



LITTLE HOLIDAYS IN

Busan

SOUTH KOREA

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Quick facts

Essential information

- [General visa information for travel to South Korea](#)
- [Health information](#)

Emergency numbers

Fire, emergency, and ambulance	119
Police (Website)	112
Medical emergency – specifically for foreigners in Seoul	1339
Tourism and translation service	1330
Coast guard	122

Lost and found information – [report or search for a lost item](#)

Language

Languages: Korean, a bit of English in the cities

Helpful phrases

- Hello – an-nyeong-ha-se-yo / 안녕하세요
- Thank you – kam-sa-ham-ni-da / 감사합니다
- Excuse me / just a moment - jam-shi-man-yo / 잠시만요
- I'm sorry – chway-seong-ham-ni-da / 죄송합니다
- Cheers! – geonbae! / 건배!

Money matters

Currency: Korean won (KRW 10,000 ~ USD 8 ~ EUR 7.5)

Credit cards (Visa and MasterCard) are accepted in most stores and restaurants. Always choose to pay in KRW (the local currency) when prompted by the payment terminal.

Carry a bit of cash for smaller stores and markets. If you have a [Transferwise Borderless Card](#), you can withdraw with minimal conversion fees and minimal ATM fees from South Korea's major banks (ex. DBG Financial Group, Korea Development Bank).

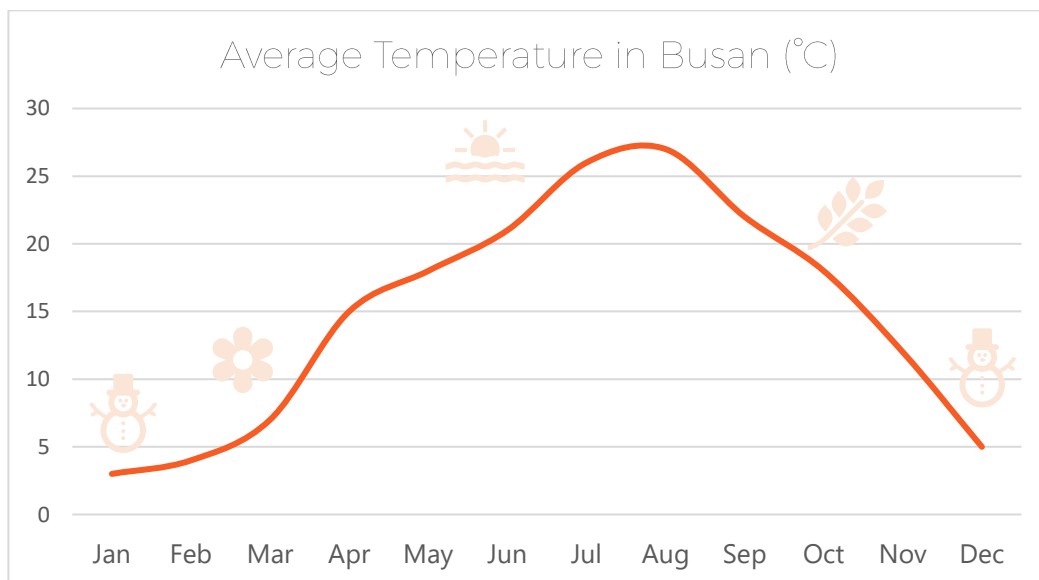
When to go

Busan is best enjoyed outdoors, so go when the weather is beautiful. **August and September** are the peak months to swim in Busan, so make sure to reserve your hotels in advance if you plan to visit during these months.

October and November are fall months with mild weather and beautiful fall foliage towards the end of October. Busan's temperature can go from 0-10 C during the winter months (December to February).

By March, it starts to get warmer, and by April temperatures rise to 10-18 C. The end of March to the beginning of April is a great time to go to Busan to see the cherry blossoms and other early spring flowers in full bloom.

From April to June, you can experience mild spring and early summer weather, perfect for walking and sightseeing. By July, it's warm enough on some days to swim in Busan's white sand beaches (22-27 C) though you can expect plenty of rainy days as well.



Events and activities

[Here's a complete list of events in Busan.](#)

MAY

[Haeundae Sand
Festival](#)

JULY

[Port Festival](#)

AUGUST

[Sea Festival](#)
[KIMA Week](#)

SEPTEMBER

Sea Art Festival

OCTOBER

[International Film
Festival](#)

DECEMBER

[Fireworks Festival](#)

Sample itineraries

▶ 3 days

Day 1: Go to Taejongdae for stunning views of the sea and a picturesque hiking trail. Enjoy a seafood meal by the beach before you go, then drop by Nampo district for some shopping and sightseeing.

Day 2: For an artsy morning, head over to the Gamcheon Cultural Village. Have your fill of street art, museums, and markets, and enjoy the view in one of the overlooking cafés. In the afternoon, head to Gwangalli Beach and watch as the sun sets and the Gwangandaegyo bridge lights up.

Day 3: Spend a whole day chilling in South Korea's most beautiful beach – Haeundae Beach. For lunch, walk to Dalmaji Road for picturesque views and great food.



Walk along the colorful streets of the **Gamcheon Cultural Village**



Take a road trip to **Gyeongju**, South Korea's ancient capital.

► 5 days

Days 1-3 as above

Day 4: Get a rental car (or join a day tour) and head to Gyeongju, South Korea's ancient capital. See the remnants of the ancient Kingdom of Silla and some of the best Buddhist art in the Far East.

Day 5: Head to Geoje Island and spend a day enjoying nature. Stroll on acupuncture pebbles by the beach, visit a marine botanical garden, and enjoy a magnificent sunset to end the day.

Typical costs

	BUDGET	COMFORT	SPLURGE
	₩16,000/night Blue Backpackers Hostel	₩85,000/night Gwangan Hound Hotel	₩540,000/night Park Hyatt
	₩20,000 Street food at Jagalchi market	₩30,000 Anga	₩200,000 Mugunghwa
	₩1,500 One ride on the Busan subway	₩95,000/day Rental car	₩360,000/day Car with chauffeur
	FREE ACTIVITIES	₩42,000 Busan day tour	₩85,000 Oedo island day tour

Getting there

By plane

Busan has its own international airport, the Gimhae International Airport

[Check flights to Busan](#)

By train

If you're coming from elsewhere in South Korea, you can take the train to and from Busan. The [Korea Train Express](#) (or KTX) is South Korea's high-speed rail system and can bring you from Seoul to Busan in just 2.5 hours.

If you plan to city-hop and move around every 1-2 days, you'd want to get a [Korea Rail Pass](#) for unlimited rides and massive savings.

From Gimhae airport to the city

By LRT and subway – From the airport, look for signs and walk towards the **Light Rail Transit (LRT)**. Buy a new transportation card from the vending machine and make sure to load it up. Depending on where you're going, you can switch to the subway either in Daejeo or Sasang. Here's an [interactive route planner](#) to help you get around Busan using the subway.

By taxi – Look for the taxi stands outside the Domestic Terminal.

By private transfer – The private transfer service can accommodate groups of up to 7 (van), 15 (minibus), and 30 (big bus).

**Book a transfer from the
airport to your hotel**

Where to stay

Busan is easily explored by car or public transportation, so you can choose one base for your stay. **Seomyeon** is the most central location and is great for sight-seeing and exploring most of Busan, while **Haeundae** and **Gwangsan** are ideal locations if you plan to spend a lot of time at the beach. If your main activity will be shopping and food-tripping, though, best to stay in **Nampo**.

Seomyeon

If you want to experience the most of Busan, stay in Seomyeon. It's a vibrant district with plenty of shopping and dining options, plus easy access to the rest of the city.

- [Arban Hotel](#)
- [Lotte Hotel](#)

Haeundae

If you're looking to chill at the beach, stay in Haeundae. This is where you'll find Busan's most beautiful white sand beach. It's also the place to look for a luxurious stay in the city.

- [Westin Chosun](#)
- [Mipo Oceanside Hotel](#)

Gwangan

If you love the beach but want to keep it low-key, stay in Gwangan. Think of it as a mid-range Haeundae, with more affordable hotels, a wider range of dining and drinking options, and a lot closer to the city center. It's a great base if you want the best of the sea and the bustling city.

- [**Hound Hotel Gwangan**](#)
- [**Wood House**](#)

Nampo

If you're in Busan to shop and eat, stay in Nampo. This district is filled with stores from fashion and beauty brands, as well as a tasty street food scene. If you're looking for Seoul's Myeong-dong in Busan, this is it.

- [**Boutique Hotel YTT**](#)
- [**Central Park Hotel**](#)

Renting a car

Requirements

- **Age** – To rent a car, you must be at least 21 years old and have held your local license for 1 year. If you're under 25, rental car companies may add a young driver surcharge.
- **License** – If you plan to drive in South Korea for a short time as a tourist (less than one year), a valid International Driving Permit (IDP) accompanied by your valid local driver's license is enough. Note that the IDP is only valid when accompanied by a valid local license, so make sure to bring both. IDPs recognized in South Korea are only those issued by member states of the [Geneva convention](#) or the [Vienna convention](#).
- **Other documents** – Have your passport and a credit card under your name when picking up the rental car. They might authorize a deposit on your credit card to cover for any damages.

Renting a car

- **Reserve online** - Make sure to reserve your car online in advance. If you're flying into Gimhae airport, you can get your car from there.

Rental cars in Busan

Other car hire locations in South Korea

- **Get a comprehensive car hire insurance** – For total peace of mind, get a [comprehensive personal car hire insurance](#) that will cover for damages and theft.

Get a rental car insurance

- **Add-ons** – A GPS unit and child seats can be added to your reservation if needed.
- **One-way rentals** – Some rental car companies in South Korea allow domestic one-way rentals for an extra free. This means you can pick up your car from one city and drop it off in another.

Costs – 3-day road trip (2022 prices and estimates)

- **Rental car** – A 5-seat sedan ranges from USD 200-250 for 3 days.
- **Gas** – Estimating 600 kilometers over 3 days, gasoline could cost you up to USD 70.
- **Tolls** – Toll fees are minimal and depend on the road used and distance. Even driving long distances, you won't spend more than USD 30 for the whole trip.
- **Parking** – Rates vary from USD 0.5-3 in tourist destinations. Parking in cities can be more expensive, up to USD 5/hour.

Road rules and safety

Emergency numbers

- 119 – fire, emergency, and ambulance
- 112 – police

South Korea drives on the right side of the road.

Usual speed limits

- Expressways – 100-120 km/hr (60-75 miles/hr)
- Open roads – 80 km/hr (50 miles/hr)
- City – 60-80 km/hr (37-50 miles/hr)

Things to watch out for

- Don't drink and/or use mobile devices while driving.
- Wear a seatbelt at all times.
- Use hazard lights to alert drivers behind you when making a hard brake
- CCTVs are everywhere – if you commit a traffic violation, your rental agency will charge your credit card

Navigating

Useful apps

- [Naver](#)
- [Waze](#)
- [Maps.me](#)

Connectivity

- [4G WiFi](#)
- [LTE SIM card](#)

Using Korean GPS

1. On the main interface, click the tab that says: 길찾기 (Translation: Get directions)
2. Select the phone icon: 전화번호검색 (Translation: Search phone number)

3. Key in the destination phone number
4. Confirm your destination by pressing this button:
바로탐색 (Translation: Quick navigation)
5. Wait for your route then press the button to begin driving: 안내시작 (Translation: Guide start)

Resources

- [**Complete guide to driving in South Korea**](#)
- [**RentalCars**](#) – Online rental car booking platform
- [**Comprehensive car hire insurance**](#)

Transportation options

Local transportation

Busan's subway system is efficient and a great way to go around the city. Get a transportation card (like T-money, Hanaro, or Cashbee) from a convenience store and load it up. Then you just need to tap in and out, then reload the card if it runs out. Here's a [route planner](#) to help you plan your trip using Busan's subway.

Car charter

If you're traveling with a group or want to sightsee around Busan efficiently, you'd want to get a chauffeured car for a day or two to bring you to Busan's best landmarks. It's a comfortable and convenient way to go around the city, without having to worry about finding your way around. [Here's one you can book online in advance.](#)

Tours and activities

[Busan East Coast Cultural Day Tour](#)

This tour covers Busan's top tourist landmarks in one action-packed day. From Gamcheon's colorful murals to the breathtaking Songdo Skywalk, the stunning Haedong Yonggungsa Temple, and Taejongdae's dramatic terrains, you'll spend the day exploring and understanding Busan's charms.

[Busan night tour](#)

Busan comes alive at night when the city lights up. This night tour brings you to Busan's best illumination spots. If you want to practice your night photography and get some gorgeous shots, go on this [night photography tour](#) instead.

[Busan Air Cruise cable car ride](#)

This thrilling cable car ride takes you across the stunning Songdo Beach and give you a unique view of Busan. You'll see some of the city's most iconic landmarks from above, including Namhang Bridge and Songo Coastal Dulle Road. Ride early if you want to explore the island or later in the day to enjoy the sunset.

Wi-Fi and SIM cards

Wi-Fi device

- [4G WiFi](#)

LTE data SIM cards

- [LTE SIM card](#)

Map

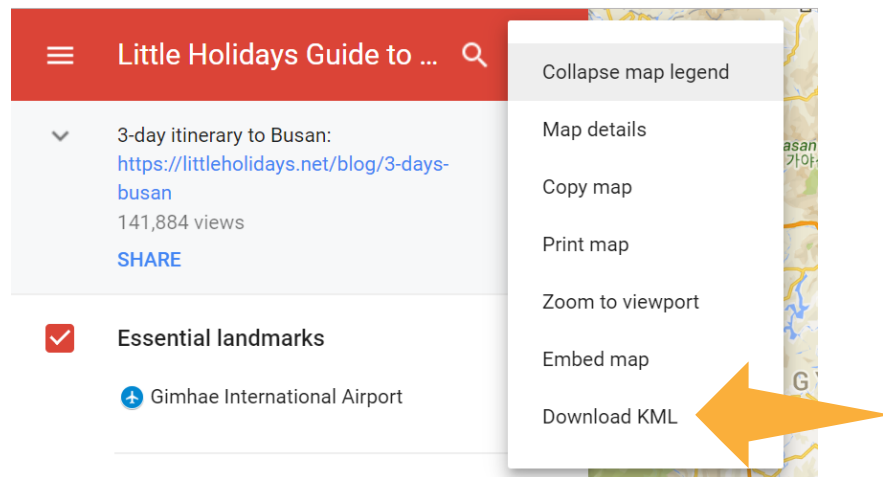
Use this [Google Map](#) to get around and plan your trip.



Take note that Google maps won't give you driving routes in South Korea – you'll have to use an alternative map like Naver or Waze.

To get an offline version of this map –

1. Download maps.me to your phone
2. Open the [Google map \(click\)](#) on your desktop web browser
3. Click on the **⋮** icon on the right side of the map name
4. Select **Download KML**



5. Export as KML
6. Send the file to your mobile via email or messaging app
7. Open the KML file using maps.me
8. Download the South Korea map on maps.me when prompted while you have an internet connection
9. You'll then be able to use maps.me offline – you'll find this Busan map saved in your **Bookmarks**

Where to go

Taejongdae Recreation Area

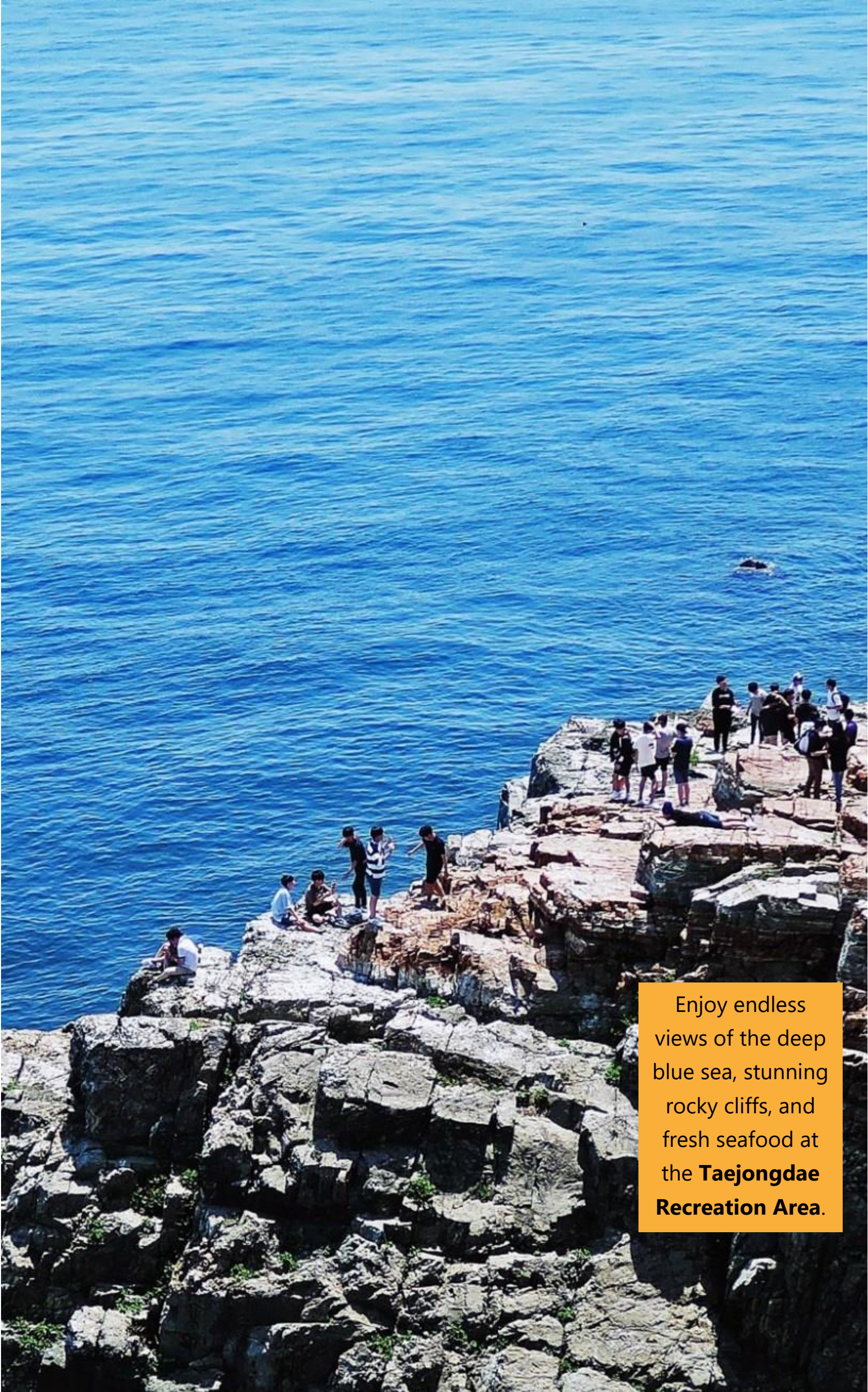
Taejongdae is a sprawling park with walking trails and fantastic vistas. It's a great first stop in discovering Busan's natural landscapes.

Walk along the trail and make your way to the lighthouse and on to the cliffs (be careful when taking your selfies!), then visit the temple on your way down.

INSIDER TIP: Be sure to walk down the alley to the left as soon as you exit the park. It leads to a pebble beach with a row of beachside shacks, where you are in for one of the most fantastic seafood meals you'll have on this trip. (I marked the spot Taejongdae Clam Tents in the Google map.)

GETTING THERE: There are buses to the Taejongdae Cliff Bus Stop coming from Nampo Subway Station and Busan Station – look for bus numbers 8, 30, 88, or 101.

From Busan station, take exit number 7, walk straight to the third bus stop, and take Bus 101. Travel time is about 45 minutes. You can get back to Busan or Nampo station via the same buses (8, 30, 88, 101).



Enjoy endless views of the deep blue sea, stunning rocky cliffs, and fresh seafood at the **Taejongdae Recreation Area**.

Nampo-dong and Jagalchi Market

Nampo-dong is Busan's central commercial and shopping district. You'll find long streets of shops and stalls selling pretty much everything: electronics, skincare products and cosmetics, clothes and fashion items, and lots of street food.

After shopping, hop over to the nearby Jagalchi Fish Market for street food and seafood.

GETTING THERE: Make your way to the Nampo station along Subway Line 1. If you're driving, you can park at the Lotte Department Store (Gwangbok Branch), and it's just a short walk to Nampo.

Dive into Busan's local cuisine and street food scene at **Nampo** and **Jagalchi Market**.



Gamcheon Cultural Village

The Gamcheon Culture Village is built on a hill and filled with maze-like alleys and views of the sea and the city below.

Take half a day to explore Gamcheon leisurely. You'll find modern art installations at every turn with plenty of photo opportunities. If you love collecting printed artworks or sending artsy postcards, Gamcheon is the best place in Busan to pick these up.

INSIDER TIP: If you don't mind walking, walk back down to the subway station as the road to the village is charming and photogenic as well. You'll be able to pass through the lower villages where you can find wet markets and get a glimpse of how the village looked like before the art explosion.

GETTING THERE: From Toseong Station along Busan Subway Line 1, take Exit 6, then take the local bus Saha 1-1, Seogu 2, or Seogu 2-2 to Gamcheon Elementary School Bus Stop.

Alternatively, you can go to Goejeong Station also on Busan Subway Line 1, take Exit 6, and local bus Sakha 1 or Sakha 1-1 to Gamcheon Elementary School Bus Stop.



The **Gamcheon Cultural Village** is filled with maze-like alleys, colorful houses, art shops, and cafes with fantastic views.

Gwangalli Beach

Gwangalli Beach is the perfect place to spend the afternoon. It's a long stretch of fine sand lined with lots of restaurants and cafés, as well as fashion stores.

If you're up for a walk along the coast, head to the right (facing the sea) and follow the trail for as long as your legs can take you. If you have several more hours of sunlight and lots of leg-power, you can walk all the way to **Oryukdo Skywalk** for more views of the sea (about 8 KM of walking).

Otherwise, spend an afternoon at sea and wait for the Gwangandaegyo Bridge to light up. Then head to one of the many restaurants and bars along the beach to end the night.

GETTING THERE: The beach is a short 5-minute walk from the Gwangan Station along Busan Subway Line 2.

The Gwangandaegyo Bridge
lights up at night, making
Gwangalli Beach one of the
best places for a nightcap.



Haeundae Beach

Haeundae Beach is one of South Korea's best beaches and the perfect spot people-watching and beach-bumming. With its long stretch of fine white sand, chic cafés, restaurants, and bars, you can definitely spend the whole day (or two) here. It comes alive during the summer season with plenty of events and seaside activities.

From Haeundae Beach, you can also head to **Dalmaji-gil**, one of Busan's most scenic sites. You'll find stunning views of the ocean and beautiful flower patches and parks. It's exceptionally gorgeous during cherry blossom season. You'll also find hip restaurants and cafes here.

GETTING THERE: It's a short walk (about 500 m) to the beach from the Haeundae Station along Busan Subway Line 2.

Chill and enjoy summer at one of South Korea's most beautiful beaches – **Haeundae Beach**.



What to eat and where

When in Busan, seafood and street food is a must! As a coastal city and a major port, Busan gets first dibs on fresh seafood, which in turn flavors much of the local cuisine. Make sure to take a deep dive into the seafood and street food scene, then enjoy more of the country's gastronomic staples.

Taejongdae clam tents

Look for the colorful tents along the pebble beach to the side of the Taejongdae Resort Park and enjoy freshly-caught grilled seafood – best coupled with soju and a gorgeous sunset (check out the map to find the spot).

Gukje Market

Look for Restaurant Street and try the gimbap (seaweed rice rolls), sundae (blood sausage), and tteokbokki (rice cakes).



Seafood and soju is simply the perfect match!

Chimaek = fried chicken + beer

After a hard day at the beach, sometimes all you want is a plate of fried chicken and a cool bottle of beer! Find chimaek restaurants all over Busan, especially in Seomyeon and Haeundae.

- [Chicken Kkang in Seomyeon](#)
- [The Chicken Times in Haeundae](#)

Samgyeopsal

No food trip in South Korea is ever complete without a visit to a samgyeopsal (BBQ) restaurant. Here are some of Busan's best spots for grilled pork.

- [Ilpum Hanwoo in Haeundae](#)
- [Matchandeul Wang Sogeum Gui in Seomyeon](#)

Craft beer

Busan is quickly becoming South Korea's biggest craft beer hub, thanks to a vibrant beachside nightlife scene. Here are some spots to check out.

- [Galmegi Brewing Company in Nampo](#)
- [An:nyeong Pub in Seomyeon](#)
- [Slice of Life Taphouse in Gwangan](#)

Day trips

[Gyeongju](#)

Take a day to explore Gyeongju, the country's ancient capital. It's home to remnants of the ancient Kingdom of Silla and some of the best Buddhist art in the Far East. This day trip is perfect for you if you love to learn about culture and history. (Here's my [travel guide to Gyeongju](#) if you prefer DIY.)

[Oedo Island](#)

Oedo is a gorgeous European-themed island. Explore the island starting with the beautiful marine botanical gardens, then climb the "Stairway to Heaven" for a magnificent view of the terrace landscapes by the ocean and a wide array of beautiful flowers. For K-drama lovers, you'll love catching a glimpse of Windy Hill.

Where to go next

If you loved Busan's vibrant art villages and exciting local food scene, chances are, you're itching to plan your next holiday. Here are some destinations that I think you'll love – they're all food-centric cities with the same splash of color and flavor that you loved in Busan. Add them to your travel bucket list!

[Penang, Malaysia](#)

Street art and street food are the things Penang does best. Explore the historic George Town where contemporary artworks bring life to old crumbling walls and eat everything from cendol to ochien to char kway teow.

[Siargao, Philippines](#)

Siargao is a tropical island destination with its own style of indie, homegrown artsy vibe, and eclectic international cuisine. The perfect combination of sea + food + chill vibes!

[Osaka, Japan](#)

As "the nation's kitchen," you can be sure that you get the best of Japanese cuisine in Osaka. Aside from delicious street food (try okonomiyaki and takoyaki made in their home turf), Osaka is also a great base to explore the Kansai region.



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Thank you for downloading this guide! I wish you happy travels to Busan, South Korea. If you found it useful, please forward or share it with your friends and travel buddies!

You (or your friend) originally downloaded this guide from the [Little Holidays travel website](#). The information is current as of July 2022 – check the website for updates or visit the relevant links listed in the guide for current information.

If you have more questions about travel in the area, [send me a message](#), and I'll get back to you ASAP!

Lastly, I'd love to know what you think! Please take 2 minutes (tops!) to help me make better guides in the future.

How likely are you to recommend this travel guide to a friend?

NOT LIKELY AT ALL

EXTREMELY LIKELY

1

2

3

4

5

Thank you and enjoy your little holidays! ♥