

PLEASE DO NOT TAKE THESE NOTES WITH YOU INTO NORTH KOREA

The Eternal North Korea

Trip notes: EAXN

Validity: 01/01/2011 to 31/12/2011

Itinerary Disclaimer

The information in this dossier has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and Babel Travel. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one that's featured in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal in the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience.

VERY IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your dossier to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans. For the latest updated trip notes please visit our website: www.babeltravel.com

Robert Young Pelton and Babel Travel have teamed up to create the first organized entries into the World's Most Dangerous and forbidden places. Created to challenge the intellectual, emotional, participatory and educational desires of a very select group of individuals. Our tours will maintain the highest level of personal and physical safety based on Robert Young Pelton's 30 years in conflict zones and Babel Travel's experience in the adventure travel business.

"These trips are dangerous because they are designed to make people think, not to scare or harm them. Being inside a country instead of watching it from the outside is going to dramatically energize and engage these adventurers. Each group is screened, trained and tasked with creating an end product to share with the world. We do not intend to be passive observers. Stories, interviews, research, video and photographs will be combined to create a portal for the next group and the world. "Groups and individuals in these regions don't have time to entertain outsiders. They are happy to engage, challenge and share with visitors but only if they take their message to the outside world."

Kevin Pollard of Babel Travel has long wanted to tap into Pelton's expertise and access ever since he read his best selling guide "The World's Most Dangerous Places" which was first published in 1993 and is now in its fifth edition. Participants in this program will update the 6th edition and carry on Pelton's two-decade legacy of safely penetrating and making sense of the world's least understood regions.

Tours for 2011 will include 11-22 day itineraries to Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, North Korea, Colombia and others. Each journey will cost in the neighbourhood of 5-12,000 EURO

per person without airfare. Robert Young Pelton will not lead the tours personally but he will select each tour leader and design each itinerary. There will be a second unadvertised list of tours for those return members that Pelton will accompany into selected locations.

Robert Young Pelton is the author of a number of books on survival and global conflict. He has journeyed through over three-dozen conflicts and over 120 countries.

www.comebackalive.com

Tour structure

The key elements of each tour (other than North Korea or fixed agendas) are;

- 1) Meeting with VIPs and subject matter experts to welcome you to the country
- 2) Charitable social benefit hands on activity
- 3) Political discussions and interaction with at least two opposing entities
- 4) Exposure to authentic, non commercial and socially relevant environments
- 5) Interaction with locals, penetrating discussions and documentation of the countries situations
- 6) Formal interviews, information gathering, fact checking and publication of group's endeavours for public viewing and further discussion
- 7) Traditional interaction with social, political, NGO or other group to understand how outsiders can engage, understand and better the situation.
- 8) Cultural immersion into music, art, dancing, storytelling, history etc
- 9) Contemporary interpretation of culture, historical monuments, natural wonders, landscapes or events by experts
- 10) Tour members questions answered, flexibility in itinerary to take advantage of opportunities or invitations and constant support for unscripted discovery, interaction and follow on relationships.

Formal structure

Each tour member will be sent a personal safety guide culled from Come Back Alive or Dangerous Places on survival in the specific area they are travelling to. Members will be asked to pick 5 things that they hope to learn. There will be a formal videotape interview of their expectations or goals both before and after. Your privacy is assured.

Each person will be asked to use a skill they have to contribute to a diary, wrap up, interview and query. Each person will be issued a workbook with suggested questions, discussion points, and a do it yourself travel guide creation kit modelled on 'The World's Most Dangerous Places'. The goal is to give structure to exploration and curiosity.

During the trip each person will be brought into the narrative and be filmed interacting, interviewing, photographing or helping. At the end of the trip the material will be assembled into a web based blog. Those members who chose to not be photographed will not be included in the public site. Those who wish to keep their trip kept private will be respected.

Itinerary

Day 1 Beijing

Arrive and check into your hotel. Your tour leader will leave a notice in the hotel reception with information for our all important welcome meeting, scheduled for 8am on day 1.

Important Note: it is a condition of joining our tours that you are in possession of a comprehensive travel insurance policy. We highly recommend <https://www.ingletravel.com/en/travel/specialRisk.asp> for coverage in China and North Korea. If you do not have a policy you will be required to purchase one from your tour leader in order to join the tour.

We start our journey in the Chinese capital of Beijing. The capital of the most populous country on earth is quickly shedding its historical face in favour of modernity. However there are still plenty of places to go that will give you a great insight into the nation's history and ancient past as well as sights which showcase China's contemporary culture.

For those who arrive early, a great way to get started is by renting a bike from nearby our hotel and venturing onto the streets to get a feel for this enormous city. You could ride to the Temple of Heaven or just see where your wheels take you. A metro ride can take you to the Summer Palace, once an imperial residence, or visit the Silk, Pearl or Panjiayuan markets for some bargain hunting and bargaining. A trip to the 798 Art District will give you a taste of where art is heading in today's China as you wander the multitude of galleries housed in an old factory complex or head into the winding lanes of Beijing's hutong districts and literally get lost in a world that is fast disappearing. Beijing's food is a highlight too, from the famous Beijing Roast Duck to dumplings or noodles in a tiny backstreet eatery to some of the best international dining in China there is no chance you will go hungry while here!

We definitely recommend arriving a few days early to make the most of Beijing's sights and experiences.

Please note that we include a visit to Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City on Day 1 of the trip so there is no need for you to visit these sights prior to the trip commencing.

After breakfast and a brief welcome meeting, we will take the subway from our hotel to the vast Tiananmen Square, the very heart of the nation for local Chinese and truly a grand sight. From there we will enter the Forbidden City, former home to China's Imperial rulers, for a guided tour of the palaces, buildings and seemingly never ending grand courtyards.

Please remember that we'll visit the Great Wall in Dandong, China on Day 14 of the trip. Our start point hotel can organise a day trip to the Great Wall near Beijing before or after your trip finishes.

We require travellers on ALL tours to come to our office/start point hotel in Beijing 4PM (16:00) on day 1 of the trip for a tour briefing and the final visa preparations regardless of whether you have had the visa issued overseas or not. If you absolutely cannot attend this meeting then please let us know as early as possible and alternative arrangements can be made. We will need about 1.5 hours of your time at this point.

You will need to bring with you your passport, all tour vouchers and a copy of your insurance policy to this meeting so that your tour leader can obtain important details that are essential to the running of the tour. This meeting will give you an overview of all the exciting things you will be seeing during your tour and includes a lot of practical information on how to get the most out of your time in China and North Korea.

Please note you will need to print and fill in the journalist and insurance contract at the end of the notes and bring it with you to the pre-tour briefing.

Days 2-4 Pyongyang, North Korea

After breakfast, transfer to the Beijing International Airport for the 2 hour flight from Beijing to Pyongyang, North Korea.

Our flight will be between 1pm and 4pm. Upon your arrival, transfer to your Pyongyang hotel.

There is a plethora of fascinating sites in the nation's capital. While here we'll visit the Kumsusan Memorial Palace, Martyrs' Cemetery, Kim Il Sung Square, Mansudae Grand Monument/Fountain Park, Grand People's Study House, Monument to Party Foundation, metro, Arch of Triumph, Juche Tower, USS Pueblo cold war relic, Moranbong Senior Middle School, Pyongyang Maternity Hospital, 3 Revolutions Exhibition, Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum (Korean War Museum), War Victory Monument Park, Mangyongdae Native House

Day 5 Kaesong

160kms south of Pyongyang is Kaesong. En route we'll visit the Sariwon Folk Village, Sinchon Village and the Museum of US War crimes and the Woljong Buddhist temple. While in Kaesong we'll visit some of the city's main sights as well as the Panmunjom/DMZ zone and the Concrete Wall.

The Sariwon Folk Village is a mock-up of a traditional Korean village which includes a territorial map of Korea's cultural ruins, historical relics, the Provincial History Museum, Food Street, various pavilions and houses in the time of the Ancient and Middle era of the country.

Sinchon Village and Museum of US War crimes Dedicated to the "crimes committed by the US imperialists". The museum has an array of gruesome exhibits and is not recommended for overly sensitive types. Sensitivity is called for here more than most other places in DPRK.

The Woljong Buddhist temple was built in the middle of the 9th century and later rebuilt, the present temple dates from the beginning of the Yi Dynasty (15th century).

In Kaesong itself, is the Tomb of King Kongmin. This twin-domed tomb of the 31st King of the Koryo dynasty and his Mongolian wife is set at the end of a picturesque valley. Kaseong Park and Kwandok Pavillion is a small tower which offers views down into Kaesong old town, features a statue of President Kim Il Sung.

The Kaesong Industrial Region is a special administrative industrial park located 10 kilometres north of the Korean DMZ with direct road and rail access to South Korea and an hour's drive from Seoul. After opening in December 2004, the first phase plan envisaged participation by 250 South Korean companies from 2006, employing 100,000 people by 2007. The park was expected to be complete in 2012, covering 25 square miles employing 700,000 people. Due to the ROKS Cheonan sinking incident in March 2010 and South Korea's response, North Korea severed ties with South Korea and shutdown the Consultative Office in the zone. As of November 2010, 110 factories were employing approximately 42,000 DPRK workers and 700 ROK staff.

Day 6 Pyongyang

Early on Day 6 we visit Panmunjom, a truce village that spans both sides of the DMZ,

marking the division between North & South Korea, where soldiers from both sides go toe-to-toe and nose-to-nose. A Concrete Wall anti-tank barrier erected on the Southern boundary of the DMZ, seen in the North as evidence of the intent to permanently divide the nation.

After lunch we travel via the Gyenam Stock Farm and the Buyong Pavilion in Haeju en route to Pyongyang. The Gyenam Stock Farm is a livestock farm for goats, cows, and rabbits. While here we'll see milk processing and methane gas production.

Originally built in 1500, the Haeju Buyong Pavilion in Haeju city is DPRK's biggest pavilion. Haeju is the capital of the South Hwanghae province, a strategic post with a heavy concentration of artillery batteries.

After a full day of travelling/sightseeing we arrive back into Pyongyang at 6pm.

Day 7 Wonsan

4 hours east of Pyongyang is the seaside city of Wonsan. While here we visit a local co-operative farm, Songdowon Schoolchildren's camp, the city docks and the local beach and the Kumgang Mountains (Temples, Hermitages, unusually shaped rocks).

The Wonsan local co-operative farm is a persimmon farm which accepts foreign visitors, ideal for those interested in the agricultural system in DPRK. The Songdowon Schoolchildren's camp is where Korean children (and also those from overseas sometimes) spend some weeks in summer, playing and learning. Schoolchildren's camps are a classic socialist institution.

We'll also visit a local project at an Orphan's School. Babel Travel and our local DPRK operator contributes towards playground equipment for 550 children aged 7-11 years who are residents and students at the Wonsan Primary School Residential Home. These children have lost one or both parents and live all year round at the residential home. We want to supply them with a climbing frame and some playground equipment for their recreation, manufactured locally. We have raised 2000 Euros for this project which will cover the cost of obtaining decent materials and local manufacture and installation of the playground equipment to brighten the days of these children who have suffered bereavement at such a young age.

The Wonsan city docks is home to the moored Mangyongbon-92 passenger ship to Japan is based here and the statue of the President looking over the harbour shows the importance of this port to the DPRK. The Wonsan local beach is a place to relax and swim in the sea, clean sand and water make for a peaceful break.

Day 8 Kumgangsan / Pyongyang

Leaving after breakfast we travel 2 hours south to the scenic town of Kumgangsan. The town is only 40 km away from South Korean border and is home to among the most spectacular mountain scenery in North Korea.

Since 1998, South Korean tourists have been allowed to visit Kūmgangsan, initially travelling by cruise ship, but recently more commonly by coach. Tourist numbers have since established themselves at about 240,000 a year and in 2008, Hyundai Asan announced the 1.5 millionth South Korean visit to the area. The resort is thought to be one way for the North Korean government to receive hard currency from abroad (usually USD dollars).

In July 11, 2008 a South-Korean tourist was shot and killed while walking on the resort's beach. Due to the shooting, South Korea temporarily suspended all trips to Kūmgangsan. In March 2010, the DPRK government warned of "extraordinary measures" if the tourism ban were not lifted and on April 23, 2010, the North Korean government seized 5 properties owned by South Korea at the resort, saying that it was done "in compensation for the damage the North side suffered due to the suspension of the tour for a long period". It's highly unlikely that tours will be resumed from the South.

The former Hyundai resort of Kūmgangsan was one of the symbols of a supposed new era of co-operation between the two Koreas when it opened in May 2008. A championship golf course with a reported \$74m price tag, was built near the infamous Demilitarized Zone, in the picturesque setting of the Mount Kūmgang range.

It proved a big draw for South Korean visitors and has even hosted a professional golf tournament. The course had also been the venue for a Korean Professional Golf Tour event in October 2007. The tournament, which boasted a prize pool of \$254,000, was unusual in one respect because it took place without any spectators due to restrictions imposed by the North Korean authorities.

Sadly it now lies empty and un-played with the other facilities on the resort mothballed. The course itself is a stunning 6,900-meter layout with sea and mountain views and has a series of signature holes, most notably a 929m par 7, one of the longest in the world. The golf course is currently not operational, but is being maintained.

Returning to Pyongyang, we stop at the Chonsamri Cooperative Farm, a community of 2,500 people living and working together, with their own shops, schools, theaters and services. Chat with the members of the farm, and hear about their life and work amid the cooperative system, which includes essentially free housing, education and healthcare.

In the evening we'll meet a Korean War veteran and take part in a cooking demonstration/dinner at the Minsok hotel.

Day 9 Mt Paekdu

This morning we fly from Pyongyang to the town of Samji, located close to Mt Paekdu.

Mount Paekdu is Korea's highest mountain and sacred birthplace of the entire Korean nation. Situated on the Chinese border, it's probably the most scenic part of the entire country. Rarely visited and absolutely unforgettable; Lake Chon is the highest crater lake in the world sitting atop Mount Paekdu. Here, we'll walk down to the lake to sample some of the crystal-clear water and take a cable car back up to the crater rim. Held by the DPRK as the birthplace of Kim Jong Il, The Secret Camp was the site of the HQ of Kim Il Sung's anti-Japanese guerrilla army. See slogan trees and the reconstructed huts of the base here.

The Samjiyon Grand Monument is the largest set of statues in the country laid out in the area where the guerrilla army gathered to launch a crucial attack. The centre piece is a bronze statue of the commander Kim Il Sung (the 2nd biggest in the country), squads of his soldiers are immortalised here too.

Day 10 Home stay

After breakfast we fly from Samji to Orang and transfer to the Chilbo Mountains. These

mountains are among DPRK's most remote and scenic areas; see a vast array of peaks and rock formations of all kinds. Colourful local legends about almost every example abound. Perfect for lovers of scenery.

In the early afternoon we travel to a small village for an overnight home stay with a North Korean family.

This is only place in the country it is possible to stay in the home of a local family in this village built specially for the purpose. Not as Potemkin as you might think, the people do really live here! (Potemkin villages or Potyomkin villages is an idiom based on a historical myth). No English is spoken but communication is possible for the patient. Our North Korean guide can translate for our group.

Day 11 Chongjin /Pyongyang

This morning we travel overland from our homestay to Chongjin.

The Revolutionary Museum in Chongjin is the main attraction in DPRK's second largest city (other than the city itself!) shows exploits in the area, includes slogan trees and reliefs of the surrounding areas. Later on we'll see classrooms and a performance at a Kindergarten School for the children of steelworkers and visit the Chongjin Central Square to view the city's main statue of the President.

In the late afternoon we fly back to Pyongyang.

Day 12 Pyongyang

Early in the morning we take a side trip to the Nampo Orphanage. This colorful, modern facility is where we will spend a few hours playing with the children and talking with their caretakers about their lives and work with the orphans. They children appear very clean and happy and well cared for by the loving teachers who are very affectionate and warm with the children.

Next stop is the West Sea Barrage an 8 kilometre barrage constructed for flood-prevention, land-reclamation, and power generation at the mouth of the Taedong river, one of DPRK's greatest feats of engineering. Moving on we visit the International Friendship Exhibition Museum in Mt Myohyang (2hrs north of Pyongyang) and the Pyohon Buddhist Temple.

International Friendship Exhibition is a series of enormous subterranean exhibition rooms housing gifts given to the DPRK's leaders by foreign political figures, notable figures, politicians and organisations. The Pyohon Buddhist Temple Historical holy temple originates from 1042, but has been rebuilt often. Beautiful pagodas and temple buildings. The more energetic can take part in the Manpok Valley Walk. This walk is up and down affair on a trail passing waterfalls, unusual rocks set in a stunning landscape. All up it's a 1-2 hour walk.

We'll return to Pyongyang in the early evening.

Days 13-14 Dandong, China

At 10am this morning we board our train from Pyongyang to Beijing. Crossing the border into China, we disembark in the Chinese city of Dandong (at around 5.30pm) where will be met by a local Chinese guide and transferred to your hotel in Dandong.

On all tours exiting DPRK by train we offer a special 24 hour North Korea-themed extension of the tour in the Chinese border city of Dandong – a fascinating small city on the Chinese side of the Yalu river, facing across to Sinuiju.

On day 14 we visit the Great Wall of China at Tiger Mountain overlooking North Korea.

The Great Wall of China is an incredible piece of engineering, it stretches 6,000 km westwards from the mountain ridges north west of Dandong. It was originally constructed to protect Chinese empires from the 'barbarians' of the north and even though it failed in this purpose, it is still without a doubt one of the country's most remarkable achievements, and an iconic destination. It's a 30 minute climb up some steep steps to the wall itself but well worth the effort! We'll have a few hours to explore the winding wall before heading back to the city for the afternoon. Please note that the wall is quite steep in places so make sure you have some appropriate footwear for this activity.

After wards we take a boat trip at the 'one metre hop' which is the narrowest point between China and DPRK (you can see Korean People's Army border guards up close, as little as 5 metres away!). We will also visit the snappily-named 'Museum of War to Resist America and Aid Korea', otherwise known as the Korean War Museum, which charts the events which led to the deployment of over 2 million Chinese 'volunteers' to Korea in 1950.

Lunch is in a North Korean restaurant complete with song and dance show from the waitresses.

In the afternoon you will take a boat trip on the wider Yalu river – the boat sweeps up and down the river in and out of North Korean waters, great for photos! This is followed by a visit to the broken bridge which was half destroyed by the US air force in the Korean War and extends to exactly the halfway point between China and DPRK.

Around the bridge area all manner of North Korean goodies can be bought, from badges and cigarettes to currency and other knick-knacks! At 6:30pm you will board the overnight sleeper for Beijing which arrives at 8.30am the next day.

This extension is fully guided and is a perfect way to end a tour of North Korea, and a unique look at a fascinating part of China!

NOTE: Standard soft sleeper cabins four bunks. No Smoking in carriage. Meals are available from the dining car.

Day 15 Beijing

The overnight sleeper from Dandong to Beijing arrives at 8.30am on day 15. Upon arrival we'll transfer to our Beijing hotel for a farewell breakfast. We have day rooms until 6pm. You are free to depart at any time during day 15. No activities are planned for this day.

Arrival Complications

Arrival transfers are included for all clients arriving in Beijing. If you have booked your flights separately from your tour please ensure that you inform your tour booking agent of your flight details at least one month before departure to avoid payment of an administration fee. If you have not made contact with our representative (please look for the Babel Travel Logo and your name) within 30 minutes of clearing customs and immigration, as can occasionally occur as many flights tend to arrive at once, please contact

our Chinese representative. Give this person your exact location in the airport (find a landmark) and you will be attended to promptly.

In the very unlikely event that this process fails, you can find taxis at the front of the airport and it will cost approximately 120 RY (18 USD) to take you to your hotel.

Metered taxis are available outside the airport terminal building. The taxi ride from the airport to our starting point hotels takes about 45 minutes and should cost around 80-100CNY (plus 10CNY for the airport expressway toll). Show the taxi driver the name and address of hotel in Chinese characters as shown below. Please AVOID taxi touts who tell you that they have a metered taxi parked outside the airport

Please inform your group leader at the initial group meeting if this occurs for a refund. No refund is available on missed transfers, or portions of your trip owing to a different flight arrival or delayed flight arrival. Any additional cost incurred in order to meet up with your group is at your own expense.

Starting Point Hotel

TBA
Beijing
China

Starting Point Instructions

If for some reason you did not make contact with our transfer officer please get a local taxi from the airport to the start point hotel. The Beijing International airport is situated about 30 minutes away from our hotel.

Finishing Point Hotel

TBA
Beijing
China

Trip Style

Cultural Engagement

This is the only way professionals, intellectuals, and modern day explorers can visit the world's most inaccessible places with comfort, security and insight. Robert Young Pelton and Babel Travel have designed experiences that are both life changing but inspiring. Those who want more from their travels will understand that these trips are both intense, engaging and rewarding because they open a window into the rapidly changing world. Accordingly these trips are never the same, never dull and will encourage further exploration. Comfort, safety and value are the cornerstones of planning and the ability to engage and interact with our hosts is critical. This is a tour for those that "do" not watch.

Group Size

Maximum of 12 travellers per group.

Accommodation

Guesthouses/hotels (13 nights), Overnight train (1 nt)

Meals

While travelling with Babel Travel you will experience the wide choices of excellent local food available in China and North Korea. For us, we aim to provide you with the flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat, and as a result not every meal is included in the trip price. Great, when you're on a budget! Usually, the large majority of our groups eat together, enjoying the wide array dishes, relaxing and enjoying each other's company - and all those wonderful travel stories! Of course, you are under no obligation to join every dinner. Your group leader will recommend excellent restaurants and eateries throughout the trip for those of you that wish to go it alone. Please check the 'included meals' section of the trip dossier for details of which meals are included.

Included Meals

14 Breakfasts, 14 lunches, 14 dinners

Solo Travellers

If you are travelling alone you will be allocated a room with another group member of the same sex. If you are travelling as a couple please note that we cannot guarantee the availability of double beds. Some of our itineraries have accommodation booked on a mixed gender share basis - where applicable this will be specified in our Trip Notes.

Getting around

Private vehicle, aircraft, taxi, overnight train, walking, metro, boat

Included Activities

This is a list of included activities on this trip. If you choose not to participate in the included activities on this itinerary, the cost will not be refunded.

Walking tours of Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City in Beijing, Pyongyang, Kaesong, the DMZ, Wonsan and Chongjin, all activities listed in the itinerary, Mt Paekdu visit, Homestay in the Chilbo mountains, visits to 8 different charities/hospitals/orphanages/schools and a visit to the Great Wall of China in Dandong, arrival and departure transfers (Beijing).

Optional Activities

We list the following optional activities for your information. This is not an exhaustive list and should be used as a guide only. They are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by Babel Travel nor included in price of this trip. If you do any of them, you do so at your own risk and it must be clearly understood that your participation is your own decision and does not form part of your contract with Babel Travel.

Please note that prices are a guide only and are subject to change!

Day trip to The Great Wall in Mutianyu - CNY 250

Beijing Opera Performance, Beijing - CNY180
Hutong Cycle Tour Beijing - CNY170
Kungfu Show, Beijing - CNY120
Lama Temple, Beijing - CNY30
Peking Duck Dinner, Beijing - CNY100
Summer Palace, Beijing - CNY50
Temple of Heaven, Beijing - CNY40
Beijing Zoo (including Aquarium), Beijing - CNY120
Factory 798, Beijing - Free

Welcome to North Korea

Babel Travel is very pleased to welcome you on the most unique journey of your life. The information included in this document below should assist you in preparing for the trip, please take the time to read it all thoroughly. It may be quite lengthy but we consider all information contained within to be important, also we hope that it will answer most of your questions and therefore save you a lot of time as you prepare for your trip. Don't hesitate to contact us if you require any clarification or further information.

Brief history of North Korea

Korea's history spans over 5000 years. Due to its strategic geographical location, neighbouring China, Japan and Russia, the peninsula has often been the field of battle of foreign powers and is now inextricably enmeshed in the global political climate. Japan occupied Korea from 1910 until the end of the Second World War whereupon the Russians took the surrender in the north and the Americans to the south on the 38th parallel. This was meant to be a temporary border however due to mistrust between Russian and America and the outbreak of the Cold War the line became permanent. Tension between the two halves led to the outbreak of the Korean War, 1950-1953 (Fatherland Liberation War) which has left the country divided until the present day. North Koreans prefer their country to be called DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea).

A background to tours in North Korea

Babel Travel's local North Korean operator specialises in travel to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), commonly known as North Korea. They are an expert in getting you into the country and making sure you have the best itinerary and are aware of the restrictions and behaviour required whilst touring such a unique destination. They ensure our clients see the highlights of the country and have as much contact with the public as possible. Because of their long history of tourism to the DPRK (they started running tours in 1993) there are certain tour sights and activities only available to Babel Travel. Unlike some travel agencies they won't just hand you a ticket and wish you luck. They know more about North Korea tourism than anyone and they do not disappoint.

They assist the Lonely Planet, Bradt Guides and Rough Guides with their travel publications and are the only recognised specialists in DPRK tourism. They have been running regular trips to the remote Chilbo and Paekdu mountains, even staying in the homes of local Koreans in the Mount Paekdu region.

DPRK (North Korea) today

2001 marked the end of what the Koreans have called the 'Arduous March' - the food and economic crisis of the late '90s. Though still extremely serious the situation has been largely 'stabilised' due in part to the foreign aid agencies who have been working in the DPRK.

Foreign hard currency is being actively sought and there is greater contact with the outside world. Whilst some would herald this as the country opening up we would be less speculative and see it as a very gradual and controlled change over time.

The labelling of DPRK as part of the 'Axis of Evil' and as one of the 'outposts of tyranny' continues to antagonise North Korean/US politics and keep relations volatile. However in spite of this and ongoing tensions over the Korean nuclear program opportunities occasionally arise for improvement in relations which means there is at least a chance of things cooling off. North and South Korean relations have fluctuated over the years – the only way to keep up to date is to read the current news and of course visit the DPRK and read the Pyongyang Times! The talks in June 2000 between Kim Jong Il and Kim Dae Jung, then ROK (South Korea) president, were a significant step in terms of trying to break the 55 year old deadlock. Talks have resumed, stalled and resumed again and the agenda (which includes plans to bridge the division of the country and to continue the family reunions) is still a long way off being put into practice.

However, part of the rail network has been reconnected which will hopefully allow South Korean goods to pass through North Korea and into Russia/Europe and if it succeeds it will mark a significant step forward. The continuing operation of the Kaesong Industrial Park where South Korean companies employ North Korean labour may also encourage further co-operative projects. South Korean tourists can visit the north on certain occasions, particularly during the mass games.

Meanwhile, the nuclear standoff continues to threaten the stability of the region and until this is resolved it is unlikely there is going to be significant positive change, North Korea continues to make headlines in the west for what are seen as provocative actions but through all this it has still been possible to visit as a tourist.

A further small step forward in the diplomatic process was taken in October of 2007 with the visit of then South Korean President Roh Moo-Hyun to Pyongyang; he crossed the DMZ by land and drove up the reunification highway to the capital where he was met by North Korean leader Kim Jong Il and the two had meetings to discuss various issues, some important points were agreed upon at that time but the main value of the summit was to keep things moving forward at least incrementally although actual reunification appears no more imminent than before the meeting it does at least keep the possibility alive that the small points of agreement may one day begin to snowball into more substantive achievements on that score.

On the international front, of significance is the establishment of diplomatic links over the past decade. The DPRK now has diplomatic links with almost all European nations as well as Australia and Canada amongst others.

Tourism in the DPRK

We run group tours where you join other travellers from around the world and travel together into the DPRK. Tourism to the DPRK is expensive but prices are all inclusive from Beijing and for the service you get from the Koreans it is money well spent. You will only require money for gifts and beverages and also for tickets to any special events that we may attend such as the mass games or the circus. The tour is in relative luxury although this contrasts with the fact that the country is still having a serious food shortage (though experts are saying that this has now 'stabilised') and infrastructure/potable water supply in the more rural areas, etc. is not of the same standard as in Pyongyang.

We have taken advice from experts in Korean politics and international organisations and the majority tell us the greater exposure North Korea has to the outside world, the better. The itinerary will take you on the trip of a lifetime revealing a catalogue of revolutionary monuments, sculptures and spectacular architecture. You will learn about the Korean Juche Idea and how Koreans perceive the world as well as how they spend their day-to-day life. We travel from Pyongyang to various locations around the country including a visit to the last of the Cold War frontiers at Panmunjom. The highlights include the contact (albeit limited) that we have with the Korean public. Every tourist who has travelled with us has said it has been one of the highlights in their world travels.

Your tour and who can and can't go...

Journalists or Photographers; We CANNOT take professional or semi professional journalists or photographers into DPRK, though we are very willing to assist them in finding out the current situation in the country. We are in no way prepared to compromise the safety of our Korean guides for journalists/photographers who attempt to pass themselves off as tourists. We cannot allow the writing of articles or publishing of photographs from our trips without prior permission and we would be obliged to take proceedings against anyone who breaks our trust.

US and Japanese citizens; Previously, US and Japanese passport holders were only admitted to the country during the Arirang Mass Games and were limited to staying for 4 nights only, however as of 2010 this policy has changed and our 11 day tour is available to American and Japanese citizens. US and Japanese passport holders are now granted 8 day/7 night DPRK visas but not permitted to take overland trains in/out of North Korea. US and Japanese passport holders must fly to/from Beijing/Pyeongyang and can therefore only join our 11 day tour.

Korean (South or North Korean)-Americans are also able to travel with us, as are Israeli nationals.

Unfortunately we are unable to take in ROK (South Korean) passport holders.

Group tours

Most people travel to the DPRK only once, therefore we strongly believe you should get the most out of your trip and our group tours are the best way of doing this. We offer visits that are unique to Babel Travel and are also accompanied by one of our western staff - a DPRK specialist – which ensures you have access to those opportunities that cannot be pre-arranged. These tours will get you closer to the real Korea.

The tourism season in North Korea runs from February to November (early Dec/late Jan visits are possible but it is very cold). We run tours throughout the season, most of them coinciding with the dates of major festivals and commemorative dates in the DPRK. The group sizes for these tours vary greatly; tours on major holidays are obviously more popular.

Independent tours

An independent tour is a great way to travel to the country if you don't want to travel as part of a group, or if your travel dates don't match our group tour dates. With an independent tour you can choose your dates of travel, methods of entry and exit and also the itinerary can be tailored to suit your requests. As with our group tours, we offer different standards of independent tours for different costs. Independent tours are more

expensive than group tours but do offer more flexibility.

Tours can be as short as 3 days up to one week – the maximum that we recommend you stay is 8 nights. On the website there are sample itineraries for a 4 night trip, these are only to give you an idea of what is possible, if you would like to go for shorter or longer, please let us know and we can send you an itinerary tailored to your needs. If you would like a particular focus or if you have a 'wish list' of things you would like to include then we will do our best to fit it all in. We will also make recommendations as to how you can get the most out of your trip. We are the specialists and as we actually visit the DPRK regularly we are in the know as to what is possible.

We can also organise special interest tours such as football tours, golf tours, etc. If you have any special suggestions we would be glad to hear them.

Please note that 'independent' still means being accompanied by your Korean guides everywhere you travel!

Important dates in the DPRK

The following is a list of the major holidays in DPRK, on most of these days each year there are public holidays and associated events, the exact nature of these events changes annually according to which festival is the biggest of that year. We make sure there is a group tour running over each of these holidays, if you are doing an independent tour it is a good idea to try and coincide your trip with one of the dates below.

February 16th – Birthday of Leader Kim Jong Il (1942)
April 15th – Birthday of President Kim Il Sung (1912)
May 1st – International Labour Day (May Day)
July 27th – Anniversary of Korean War Armistice (1953)
August 14th – Liberation Day (1945)
September 9th – National Day (1948)
October 10th – Anniversary of Workers Party Foundation (1945)

Mass Games

Since 2002, the DPRK has hosted the full scale Mass Games named 'Arirang'. The mass games involves over 100,000 performers in a synchronised mass gymnastics and dance extravaganza, the likes of which is impossible to see anywhere else. This is an art form that the DPRK has developed over the decades and takes place in the May Day stadium (the world's largest). The Mass Games are planned for 2011 between August 1st and September 9th. We have 2 departures of our 15 day trip that coincide with the Mass Games so you can be there for this spectacular event.

Climate and weather

Korea has a temperate climate with distinct seasonal changes. Early spring (April) is sunny but chilly, late spring warms up considerably. Summer (June to September) is hot and humid and is the rainy season, so please bring a light raincoat/umbrella. Autumn (October to November/December) has marked variations between warm and cold but it rarely rains. Winter (December to February/March) has clear skies, not much snow in Pyongyang but it's very cold!

There are no clothing markets that it is possible to visit during the tour so each person will

have only what they take with them, therefore we strongly advise that you over-pack as regards clothes for all eventualities. The northern areas of the country are significantly colder than Pyongyang so if your tour is going to Mount Paekdu in any season it is worth taking along a warm jacket, hat, gloves etc just in case. Outside of the summer months it is usually much colder inside buildings than outside due to the lack of heating and overall size of some of the museums, etc, therefore it is always best to take a sweater or jacket out when the tour departs for the day. For more detailed weather forecasting and other information check www.weather.com or similar websites.

Visa's for China and North Korea (DPRK)

You will require a passport valid for at least 6 months after the date of your trip, a DPRK visa, as well as a double entry visa for entry into China. Visas are not issued at the Beijing airport.

China visa; You must obtain a **double-entry visa for China**. It can be obtained through a local Chinese consulate or embassy, or through a visa service company. Please allow yourself 4 weeks to successfully apply for your double-entry visa. It is occasionally possible to obtain a re-entry visa at the Chinese Embassy in Pyongyang, however this is closed for weekends and holidays in both DPRK and China so is not to be relied upon as anything but a last resort, please do your very best to obtain a double entry Chinese visa for the trip and inform us if you have not been able to do so. Please note that visas are the responsibility of the individual traveller. The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as much as possible, but rules do change. It is important that you check for yourself. Citizens from Singapore, Brunei and Japan are allowed up to 15 days stay without a visa. All other nationalities require a visa. When filling out the visa application form, please list the hotel in China specified in the start, continuing or finishing point listed in the trip notes. You require a double entry visa to complete this trip.

North Korean (DPRK) visa; At this point you will have already applied for this visa through us, we don't require your actual passport for the visa at any time, just the passport copy you will have already sent us along with 2 passport photos. The visas are issued separate to the passports and passports are not stamped at any time. The tour leader and guides retain possession of the visas at all times during the trip.

How to apply for your North Korea visa

The following information tells you how to apply for your North Korean visa! We ask for all documents to be submitted a minimum of 4 weeks in advance of tour departure (in some circumstances this can be shortened so please do contact us if you are unsure).

*Check your passport is up to date and then fill out the online visa application form which will be sent to you. This application form will then be submitted electronically.

*Please scan and email us a copy of the ID page of your passport – please make sure this is the same passport you used for the online application!!!

*Please also send us via email a passport photo ideally in Jpeg or Pdf format. This must be a clear, recent photo or the visa authorities will reject it. Make sure you shrink files before sending (no larger than 200kb please!).

*Unless you have specified otherwise (see below), the visa will be issued and collected on

your behalf in Beijing – we use the passport copy and photo for this, we do not need your actual passport at any time.

*Make sure you have a double entry visa for China. It may be possible for the Chinese Embassy in DPRK to issue a tourist re-entry visa but you will need a minimum of 6 months validity in your passport for this as well as a blank page. Please note that sometimes the Chinese embassy in Pyongyang will only issue a visa valid for 10 days upon return to China.

*Once we have all your application documents we will send you an invoice so that you can pay the deposit for your trip.

Collecting your North Korean visa

We arrange for the vast majority of visas to be issued in Beijing, this is the simplest and most convenient place to get everything done. However, we can also arrange to have the visas issued in a DPRK Embassy overseas if you live in the UK or Hong Kong. If you choose to have the visa issued in your home country then please be aware you will be required to go to the Embassy shortly before the tour to collect the visa in person. If you are leaving the country more than a few days before the DPRK tour begins then we suggest you opt to have the visa issued in Beijing.

Please note that when you apply for the tour (ie have sent us your application form and passport copy) we consider this to be a solid booking, if you then cancel the trip the cancellation fee policy will be invoked if relevant, please see TERMS & CONDITIONS for further details.

IMPORTANT: If we have to change the place of visa issuance because you leave your home country early or if you have given us incorrect passport details we will have to pass on the charge of EUR 100 (which the Koreans charge us).

Important information about obtaining North Korean visas!

As is standard in the tourism industry we need to make all our tourists aware that Babel Travel can offer no guarantee of the success of the visa applications, or that the tour itself will be operated as advertised. We cannot confirm the DPRK visa until it is actually stamped and issued which takes place only a few days before your departure to DPRK.

Do note that our North Korean tour company has operated thousands of tours over the last 17 years and have had only a handful of applications refused, and arbitrary denial of permission to travel is exceptionally rare indeed and we expect to be able to secure a visa for all applications that we make. If for any reason we cannot get you a visa Babel Travel cannot be held liable for the travel and hardship expenses incurred in getting to Beijing. You will of course receive a full refund of any money paid to Babel Travel.

Our itinerary

Babel Travel will do their best to ensure the itinerary is as near as possible to the one we advertise, however, if on arrival it changes we cannot be held responsible. Even in the case where we promote 'special occasions' such as Mass Games we cannot guarantee access to the event. We advertise and promote our tours according to the advice given by the Korea International Travel Company and their decision is final. We cannot offer refunds for tours once you are in the DPRK.

Insurance

We cannot be held responsible for any mishap to yourself or your property and in particular any consequence or effects of flight/train cancellation/delay, robbery, sickness, Government intervention or other such happenings. You are advised to insure yourself against any possible risk that may occur and in particular to ensure that sufficient insurance has been obtained in respect of any dependant relatives. It is your responsibility to be covered by insurance which must include adequate cover for baggage, medical expenses and the cost of repatriation should you become too ill to continue. Any claims must be directed to your insurers. If you have a medical condition which may affect your health or safety in North Korea you must inform us before visa application.

Our tour prices do not include insurance. However, it is a condition of joining our tours that travellers are fully insured for any medical expenses they might incur while travelling. At the start of your tour the Tour Leader will ask to see your insurance documents and will note down the policy number and emergency contact number.

We recommend a comprehensive travel insurance policy that covers repatriation and evacuation in case of a medical emergency, serious injury, cancellation and curtailment as well as covering baggage and valuables. You may also need specific cover for expensive camera equipment.

Many credit card companies offer complementary travel insurance. However the majority of such policies offer virtually no cover and cannot be accepted as adequate travel insurance. If you are planning on using credit card insurance you must bring along proof that the policy covers medical emergencies. Failure to be able to provide such proof to the Tour Leader will result in you being compelled to purchase a new approved policy before you can join the tour. If your travel insurance was not purchased from Babel Travel or our agents, you will be required to sign a waiver absolving the company and its agents should your policy not be adequate.

Any clients unable to provide proof of adequate travel insurance cover will be required to purchase a policy or will not be allowed to join the tour.

Most insurers require a local police report to support claims for loss of or damage to personal property. Our office can only issue a letter verifying that personal items have been lost or damaged on tour of 50 USD in value and the tour leader was informed of the loss or damage at the time that it occurred. We recommend Ingle Insurance for this particular trip; <https://www.ingletravel.com/en/travel/specialRisk.asp>

Please also make sure you have access to an additional USD200, to be used when unforeseen incidents or circumstances outside our control (eg. a natural disaster, or an outbreak of bird flu) necessitate a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence but it is well worth being prepared!

Before traveling with Babel Travel you must take out travel insurance to cover medical and evacuation costs. Babel Travel cannot be held liable for any medical costs whatsoever.

What the group tour cost covers

The tour is sold all-inclusive from Beijing to DPRK and back again and so the only extra costs you will have are as follows;

Tour fee includes the following:

- transportation from Beijing to the DPRK and back to Beijing
- all meals on the tour except on the train into/out of the DPRK
- hotel accommodation
- two Korean tour guides and a driver per group
- all transportation in the DPRK
- all entry fees for attractions such as museums etc in the DPRK

Not included in the tour fee:

- spending money for drinks and souvenirs
- DPRK visa fee (EUR 30 in Beijing for non-US citizens, EUR 40 for US citizens; fees at other embassies vary)
- tip for the guides (approx EUR 60 total)
- meals on the train into/out of DPRK (bring your own food or eat dinner and lunch in the buffet car approximately EUR 5 per person)
- entry tickets for Mass Games and special events if applicable – for example Revolutionary Opera if being staged, or a visit to the funfair
- the lift up the Juche Tower has to be paid in the DPRK (EUR 5)
- meals will have a complimentary beer but you will have to pay for extra drinks above those provided (these are inexpensive though)

Terms & Conditions

A deposit of 50% of total cost of your tour should be made on booking with the other half paid 40 days before the commencement of the trip. Alternatively you can opt to transfer the full amount. Please contact us for bank details.

NOTE: ALL bank charges should be paid by the remitter. Please put only your name as the reference – DO NOT WRITE DPRK/NORTH KOREA.

Cancellation

If Babel Travel cannot arrange visas or for some reason it is not possible to travel to DPRK at the specified time (or you cannot make rescheduled dates) a full refund will be made. If the tourist cancels themselves the charges laid out in the description below apply. We realize that in many instances, cancelling a trip is due to circumstances beyond your control. If you do cancel but are able to make another trip at a later date we will do our best to offer you a discount.

Note that with all refunds Babel Travel will not be held liable for any bank charges.

No. of days before tour departs	% of cost to be paid as cancellation fee
0 (day of departure)	100%
1	80%
2-10	50%
11-40	20%

*Please note that once we have confirmed receipt of your tour application form it becomes a confirmed booking and from that moment all charges apply. If you do not intend to go ahead with the trip then you must inform us more than 40 days ahead of departure or you

will be subject to relevant cancellation fees.

Important information about our group tours

We require travellers on ALL tours to come to our start point hotel in Beijing 4PM (16:00) on day 1 of the trip for a tour briefing and the final visa preparations regardless of whether you have had the visa issued overseas or not. If you absolutely cannot attend this meeting then please let us know as early as possible and alternative arrangements can be made. We will need about 1.5 hours of your time at this point. This applies to both group & independent tours.

We are looking forward to meeting you in Beijing. Before you depart please take the time to read the following.

Please note you will need to print and fill in the journalist and insurance contract at the end of the notes and bring it with you to the pre-tour briefing which will be held at our start point hotel in Beijing at 4pm on Day 1 of the trip.

Guidelines to travelling in the DPRK

Please read the points below and inform us immediately if any affect you:

- 1) Do you have any medical condition that could cause a problem in the DPRK?
- 2) Are you allergic to anything or do you take any medication that we should be aware of?
- 3) You are responsible for your personal travel insurance which must cover you for any medical /personal emergency in the DPRK including evacuation. We cannot take you into North Korea unless you have personal travel insurance to cover any emergency.
- 4) You must have a dual entry Chinese visa before you visit DPRK (or a multi entry visa).
- 5) If you are a professional or semi-professional journalist or photographer we cannot take you to the DPRK on a tourist visa – please contact us.
- 6) Before your tour we will send you a more detailed list of behaviour whilst in the DPRK and we will also give you a 1 hour briefing at our office/or your Beijing hotel the day before your trip commences.

Transportation

Flights to and from the DPRK are on the national airline, Air Koryo, or Air China - these are the only 2 airlines flying between Beijing and Pyongyang. When in DPRK you will travel by bus or minibus depending on the size of the group.

Arrival in the DPRK

When arriving or leaving by train the procedures take much longer; customs officials board the train and hand out forms that need to be completed and then take these in along with your passports and visas for checking, while this is being done they conduct a hand-search of all baggage, this can be quite thorough so be prepared for it. The customs officers are not out to steal anything or extort anyone, it is just that they don't have an X-Ray machine at the station so have to do it all by hand, this can take more than an hour for each carriage. After this is done the passports and visas are returned and the train continues its journey. At no point do you have to get off the train, or take your bags off the train, the bogies do not need to be changed and the same carriage continues for the rest of the journey. If you enter DPRK by train the Korean guides meet you on arrival at Pyongyang station.

If arriving at the airport in Pyongyang, you will go through Immigration and Customs which is a reasonably straightforward, albeit slow, procedure. You will need to fill out a customs declaration and entry form, along with a health declaration on the plane or in the Arrival Hall. Once you have passed through Passport Control you will enter a small baggage claim area to collect your bags. These bags will be X-rayed and may be inspected before you can leave the baggage claim area. A small number of trolleys are available to move your baggage outside to the waiting tour bus, this is where you are met by the guides who will accompany and lead you for the rest of the trip.

Baggage and international flights

For flights between China and the DPRK on Air Koryo your total baggage allowance is 20kg plus one carry-on bag. The airline may charge passengers for overweight luggage. If you have more than 20kg of luggage, or have items you don't wish to carry with you into the DPRK, luggage storage is available at the Beijing Capital International Airport for a small fee. Alternatively, you can store small items and valuables at our office in Beijing; however, we can't take responsibility for any loss/damage. Please note that Air Koryo operates Ilyushin and Tupolev model planes, these do not have a lot of storage space inside the cabin so only carry on small bags, bags the size of which are regularly carried on flights in US, Europe, etc cannot be accommodated by the overhead bins on these flights.

All of our tours costs are priced using Air Koryo, if you use Air China the price will be slightly higher. Air Koryo flies from Beijing Capital Airport Terminal 2 and offers economy and business class. Air China flies from Beijing Capital Airport Terminal 3 and offers economy and first class (the latter limited to 8 seats).

NOTE: The Wednesday Air China flight is currently not in operation and isn't expected to resume in 2011.

International flights

International flights are not included in the price of the trip. Babel Travel can assist with finding you the right flight. The tour price quoted is land only.

Departure tax

All departure taxes should be included in your international flight ticket back to your home country.

Trains

Trains depart Saturday, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Beijing to Pyongyang – depart 17:30, arrive Pyongyang at 19:00 the next day
Pyongyang to Beijing – depart 10:10, arrive Beijing at 08:23 the next day

NOTE: Standard soft sleeper cabins four bunks. No smoking in the carriages. Meals are available from the dining car.

Customs

The usual list of prohibited items applies ie; arms, drugs, pornography, etc. Immigration officers will examine your baggage and will frown on books/articles about North Korea and

books/magazines from South Korea. Please do not bring in any item that may risk confiscation – we can look after these in our office in Beijing until you return. If you wish to take in Bibles or other religious material please contact us before you depart and we can advise.

Early check-in throughout the trip

Throughout the trip we request that our hotels prepare rooms in time for our arrival, however this is not always possible which means we will not be able to check-in. Instead we can store our luggage and explore our new destination.

Additional accommodation in Beijing

If you have purchased pre or post trip accommodation (only when available), you may be required to change rooms from your trip accommodation for these extra nights.

Arrival and departure transfers

Please note that arrival and departures transfers are included in the price of this trip. This is regardless of when you arrive in or depart from China.

Freedom

You are free to walk around the grounds of the hotel but elsewhere you must have your guides with you. On group tours we make sure that we go for gentle walks where possible. On independent tours you can slow down the pace if you wish – just ask the guides. It is worth suggesting to the guides that you wish for a stroll along the river or in Moran Park, they will accompany you but it is a great way to see life as 'normal'. If you leave your camera on the bus etc the guides are a lot happier to give you more freedom.

Security and crime

Petty crime is exceptionally rare in DPRK. Nonetheless, it always pays to be careful when you are traveling especially in major cities. Do not carry large amounts of money around. Always lock room doors. There is a safe in each room in our Pyongyang hotel. Please do use this as the hotel will not take any responsibility for lost or stolen items.

Drugs and the law

The possession or use of any illegal drugs is strictly prohibited in all the countries we visit. When overseas you are subject to local laws and the penalties for breaking the law are severe. In order to safeguard the interests of the group as a whole, our Tour Leaders are instructed to insist that any person found to be in possession of drugs leave the group immediately. The Tour Leader's decision on this matter is final. If you need to carry certain drugs with you for purposes of medication, please ensure that you also carry a copy of your prescription. Local medications and health care are available with military facilities providing world class medical attention in emergencies.

Babel Travel's philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make our destinations such special places. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our Tour Leader has the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

Health and hygiene

As elsewhere in Asia, the most common problem experienced in the DPRK is a stomach upset or perhaps a cold. We recommend you pack your own anti-diarrheal medications and any other personal products you think you might need. There are almost no drugs or any of the usual medicaments to be had in the DPRK, not even Tylenol/acetaminophen. It's a good idea to bring a broad-spectrum antibiotic in case your diarrhea turns out to be bacterial in nature, or you sustain an infection of some kind. On group tours your tour leader will carry a basic first aid kit, but cannot prescribe, recommend or give you any prescription medicines, so we strongly encourage you to discuss with your doctor what you need to bring.

We also recommend you bring a duplicate supply of any prescription drugs you regularly take, and keep them separately from the main supply, in case of loss. Medical facilities in the DPRK are basic, with very few drugs and little equipment available. Hospitals and clinics are subject to power cuts. Blood and blood products may not be screened. There is often a DPRK doctor at the hotel but in more serious cases please ask your guide to take you to the compound of the WFP (Munsudong) where there is a UN surgery. If you do become seriously ill you will need to be evacuated to Beijing for treatment.

What to take

What you luggage you need to bring will vary according to the trip style you have chosen, the countries you are visiting and when you are travelling. As a guideline, you should pack as lightly as possible (under 10kgs is a great idea!) On the vast majority of our trips you are expected to carry your own luggage over short to medium distances (no longer than 10 minutes).

Due to this nature of our trips, cumbersome suitcases and wheelie bags are not recommended for Babel Travellers! Most group members carry their luggage in a backpack, although an overnight bag with a shoulder strap would suffice if you travel lightly. Smaller bags with wheels are acceptable (if it has carry straps) but you will need to carry these bags up and down stairs, over bumpy roads, through muddy streets etc. You will also need a day pack/bag to carry water and a camera etc for day/overnight trips or walking tours. Weight restrictions on local airlines and even overhead luggage space can be dramatically less than international allocations or space.

It is very important that your bags can be locked. It may be necessary to store your luggage separately (and unattended) from the group. The smaller your bag is the better for you and other passengers on local transport, for when it comes to traveling on local buses and trains it's usually only the smaller bags that will fit into the storage areas. If your bag does not fit in these areas then often the only place to put it is on your seat or on your lap.

Basic packing list

- *Torch/flashlight – not needed in Pyongyang but areas outside the capital are quite susceptible to power cuts
- *Immodium or charcoal tablets – some people have a bad reaction to food they are not used to, this will help you if you fall prey to Pyongyang-belly
- *Digital camera memory card – it is not possible to buy more in DPRK if you run out, and you will take more pictures than you expect. A spare camera battery is also advisable
- *Alarm clock – the tour involves some early starts and you won't have your mobile phone to wake you up!

- *A good supply of any prescription medicines you need – these will not be available in DPRK
- *Spending money – although it is not a shoppers' paradise there is also no way of getting more money, we suggest that EUR 600 would be more than adequate for 13 days in DPRK as all meals and transport, etc are already included in the price of the trip.
- *Small change – this is hard to come by in DPRK and if you only bring large denomination notes then you may trouble ever buying anything! Euros, US Dollars, and RMB are accepted everywhere so get plenty of small bills in China or lots of \$1 bills, very useful for small purchases
- *Travel documents: (your passport, visa, travel insurance, flights tickets, travel voucher)
- *Health requirements and any necessary medication
- *Money: cash (for North Korea)/debit/credit cards (for China), money bag or pouch
- *Antibacterial hand gel (wet wipes etc) – on occasion there may be no soap available
- *Pocket tissues - most public bathrooms don't have toilet paper
- *Lightweight travel towel
- *Ear plugs
- *Phrase book
- *Sunscreen (with high sun protection factor and lip balm) & sunglasses
- *Day pack to carry your personal needs during the day
- *A lock for your backpacks - small and large
- *Conservative attire
- *Comfortable fully covered shoes with good grip and ankle support
- *Warm clothes (it will be very cold in the mountain regions)

Optional items;

- *Photos of home and family – the guides and other Koreans like to see what the lives of their tourists are like, makes a good ice-breaker for conversation
- *Gifts for guides and driver – makes a good impression and shows an appreciation for their work, anything from cigarettes to face cream is good, remember this is a gift not aid so bring something quality rather than quantity

Don't bring;

- *Books about DPRK or the Korean situation
- *American or South Korean flags or clothes prominently showing these
- *Radios
- *Books or magazines/newspapers from South Korea or in the Korean language
- *DVD movies
- *Clothes with political slogans

Things you can take which you may think you can't take;

- *Notebook (not a computer!) and pen
- *American money
- *Long hair
- *Jeans
- *Video camera

Medical

It is sensible to bring a small personal first aid kit – plasters, aspirin etc. In case of mild diarrhoea bring Immodium or activated charcoal tablets (more natural method) and oral rehydration salts. Hospitals in DPRK can provide basic treatment. For more serious cases

there is a surgery in the diplomatic compound and basic treatment here is possible. If the situation is very serious then your insurance should cover repatriation or a flight to an international hospital. Good international-standard hospitals exist in Beijing and Hong Kong. You must have adequate medical insurance and personal insurance before visiting DPRK.

Money matters

Tourist purchases are priced in Euros (€). Bring enough Euros for your trip, in cash, with plenty of small denominations. You can also use renminbi (Chinese currency) and US Dollars for purchases, and Japanese Yen if you happen to have them. Credit cards and travelers' cheques are not accepted. There are no ATMs. Foreigners may not use DPRK currency (Won) but it may be obtained for souvenir purposes only.

There are plenty of ATMs and money changing facilities in Beijing.

As of December 2010, €1 = 9 Chinese Yuan Renminbi (CNY).

Spending money

Take EURO cash into the DPRK as most items are now paid for in EURO. Official exchange rates are around EUR 1 to 170 won but foreigners are expected to use foreign – not local – currency. It is also possible to pay in USD and Chinese RMB, however, exchange rates may be higher than normal.

Visa cards and other currencies other than € or USD cannot be used so please make sure you take enough cash to last you the whole trip.

For spending money we would suggest that around EUR 500-600 per person is fine (for 13 days in the DPRK). Please note that this amount doesn't take into account the purchase of items such as Mass Games tickets or expensive souvenirs like gold coins, ceramics or paintings!

Food and drink

Those living near Korean communities may already be familiar with Korean cuisine, of which barbecue perhaps is most well known. Other dishes include naengmyon (cold noodles served in a broth with a slice of meat and an egg), chicken stuffed with ginseng, pulgogi (barbecued beef which you cook yourself), kimchi (pickled cabbage), and bibimbap (vegetables, meat and a fried egg served on top of rice). Koreans eat dog meat as a delicacy and it is not served to tourists as a rule (if you don't know what the meat you are eating is, it isn't dog!). Local beer is good and, on occasion, ginseng wine or rice wine (soju) is available. Vegetable dishes can be very good and vegetarians do quite well. Vegans and those requiring strict Halal or Kosher food cannot be accommodated.

Expect the offerings in the DPRK to be basic but adequate. Breakfast can be on the dull side (eggs and bread). Dairy products are not common, except for breakfast yoghurt, triangles of cheese spread imported from China and powdered milk. It's a good idea to bring your favorite snacks from home to perk up your palate (be sure they travel well). A thermos of boiled hot water is provided in your Pyongyang hotel room – but nothing is provided to put in it, so you may like to bring some teabags or coffee for yourself.

Food / water precautions

We do our best to ensure the highest level of cleanliness at all of the hotels we use, but it pays to be prudent. The following are some reminders to help you stay healthy: Note that these are recommendations; the food in DPRK is generally clean and perfectly safe to eat.

Avoid

- Tap water - it is best to consume only bottled water
- Ice (freezing does not disinfect water)
- Milk (unless it has been boiled or comes out of a can)
- Ice cream
- Uncooked vegetables
- Fruit (if not peeled by you)
- Home-made liquor

Safe Foods and Beverages

- Bottled water
- Carbonated soft drinks
- Hot tea or coffee
- Cheese (if the outside has been peeled or it is in a sealed package)
- Fruit (if peeled by you)
- Vegetables (if thoroughly cooked)
- Beer or commercially-produced liquors

Gifts

If you care to bring any personal gifts they are bound to be appreciated. Food items, such as apples or other fruit which will last the journey from Beijing, cookies, etc. Gifts for children such as crayons and picture books are an ice-breaker. Scenic postcards of your home or photographs of your family are nice to show. Gifts which are local to your hometown are also a nice idea.

You will be assigned two guides and a driver when in the DPRK. It is worth bringing in three relatively good gifts for these people who will be with you throughout the week. We suggest you give these during the first few days as a small gesture. Korean males smoke like chimneys and if you do not mind promoting smoking then it is a good idea to bring a carton or two of Western cigarettes or Chinese brand Zhong Nan Hai (about RMB 60/EUR 6 for 10 packets) to share amongst the driver and guides. If you do not want to promote smoking then coffee/chocolate or another gift would be appropriate. You might also have a female guide so bring in something suitable for them such as chocolate or some cosmetics gift such as hand cream. Gifts which are a specialty of your home country/hometown are always a good idea.

You will also meet several individual guides who guide you at the major sights and also waitresses and hotel staff. Small gifts such as pens, cigarettes, lighters, cosmetics, packets of biscuits, chocolates, etc are worth having to hand. It is probably advisable to make sure what you do take in is of reasonable quality as opposed to quantity. Most people are happy to receive a gift, though sometimes it is easier to ask your guides to offer them. It is also worth taking in fruit for you and the guides as there is not so much available in the DPRK. We realise this all sounds a bit excessive however there are very few goods available in the DPRK and it is a great way of thanking people who really do make an effort for you. It is more the act of giving the gift than of the content. Also bring in luxuries for yourself - it is an intensive trip and also worth having a good book to take time off!

Bring a bit of home to show the Koreans

We recommend you bring a selection of photos to let them see a little of how you live. If you have a Polaroid camera the giving of a photograph makes a great gift - or you can post photos to us once you are back home and we will take them in next time we visit.

Making the most of your trip

The Koreans are very wary of foreigners but having re-met many time and time again it is clear that you can have a great impact if you are open and friendly. In 1993, the Koreans would be very wary and ignore you. However, they are now responding with 'hello' and often take a second glance at you. It really helps to smile and greet adults in Korean as well as wave frantically at children, etc.

Clothing

Dress in the DPRK is modest. Flashy, skimpy, or over-casual clothing is frowned upon and will do nothing to enhance the North Koreans' image of westerners. Koreans always try to dress their best and will only very rarely look scruffy, they do not require visitors to adhere to these standards but it would be polite to make an effort to look presentable. On holidays and during visits to important sites, local women often wear the Korean national dress (choson-bok) in bright colors and men may wear a jacket or a dress shirt and slacks.

The only place where there is a dress code on this trip is at the Kumsusan Memorial Palace, the Mausoleum of Kim Il Sung. Here, men will need a collared shirt and tie and women should wear more formal clothing. Open-toed shoes should not be worn by either sex. It is a site of great importance to the Korean people and you may be refused admittance if you don't adhere to the dress code.

Media & Communications

Local Korean and satellite channels are available in your Pyongyang hotel, including BBC World. The Pyongyang Times is published in English in the DPRK and also available on the web at <http://www.kcckp.net/en/periodic/times/index.php>.

Mail

You can buy postcards and stamps at your hotels and postcards are available at most tourist sites. Mail usually takes one to two weeks to reach the U.S. or Europe. In the DPRK, be aware when writing home that your letters and postcards may be read.

Telephone and fax

International Direct Dial telephone and fax are available in hotels although, in the DPRK, connections aren't reliable and calls may be monitored. Phone calls to Europe/Australia cost around 4 Euros per minute. There is no charge for receiving calls in your room.

Making a phone call within DPRK is possible, though monitored. Phone calls are very expensive so check the rates before you call. We advise not to phone from the bedroom. A quick call can be made to your friends to give them your room number and they can ring you back. Post can also be sent from the hotel.

It is possible to receive/send faxes from our hotel in Pyongyang. Remember faxes will be read before being delivered to you.

Mobile phone/computers

Cellular, satellite, or radio phones, iPhones, iPods, Blackberry's and laptops computers are prohibited in the DPRK. All will be confiscated at the border and returned on your departure, but if you are entering and leaving by different routes we recommend you leave these goods in the office safe at our start point hotel in Beijing.

Internet and email

The internet is not available anywhere in DPRK, however it may be possible to send an email from our hotel in Pyongyang using the hotel's own email system. This correspondence will be monitored and there's no way to receive a reply.

Photography

Photography is possible but it is limited. Bring as much film and as large a memory card as you will need for your trip – or more. You might take more photos than you expect and it is not possible to obtain more in the country. Video cameras are allowed but as they arouse more suspicion than regular cameras you need to be extra careful when using them. Lenses over 150mm are officially not permitted in DPRK, but there's almost never a problem taking them in.

Be very careful what you photograph – the golden rule is to always ask your guide or tour leader; you will be under close scrutiny and so will what you photograph.

Additionally:

- Don't photograph anything or anyone military or strategic – this includes soldiers.
- Photography from the bus window is usually not allowed.
- Don't take photographs of people without asking – many Koreans don't want to be photographed.
- Be extra cautious when taking photos at particularly venerated monuments so as not to cause offence. At the statue of Kim Il Sung at Mansudae Grand Monument, don't photograph behind the statue, its feet, or just a part of it.

Taking photos of soldiers, poverty, shops, housing, sneaked photos and close-ups of people without their express permission will cause serious problems - even 'day to day' scenes will cause problems for you, your group, or your guide. Just because a shot seems innocent or interesting to you doesn't guarantee someone else won't find your interest suspicious or threatening. Anything suspicious is likely to be reported and could either result in the trip being curtailed (or even cancelled) or your guides being made responsible for your actions. Turn to your trip leader for guidance on this as you travel around.

In the end, it pays to conform to the restrictions - if the group earns the confidence of the guides there will be considerable opportunities for photography, and you are less likely to miss anything. The itinerary may be subject to change upon arrival in DPRK. Because all sites on your itinerary have to be booked beforehand, request stops for photos or additions to the itinerary may not be possible.

Electricity

Electric current is both 220 and 110 volts AC, 60 Herz. The two-round-pronged plug (European style) is the most common but you do also get the two-flat-pin plugs (American style) and three angled flat blade sockets. We suggest that you bring a voltage adaptor or a dual-voltage appliance, and bring a replacement set of batteries.

Although there is a shortage of electricity in the DPRK, hotels have their own generators and, therefore, generally reliable power supplies. The only time you may notice power cuts is possibly in a restaurant and at night in Pyongyang. Have a flashlight handy!

Journalism

The laws of DPRK prohibit journalists and photographers (full or part-time) from traveling on tourist visas. We do not make the laws in DPRK but our work is subject to them, if a journalist/photographer poses as a tourist and manages to join one of our tours then our local North Korean tour operator will be put out of business (as happened to our North Korean tour operator for 9 months in 1997 when an undercover journalist joined a tour) and, more importantly the guides who we work with in DPRK who are responsible for the actions of the tourists while in their country would be endangered.

Since 1993 we have worked on film-making, sports and cultural exchanges, etc as well as tourism and are working to help open North Korea to the outside world and we want to continue in this business. We ask journalists/photographers to please respect our position and DO NOT APPLY for a visa with Babel Travel. We are happy to assist journalists/photographers with any information that they may require, with information on getting into the country and we can contact you when the rules are relaxed or opportunities appear.

Articles / blogs / publishing tour photographs online (ie Facebook!)

Babel Travel and our North Korean tour operator cannot allow the writing of articles/publishing of photographs from our trips without prior permission and we would be obliged to take proceedings against anyone who breaks our trust. If you plan on writing a blog, article or online journal, about the tour or putting photographs from the trip online please consult us. As much as we support dissemination of information we do have to protect our guides and ourselves.

Shopping

The DPRK is not a consumer culture so there is little to buy with the exception of souvenirs such as postcards, books, stamps, DVDs, CDs, videos and lapel pins. These are available in hotel shops and the Foreign Language Bookshop and Stamp Shop in Pyongyang. Books range in price from 2 Euros to 35 Euros, and are available on a variety of topics. You can usually buy ginseng. There are also some T-shirts, embroidery and traditional-style paintings for sale. Shops frequented by tourists have fixed prices – there is no bargaining unless a lot of purchases are being made. Guides do not make commission from shops so they will not take the group to shops just to make money.

Your Tour Leader

Your Babel Travel tour leader (whether it be a local or a westerner) is there to ensure that all aspects of the trip run smoothly. He/she will share their local knowledge, advise on how

to fill your free time and co-ordinate the day to day running of the tour, although occasionally he/she may need your understanding if things do not go according to plan. If you have any problems on the tour, please let your Tour Leader know so that steps can be taken to put it right. Tour Leaders are supported by our regionally based office staff and, in most cases, a locally based manager.

In North Korea we also use the services of specialist guides at sights of particular historical interest, and specialised mountain guides for any trekking/hiking activities in mountain regions. At Babel Travel we aim to support local guides who have specialised knowledge of the regions we visit - and who better to hear it from than the locals themselves?

Your group

On group trips you will be exposed to all the wonderful things that comes with experiencing a destination with like-minded people. Your fellow Babel Travellers will most likely come from all walks of life, and from different countries. We ask you to patience will all travellers for the sake of group dynamics. We want every one of you to have the best travel experience of your life. Being punctual helps the group. If you are asked to be in a place at a particular time, please ensure that you do so. Being late may mean you'll miss that special cultural performance, or in some cases completely miss an important connection or journey. The best groups are the ones that work together as a team!

Laundry

Some of our hotels offer a laundry service however this can be expensive. Self-service laundries are scarce in this region. We recommend you bring bio-degradable laundry soap and hand wash while travelling on your trip. Ask your leader who can point out the best places to do your laundry on the trip. They are usually at any 2 night stop to allow enough time for drying.

Tipping guidelines

DPRK is not a tipping culture, however it is customary to tip the tour guides and driver, there is no need to tip anyone else such as bellhops, waiters, etc. In fact we strongly discourage this practice as it sets a standard that is alien in these circumstances, this is true in China as well (don't even tip taxi drivers, it is not done), in brief tip nobody apart from your Korean tour guide! On group tours the tour leader will collect a group tip at the end of the tour and pass it on to the guides, we suggest something in the region of 60 Euros from each person in the group, which is then divided between the guides and driver.

Cross-cultural matters

Attitudes; It is worth saying a word here about attitudes – ours and the North Koreans'. It is likely that you know little of the reality of the DPRK, and the media tends to portray the country in a way which obscures the wider picture. However, we believe you've signed up for this trip because you're curious to see for yourself; you have an open mind, and want to learn more. You'll be more restricted on this trip than you are used to. The key to success is not to see this as an onerous requirement, and certainly not one to be 'got around', but just to accept that we have been invited to the DPRK on these terms, and to conform to them in return for a chance to visit this fascinating country.

Perception of foreigners; Koreans have long been wary of foreigners – the country has been known as the 'hermit kingdom' for historical as well as modern reasons. Koreans

suffered greatly under Japanese occupation and colonization from 1910 until 1945 when the country was liberated and immediately divided, this was followed by the war with the South and the U.S. which entrenched the division of the country.

Perceptions of Americans; At school and indeed throughout life they are told that Americans are 'imperialist aggressors' who deprive them of foreign trade, would like to deprive them of the right to nuclear power which America itself enjoys, and would like to overthrow their government. This (they believe) has caused the poverty, international opprobrium and isolation they experience. There is also a good deal of visible anti-American propaganda in the DPRK but it is not about the American people - it is about the abstract 'bogeyman.' Despite all this, the North Koreans have invited us as guests. Who is right and who is wrong, what's true and what's false – these should not be the issue on this trip – you are traveling to observe DPRK firsthand and how much you enjoy this trip will, more than usual, have to do with your approach to it, and what you put into it.

Co-operation with the guides; The key to getting the maximum out of this trip not only has to do with your willingness to accept North Korea and North Korean 'rules', and be flexible – it has to do with your relationship with the guides. It's important to understand this point. Being a guide is a privileged job in North Korea – it provides access to hard currency, decent plentiful food, and consumer gifts. However, the job comes with its difficulties, because the guides are held responsible for everything you do – even if they didn't see you do it, or couldn't stop you anyway. This means you are, in a sense, a risk for them. Be aware that if you cause a problem, even unwittingly, then as well as your entire tour group, it is the guide who will suffer as a result. So the more you co-operate with the guides and the more you show you are diplomatic, interested and fair, the better your experience will be, because the guides will trust you more and be more open to you. They control your visit, not you. You don't have to pretend to believe anything you don't (nor should you) – it's simply about acknowledging the other point of view, and showing you have an open mind and want to learn about the country.

Rules; Going against the rules (for example, going out alone at night) will cause major problems for you, major problems for the entire group, and serious problems for the guide. Guides can restrict a whole group they decide can't be trusted – even if it was only one member who broke the rules. The authorities can even recommend the group be sent home (this has happened before!). So you will implicate a great many people if you decide to flout the terms of your visit, and you will be extremely unpopular with your fellow travellers.

Politeness and respect; Everywhere in Asia, but especially in the DPRK where people have learned to be reserved in speech and action, and to hold fast to manners which are loosening elsewhere, great value is placed on politeness and respect. As noted, Koreans know they are completely isolated internationally, and they believe that certainly America and much of the outside world is against them. They are sensitive, observant and react quickly to perceived or real slights or inappropriate behaviour, which not only transgress the custom of politeness to a host, but also cause a loss of face or an anxiety about a security breach. For your guide who is considered responsible for you, this will cause a real concern, and possibly trouble. It is therefore very important not to show any disrespect to any aspect of Korean life or belief, and especially not to their Leaders Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il – no matter what you may privately think. (Notice how newspapers are folded so that their faces are not creased). Don't fold or crumple up any piece of paper with their pictures on and throw it away! Please don't smoke, eat or chew gum at sites of national importance – this would offend.

Bowing; As noted in the itinerary, when visiting the Mansudae Monument you will be

expected to bow to the statue of Kim Il Sung. This is simply about respecting other people's customs, just as you would take off your shoes in a Buddhist temple or mosque, even if not of the faith. The only other place where bowing is required is at the body of Kim Il Sung in the Mausoleum. If you are not willing to do this then we recommend that you do not visit the DPRK.

Conversation and communication; Koreans will appreciate those who come to North Korea with a genuine interest in learning more about the country for themselves. For reasons of politeness and out of consideration for the Koreans with whom you are speaking, it is also essential you are very careful what you say about what you observe and believe about the DPRK. Politics, economics, religion, the power supply, famine, poverty, the Kim's, South Korea, your understanding of the Korean War, nuclear issues, etc. are all topics which can be discussed but please take care to avoid doing so dogmatically, ie preaching to the Koreans who are our hosts, this is disrespectful and condescending, will not be welcomed and may even get you, your guide and your group into serious trouble. North Koreans are well aware that foreigners hold different views to them and can accept this but do not wish to be 'taught' or 'saved' by their guests. Notice that if a subject appears to be delicate and/or the other person is hesitant in replying, you may have inadvertently trodden on a sensitive area. Do not press the point, and try to find a graceful way to drop the topic. Bear in mind that when you ask for something and are told "yes," it often means the speaker understands what you want, but is not necessarily able to fulfill your request. Remember also that a smile in Asia can often be a sign of discomfort, pain or embarrassment – so "yes" and a smile in answer to your question may mean something quite different from your expectations. A "maybe" or a "we will see" might more likely mean no.

General cultural customs; You will find North Koreans more reserved and old-fashioned in their manners than South Koreans. All over Asia it is considered extremely offensive to display anger. Not only will it not get you what you want, it may also work directly against the successful resolution of your problem as it causes the other person to lose face. Patience and calm will always work better. It is not fully necessary to immerse yourself in the cultural nuances in Korea as this will not be expected of you but it is worth knowing a few tips that can help you become 'more Korean'! You shouldn't pour your own drink; pour for others at the table first and they will be obligated to pour for you, ideally start with the most venerated person there (usually the oldest or most senior); when presenting gifts or business cards, for example, do so with both hands, showing that what you are offering is the fullest extent of yourself. Study with interest any card you receive before putting it away; always wave someone over with your palm down, motioning to yourself, and not with your finger crooked upwards.

Names; As elsewhere in East Asia, Korean surnames precede given names. For example, Kim Ye Jin would be referred to as Mr/Mrs Kim. Although we tend to go by our first names, you should not call your guide or other adult by his or her first name (unless invited). North Koreans never use English names. The proper way to refer to what we call North Korea is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), or (when you are there) just as Korea.

Our North Korean operator; Since 1993 Babel Travel's North Korean tour operator has been the only company running regular tours to the DPRK. We are very concerned that we do not endanger our Korean guides who, as well as giving you an insight into the DPRK society, are responsible for your conduct on tour. The group will be monitored by authorities other than our guides and if there is a problem it is our guides who will receive repercussions. Obvious examples are leaving the hotel unescorted, taking photographs without the guides' permission, not seen to be respecting the Korean people and their history. We ask all tourists to consider their behaviour – remembering North Korean society

is NOT in any way similar to the West or even China. It is surprising what articles are seen by the Korean authorities and therefore even for blogs and websites we ask you to contact us so that by accident you do not create problems either for us or our Korean colleagues.

PLEASE PRINT AND FILL IN THE PAGE BELOW and bring to the pre-tour briefing at your start point hotel in Beijing.

DATE: _ _ _ _ _

AGREEMENT BETWEEN

Babel Travel and Mr/Mrs _ _ _ _ _

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING CAREFULLY

Babel Travel is a company incorporated under the laws of Switzerland which leads tours to the DPRK (North Korea). As a condition of taking part in the tour, you are required to agree to the terms and conditions set out in this agreement.

1) JOURNALISM / PHOTOGRAPHY

The DPRK authorities place strict conditions on Babel Travel leading tours to the DPRK (North Korea). In particular, there are restrictions upon the publication of materials regarding the DPRK and in addition we are not permitted to arrange DPRK tourist visas for journalists or photographers.

I confirm and agree that:

- I am visiting the DPRK for tourism purposes only;
- I am not currently engaged as a journalist or photographer (and have not been engaged as a journalist or photographer in the last 12 months);
- I shall not sell, submit for publication, publish (in any media) any article, book, film, note, diary, photograph or similar material without the written consent of Babel Travel;
- I shall not publish any blog, travel note, notice or diary without the written consent of Babel Travel (although, Babel Travel shall not unreasonably withhold consent).

I understand that should I breach any of these terms and conditions Babel Travel may suffer significant losses and potentially the cancellation of its license to conduct tours in the DPRK. I understand that I shall be held liable to compensate Babel Travel for such losses suffered and I agree to indemnify Babel Travel for such losses.

This agreement is governed by the laws of Switzerland and the parties submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of Swiss courts.

PRINTED NAME (CLEARLY PLEASE): _ _ _ _ _

SIGNED: _ _ _ _ _

2) INSURANCE

Babel Travel cannot be held responsible for any mishap to yourself or your property and in particular any consequence or effects of flight/train cancellation/delay, robbery, sickness, Government intervention or other such happenings. You are requested to insure yourself against any possible risk that may occur and in particular to ensure that sufficient insurance

has been obtained in respect of any dependant relatives. It is your responsibility to be covered by insurance which must include adequate cover for baggage, medical expenses and the cost of repatriation should you become too ill to continue. Any claims must be directed to your insurers. If you have a medical condition which may affect your health or safety in DPRK you must inform us before departure.

I, the undersigned, confirm that I understand and agree with the above and that I have arranged my own travel insurance.

TRAVEL INSURANCE COMPANY _ _ _ _ _

INSURANCE TELEPHONE NUMBER (in case of emergency) _ _ _ _ _
_ _ _ _ _

TRAVEL INSURANCE POLICY NUMBER _ _ _ _ _
_ _ _ _ _

TRAVEL INSURANCE (expiry date) _ _ _ _ _
_

SIGNED _ _ _ _ _

PASSPORT PHOTO HERE