

SOUTH KOREA IN NEED TO PROMOTE INBOUND TOURISM



While many Asian countries have been enjoying the benefits of healthy tourism growth, South Korea lacks behind. The government is preparing specific plans to increase the number of foreign visitors and the profit they will generate.

Unlike Hong Kong, Singapore, or Thailand, South Korea has not gained a reputation of a frequented tourism destination. It is a prosperous country where most foreign visitors are business travelers who seek profitable deals rather than cultural experiences. **The current traffic is mostly generated by domestic visitors and tourists from nearby countries.** The country officials believe, however that with the right promotion campaign, tourism will boom in South Korea within a few years.

The government has been trying to promote the country's sense for sustainable tourism, environmental awareness, passion for design and art as well as nature and cultural heritage. **The capital Seoul remains the main magnet, especially after being appointed a 'Creative City for Design' by UNESCO earlier this year.**

Other appealing places of interest include Changdeokgung, a UNESCO World Heritage Site of a 15th century royal residence in Seoul. The Han River Renaissance Project aimed to improve the city's major waterways has been already studied by the United Nations World Tourism Organization. Visits to the Demilitarized Zone on the border with North Korea also appeal to many.

South Koreans are keen on hiking, it is one of their most favorite pastimes and there are plenty of suitable opportunities; Mount Seroak National Park is undoubtedly one of the highlights, with its many Buddhist hermitages and temples scattered around.

The new initiative aims to increase the number of foreign visits to 10 million per year. Since it started, the increase has become apparent, though South Korea has still a long way to go before taking full advantage of its potential.

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