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# KOREA

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# Valentine's Day in Korea

PAGES 8-9



5 romantic  
destinations for a  
Valentine's Day date  
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# Military children tell us your story!

**H**ey, all you kids in the military community need to read this. Seriously! So, please put down your iPad, iPhone or other digital device for the next couple of minutes. You'll survive, and I promise no one will take them.

Now that I have your attention, I want to give you a little job. No, wait! Don't stop reading! I'm not going to ask you to clean your room! I'm simply going to give you the opportunity to be heard by tens of thousands of people. Seriously! You see, April is the Month of the Military Child, and for the 15th straight year, the Stars and Stripes community publications are dedicating it to you, the children of our men and women in uniform.

Send your story to  
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**SEE MOMC ON PAGE 2**



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# MOMC: We're here for you!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Each Stripes Okinawa, Stripes Japan, Stripes Korea and Stripes Guam issue in April will contain your stories, poems, drawings and photos about what life is like as a military child.

For those children who are part of the military community overseas but not technically a military child, we want to hear from you, too! You and your Department of Defense civilian parents are also a key part of the military community.

So, what's life like as a military kid? Tell us. And after you share with us, your submission will be posted on one of our four community sites – [Japan.stripes.com](http://Japan.stripes.com), [Okinawa.stripes.com](http://Okinawa.stripes.com), [Korea.stripes.com](http://Korea.stripes.com) and [Guam.stripes.com](http://Guam.stripes.com) – depending on where you live. It could appear in at least one weekly paper.

We are giving you a platform to say what you want. Of course, to have your say, you must write, type or draw it. You can be funny or serious. You can write a paragraph or a longer story (250-word maximum, please). Whatever you do, be yourself. Stand up and be heard!

We get thousands of submissions a year, so for stories to run in the paper, they must be submitted by April 15. But no matter when they are submitted, they will be posted on the website. As we approach another April, our team is ready for the onslaught. In fact, we're already receiving submissions.

Like every year, we've been in touch with teachers across the Pacific who are using this as a class project, so be ready for that. For those of you who haven't participated in our annual salute, we hope to hear from you this year.

Stars and Stripes is very proud to serve the military community, and it's an honor to spotlight its resourceful group of children.

We can't wait to hear from you!

Chris Carlson,  
Publishing and Media Design Manager  
Stars and Stripes



Stories must  
be submitted  
by April 15  
to appear in  
Stripes Korea!



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# A guide to Seollal

## What to know about Korea's Lunar New Year

BY HYEMIN LEE,  
STRIPES KOREA

**S**eollal, Korea's Lunar New Year, is the country's most important family holiday. Much like the Christmas and New Year season in the United States, it's a time when families travel and gather. However, the customs for Seollal are uniquely Korean.

For those experiencing Seollal for the first time, understanding the cultural meaning and customs will make the holiday easier to navigate and more enjoyable to partake in.

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### -1- What is Seollal?

Seollal is the Lunar New Year, and it falls on the first day of the new year on the lunar calendar, one many Asian countries traditionally follow. In Korea, the holiday is celebrated over three days. The dates vary each year. In 2026, Seollal falls on Feb. 17, and the holiday period runs Feb. 16-18.

Seollal is a tradition when families gather to welcome the new year and share wishes for good fortune. Families enjoy traditional holiday foods, perform ancestral rites to honor their roots and play traditional games for family bonding. Many Koreans also wear hanbok during the holiday.

While each family celebrates Seollal in its own way, the holiday is ultimately about remembering where one comes from and expressing love and gratitude toward family.

-2-

### How Seollal is observed today

Seollal has deep traditional roots, but today it is observed in different ways depending on family beliefs and lifestyle.

In families that continue traditional customs, relatives gather under one roof, prepare food and take part in ancestral rites. The multi-generational company, long meals and conversations are a big part of this celebration.

That tradition, however, often comes with a heavy preparation process. Setting up an elaborate ritual table and cooking multiple dishes can take hours of work that has traditionally fallen on women in the family.

At the same time, many Christian families do not observe ancestral rites at all, and many younger generations choose to step away from formal rituals. Instead, they treat the holiday as a rare chance to travel together or simply enjoy time off.



-3-

### What stays open during Seollal

Seollal Day, the day before and the day after are considered national holidays, so most public offices are closed during this period.

Business operations vary. Small businesses such as family-run restaurants and traditional market vendors may close for all three days or only on Seollal Day. However, many businesses, especially convenience and grocery stores, remain open throughout the holiday.

For many Koreans, Seollal is short vacation period for outings and family activities. Because of this, many travel-related destinations and leisure facilities stay open, and some operate extended hours to welcome more visitors.

-4-

### Seollal is a peak travel season

Seollal is one of the busiest travel seasons of the year in Korea. Roads are heavily congested as people travel to their hometowns or take family trips. Travelers using trains or buses are strongly recommended to book tickets several weeks in advance.

Flight prices for nearby destinations such as Jeju Island and Japan also rise during the holiday period. If you plan to travel, you may find it easier to leave early in the morning to avoid delays. Peak traffic usually includes the day before Seollal and from morning through early evening on Seollal Day. Keep in mind that popular destinations may be crowded.

-5-

### Enjoy free tolls and admission

Because Seollal is one of Korea's biggest national holidays, some government-run services and facilities are free during the holiday period. Expressway tolls are waived across Korea. Many museums and historic sites also offer free admission and host special Seollal programs and activities.



-6-

## Cultural cues to know during Seollal

### New Year greetings

One phrase you will hear everywhere during Seollal is “Saehae bok mani badeuseyo,” which means “Wishing you lots of luck in the New Year.” It is the Korean equivalent of “Happy New Year,” and it works in almost any situation. You can say it to your friends, older people, neighbors, shop owners or coworkers around the holiday. Even if your pronunciation is not perfect, effort is always appreciated and brings a smile.

**Saehae bok mani badeuseyo!**

(새해 복 많이 받으세요!)



File photos



### Tteokguk (New Year food)

Tteokguk, a rice cake soup, is traditionally eaten during Seollal to welcome the new year and bring in good fortune. The white rice cakes symbolize renewal, long life and wealth. There is also a common saying that eating tteokguk marks becoming one year older. More than just the dish, sharing tteokguk is the moment to start the year together around the same table.

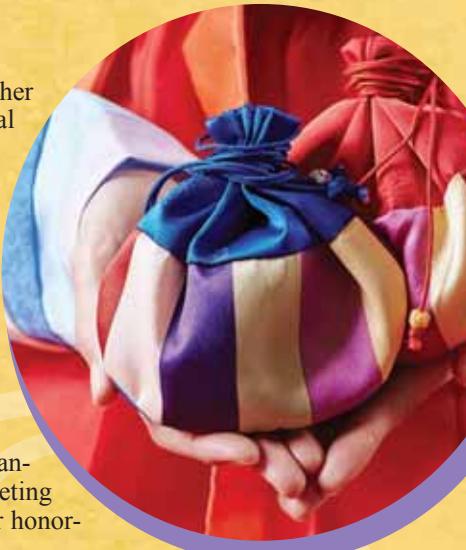
### Sebae (New Year's bow)

The deep bow (keunjeol 큰절) is another key part of Seollal culture. It's a formal gesture lowering the body all the way to the floor to express respect and gratitude.

During Seollal, younger family members perform a deep bow called sebae (New Year's bow) to elders such as parents, grandparents or teachers. In return, elders offer words of blessing and give sebaetdon (New Year's cash gifts). Sebaetdon symbolizes blessings, encouragement and good wishes for the year ahead.

The number of bows also carries meaning. A single deep bow is used when greeting living elders while two deep bows are for honoring the deceased, including ancestors.

Visitors are not expected to participate in bowing rituals. However, it helps to know that a deep bow is considered a highly respectful gesture, expressing deep gratitude and honor. If you choose to offer one sincerely in an appropriate setting, keep in mind that a single deep bow is used for living elders.



Sebaetdon  
File photos

## 5 places to experience Korea's Lunar New Year

BY HYEMIN LEE,  
STRIPES KOREA

**A**lthough Seollal, the Lunar New Year, is traditionally a family holiday spent at home, many people also use the break to get out and explore. Across the country, cultural sites, traditional villages, markets and museums welcome visitors with festive holiday events, with some offering free admission during the holiday period.

In 2026, Seollal runs Feb. 16-18 (Monday-Wednesday), but many holiday events begin during the weekend, Feb. 14-15. Whether you're spending the holiday with your family or on your own, you don't have to sit out. Here are the five places where you can experience the Lunar New Year in a uniquely Korean way!

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### 1 Korean Folk Village

Korean Folk Village is a cultural theme park that recreates daily life during the Joseon Dynasty, bringing many of Seollal's key traditions together. While many places slow down during the holiday period, it becomes one of the busiest destinations for comprehensive Seollal experiences.

Throughout the Lunar New Year period, the village hosts special Seollal programs, including traditional folk games, performances and cultural events. Visitors can take part in hands-on activities, try traditional holiday foods and see how Seollal was traditionally celebrated. Winter attractions such as sledding and ice fishing are also available with additional fees, making it easy to enjoy seasonal experiences together.

The village also features costumed actors playing merchants, nobles, warriors and scholars from the Joseon era. They wander the village to recreate the scenes from the past. Hanbok rentals are available nearby, and many visitors wear the traditional clothing to become part of the setting. Visiting Korean Folk Village during Seollal can be one of the most fun ways to experience Korea's Lunar New Year traditions. For detailed program schedules, please visit their website.



Naver Map



Website

**HOURS:** 10 a.m.-6 p.m. (Mon.-Fri.) / 10 a.m.-8 p.m. (Sat.-Sun.)  
**TICKETS:** 17,000 won-37,000 won (Discounted tickets are available through Naver booking and seasonal promotions. Most visitors pay around 17,000-19,000 won for admission, or 23,000-27,000 won when adding sledding.)

SEE SEOLLAL ON PAGE 6

# SEOLLAL: Places to check out

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

## 2 Traditional markets

Seollal is closely tied to food, and traditional markets are one of the easiest places to experience it. During the Lunar New Year season, Koreans enjoy traditional holiday food such as tteokguk (rice cake soup 떡국), jeon (Korean pancakes 전), japchae (stir-fried glass noodles 잡채), galbi (marinated short ribs 갈비), tteok (rice cake 떡) and hangwa (traditional sweets 한과). Each dish takes time and care to prepare, almost like a work of art. They are colorful and flavorful even for those new to Korean food.

Many Koreans visit traditional markets to buy ingredients or freshly made dishes. Preparing a full Seollal table multiple times for the entire family is a time-consuming task. As a result, many families choose to buy holiday foods from markets.

Ahead of Seollal, traditional markets are lively, filled with fresh ingredients and colorful, hot holiday dishes that are ready to eat. Walking through the stalls offers a close look at how Koreans prepare for the Lunar New Year. However, many traditional markets are closed on Seollal Day, and some open only early in the morning, so visiting the market a couple of days before is a safer option.

You can visit any traditional markets nearby for this experience, but Tongbok and Seomun are the largest ones close to U.S. military bases in Pyeongtaek and Daegu.



Photo courtesy of Korea Tourism Organization

Tongbok Market  
Naver mapSeomun Market  
Naver Map

## 4 Namsangol Hanok Village

Located near Namsan in Seoul, Namsangol Hanok Village hosts one of the city's most dedicated Seollal festivals each year. The village is a compact site with five restored traditional hanok houses from the Joseon Dynasty. During the holiday season, Namsangol strongly focuses on recreating the atmosphere and customs of the traditional Korean New Year through cultural programs and events.

Many families visit the village during the Seollal festival to experience how Seollal was traditionally celebrated, and children can gain firsthand experience through hands-on activities. The programs usually include traditional craft workshops such as kite-making and calligraphy, as well as Seollal experiences like yut-nori games and traditional rituals wishing for good luck in the year ahead. Lively folk performances and shows are also staged throughout the village.

Most Seollal programs are open to the public without reservations. Entry to the village is free, but some activities may require a participation fee. For visitors looking for an easy way to experience authentic Seollal traditions in the heart of Seoul, Namsangol Hanok Village is a great choice. The village is also a popular spot to take photos of hanok houses with the N Seoul Tower as a backdrop.



DATES: Feb. 16-18 (dates may vary, so please check their website)



Photos courtesy of Namsangol Hanok Village



Naver Map

Website



Naver Map



Website



Photos courtesy of Jeonju Hanok Village

## 3 Royal Palaces and Tombs in Seoul

Seollal is one of the few times of the year when Seoul's royal heritage sites—including royal palaces, Jongmyo Shrine and the Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty—are open for free to the public. Several sites host special programs that offer a glimpse into royal New Year traditions. Jongmyo Shrine, a sacred ancestral shrine that normally requires prior reservations, allows walk-in entry during the Seollal period.

The Seollal programs are various. At Gyeongbokgung Palace, visitors can receive a "Sehwa," a traditional new year charm with artwork of auspicious animals like tigers and magpies believed to bring good fortune. Kings historically gifted sehwa to their subjects at the start of the New Year as a symbol of blessing. Quantities are limited daily, so they are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.

Seollal is also one of the rare occasions when many Koreans dress up in hanbok. Hanbok rental shops near those sites remain open during the holiday. Many flock to royal sites to enjoy the festive atmosphere while exploring royal history.

**Note:** The Secret Garden at Changdeokgung Palace requires a separate ticket. All palaces are closed after the Seollal free-entry period.



**LOCATION:** Gyeongbokgung Palace, Changdeokgung Palace, Changgyeonggung Palace, Duksugung Palace, Jongmyo Shrine, the Royal Tombs of Joseon Dynasty

**DATES:** Feb. 16-18

[Website](#)

### ■ Sehwa distribution at Gyeongbokgung Palace

**LOCATION:** Gwanghwamun Square (in front of the Royal Guard Changing Ceremony area)

**TIME:** 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. (After the Royal Guard Changing Ceremony)

**NOTES:** Limited to 1,000 copies per session



Photo courtesy of Korea Tourism Organization

## 5 Jeonju Hanok Village

Jeonju Hanok Village is the largest traditional hanok village with hundreds of preserved hanok houses across a spacious neighborhood. As the village is accessible anytime without entrance fees, it becomes one of the best places to experience Seollal in traditional surroundings.

Many Koreans wear hanbok during Seollal as part of the holiday traditions, and Jeonju Hanok Village is a popular place to do so. Hanbok rental shops operate throughout the holiday season.

Food is another reason the village stands out during the Lunar New Year. Jeonju is best known as the home of Jeonju Bibimbap, but during Seollal, visitors can also find traditional holiday dishes such as tteokguk (rice cake soup) and a variety of traditional sweets. On Seollal Day, many restaurants and food stalls are closed in the morning but open later in the afternoon.

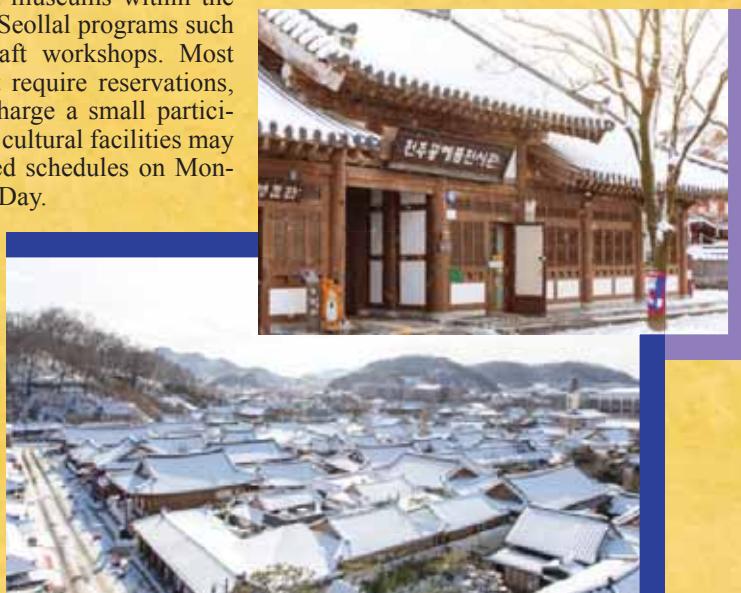
The village becomes festive from the weekend before Seollal. During the holiday period, visitors can enjoy Seollal events and programs throughout the village. Cultural centers and museums within the village also host Seollal programs such as traditional craft workshops. Most programs do not require reservations, but some may charge a small participation fee. Some cultural facilities may operate on limited schedules on Mondays and Seollal Day.



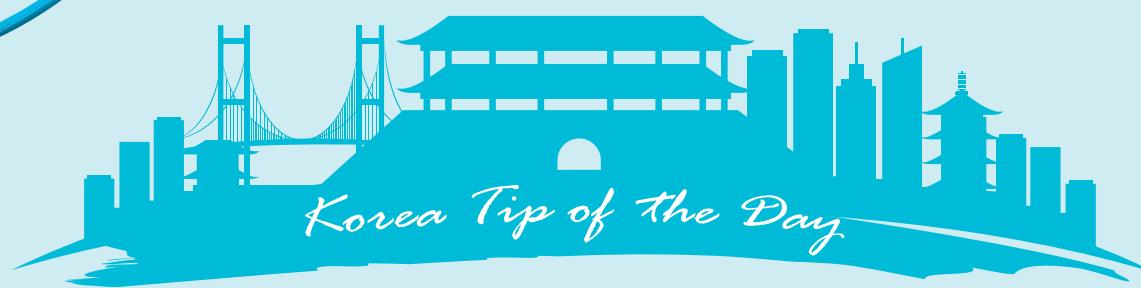
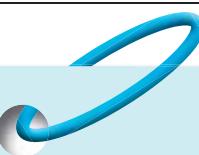
Naver Map



Website



Photos courtesy of Jeonju Hanok Village



## KakaoT app perfect for grabbing a taxi

BY HYEMIN LEE,  
STRIPES KOREA

To grab a cab off base in Korea, KakaoT app stands out as the most efficient taxi app, offering a user-friendly setting for non-Korean speakers. KakaoT makes it easy and quick to call a taxi nearby as it automatically sets your current location as the departure point, or you can move the pin to your desired pickup spot. When adding your destination, it shows the estimated fare and trip duration, so you don't have to worry about being charged a foreigner price even if you're completely new to Korea.

You can also choose a regular taxi or pick special options like premium and van-sized taxis. In major cities, it's easy to grab special types of taxis quickly, but they often require reservations if you're outside a big city. To plan your trip more efficiently, you can book a taxi in advance through the app.

KakaoT offers more than just taxi services. It also includes useful features such as finding parking spots, renting cars, using Kakao bike rentals, and more. Download KakaoT to make your life in Korea more convenient!

### Taxi fares

Regular taxis (ilban taxi in Korean) start at 4,800 won for the first 1.6 km. The fare increases by 100 won for every 131 meters or 30 seconds. For larger groups or families, a large taxi can accommodate between 6 and 13 passengers, with fares starting around 7,000 won for the first 3 km, plus an additional charge of 200 won for every 151 meters or 36 seconds.

Night fare applies between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m., with an extra charge of 1,000-2,000 won at the start and 20-40 won more for every 30 seconds or 131 meters compared to daytime rates.

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### How to use KakaoT

1. Download the mobile app. **Note:** A KakaoTalk ID is required to use the app. KakaoTalk is a messenger app used Korea wide. You can create an account either with your U.S. phone number or Korean phone number.
2. Select "Taxi" on the main page and set a starting point and destination. Make sure to adjust the accurate point by moving the taxi icon with your finger on the screen.
3. The app will then display taxi options (General, Venti, and Black) along with the estimated price for your trip. Choose the desired taxi option.
4. In the payment section, select "Pay to the driver" if it's convenient for you.
5. After completing the taxi order, the app will connect you with a driver in your vicinity and display the estimated arrival time of the taxi you ordered.
6. Cancellation is available, but a 2,000 won fee will be charged if you cancel a minute after the vehicle is dispatched.



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# Valentine's Day in Korea

## February not only month love is in the air

BY HYEMIN LEE,  
STRIPES KOREA

Like most Western countries, Korea celebrates Valentine's Day as a big romantic holiday on Feb. 14, albeit with a Korean twist.

Here in Korea, it's women who gift men chocolate and gifts on Valentine's Day. The unofficial holiday isn't only for couples as it's also a day for single women to be brave and confess their feelings to their crush. At middle and high schools, girls also use the day as an excuse to make a love confession to their crushes.

One month later, on March 14, it's the men's turn to break out the sweets and charm on White Day. This reciprocal holiday was actually an invention by a confectionary company in Japan decades ago to sell more sweets. The custom has since spread to other East Asian countries.



During these romantic holiday seasons, it's easy to find stores and malls filled with chocolates, candies and flowers. Many people also exchange sweets or small gifts with friends, family or someone they care about, regardless of gender, as a simple way to express affection or gratitude.

### Black Day in April

After the first two romantic holidays of the year pass, April 14 is known as Black Day in Korea. It was originally created as a day for those who didn't find a romantic partner to wear black, eat jjajangmyeon (black bean sauce noodles), and drink an Americano to express their gloomy mood about being single.

For many Koreans, however, Black Day is remembered more as a playful cultural joke than a serious occasion. Many simply use the day as an excuse to eat jjajangmyeon and some restaurants offer small promotions or discounts.



### Love celebrated monthly

Though Valentine's Day and White Day are big in Korea, the celebration of love is taken a step further with other romantically-related holidays on the 14th of every month.

In an ideal world, singles have coupled up by April 14, so the rest of the holidays are to celebrate being a couple in love!

#### May 14 - Rose Day

A day to give a bouquet of roses to your partner.



#### June 14 - Kiss Day

A day to kiss your partner to express affection.



#### July 14 - Silver Day

A day to exchange "couple rings," which are silver rings and a symbol of commitment.



#### Aug. 14 - Green Day

This is a day to pack a picnic and drink Korean alcoholic drinks together.



#### Sept. 14 - Photo Day

A day to take nice photos together.

#### Oct. 14 - Wine Day

A day to drink red wine together.



#### Nov. 14 - Movie Day

A day to watch a good movie together.



#### Dec. 14 - Hug Day

A day to give your partner a warm embrace in the chilly winter.



#### Jan. 14 - Diary Day

To make a plan for the new year together, couples exchange a yearly planner.



Another unofficial and commercial holiday is Pepero Day on Nov. 11. Pepero is a popular snack of thin cookie sticks that look like the number one, so four together form 11/11 or Nov. 11 on the calendar. On Nov. 11, Pepero packs are given to friends and family.

Though the 12 Korean love holidays make it seem like Koreans are keen about celebrating couples, you don't need to worry if you're single!

Besides Valentine's Day, White Day, and Pepero Day, the other love holidays are in fact minor holidays that most Koreans don't celebrate.

In any culture, expressing love for someone is meaningful as everyone wants to love and be loved. Though not all love holidays in Korea are large celebrations, they simply show a cultural desire to make each month a little more special for loved ones.

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# Dating culture



As Korea's 12 love holidays show, love plays an interesting role in Korean society. Dating culture here may be a little different from what many Americans are used to. While younger generations in Korea are increasingly influenced by Western dating styles, many people still follow local dating manners and expectations.

If you're dating a Korean, understanding a few common habits and unspoken rules can be helpful. Here are six interesting aspects of Korean dating culture.

## 1. Romantic holidays/anniversaries

There are several romantic holidays that couples in Korea celebrate by exchanging gifts or enjoying a special date: Christmas, Valentine's Day, White Day, yearly anniversaries and the 100-day anniversary.

The 100-day anniversary is commonly marked by couples, and some even choose to celebrate every 100 days they've been together plus yearly milestones. Yet not everyone finds celebrating anniversaries important, so it's always a good idea to talk with your partner about what they expect.

## 2. Make it official

If you want to continue dating in Korea, keep in mind that making the relationship official is a culturally important step. Many couples count the 100-day



anniversary from the day they officially become a couple, so it's common to clearly ask someone to be your boyfriend or girlfriend.

After a few dates, if one person (usually the man) doesn't bring up becoming official, the other may begin to wonder where the relationship is heading. Many Koreans tend to value clear commitment early on before building deeper intimacy.

## 3. Saying 'I love you' too soon

You may be surprised when your Korean partner says "I love you" sooner than you expect. Because most Koreans usually decide to commit to their partner at an early stage of dating, it's natural to say "I love you" to each other.

In Korean culture, there is also a concept called aegyo (애교), a playful and flirtatious way of showing affection through tone of voice and behaviors toward a romantic partner. When used with aegyo, saying "I love you" is just meant to sound sweet rather than anything serious.

## 4. Two of a kind

Couples often shop together on romantic holidays and buy matching shoes, clothes and accessories. It is especially common for young couples to wear couple rings without plans to wed. Wearing a couple ring is a symbol of commitment as a couple and usually is bought on the 100-day anniversary or one-year anniversary.

## 5. Parents' opinion matters

Most Koreans introduce their partner to their parents only when they are in a serious relationship that is leading to marriage. Parents' opinion can greatly affect the relationship since the majority of Koreans believe marriage isn't just the union of two people but of two families.

## 6. Keeping in touch

Texting is an important part of communication in many Korean relationships. Frequent messaging and quick replies are often seen as signs of care and interest, especially in the early stages of dating.

Expectations around texting can differ depending on personality and relationship style. Some couples enjoy staying closely connected all day while others are comfortable with less communication. Talking openly about texting habits can help avoid misunderstandings.

### Useful Korean phrases for love

- Joahae(좋아해): I like you / I like that
- Saranghae (사랑해): I love you / I love that
- Sarang(사랑): Love
- Ha-tuh (하트) / Simjang-organ (심장): Heart
- Aegyo (애교): A playful and sweet way of showing affection used between romantic partners or in close relationships.

### Useful Korean phrases for dating

- Date (데이트): Dating / Going out
- Date sincheong-hada (데이트 신청하다): To ask someone out on a date
- Gobaek-hada (고백하다): To confess feelings or ask someone to be in a relationship
- Sagwi-da (사귀다): To be in a romantic relationship with / to date (officially)
- Yeoja/Namja-chingu isseoyo? (여자/남자친구 있어요?): Do you have a girlfriend/boyfriend?
- Uri sagwija (우리 사귀자): Let's make it official (informal)
- Na-rang sagwil-lae-yo? :(나랑 사귈래요?): Would you be my boyfriend/girlfriend? (polite)

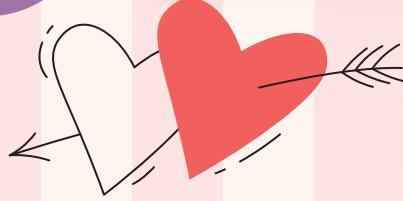
### Titles

- Aein (애인) / Yeonin (연인): Lover / Partner / Girlfriend/ Boyfriend
- Yeoja-chingu (여자친구): Girlfriend
- Namja-chingu (남자친구): Boyfriend
- Oppa (오빠): A term women use to address an older male, often used affectionately toward a boyfriend.
- Jagi (자기) / Yeobo (여보): Honey / sweetheart (Yeobo is commonly used between married couples)



Illustrations by Hyemin Lee, Stripes Korea

# 5 romantic destinations for a Valentine's Day date



BY HYEMIN LEE,  
STRIPES KOREA

Valentine's Day is not just about gifting chocolates, it's a special opportunity to create romantic memories with your loved one! Even in the cold winter weather, couples can share warm moments together at some beautiful places in Korea. Plan ahead and spend a warm, unforgettable Valentine's Day with that special person in your life!

lee.hyemin@stripes.com



## N Seoul Tower

N Seoul Tower in Seoul is a must-visit romantic spot for couples. Visitors can take a scenic walk along the beautiful trails or ride a cable car to the top where panoramic views of the city are waiting. Make sure to visit just before sunset to fully experience the romantic atmosphere and enjoy a scenic night view of the city lights.

The "Love Locks" tradition at N Seoul Tower makes this destination particularly romantic. Couples pledge their eternal love by attaching a lock to the tower's fence and many do so on Feb. 14. They also leave special messages for each other on the locks before hanging them, promising to return in the future to see if their lock is still there.

Inside the tower, you'll find restaurants, bars, and cafes offering stunning city views, perfect for a romantic dinner. If you visit during peak times like weekends or Valentine's Day, be sure to make a reservation in advance. Also, don't miss the popular "Sky Toilet" on the second floor of the observatory, known as the highest restroom in Seoul. For more details on reservations, observatory tickets, and cable car packages, check the website.

*Note: N Seoul Tower is also known as Namsan Tower or YTN Seoul Tower.*

**ADDRESS:** 105 Namsan Park Road, Yongsan-gu, Seoul

**HOURS:** 10 a.m. - 10:30 p.m. (Weekdays) / 10 a.m. - 11 p.m. (Weekends)

**TICKETS FOR OBSERVATORY:** Adults 26,000 won / Children 20,000 won (Naver offers discount tickets)

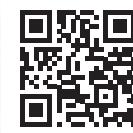
### N Seoul Tower cable car

**HOURS:** 10 a.m. - 11 p.m.

**TICKET:** one way 12,000 won / round-trip 15,000 won



WEBSITE



NAVER MAP



N SEOUL TOWER  
CABLE CAR  
NAVER MAP



Photos by Korea Tourism Organization



## Paradise City Cimer Spa



What could be more romantic than relaxing together in a luxurious spa during the chilly winter season? Cimer Spa, inside Paradise City, a 5-star hotel in Incheon, is the perfect winter dating spot for many couples looking to escape the cold and bond in a relaxing atmosphere. This fancy spa beautifully combines a premium Korean bathhouse (Jjimjilbang), a European-style spa and a fun water park.

Cimer Spa is divided into two main zones: Aqua Spa Zone and Jjimjil Spa Zone. In Aqua Spa Zone, you can enjoy a variety of unique spa facilities including an Italian Venice-themed pool, a stunning spa surrounded by LED screens, a cave spa and indoor and outdoor pools. The most romantic spot is the outdoor infinity pool where you can soak in hot water during sunset.

Jjimjil Spa Zone offers seven different themed rooms filled with natural materials. Each room provides numerous benefits for your skin and body as well as an ultimate healing experience for relaxation.

While both Jjimjil and Aqua Spa Zones allow all genders to enjoy time together, there is also a gender-segregated bathhouse area where you must remove your clothes to take a shower or long bath.

Jjimjil Spa ticket is for those who wish to only use the jjimjilbang and bathhouse and includes rental pajama-like robes. Aqua Spa ticket allows access to all facilities, including the spas and the Jjimjilbang. Entry to the spa requires swimwear. Make sure to plan wisely when visiting as exploring all the spas and facilities will take half a day!



Photos by Paradise City

**ADDRESS:** 321 Yeongjong-haeannam-ro, Jung-gu, Incheon

**HOURS:** 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.

**TICKET:**

-Aqua Spa pass (6 hours) - Adults 60,000-70,000 won / Children 50,000 won -60,000 won  
-Jjimjil Spa pass (4 hours)- Adults 40,000 won / Children 30,000 won

(Naver offers discount tickets)

**NOTE:** Regular tattoos are fine for entry but irezumi or large full-body tattoos should be covered with rash guard at Aqua Spa Zone.



NAVER MAP &  
BOOKING



## Han River E-Land Cruise

One of the ultimate experiences couples shouldn't miss in Korea is an evening cruise along the Han River aboard an E-Land Cruise. The sight of the stunning river reflecting the tall buildings is truly magical. There's even live music to serenade couples as they float along in the romantic atmosphere.



Photos by E-Land

The cruise departs from Yeouido and takes you past other iconic Han River locations, such as Nodeul Island, Han River Railway Bridge and Dongjak Bridge. You'll also get to see Seoul's famous landmarks, including the National Assembly Building, 63 Building and N Seoul Tower. Every angle of the Han River on this cruise offers spectacular views as it crosses the heart of the most vibrant city in South Korea.

The E-Land Cruise station is also home to Ashley Queens, a Western-style buffet restaurant. Many couples dine at Ashley after the cruise to enjoy stunning river views along with a variety of fusion cuisine.

Book tickets online or on site up to 30 minutes prior to departure. If booking online, use the booth to pick up your ticket.

Inform staff if you need a free parking voucher. Tours vary by time of day, duration of trip and package deals, but a standard 40-minute cruise runs about 20,000 won. Don't forget to bring your ID.

**ADDRESS:** 8-minute walk toward 63 building Yeouinaru Station, Exit 3 (Yeouido E-Cruise)

**HOURS:** 1 - 9 p.m. (Mon.-Fri.) / Noon - 9 p.m. (Sat.-Sun.)

**TICKET:** 12,900 won - 29,900 won

**PARKING:** Free parking available with a voucher (Yeouido Hangang Park 1 Parking Lot)



PARKING  
NAVER MAP



BOOKING  
WEBSITE



NAVER MAP &  
BOOKING



ASHLEY QUEENS  
NAVER MAP



## Paju First Garden

This beautiful destination features a variety of themed gardens including a historical Greek park, a flower garden, a rose garden, Tuscany Square and more. While the garden is charming during the day, it becomes even more magical at night when it's illuminated by beautiful lights.

First Garden hosts the Starlight Festival, a year-round event with the theme of "Garden Flowing with Starlight." The gardens are adorned with sparkling lights creating the illusion that you're walking among a galaxy of stars, melting away the winter chill in this romantic place. It's an ideal spot for a romantic stroll, sipping hot cocoa, holding hands, and enjoying each other's company.

In addition to the gardens, First Garden offers a range of facilities: restaurants, a wedding hall, amusement rides, gift shop, sledding area, drive-in theater, and event areas where visitors can interact with animals and enjoy traditional games.

**ADDRESS:** 260 Tapsakgol-gil, Paju-si, Gyeonggi-do

**HOURS:** 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.

**LIGHTING:** From 5:30 p.m.

**TICKET:** Adults 10,000 won (weekdays) & 12,000 won (weekends) /

Children 9,000 won (weekdays) & 11,000 won (weekends)



NAVER MAP &  
BOOKING

Photos by First Garden



## Ring workshop

For a hands-on expression of your love, try creating a custom ring together on Valentine's Day. In Korea, the trend of wearing couple rings, regardless of whether engaged or married, is popular even among young adults. Many couples enjoy the activity of crafting their own rings that symbolize their unique bond. You can customize every detail of your special ring from the shape to the engraving and stones that will fit perfectly on you and your partner's finger. All materials and equipment are provided, and the staff will give a brief lesson to guide you through the crafting process. You'll leave with a beautiful, handmade piece of jewelry and memories to cherish forever!



Photos by Ring Campus Workshop

There are numerous ring-making workshops across Korea, especially in major cities like Seoul, Daegu, and Busan. You can search for "ring making" or "반지공방" on Naver Map or check out the place below.

### Ring Campus Workshop in Hongdae

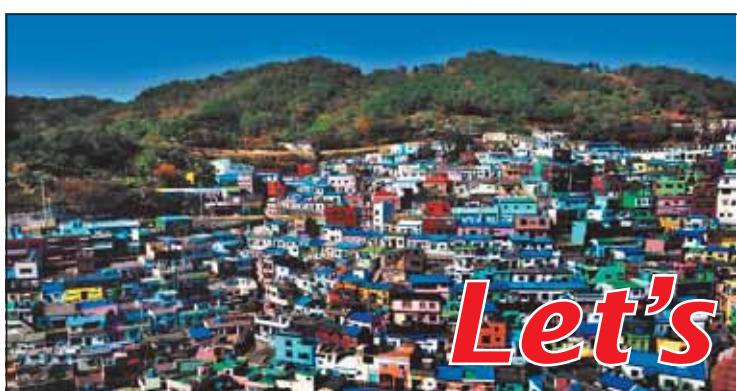
**ADDRESS:** 345-16 Seogyo-dong, Mapo-gu, Seoul / Line 2.  
Hongik University Station Exit 9

**HOURS:** 11 a.m. - 10 p.m. daily.

**PRICE:** Starting from 35,000 won (pure silver)



NAVER MAP &  
BOOKING



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*Let's explore Korea!*



## KOREA KIDS' CORNER

# 6 amazing science museums your family will love!

BY HYEMIN LEE,  
STRIPES KOREA

**V**isiting a science museum is so much more than just an educational outing, it's an exciting adventure for the whole family to explore the wonders of science together! For parents, it's a perfect chance to cultivate their children's curiosity and spark an interest in science, which is key to understanding the world around us and the technologies shaping our lives.

Unlike a traditional classroom setting, science museums offer dynamic experiences with interactive exhibits, virtual reality adventures, and hands-on workshops that truly bring science to life. Korea is home to many exceptional science museums that are not just educational but also family-friendly and at low cost, making them an ideal destination for a family day out.

Here are six fantastic science museums in Korea that you and your kids won't want to miss!

lee.hyemin@stripes.com

**Important note:** Many science museums require reservations for popular interactive exhibits and programs because of limited seating. It's usually fine to join the waiting list on-site on the day of your visit. However, during weekends or holidays, it is highly recommended to make a reservation through the museum's website. Reservations usually require a Naver ID or Korean phone number verification. If you don't have either, you might need assistance from a Korean.



NAVER MAP WEBSITE



Photos courtesy of National Science Museum

## 1. National Science Museum (국립중앙과학관)

Located in "Science City" Daejeon, the National Science Museum sits right next to KAIST, the nation's leading science and technology university. As the largest science museum in Korea, it features an expansive campus with various buildings: Science and Technology Hall, Natural History Hall, Human Evolution Hall, Future Technology Hall, Children's Science Hall, Astronomical Space Hall and more. With so much to explore, it's recommended to grab a map at the entrance and plan your visit as it's nearly impossible to see everything in one day.

Established under the theme of "Harmony of Nature, Humanity, and Science," the museum serves as an engaging gateway to understanding science in the context of everyday life. It makes complex scientific concepts approachable and enjoyable through interactive exhibits spanning a wide range of topics such as chemistry, biology, ecology and future technologies.

For popular experience exhibits, reservations are required, or visitors can join a waiting list on the day of their visit.

**ADDRESS:** 32-2 Guseong-dong, Yuseong-gu, Daejeon

**HOURS:** 9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. (Tue.–Sun.) / Closed Mondays, New Year, Seollal Day and Chuseok Day

**ADMISSION:** 2,000 won for adults / 1,000 won for children / Free for children aged 6 or younger (Additional fees may apply for certain halls and programs)



NAVER MAP WEBSITE



Photos courtesy of Gwacheon National Science Museum

## 2. Gwacheon National Science Museum (국립과천과학관)

Gwacheon National Science Museum, one of South Korea's most prestigious science museums, is located next to Seoul Grand Park (Seoul Land). The museum is dedicated to inspiring future generations by fostering interest in science and nurturing dreams of becoming a scientist.

The permanent exhibits cover a variety of topics from Korean scientific heritage and natural history to future technology.

The museum resembles a "science village," featuring diverse exhibition halls, outdoor displays, Insectarium, Dinosaur Park, Astronomical Space Hall and much more. Due to its large scale, visitors are encouraged to spend the entire day.

Visitors can enjoy a variety of fun and interactive activities that will captivate both children and adults. However, many activities require reservations in advance via the website or at the entrance kiosks on the day of your visit.

**ADDRESS:** Line 4. Daegongwon (Grand Park) Station Exit 6 or 110 Sanghabeol-ro, Gwacheon-si, Gyeonggi-do

**HOURS:** 9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. (Tue.–Sun.) / Closed Mondays, New Year, Seollal Day and Chuseok Day

**ADMISSION:** 4,000 won for adults / 2,000 won for children / Free for children aged 6 or younger (Additional fees may apply for certain halls and programs)

## 3. National Children's Science Center (국립어린이과학관)

As Korea's only national science museum designed specifically for children, National Children's Science Center offers kids an exciting and educational experience that can even rival the fanciest kids' cafés. Packed with interactive science exhibits, the museum provides children opportunities to explore basic science concepts, natural phenomena, ecosystems, space, energy, and more in an engaging way. The center features a variety of attractions, including a 4K planetarium, an observatory for watching the sun and planets, and a science playground.



To maintain the museum's focus on children, teenagers and adults without accompanying children (elementary school-aged or younger) are not permitted to enter unless they email the museum for prior approval. The number of visitors is limited daily to ensure quality time for children, so the museum accepts visitors with reservations first. On-site visitors are allowed only if there are available spots. Therefore, prior reservations are highly recommended for all visitors, especially for group visits or during weekends and holidays.

**ADDRESS:** Line 4. Hyehwa Station Exit 4 or 215 Changgyeonggung-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul

**HOURS:** 9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. (Tue.–Sun.) / Closed Mondays, New Year, Seollal Day and Chuseok Day

**ADMISSION:** 2,000 won for adults / 1,000 won for children / Free for children aged 6 or younger (Additional fees may apply for certain halls and programs)



NAVER MAP WEBSITE



WEBSITE



## KOREA KIDS' CORNER

### 4. Asan Jang Yeong-sil Science Museum (아산장영실과학관)



NAVER MAP



WEBSITE

Named after Jang Yeong-sil, regarded as the greatest scientist of the Joseon era, the museum offers a glimpse into his inventions, such as the water clock (Jagyeokru) and the rain gauge (Cheugugi), while explaining how they contributed to the development of science during the Joseon dynasty. Children can also learn comprehensive science knowledge through interactive exhibits at the Science Playground and the Space and Aviation Exhibition Hall.

Make sure to purchase a package ticket that grants access to the Science Museum, Ecology and Insect Center and the observatory. This package offers a great opportunity to enjoy all three attractions during your visit at an affordable price.

Located just 30 minutes by car from Camp Humphreys and 45 minutes from Osan Air Base, Asan Jang Yeong-sil Science Museum is relatively small compared to other science museums introduced here. However, its proximity and unique exhibits make it a worthwhile destination. Also, it's suited for younger children.

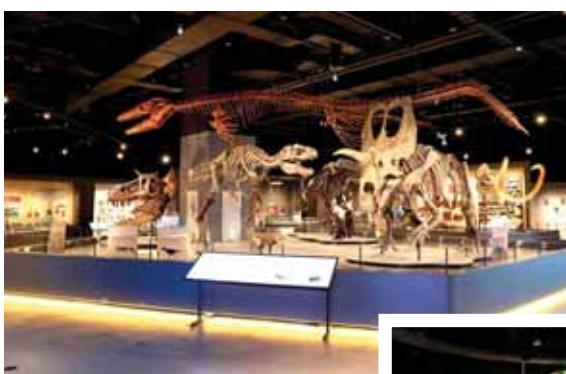
**ADDRESS:** 222 Silleuk-ro, Asan-si, Chungcheongnam-do

**HOURS:** Tue.–Sun. 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Nov.–Feb.), 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. (Mar.–Oct.) / Closed Mondays, New Year, Seollal Day and Chuseok Day

**ADMISSION:** 2,500 won for adults / 1,500 won for children / package tickets: 5,000 won for adults / 3,200 won for children



Photos courtesy of Asan Jang Yeong-sil Science Museum



### 5. Daegu National Science Museum (국립대구과학관)

Explore nature, evolution of life, space, technology and more at the science museum about 25 kilometers (15 miles) away from U.S. military bases in Daegu.

Daegu National Science Museum has extensive exhibition halls that can easily fill a full day of fun and education. The museum is also home to a top children's science museum. Given its size, allow yourself enough time when visiting.

The permanent exhibits cover various topics: Nature and Discovery, Science, Technology and Industry, Evolution of Life, History of Science and Technology Civilization. Other attractions include Astronomical Projection Hall, 4D Theater, Mobility World Exhibit, Kid's World Exhibit and more.

**ADDRESS:** 20 Techno-daero 6-gil, Dalseong-gun, Daegu

**HOURS:** 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. (Tue.–Sun.) / Closed on Mondays, New Year, Seollal Day and Chuseok Day

**ADMISSION:** 3,000 won for adults / 2,000 won for children / Free for children aged 6 or younger (Additional fees may apply for certain halls and programs)



Photos courtesy of Daegu National Science Museum



NAVER MAP



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### 6. Busan National Science Museum (국립부산과학관)

Located in the coastal city, Busan National Science Museum features exhibits that focus not only on fundamental sciences but also on maritime technologies. It is especially beloved for its high-quality, interactive displays that allow visitors to learn science in dynamic ways. Highlights include VR rides and simulations for space travel and a motorboat.

Families with young children are strongly encouraged to visit Space Science Playground, designed for toddlers and preschoolers, as well as Children's Science Hall, where kids can explore basic science and future technologies through hands-on displays. Other attractions include a planetarium, Astronomical Observatory, RC/Drone Experience Center and more.



**ADDRESS:** 59 Dongbusangwangwang 6-ro, Gijang-gun, Busan

**HOURS:** 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. (Tue.–Sun.) / Closed on Mondays, New Year, Seollal Day and Chuseok Day

**ADMISSION:** 4,000 won for adults / 3,000 won for teens / 2,000 won for children aged 3 to 6 (Additional fees may apply for certain halls and programs)



NAVER MAP



WEBSITE



Photos courtesy of Busan National Science Museum

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Matcho-king combo features only drumsticks and wings covered in soy sauce seasoning.



Rose tteokbokki, matcho-king, bburinkle, bburing hot dogs and kaymak cheese balls are placed on the table.

## Discover art of fried chicken at popular chain BHC

STORY AND PHOTOS BY YOOJIN LEE,  
STARS AND STRIPES

Published: December 31, 2025

**S**outh Korea's bounty of fried chicken restaurant chains attracts not only locals but also tourists from around the world.

The BHC chain stands out. Besides its two widely known versions of deep-fried chicken — classic

Five kaymak cheese balls are \$4 at BHC in South Korea.

and sweet-and-sour — the chain has several specials on its menu.

Bburinkle and Matcho-king are signature items, and we ordered both during a recent visit along with sides of cheese balls, bburing hot dogs and rose tteokbokki.

Bburinkle is a powdery cheese topping, like the flavor of Cheetos. The crunchy batter is covered with this addictive seasoning, which is almost like biting into a huge serving of chips, but the inside is filled with tender, juicy chicken.

Pickled radish is served alongside the chicken to refresh the palate. Chewy potato noodles dipped

in rose sauce make up the tteokbokki.

Matcho-king is a soy sauce-based fried chicken topped with slices of spicy pepper, adding excitement to the flavor.

BHC has a dark-meat-only option called Combo, while the boneless option is only with white meat, giving customers a choice based on their preference.

Matcho-king combo we ordered included only drumsticks and wings, perfectly coated in sweet soy sauce but still crunchy.

Instead of the original mozzarella cheese balls, we ordered

EXCLUSIVE NEWS FROM:  
STARS AND STRIPES

[www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com)

### Bburing hot dog

their new side menu, kaymak cheese balls. A staple of Central Asia, kaymak adds rich and creamy flavor to the cheese ball along with its unique yogurt-like taste.

The bburing hot dogs are known for their chewy dough, with a texture almost like cheese. The outside is covered with bburinkle powder, making them good to pair with chicken.

BHC stands for "Byul Hana Chicken," which means "one star chicken." Founded in 1997, the brand has grown into a global chicken franchise, starting overseas in Hong Kong.

After opening in Los Angeles in February 2023, the chain has expanded to three locations in the U.S., according to its website.

[lee.yoojin@stripes.com](mailto:lee.yoojin@stripes.com)  
[@YoojinLee00](https://www.instagram.com/YoojinLee00)

### Things to know

**LOCATION:** BHC Chicken Songtan Terminal Branch, 781-9 Jisan-dong Pyeongtaek-si Gyeonggi-do, South Korea

**DIRECTIONS:** A 3-minute drive from the main gate at Osan Air Base, South Korea. **HOURS:** Open every day from noon to midnight

**PRICES:** Chicken from 20,000 won to 25,000 won, \$14 to \$17; sides are 4,000 won to 7,000 won, or \$3 to \$5.

**DRESS:** Casual

**INFORMATION:** 031-666-5463, parking lot available



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### 2 HIFU (High Intensity Focused Ultrasound)

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\* *The first success story south of Han River!*

- 8 successful pregnancy cases among 15 infertility patients with uterine myoma.

\* *Received 2009 Maternity-Friendly Policy Award (Presidential Award)*



### 3 VBAC (Vaginal Birth After Cesarean section) : Natural Delivery after Cesarean Section

- The highest national VBAC, natural delivery rate, based on statistics from the Health Insurance Review and Assessment Service.
- VBAC : The head office has the critical position as it is responsible for most of the VBAC surgeries performed in Daegu and Gyeongsangbuk-do Province.

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If you have any inquires regarding this article, please feel free to contact below!

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