

C H O U S E

SOUTH KOREA History & Modernity

October 13-23, 2023
11 Days / 9 Nights

Optional 3-Night Extension to
TAIPEI -TAIWAN



WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL
OF GREATER HOUSTON

Global Perspectives, Local Conversations



South Korea

October 13-23, 2023

11 Days / 9 Nights

ITINERARY

DAY 1	Leave USA for Seoul, South Korea
DAY 2	Arrival in Seoul / Seoul
DAY 3	Seoul sightseeing / Seoul
DAY 4	Seoul - Busan - Sightseeing / Busan
DAY 5	Busan - Gyeongju with visits on the way / Gyeongju
DAY 6	Gyeongju area sightseeing / Gyeongju
DAY 7	Suwon sightseeing / Seoul
DAY 8	DMZ excursion / Seoul
DAY 9	Seoul sightseeing / Seoul
DAY 10	Seoul sightseeing / Seoul
DAY 11	Departure

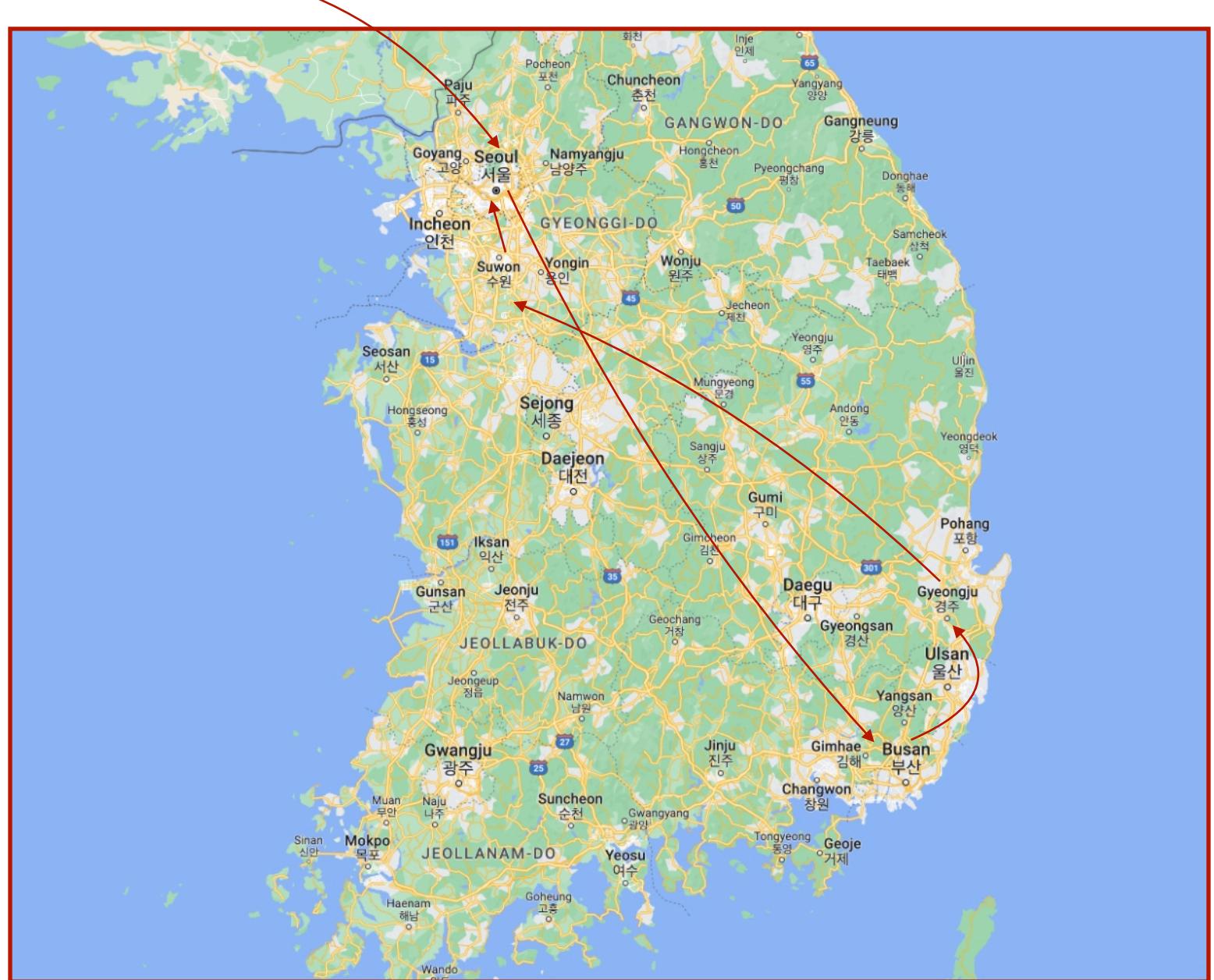


South Korea

October 15-23, 2023

11 Days / 9 Nights

MAP TRAJECTORY





South Korea

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HIGHLIGHTS

Gyeongbok Palace in Seoul.

Jogyesa Temple in Seoul.

U.N. Memorial Cemetery in Busan.

Bullet Train - Korean Version.

Jagalchi Fish Market in Busan.

Giant Shipyards - Birthplace of oil tankers.

Bulguksa Temple in Gyeongju.

Daereungwon Tomb Complex in Gyeongju.

Samsung Innovation Museum in Suwon.

DMZ - Taking a peek at the North.

Han River Cruise.

Nanta Show in Seoul.

Gangnam Style - K-Pop.

National Museum of Korea.

War Memorial of Korea.

Local food and more...



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INCLUDED

**9 Nights hotel accommodation with daily breakfast.
Lunches and dinners as indicated in the itinerary.**

English speaking professional tour guide and local guides where necessary.

Private transportation with AC vehicles.

Two small bottles of water per person on the bus on touring days.

Arrival and departure transfers for suggested flights.

All entry fees to places mentioned in the itinerary.

Nanta Show tickets.

Tips for meals and accommodations.

Gratuities for guide & driver.

NOT INCLUDED

International airfare.

Drinks with included meals, except tea or coffee for breakfast.

Personal expenditures like phone calls, laundry, medical expenses.

Travel insurance.



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SUGGESTED FLIGHTS

Suggested flights are on Eva Air:

13 Oct Houston to Taipei
BR 51 dep: 12:50 am / arr: 6:00 am on 14 Oct

14 Oct Taipei to Incheon-Seoul
BR 170 dep: 7:30 am / arr: 11:00 am

23 Oct Incheon-Seoul to Taipei
BR 169 dep: 12:00 noon / arr: 1:35 pm

23 Oct Taipei to Houston
BR 52 dep: 10:00 pm / arr: 11:00 pm

Economy class: \$1260

Business class: \$6960

Fares are per person, including taxes, surcharges and fees as of December 5, 2022. Fares can change based on availability.

Please call for suggested flights with Taipei extension.



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PROGRAM DETAILS

DAY 1

Fri, Oct 13 - Leave USA

We will leave USA for Incheon Airport, Seoul, South Korea.

DAY 2

Sat, Oct 14 - Seoul Arrival

We will arrive in Incheon Airport in the afternoon.
We will be transferred to our hotel in Seoul for overnight.

Overnight in Seoul

Meals: D

Seoul, the capital of South Korea, is a huge metropolis where modern skyscrapers, high-tech subways and pop culture meet Buddhist temples, palaces and street markets. With a municipal population of over 11.8 million, and a metropolitan population totaling over 25.6 million, Seoul is by far South Korea's largest city and one of East Asia's financial and cultural epicenters.

Seoul Capital Area is home to the headquarters of 15 Fortune Global 500 companies, including Samsung, LG, and Hyundai.



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DAY 3

Sun, Oct 15 - Historic Seoul

We have a full day of sightseeing in Seoul, to explore the historic center of the city, in addition to various other locations in the city center.

We will start our visits with Gyeongbok Palace. Then continue with National Folklore Museum where we can see the exhibits that show us how Koreans lived from the past to present.

We will drive by the Presidential Blue House, the residence and office of the president of ROK (Republic of Korea.)

After lunch at a local restaurant, we will end up at Gwanghwamun Plaza, which was restored with various statues and structures to bring back the historical look. The plaza was opened on 1 August 2009 by the Seoul Metropolitan Government and is part of the City's plans for environmentally friendly renovation projects.

In the afternoon, we will also visit Jogyesa Temple and have some free time in Insadong Antique Street which is connected to a multitude of alleys with modern galleries and tea shops. Historically, it was the largest market for antiques and artwork in Korea.

Overnight in Seoul

Meals: B-L-D



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DAY 3

Sun, Oct 15 - Historic Seoul (Continued)

Built in 1395, **Gyeongbokgung Palace** is commonly referred to as the Northern Palace because its location is furthest north when compared to the neighboring palaces of Changdeokgung (Eastern Palace) and Gyeonghuigung (Western Palace). Gyeongbokgung Palace is arguably the most beautiful, and remains the largest of all five palaces.

The premises were once destroyed by fire during the Imjin War (1592-1598). However, all of the palace buildings were later restored under the leadership of Heungseondaewongun during the reign of King Gojong (1852-1919).

Remarkably, the most representative edifices of the Joseon dynasty, Gyeonghoeru Pavilion and the pond around Hyangwonjeong Pavilion have remained relatively intact.

Jogyesa Temple: The temple was built in the late 14th century during the Goryeo period but was completely destroyed in a fire. It was rebuilt under the name of Gakwangsa Temple in 1910. Jogyesa Temple plays an important role in Korean Buddhism as the head temple of the Jogye order. Jogyesa Temple's Dharma Hall serves as the main venue for several Buddhist events, holding rituals, lectures, ceremonies, and other events all year long. The annual lantern festival in celebration of Buddha's birthday also takes place at this temple.



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DAY 4

Mon, Oct 16 - Seoul - Busan

This morning, we will be transferred to Seoul KTX (Korean bullet train) station and take the 2.5 hr ride to Busan, on the southern coast of the country.

Upon arrival, we will continue with our visits in Busan, including Jagalchi Fish Market, UN Memorial Cemetery, Dongbaek Island and Haeundae Beach.

Overnight in Busan

Meals: B-L-D

KTX (Korea Train Express) is South Korea's high-topped rail system. Construction began on the high-speed line from Seoul to Busan in 1992. KTX services were launched on April 1, 2004. Top speed for trains in regular service is currently 305 km/h (190 mph), though the infrastructure is designed for 350 km/h (217 mph).

Jagalchi Market is Korea's largest seafood market, selling both live and dried fish. After the Korean War, the market solidified itself as a fish market. Most of the people who sell fish are women, so the vendors here are called Jagalchi Ajumma, "ajumma" meaning middle-aged or married woman in Korean. This market represents Busan and is famous throughout the country.

The United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Korea is a burial ground for United Nations Command (UNC) casualties of the Korean War. It contains 2,300 graves and is the only United Nations cemetery in the world. Laid out over 14 hectares (35 acres), the graves are set out in 22 sites designated by the nationalities of the buried service members.



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DAY 5

Tue, Oct 17 - Busan - Gyeongju

We will leave Busan this morning and drive to Gyeongju. On the way we will visit Bulguksa Temple and Seokguram Grotto.

Also we will visit one of the giant shipyards, which are well known for building oil tankers and world's largest container ships.

Overnight in Gyeongju

Meals: B-L-D

Bulguksa is located on the slopes of Mount Toham. It is one of the head temples of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism and encompasses six National treasures of South Korea, including the Dabotap and Seokgatap stone pagodas, Cheongun-gyo (Blue Cloud Bridge), and two gilt-bronze statues of Buddha. The temple is considered as a masterpiece of the golden age of Buddhist art in the Silla kingdom.

The **Seokguram Grotto** is a hermitage and part of the Bulguksa temple complex.



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DAY 6

Wed, Oct 18 - Gyeongju

Today we will be in Gyeongju area; a day full of Korean history and nature.

Our visits will include Daereungwon Tomb complex, Cheomseongdae Observatory, Donggung Palace and Gyeongju National Museum. We will also spend some time at the Hwangnidangil road, with its cafes and stores.

Overnight in Gyeongju

Meals: B-L-D

Gyeongju was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Silla (57 BC – 935 AD), which ruled about two-thirds of the Korean Peninsula at its height between the 7th and 9th centuries, for close to one thousand years. Later Silla was a prosperous and wealthy country, and its metropolitan capital of Gyeongju was the fourth largest city in the world. A vast number of archaeological sites and cultural properties from this period remain in the city. Gyeongju is often referred to as "the museum without walls".

Large ancient tombs of kings and nobles of the Silla Kingdom can be seen around Gyeongju at the Daereungwon Tomb Complex. There are twenty-three large tombs located here. A total of 11,500 artifacts were recovered from one of the tombs, demonstrating the lavish lifestyle of the king. The majority of these were removed and now reside in the **Gyeongju National Museum**. The tomb was excavated in 1973 and is believed to date probably from the fifth century.



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DAY 7

Thu, Oct 19 -Gyeongju - Suwon - Seoul

This morning we will take the KTX bullet train again back to Seoul. Then we will drive to Suwon to visit Hwaseong Fortress.

Headquarters of the Korean technology giant Samsung is also located in Suwon, where we will visit Samsung Innovation Museum.

Overnight in Seoul

Meals: B-L-D

Hwaseong Fortress is a fortification surrounding the centre of Suwon. It was built from 1794 to 1796 by King Jeongjo of the Joseon dynasty to house and honor the remains of his father, Prince Sado. Sado had been executed by being locked alive inside a rice chest by his own father King Yeongjo after failing to obey a command to commit suicide.

Located 19 miles south of Seoul and enclosing much of central Suwon, the fortress includes King Jeongjo's palace Haenggung. The fortress and enclosed palace were designated as a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 1997.



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DAY 8

Fri, Oct 20 - DMZ Excursion - Seoul

Today is our excursion to DMZ, the Korean Demilitarized Zone. This excursion will give us an authentic feel of what the Korean conflict was like to live through. We'll also discover how it has affected and shaped both North and South Korea and the current state of affairs as it stands today.

The Korean Demilitarized Zone is a strip of land running across the Korean Peninsula near the 38th parallel north. It is a border barrier that divides the peninsula roughly in half. It was established to serve as a buffer zone between the countries of North Korea and South Korea under the provisions of the Korean Armistice Agreement in 1953, an agreement between North Korea, China, and the United Nations Command.

In DMZ, we will visit Imjingak Park, where there are many statues and monuments regarding the Korean War, Dokgae Bridge, which was initially built in 1906 as a railway bridge but had been severely damaged during the war. We will also take the DMZ gondola ride which offers a birds-eye view of the DMZ while carrying its passengers across the Imjin River. We will end up at Odusan Unification Tower which lies just 1500 ft. from North Korea.

On our way back, we will also have a boat cruise on Han River which runs through Seoul.

Overnight in Seoul

Meals: B-L-D



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DAY 9

Sat, Oct 21 - Modern Seoul

This is our day to explore the modern/hip face of Seoul.

We will start with K-Star Road, then visit the impressive Starfield Library in Coex Mall, Myeongdong Shopping street, Seoul's answer to Fifth Avenue in New York and Sinsa-dong Garosu-gil road in famous Gangnam district.

In the evening, we have tickets for Nanta Show.

Overnight in Seoul

Meals: B-L

Nanta Show: A show blending acrobatics, martial arts, music and culinary skills. The talented troupe of Korean performers cook up a storm in the on-stage kitchen giving the audience a taste of Korean culinary lunacy, sliced and diced to percussive perfection. This captivating 90 minute performance is the longest running show in Korean history, displaying the comedic culinary attempts of four cooks under pressure. Nanta combines the rhythms from Korean folk songs with modern music, creating a non-verbal performance that's accessible to an international audience.

Gangnam is the glitzy center of modern Seoul, home to hundreds of glass and steel skyscrapers, neon billboards, and some of the most expensive real estate in the country. Gangnam station is the true center of Gangnam - with dozens of high rises, hundreds of restaurants and bars, and thousands upon thousands of neon signs lining Gangnam street, this area is not only a major commercial and nightlife center for young adults, it is Korea at its futuristic, digital, high-tech best.

At the other end of main boulevard is COEX, a huge underground shopping mall with a movie theater, aquarium, hotels, food courts, and a Hyundai Department Store.



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DAY 10

Sun, Oct 22 - Seoul

On our final day in Seoul, we will visit the National Museum of Korea and War Memorial of Korea.

We will also visit Seoul Sky, world's fifth tallest building and tallest building in South Korea. We will go up to the 123rd floor observatory for a 360-degree view of Seoul.

Overnight in Seoul

Meals: B-L-D

The National Museum of Korea is the flagship museum of Korean history and art in South Korea and is the cultural organization that represents Korea. It was established in 1945. More than 12,044 pieces are always on display in the six permanent exhibition sections, where visitors can examine numerous national treasures of Korea, including Pensive Bodhisattva, Goryeo Celadon Openwork Burner, Ten-Story Pagoda from Gyeongcheonsa Temple-Site, and Gold Crown from Silla.

The War Memorial of Korea was opened in 1994 on the former site of the army headquarters to exhibit and memorialize the military history of Korea. It was built for the purpose of preventing war through lessons from the Korean War and for the hoped for peaceful reunification of North and South Korea. The memorial building has six indoor exhibition rooms and an outdoor exhibition centre displaying war memorabilia and military equipment from China, South Korea and the United States.



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DAY 11

Mon, Oct 23 - Departure

We will have a morning at leisure. Then we will be transferred to the airport for our return flight.

Contact Us

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713-522-7811

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Taipei - Taiwan Extension

October 23-26, 2023
3 Days / 3 Nights

DAY 11

Mon, Oct 23 - Seoul - Taipei

We will leave Seoul in the morning and arrive in Taipei at 1:35 pm.

We will be transferred to our hotel. Rest of the day at leisure.

Overnight in Taipei

Meals: B



Taipei - Taiwan

October 23-26, 2023

3 Days / 3 Nights

DAY 12

Tue, Oct 24 - Taipei

We will start our day at 9 am. Our guide and driver will pick us up from our hotel. We will drive to Pinglin.

Pinglin is in the Southeast of New Taipei City. Most everything in Pinglin is about tea; and everything we do here will be associated with tea, one of Taiwan's most well-known exports. We will taste the local tea, acidic, rich, green Bao Zhong variety. And then we will visit the Tea Museum.

Claiming to be the biggest tea-dedicated museum in the world, this is definitely the stop for those interested in tea, the world's first global commodity. The museum highlights not only the tea-making and tea cultivation processes, but also enlightens visitors on the role tea has played in Chinese history.

Then we will drive back to the city center to have lunch.

In the afternoon, we will visit the Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall. It is the famous symbol of both Taipei and the Republic of China. It is here that the nation's flag is raised every morning, and the huge court yard in front of the memorial serves as a place for both national celebrations as well as a platform to voice one's disapproval of the government. The memorial consists of a large bronze statue of Chiang Kai-shek, watched over by two motionless honor guards who are replaced every hour in a rifle twirling ceremony.

Driving by the Presidential Office Building, we will go to National Palace Museum, which has the world's best collection of Chinese historical artifacts and antiquities.

After our museum visit, we will drive back to our hotel for overnight.

For dinner, we will be on our own.

Overnight in Taipei

Meals: B



Taipei - Taiwan

October 23-26, 2023

3 Days / 3 Nights

DAY 13

Wed, Oct 25 - Jiufen & Night Tour - Taipei

Today we will have a leisurely morning. Our guide and driver will pick us up at 1 pm, and we will drive to Jiufen.

Jiufen is a mountain town in northeastern Taiwan, east of Taipei. It's known for the narrow alleyways of its old town, packed with teahouses, street-food shacks and souvenir shops. In 1890, workmen discovered flakes of gold while constructing the new Taipeh-Kelung railway] and in 1893 a rich district was discovered in the hills of Kau-hun that produced several kilograms of gold a day. In the next year, the promise became greater than ever after a Chinese "expert" with experience gained in California found gold-bearing quartz in the said hills.

The resulting gold rush hastened the village's development into a town, and reached its peak during the Japanese era. But the town went into a decline after 1950's when gold mining was discontinued.

Here we will visit the old center of the town and the remains of the gold and copper mines in Jingoashi.

On the way, we will also see the Nanya rock formations which look like a natural sculpture garden.

We will drive back to Taipei in the evening to visit the Longshan Temple and Huaxi Street night market. We will also climb up Taipei 101 observatory for a night view of Taipei.

Officially known as the Taipei International Financial Center this 101-floor, 508-meter high skyscraper is in the Xinyi District of Taipei and is the ninth tallest skyscraper in the world. The tower is rich in symbolism; it was designed to resemble bamboo rising from the earth, a plant recognized in Asian cultures for its fast growth and flexibility, both of which are ideal characteristics for a financial building.

Then we will have a dinner, with a traditional Taiwanese menu.

Overnight in Taipei

Meals: B-L-D



Taipei - Taiwan

October 23-26, 2023

3 Days / 3 Nights

DAY 14

Thu, Oct 26 - Departure

We will have a leisure day in Taipei. Late in the afternoon, we will be transferred to airport for our return flight.

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