



JUMP INTO JEJU

Whether on Korea's balmy southern island for work or play, its volcanic attractions offer something for everyone

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The naturally rugged UNESCO World Heritage site of Jeju Island lies just off South Korea's southern coastline. Home to Hallasan Mountain – a volcano still classified as active despite not having erupted in over 5,000 years – Jeju's dramatic landscape has proven a major draw for Asia's tourists.

The island is also increasingly a significant player in the region's MICE industry, offering world-class facilities and services. Here's a rundown of what Jeju has to offer – for meetings, conferences, team-building... or simply a relaxing getaway.

PREPARED FOR ANY EVENT

Offering information and planning assistance to event organisers, Jeju Convention Bureau showcases the island's major advantages when it comes to hosting MICE groups. One of the most significant benefits to those planning a large-scale event, and for individual travellers, is Jeju's favourable visa conditions, granting visa-free entry and 30-day stays to more than 187 countries, including China.

Jeju is also gaining global recognition as a reliable choice: it's been praised as the "best place for international conventions" by the UN Safety Office, declared an "International Safe City" by the World Health Organisation, and ranked 19th worldwide as an International Convention City by the Union of International Associations.

Another major asset is the purpose-built International Convention Centre Jeju (ICCJEJU). Opened in 2003, it has rapidly become the flagship venue for larger events and exhibitions within the region, boasting a seven-storey building spanning 5,000 sqm that can accommodate up to 4,300 delegates. It also contains over 30 breakout rooms and medium-sized meeting rooms, an event hall, and an outdoor banqueting site.

ICCJEJU's location in the coastal Jungmun Tourist Complex also makes it the ideal base for groups and independent travellers alike to explore the island once the working week has finished (2700 Jungmun-dong, Seogwipo; +82 64 735 1000; iccjeju.co.kr). →

PREVIOUS SPREAD: Seongsan Ilchulbong

BELOW: Hyeop-jae Beach

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ACTIVITIES AND INCENTIVES

Hike it up

Whether you're a serious hiker or a fair-weather rambler, Jeju has a leg-stretching walk to suit you. **Hallasan** is South Korea's highest peak at 1,950 metres above sea level; summiting the island's famous volcano takes around nine hours, requiring an early start, as hikers are obliged to descend before sunset. Although a challenging hike, the extensive views from the summit are undoubtedly worth the effort. Meanwhile, **Seongsan Ilchulbong** – known in English as Sunrise Peak – is a volcanic cone that juts dramatically from the sea, offering the ideal vantage point to welcome the dawn. The summit is accessible by a half-hour walk up relatively steep steps leading to the edge of the crater.

For something gentler, try the **Olle Trails**, which comprise 422 kilometres of walking routes ringing the entire island. An excellent way to explore Jeju, the trails wind their way through farmland, rural villages, beaches and forests. Access to the Olle Trails is free; however some visitors opt to engage a professional guide to shed light on the island's cultural highlights. With each section averaging around 16 kilometres, it's easy to find a walk to fit your schedule.

Beach bliss

Jeju is blessed with an abundance of beautiful beaches, so whether you're interested in surfing, spas or simply snoozing, make time to hit the coast. Little-known **Samyang Beach** is no ordinary seaside destination; consisting of black volcanic sand, the striking beach offers a dramatic backdrop to holiday snaps. Mineral-rich and reputedly offering myriad health benefits for conditions from nerve pain to obesity, visitors are encouraged to bury themselves in Samyang's sand and lay back to experience a natural "sand sauna".

In direct contrast to Samyang, **Hyeop-jae's** pristine white beach of finely crushed seashells is so bright that

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you'll need shades. Powder-soft and fringed by lush tropical forest, the beach offers safe, shallow water in which to bathe. Nearby **Biyangdo Island** is rich in marine life – a tranquil and picturesque day trip. Meanwhile, **Jungmun Beach** is an ideal destination for those who prefer their travel active. The summer months offer excellent surfing conditions, whilst windsurfing, parasailing and waterskiing are available year-round.

Dive deep

Known as the "sea-women of Jeju", the Haenyeo are a group of female free-divers, many of whom are now in their 60s, who dive for abalone, crabs and squid without breathing apparatus, having learned to hold their breath underwater for up to two minutes. Visitors can experience first-hand the gruelling nature of their work by joining them in the sea, taking part in traditional pre-diving rituals, and finishing with a tasty seafood snack. Recently added to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list, the nearby Jeju Haenyeo Museum offers unique insight into this fascinating way of life (*Hado-ri, Gujwa-eup, Cheju*; +82 64 782 9898).

Go green

Learn more about one of Jeju's greatest exports, green tea, at the **Osulloc Tea Museum** (*15 Sinhwayeoksa-ro Andeok-myeon, Seogwipo, Jeju-do*; +82 64 794 5312). This expansive complex was opened by Korean cosmetics company Amorepacific (who use tea in many of their beauty products), and includes a teacup gallery,

a cultural space where guests learn about different teas and how to blend and serve them, beautiful gardens overlooking the surrounding tea fields, and a café serving up plenty of delicious (and incredibly Instagrammable) green tea-based drinks and desserts. For a more serene experience, head to the seemingly endless green tea fields at **Dosun Dawon**, the largest on Jeju. As a working farm and factory, this is less of a tourist attraction than Osulloc, but for a scenic morning admiring open blue skies and rolling, verdant hills without the buzz of tour groups, this is the place to be.

Sky high

Vertigo sufferers look away now... If you feel like you've conquered Jeju on the ground, how about heading to the skies for a totally different perspective? Get a bird's-eye view of the island's stunning landscapes from a hot-air balloon 2,000 feet (600 metres) above ground with **Oreum Balloons** (+82 64 784 2633; *oreumballoons.com*), the only private balloon operator in Jeju. One-hour flights depart at sunrise and a celebratory bottle of bubbly awaits you when you land. For something more adrenaline-pumping, how about a 10-20 minute adventure with the **Jeju Paragliding School** (+82 17 691 2633; *cafe.daum.net/jejufreemanpara*); with the wind behind you and Jeju's breathtaking volcanic scenery below, there's no better place to experience flying. If you're too nervous to go solo, don't worry – an instructor is strapped in with you to guide you safely through each airborne twist and turn.

WHERE TO STAY

Haevichi Hotel & Resort

A self-contained complex that includes a 36-hole golf course, outdoor running track, karaoke lounge and kids' club, Haevichi certainly has plenty to offer visitors regardless of age and interest. There are 12 room categories, with entry-level Superior Rooms starting at a generous 45 sqm. Meanwhile, dining facilities range from bright, airy all-day dining Ildy restaurant to the fine-dining restaurants Milieu and Hanobu, serving up the best local ingredients.

MICE facilities include a 1,320-capacity ballroom fully equipped with multimedia conferencing equipment, and four other event halls accommodating between 150 and 1,000 delegates. The spectacular atrium lobby, with its statement overhead lighting, is the ideal location for evening drinks receptions and presentations.

With stunning views of the ocean and excellent facilities, this one-stop destination is ideal for those looking to extend their stay and unwind after a busy event. **haevichi.com**

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: A Haenyeo diver; Hallasan Mountain; Jeju Tea Plantation; and the pool at Haevichi Hotel & Resort



WHERE TO EAT

Dombedon

It would be remiss to leave Jeju without sampling one of its most famous signature dishes – barbecue black pork – and Dombedon is *the* place to try it. This Michelin-starred restaurant serves meat only from Jeju’s indigenous black pigs, which has earned a reputation as the “wagyu” of pork thanks to its juicy, melt-in-the-mouth texture. Cooked traditionally on a barbecue grill at your table, expect big portions, so come hungry – and be sure to arrive early or book in advance to avoid lengthy queues. 25 Gwandeong-ro, 15 Sibogil, Jeju-si, Jeju-do; +82 64 753 0008.

Suhui Sikdang

It’s no surprise that Jeju has an abundance of excellent seafood – and you can feast your way through some of the freshest at the Michelin-starred Suhui Sikdang. This family-run eatery boasts views of the cascading Cheonjiyeon Waterfall, but the main draw here is the food, especially the much-loved local delicacy of *galchi jorim* (spicy braised hairtail stew). Other dishes worth tasting include *obunjaegi ttukbaegi* (seafood stew served in an earthenware pot that keeps it warm during your meal), *jeonbok-juk* (an abalone porridge, similar to congee) and *okdum gui* (grilled sea bream). 77 Taepyeong-ro, Seogwipo-si, Jeju-do; +82 64 762 0777.

The Shilla Jeju

One of South Korea’s best-known hotel brands, The Shilla Jeju delivers the ultimate in luxury, convenience and well-appointed facilities, making it an ideal choice for just about every type of traveller. Boasting more than 400 spacious rooms featuring sweeping ocean or mountain views, the resort’s expansive grounds include an eight-acre (3.2-hectare) garden (leading directly to nearby Jungmun Beach), three swimming pools, a gym and fitness facilities, a spa, six dining outlets, camping and “glamping” areas, and a kids’ club.

The hotel’s state-of-the-art MICE facilities have hosted major international conferences like the US-Korea Summit, and a Shilla speciality is its Guest Activity Organiser, who can plan bespoke group experiences, including eco-diving, horse riding and mountain trekking. shilla.net/jeju

Hyatt Regency Jeju

A brand globally renowned for its superior business facilities, Jeju’s Hyatt is every bit as welcoming to independent visitors. Featuring extensive leisure facilities, including indoor and outdoor pools, a beachside heated whirlpool and a spa, the Hyatt Regency also boasts 36 Korean *ondol*-style rooms. A contemporary twist on the traditional design, these rooms feature wooden floors, low beds, natural stone accents and stunning ocean views.

Although close to ICCJEJU, business travellers needn’t venture off-site unless they choose to, as the hotel can host groups of up to 1,000 across three spacious ballrooms, with additional dining and event space available atop the dramatic cliff gardens.

jeju.regency.hyatt.com



Seogwipo Maeil Olle Market

Great food is often found in the most humble of settings, and such is the case at Seogwipo Maeil Olle Market, whose many food stalls dish up *dak galbi* (spicy stir-fried chicken), *jjamppong* (spicy seafood soup) and *gimbap* (seaweed rice rolls), all at very reasonable prices. Sweet-toothed visitors should save room for *jinppang* (steamed red bean buns) and one of Jeju’s foodie highlights, the native Cheonhehyang, Hallabong and Hwanggumhyang – all varieties of orange – renowned for their sweet, juicy flavour. 22 Jungjeong-ro, 73 Beon-gil, Seogwi-dong, Seogwipo; +82 64 762 1949.

Jamae Guksu

Another humble eatery that packs a punch, along with a very reasonable bill, Jamae Guksu is beloved by locals and tourists alike for its rendition of Jeju’s traditional pork noodle soup, *gogi guksu*. Despite its use of Japanese-style ramen noodles (originating from South Korea’s Japanese occupation days), this dish is unique to Jeju and features slices of pork served in a light, milky broth. Such is its popularity that the whole street is filled with similar noodle joints, and has become known as “Noodle Street” – but those in the know reckon Jamae Guksu is the best of the lot. 67 Samseong-ro, Jeju-do; +82 64 727 1112.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
The Shilla Jeju; Dombedon; and Seogwipo Maeil Olle Market

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