

📍 Seoul

Backstreet buzz

In Euljiro, Seoul's historic manufacturing hub, you can get cocktails, street food and unusual souvenirs

The industrial heart of the South Korean capital during the city's postwar economic boom in the 1960s, Euljiro Street is home to alleyways packed with thousands of bustling manufacturing workshops. These backstreets now boast hidden bars, cafés and trendy stores that are mostly clustered around the Euljiro 3-ga subway station. Visit now before it's too late, as the neighborhood's prime location in central Seoul means sizeable sections will be lost to redevelopment projects in the coming decade.



Studio Chlorophyll

For a completely different experience, consider a flower arranging workshop at this flower shop and studio located just off Euljiro Street, the brainchild of blossom-loving owner Minah Park. "In college, I studied Korean traditional painting, which has a very nature-friendly worldview," she says, explaining the motivations behind the project. "That's when I first became attached to flowers." Park teaches creative floral combinations, from traditional displays to contemporary bouquets. [instagram.com/studio_chlorophyll](https://www.instagram.com/studio_chlorophyll)

Kenektid X Bookstore

You'll find this one-year-old bookstore nestled among Euljiro's electronics stores and repair workshops in Sewoon Sangga (Plaza), one of South Korea's oldest shopping malls. The simple set-up has undeniably charming surroundings. "If you look to the left outside of the store, there's a beautiful mountainscape," says founder Sungho Kim, who enjoys the visual contrasts offered by the location. "Look right, and you see crazy skyscrapers and busy city life." Besides Korean literature, you'll find here a tempting selection of souvenir alternatives, such as retro posters and funky apparel. [instagram.com/kenektidxbookstore](https://www.instagram.com/kenektidxbookstore)



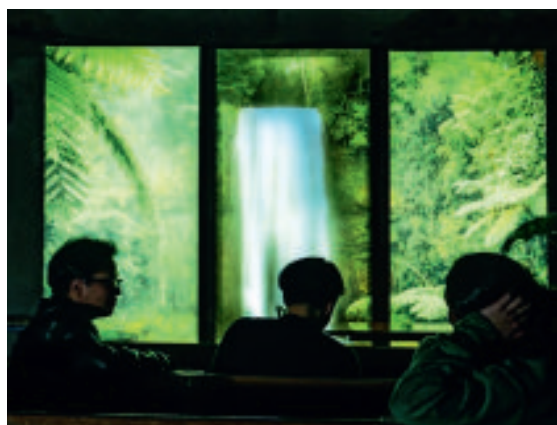
AJO

No two chairs are alike at AJO (After Jerk Off), a speakeasy café that boasts an assortment of retro lamps and a hypnotic fish-tank bar. The space, which opened in February, is just south of Euljiro 3-ga station and hides on the fourth floor of a nondescript building behind an unmarked white door. Classic hip-hop emanates from the speakers while large windows offer commanding views over the area's mismatch of rooftops and skyscrapers. [instagram.com/after_jerk_off](https://www.instagram.com/after_jerk_off)



Seendosi

Hit this speakeasy before stumbling home to bed. Nestled on the fifth floor of a rundown apartment building just off Cheonggyecheon Street, Seendosi has no discernible signage, so look for its edgy logo instead: three large symbols in blue, red and green. This alternative dive bar boasts trippy lighting, a pumping electronica soundtrack and a rooftop space for art installations. You won't write home about the cocktails, so go for a Red Rock Lager or White Pale Ale instead. Live trance and house music events take over the space on the weekends, so look out for updates on the bar's website. [seendosi.com](https://www.seendosi.com)



Manseon Hof

Manseon Hof is a wildly popular nighttime Korean restaurant that spreads itself over three floors before spilling onto a bustling side street. It's a prime spot to sample street food and people-watch, but you'll also find tightly packed tables inside to escape the chill in winter. Ice-cold glasses of draft beer are served almost immediately but you can request a bottle of soju (or two) to liven up the party. Order the garlic chicken and a hearty hotpot. **19 Eulji-ro 13-gil**

Ace Four Club

If you like smooth jazz playlists and cozy mood lighting, head to Ace Four Club. To soak in the busy atmosphere of the district, nab a spot by the broad window overlooking the roaring street. But for those who prefer a more quiet evening, settle down at one of the candlelit tables or perch at the eight-seater bar and have a chat with the bartender. Not sure what to drink? You can't go wrong with classic cocktails such as the Old Fashioned. [instagram.com/acefourclub](https://www.instagram.com/acefourclub)

