

TOURISM BOOM IN SEOUL THANKS TO THE OSCAR-WINNER “PARASITE”



A bleak representation of reality that reveals deep social divide: Parasite, the South Korean film by director Bong Joon-ho, has been praised by everyone, from the Academy Awards – becoming the first film to receive both the Oscar for Best International Feature Film and Best Picture – to the public, who now make trips to Seoul in search of the locations.

It is true that the main locations were created in studios: both the house in which the wealthy Park family lives and the small semi-basement apartment (or ‘banjiha’), in which the Kim family struggles every day, are fabricated scenarios.

However, people can follow their tracks in other real places, from the supermarket where the plot begins at the pizzeria Age (which is actually named ‘Sky Pizza’) through the staircase that leads to the Park house or the tunnel in which the main characters take shelter in the middle of the storm.

The tourism boom after the film premiered inspired the opening of a route covering the main locations in Seoul. The local tourist authorities have created a route with mandatory stops in all these places, including a map and recommendations to follow in the footsteps of the characters that managed to win over critics and audiences.

The number of visitors has skyrocketed in such a way that even ‘Visit Seul’, the country’s official travel guide, has recommend “not disturbing the residents”.

Woori Mart

The location where the young Kim Ki-woo (played by Choi Woo-shik) receives the offer for the job as the English tutor of the Park’s daughter, the Woori supermarket, is actually the Doijissal Supermarket, located at 32 Songijeong-ro, Mapo-gu, in Seoul.

It is not hard nowadays to see tourists taking photos of the front and admiring the establishment shown in the film. Film fans can also visit the Trickeye Museum Seoul or the Oil Tank Culture Park, an old oil depot transformed into a public space of leisure and culture.

Stairs to the Park House

The stairs where the young daughter of the Kim family buys fruit to take back to the Park’s is also a real location. These stairs are very close to the Doijissal supermarket, in a quiet residential neighborhood in the Ki-taek area, where homes of diplomats, art galleries and coffee shops can be found. Just a few miles from the stairs, visitors can find the Korea Furniture Museum, Seosomun Historical Park and Songijeong Sports Park.

Jahamun Tunnel Stairs

A rainstorm forces the Park family to return earlier from their camping trip (and causes the Kim family to leave the house in a rush). The director chose the stairs leading to the Jahamun tunnel for

this scene to depict the class division of the neighborhoods both families live in.

There are also other interesting stops in the area, like the Gyeongbokgung Palace, the Seoul Museum of Art or the Yun Dong-Ju Literature Museum.

Pizza Age

The famous pizzeria shown in the film exists, although its real name is 'Sky Pizza'. It has been in the same location for 17 years and run by the same family. According to 'Visit Seoul', it was the very owners of the pizzeria who showed the actors how to fold pizza boxes and, in fact, the place now showcases a picture of the owner next to director Bong Joon-ho.

Bonus location

While this location is not mentioned in the official tour, it is also possible to visit the store in which Mrs. Park buys all kinds of goodies for her son's birthday party, where the final act takes place. This location is actually Orga Whole Foods, shown in the film under the same name, and sells organic and healthy foods.

Date: 2020-02-24

Article link: <https://www.tourism-review.com/south-korean-film-made-local-tourism-boom-news11405>