cover travel etiquette, safety, and practicalities for travel in the DPRK. Have your last minute questions answered and meet your fellow travelers and photography enthusiasts! Please be punctual - you can come early, pay any outstanding tour fees and browse our collection of Korean art.

The photographic workshop begins - We will have a workshop from Jeroen Hansler, our Leica approved instructor and brand ambassador, followed by a review of a selection of your photographs so you can make sure to get the best North Korean photos from the very beginning of the tour!

Overnight | Hotel in Beijing not included in the tour. Contact us for recommendations near our office



Day 1 – May 23 | Saturday

Arrival Day in Pyongyang

AM

Free bus from the Koryo Tours office to Beijing Capital Airport Terminal 2. Exact time TBC at the pre-tour briefing. Alternatively, meet the group at the Air Koryo check-in counter.

PM

Flight departure from Beijing on Air Koryo flight JS152 at 1:05 pm. A 1.5-hour flight with basic lunch.

Arrival to Pyongyang's Sunan International Airport (FNJ) expected at 4:05 pm. DPRK immigration and customs meet your Korean guides and transfer to the city.

Arch of Triumph | Our first stop as we head into the photogenic city of Pyongyang, this massive archway made for the 70th anniversary of the birth of President Kim Il Sung in 1982 and commemorating the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonial rule in 1945. Larger than its counterpart in Paris. From here we gain views over the surrounding park, Kim Il Sung Stadium and other areas of the city. From atop this great vantage point, we can set up cameras as we wait for the changing light offered at sunset.

Screening of Comrade Kim Goes Flying, a DPRK film about a young rural coal miner, Kim Yong Mi, who dreams of becoming a trapeze artist at the Pyongyang Circus. Her plans are complicated by the arrogant trapeze star Pak Jang Phil who believes miners belong underground and not in the air. North Korea's movie about a young woman achieving her dreams. Produced and directed by a British, Belgian, and Korean team. The film is 78 minutes long and will be shown at the Pyongyang International House of Cinema, a short distance from our hotel. Comrade Kim Goes Flying Overnight | Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang. Home away from home for most (but not all!) foreign visitors to Pyongyang, this 47-story hotel is located on an island in the middle of the Taedong River and offers great views of the city, perfect for those North Korean photos! Comfortable rooms and comprehensive leisure facilities: swimming pool, spa, billiards, bowling, gift shops, tea houses, and beer brewed on-site. This hotel offers great vantage points overlooking the city. From most rooms, you will be able to capture pictures from the morning sunrise transition and the old and new apartment blocks that surround us.

Day 2 - May 24 | Sunday

Pyongyang city tour

AM

Early morning walking to Kim Il Sung Square via Pyongyang railway station | This morning we depart our hotel early before breakfast walking via Pyongyang railway station to Kim Il Sung Square. This early morning walk offers us views through downtown Pyongyang and capture the lives of the locals on their day off, whilst also giving us an opportunity to photograph some of the older building synonymous with any visit. We will stop for breakfast at the Viennese coffee shop, where we will have time to set up cameras for more pictures of the center of the city. Kim Il Sung Square | Pyongyang's central square lined with government ministries, museums, and The Grand People's Study House.

Foreign Languages Bookshop | Store selling Korean publications translated into English, German, French, Russian, Chinese, Spanish, and Arabic. No visit to Pyongyang is complete without a visit to this famous bookshop. Situated at a road crossing patrolled by the infamous Pyongyang traffic police, it is also great to capture the perfect picture of these iconic workers. We continue our walk crossing to the Mansudae Fountain Park from where we can continue to picture everyday life as well as some examples of Korean sculpture.

Mansudae Fountain Park | The historic center of Pyongyang popular with local citizens after school and on weekends. Flanked by examples of ancient and modern architecture from different eras.

As we approach lunchtime, we further our expedition through the streets of Pyongyang past some of the cities newer apartments, to our destination, the Okryugwan cold noodle restaurant. This restaurant located on the banks of the Taedong river not only offers visitors great views but delivers us the best cold noodles in the city. Often busy with locals, we may have a little wait before trying Pyongyang's signature dish.

PM

After our hearty lunch, we board our bus and drive to the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum and USS Pueblo. Here we have an extended visit taking time to photograph the military hardware, large statues, and the famous USS Pueblo. For our visit, we will be accompanied by a local Museum guide dressed in military clothing. She will be happy to allow time for some portraiture.

Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum | Tour this world-class museum led by a local museum guide. Renovated in 2012, it exhibits the Korean War from the DPRK perspective containing artifacts, documents, photos, and lifelike dioramas. The exterior grounds house the War Victory Monument and displays of Korean People's Army Hero Equipment and captured equipment from the US military, including the USS Pueblo. Central to the understanding of the country today and for many a highlight of the trip. When we leave the Museum we drive to Pyongyang central tram terminus from where we take a ride on one of the cities older Trams which will offer great photographic options as we pick our way through the streets at a local level.

Drive 2 ½ hours south along the 'Reunification Highway' to Kaesong, the ancient capital of the Koryo Dynasty (918-1392 AD) located near today's Korean Demilitarised Zone.

Overnight | Minsok Folk Hotel, Kaesong. Traditional style accommodation where guests sleep on heated floors in Korean style. Housed in beautiful courtyards of Kaesong's old city, structures date back to the Ri Dynasty. Basic bathroom facilities. Hot water not guaranteed and erratic electricity supply – please bring a torch.

Day 3 – May 25 | Monday

Visit DMZ and Kaesong

AM

After a morning photographing the beautiful hotel area we drive to visit the Panmunjom Truce Village and DMZ. In this area, photography is limited. Although, if the rules are followed there is still a great opportunity to get some great shots. Traveling in a small group also means a better chance of getting a photograph with a Korean military officer - the only place in North Korea this is possible.

Panmunjom Truce Village and DMZ | Located in the middle of the 4 km wide Demilitarised Zone, Panmunjom is the site of the signing of the 1953 armistice at the end of the Korean War. This is the only location where visitors can directly view soldiers from both sides and the demarcation line dividing Korea. On some days, it is possible to enter the hut straddling both Koreas and there cross temporarily into the south. After our visit to this strange and unusual area, we continue with a visit to Kaesong Koryo Museum. This interesting area is great for photographing ancient architecture. If we're lucky, we may get the chance to catch some local couples having their wedding photos taken.

Kaesong Koryo Museum | Once the Songgyung Academy, a Confucian school, and now a museum on the Koryo Dynasty exhibiting historical objects, statues, pagodas, and porcelain from that era. A UNESCO World Heritage Site perfect for North Korea photos.

Before lunch, we take another walk to build an appetite taking a look at some of Kaesong's older buildings.

Old City Walk and South Gate | A morning stroll through Kaesong's historic district lined with homes dating back to the Ri Dynasty to the city's historic South Gate.

Traditional Royal Korean Lunch (pangsanggi) | An incredibly photogenic meal made of 12 dishes served in brass bowls fit for the kings of old. Perfect for avid instagrammers, and tastes great too! The more dishes, the more distinguished the guest!

PM

Once lunch has finished, we start our drive returning to Pyongyang. On the way, we of course have some more photographic opportunities.

Pakyon Waterfall | Light walking in relaxing wooded area to a scenic waterfall. There are hiking trails of various lengths. Local people commonly visit here for picnics and sometimes bathing/swimming.

Gwanum Temple and Taehungsan Fortress | Located behind Pakyon Waterfalls this complex of mostly ruined buildings dates from more than a thousand years ago. Most of the temple remains intact since its last renovation in the 17th century

Return to Pyongyang via the Three-Charter of National Reunification Monument, the iconic arch over the Pyongyang-Kaesong Highway dedicated to a joint meeting between Koreas, north, and south. This monument is also known as the 'Arch of Reunification'.

Workshop after dinner. We gather together to view our photos from the days excitement and listen to instruction for the coming days.

Overnight | Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang.

Day 4 – May 26 | Tuesday
Industry and Iconic Culture

AM

Pyongyang Textile Factory and Dormitory.

Pyongyang Metro Tour (two-line ride) | One of the deepest metro systems in the world with stunning artwork reflecting the name of each station, you'll find it hard to put your cameras down. Ride both lines and stop off at smaller stations rarely visited by tourists. We visit all we can, making the most of our time here and getting some rare North Korea pictures.

PM

May Day Stadium this afternoon we tour the grounds and facilities of the world's largest stadiums. With a capacity of 150,000 and renovated in September 2014, it is used for all of the DPRK's major sporting events and in 2018 hosted the return of the Mass Games. Its grand architectural style lends itself to great photography.

Pyongyang International Football Academy only a short leap from the Mayday stadium, this is a Premier football school for young and promising athletes. We tour the facilities and learn about the history of football in the DPRK. It has multiple training pitches where you can see yourself against some students here.

This evening it's off to a different setting for dinner as we enjoy an exclusive meal on the Rainbow boat on the Taedong River. From here, we can also get some great night time city-scape shots.

Workshop after dinner - We gather together to view our photos from the days excitement and listen to instruction for the coming days.

Overnight | Yanggakdo International Hotel, Pyongyang.



Day 5 – May 27 | Wednesday
Hamhung

AM

Today it's off early as we start our drive to Hamhung. Hamhung together with its southern neighbor Hungnam make up the DPRK's second largest urban area by population. They are a major center of chemical industry, producing fertilizers and Vinalon, or 'Juche Fiber'. The twin cities were rebuilt after the Korean War with the assistance of East German architects and planners. This 6-hour drive will be broken with visits along the beautiful mountain road, perfect for photos of North Korea countryside.

Upon reaching Hamhung we make our visit to Hungnam Fertiliser Factory. This is a massive chemical-industrial plant producing various kinds of fertilizers. We will have a tour of the plant control room, production facilities, and packing

plant, where you will also be able to take photos. A perfect location for some industrial photography and if we're lucky some welcome portraiture photographs.

Home of Ri Song Gye | Home of the first king of the Ri Dynasty (1392-1910) who extinguished the Koryo Dynasty, only to be then ousted by his own son. This traditional style building is a peaceful place to brush up on history and catch some of those photos of traditional style buildings.

After dinner, electricity permitting, it's time to review those photos again!

Overnight | Majon Guesthouse, Hamhung. A beachside holiday compound with basic but comfortable chalets. Rooms have heated floors but no running water. There is a main building with restaurant, bar, billiards, table-tennis, bookshop, and Korean karaoke. Bring a torch!

Day 6 – May 28 | Thursday

Wonsan

AM

Today we head off for our adventure onwards to the coastal city of Wonsan which is home to the famous hot spring spa where we will spend the night to relax and recharge.

Wonsan is a crucial city on the east coast of the country. The least heavily industrial, but a key port and a city where the national government focuses efforts on leisure facilities and promoting the favorable location of the city between sea and mountains. On our journey, there are some stops to be made.

Tongbong Co-operative Farm is located on the outskirts of Hamhung offering visitors the chance to view some of the farm machinery, a local home, and even a local farm shop where visitors can buy some homemade products. From here, we can take photos of daily life and work on some portrait photos.

PM

Wonsan Agricultural University The DPRK's premier agricultural university set among beautiful hillside scenery. Tour the grounds and the neo-Romanesque teaching hall, originally built by Catholic monks living in the area in the early 20th century. Great not only for the architectural style, but it can offer some candid shots of its students.

Next stop, Wonsan City Centre and Docks Central square and ship terminal in downtown Wonsan. The Mangyongbong-92 ferry/cargo ship which one shuttled Koreans living in Japan back and forth across the East Sea of Korea is moored here.

Jangdok Island and Lighthouse Take a stroll on the breakwater to a small island in the middle of Wonsan harbor. Local fishermen flock to this area, feel free to chat with them along the way, and get some shots of the locals. We time our visit so as to stroll out at sunset, to catch our best chance of pictures as the sun lights this attractive sea resort.

Overnight | Dongmyong Hotel Waterfront, Wonsan. Hotel with stunning seaside views of Wonsan Harbor. Limited hours of hot water, bar, billiards, ping-pong, barber shop, beauty salon, dry-sauna.

Day 7 – May 29 | Friday

Wonsan and Pyongyang

AM

Chonsam-ri Co-operative Farm Learn about rural life at this farm specialising in rice and persimmons. Visit the cultural centre, farm house, and fish pond giving us another chance to photograph farming in North Korea.

The pace of the tour slows a little as we visit Sokwang Temple to view the remains of a Buddhist temple established dating back to the late-14th century and associated with the dream that predicted the fall of the Koryo Dynasty. A historic and haunting place set in a serene mountain valley with stream.

Return to Wonsan for lunch

PM

Afternoon drive back to Pyongyang via Masikrong

Visit Masik Pass Ski Resort in the winter its DPRK's largest ski resort. Opened in 2013, Masik Pass is also good for hiking in spring, summer, and autumn. We stop here for coffee on the way back to Pyongyang from Wonsan.

Tower of Juche Idea | Iconic tower on the Taedong River dedicated to the DPRK's guiding philosophy. Take the elevator to the top for great views of the city. Lift ticket paid on the spot (€).

Farewell dinner at Duck BBQ restaurant

Overnight | Yanggakdo Hotel, Pyongyang.

Day 8 – May 30 | Saturday

Train Return to Beijing

It's a relaxed start for us as we depart the captivating capital of Pyongyang for our return journey to Beijing. We travel via the train using soft-sleeper carriages (4 bunks per compartment with their own doors). The train journey takes 24 hours with a transfer at the city of Dandong.

As we travel you will still have time for a little more scenic countryside photography.

Overnight | On-train

Day 9 – May 31 | Sunday

Arrival into Beijing.

We should arrive into Beijing station at 08.34 AM and from there you are free to head to your accommodation or begin your journey home.

For those who wish to, there will be a final tour debrief and photo session at the Koryo office, we will have the opportunity to review a final selection of photos and ask any last minute questions.

Extras

Upgrade to your own room All hotel rooms on our all-inclusive group tours feature twin beds, and will be shared. If you'd like a room to yourself then you can upgrade for an extra 40 EUR per night.

Insurance (7 to 9 nights) We're unable to take you on one of our tours if you do not have medical insurance that covers the destination in question. Issues of isolation and infrastructure where we go mean it would be irresponsible of us to do so. We can provide this if you do not have it — or you can use your own.

What is / is not included?

INCLUDED

- Flight to Beijing – Pyongyang
- Train Return Pyongyang – Beijing (soft Sleeper)
- All meals on the tour apart from the meals on the train.
- Hotel accommodation
- Two local Korean guides, and a driver per group
- A Koryo Tours tour leader
- Leica Photographic instructor
- All transportation in the DPRK
- The shared use of three Leica cameras
- Evening instruction and talks
-

NOT INCLUDED

- DPRK visa fee 50 EUR
- Optional single room supplement of 40 EUR per night
- Tips for the local Korean guides and driver (approx 10-15 EUR per day)

- Optional activities such as the lift up the Juche Tower (5 EUR) or a visit to the funfair (approx. 2 EUR entrance fee per person)
- Entry tickets for special events if applicable – for example, Pyongyang Circus (approx. 20 EUR per person)
- Meals include a complimentary beer and water, but you will need to purchase extra drinks if needed
- Spending money for souvenirs

Notes

Groups will be in the experienced hands of two or three local Korean guides. Furthermore, for groups of 10 or more, a member of the Koryo Tours team will accompany the trip.

Please note that when on tour your day-to-day itinerary may differ slightly to what is advertised above. Your tour leader will ensure, however, that everything available at the time is covered, and replacement options are provided where needed. We will also add in extras when there is time (such as a visit to a local bar or amusement park). We visit the DPRK regularly so know all the best places to go, and how to make the most of your days there to guarantee the experience of a lifetime. After the tour, we will send out a list of all participants' emails, so you can keep in touch, swap photos etc. If you do not wish to be on this list then please let us know.

Visa Information

We arrange your North Korean visa as part of your tour package [+50 EUR]. However, given the tour starts and finishes in China you may also need to consider entry and exit procedures in China for your trip. This can be obtained at a Chinese embassy abroad. We recommend obtaining at least a double-entry Chinese visa for your trip.

Over 50 nationalities can obtain a visa-waiver for up to 144 hours when in transit through Beijing Capital Airport (PEK) using direct international flights. Most other nationalities can transit for up to 24 hours. If you don't want to visit China as part of your trip, this could be the easiest option for you. It is not possible to obtain a transit-waiver when using a train for entry or exit from China.

Please be sure to check your visa status for travel through China while planning your trip. We may be able to assist with Chinese visas. We can also provide documentation in support of visa applications upon payment of a tour deposit.