

Why South Korea is the next big destination for SA travellers

By  Maroefah Smith

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Unless you've been living under a rock, you'll know that the Korean Wave is currently sweeping the world off its feet. Leading this wave is K-pop and leading K-pop is the seven-piece worldwide sensation, BTS.



Image credit: BigHit Entertainment.

Known for their meaningful lyrics, synchronized choreography and explosive talent (and hilarious shenanigans), RM, Jin, Suga, J-Hope, Jimin, V and Jungkook have collectively brought their country into the global spotlight – from the UN to the Grammys.

With fans from all over the world flocking to see all that the home of the boys has to offer, they've also become tourism ambassadors in the process. If you don't believe the impact they have, the band is believed to contribute [more than \\$3.6bn a year](#) to South Korea's economy.

But the Korean Wave is not all about K-pop – there’s also K-beauty, K-dramas and, obviously, kimchi!

Also riding that Korean Wave is Airbnb, which recently introduced a K-Wave trip for those of us who love all things Korean. The online marketplace lets us in on why the East Asian destination is appealing to South Africans, where we can spot BTS and all the best K-beauty spots.

■ **Besides K-pop and K-beauty. What else makes South Korea an exciting destination for South African travellers?**

South Korea has so much to offer! Shopping enthusiasts can enjoy the abundance of both modern mega-malls and traditional markets such as Namdaemun and Dongdaemun. For travellers craving both urban and nature, Seoul is your perfect retreat with the Han River weaving through the city and several mountains in its surrounds.

“ 이려고 합니다 💎💎 pic.twitter.com/VgJnRn7ZKJ — 방탄소년단 (@BTS_twt) [August 21, 2019](#) ”

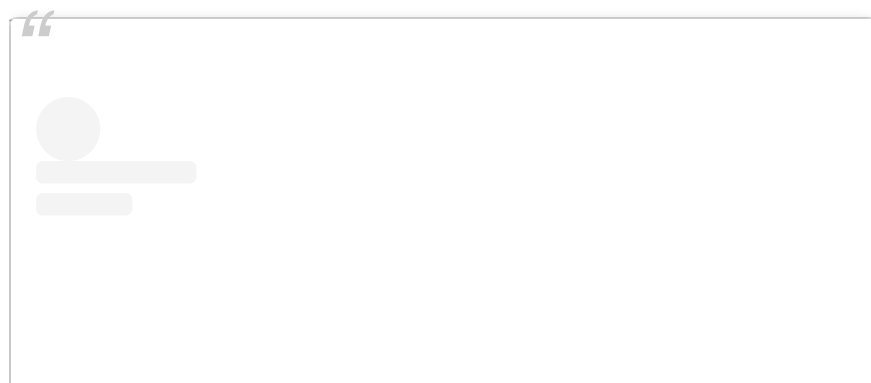
You can discover the charm of city life, relax by the riverside and hike mountain trails. South Korea is also one of the countries that South Africans are able to visit without a visa. This remains one of the top reasons why locals have South Korea on their must-visit list.

■ **What are some of the must-see sites for South African K-pop fans? And where can we spot BTS or Twice?**

There are a number of must-see-and-do sites and activities for K-pop fans. Of course, the newly launched Airbnb Experiences in this field are a must. With these Experiences, visitors can [recreate the moves from your favourite K-pop hits](#) or [dive headfirst into the recording studio](#) and unleash some powerful vocals.

There is also the opportunity to explore funky Hongdae on a [music walk with local musician and TV personality Zozno](#) where guests will learn about the history of the bustling arts district first-hand over a cup of coffee in a local cafe, then pop into Zozno’s personal studio and have the opportunity to play his personal collection of instruments.

Fans of BTS can visit the exact bus stop that appears on the group’s *You Never Walk Alone* album. The bus stop is located at the stunning Jumeunjin Beach – it makes for the perfect Instagram shot!





[View this post on Instagram](#)



*Spot : BTS You Never Walk Alone Bus Stop *Location : 8-54, Hyangho-ri, Jumunjin-eup, Gangneung-si, Gangwon-do, Korea (Jumunjin Beach) *How to get there : - Take Subway to Dongdaemun Hist&Cult Park st. - Transit Line 2 to Gangbyeon St. Exit 4 - Walk to Dong Seoul Bus Terminal, take Express Bus to Jumunjin Express Bus Terminal - Board Jumunjin Intercity Bus no.300 (alt), 10 stops Jumunjin Beach - Walk abt 5min to Jumunjin entrance - After getting off at the Jumunjin Bus Stop, then you will see the sign board to lead you to the BTS Bus Stop - After walk in Jumunjin Beach, you will spot the second sign board to show that BTS Bus Stop is 200m away from here *What's more in Gangneung : Goblin shooting spots & Legends of the Blue Sea Shooting spots along in the beach line..oh RM photo place too (check bts_twt post on 31jan) #Jumunjin #주문진 #Gangneung #강릉 #Gangwondo #강원도 #jalanjalan #Jumunjinbeach #ayusassitrip #AkuDanKorea #vsco #vscocam #vscocamphotos #instadaily #instagram #vacation #checklist #KeKoreaAja #ISeoulU #Koreatrip #explorekorea #travelkorea #VisitSeoul #MySeoulPlaylist #SouthKorea #VisitKorea

A post shared by [Indriayu Sekarsassi \(@ayusassi\)](#) on Mar 2, 2019 at 9:15pm PST

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se. The Myeongdong Underground Shopping Mall in Seoul is known to be a good place to dive into for all things K-pop-related, while Play K-Pop at Jeju Island offers a live hologram concert where you can try over 31 unique interactive K-pop experiences, such as learning how to dance to K-pop music.

What about K-beauty enthusiasts?

The growing K-beauty trend has inspired enthusiasts worldwide to embrace Korean beauty and skincare products. For a one-stop destination for everything K-beauty related, Myeongdong is your best bet. You can find all sorts of beauty products from every brand available. And much like the K-Pop Experiences, the K-beauty Airbnb Experiences is a must for those who follow this trend.



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Maroefah Smith 4 Sep 2018



With these Experiences, guests can [make their own organic bath bombs](#) with flowers, herbs and other 100% plant-derived

ingredients, [design unique and natural, petroleum-free lipsticks](#) or enjoy a [private style consultation and custom-tailored suits](#) from true locals.

▣ **How does Airbnb make travel to non-English speaking countries easier for South African travellers?**

Some of our hosts practise several languages so they can chat with their guests, but there are lots of clever ways to connect, even if hosts and guests are not multi-lingual. Airbnb regularly shares host tips with our host community, including recommendations on how to create a warm welcome for guests.

We also strongly encourage our hosts to clearly communicate their house rules on the platform and to help their guests navigate around town with insightful pre-translated guidebooks. A willing and curious attitude and sense of humour are key to navigate any differences and build a real sense of connection!

▣ **What are some of your favourite spots?**

Seoul is a well-loved destination by international travellers with a diverse range of attractions from old palaces and temples to trendy fashion hotspots and breathtaking mountain trails. It's worth checking out Jeju Island, Korea's favourite domestic holiday destination and only an hour's flight away.



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Here, guests can take an early morning [trek up the Darangsi Oreum](#) with a professional photographer and Airbnb host He, and revitalise with this [guided forest walk](#) in the Healing Forest of Seogwipo. Stay a night or two in this minimalist [home tucked away in a tangerine orchard](#), or this [sundrenched, minimalist home overseeing the sea](#).

ABOUT MAROEFAH SMITH

Enthusiastic UCT graduate with a passion for fashion, film and words.

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