The city of Andong is a great place to enjoy the colors and charm of autumn. Designated a UNESCO World Heritage in 2010, Andong is the home of the Confucian “yangban” (aristocratic) culture, traditional folk culture, the Hahoe Village and Buyongdae Cliff.

The city is cozily surrounded by mountains, with Taebaek Mountain to the east and Sobaek Mountain to the west. The Nakdong River, which starts at Hwangji Pond in Taebaek City, Gangwon Province, meanders around Hahoe Village. Serene and quiet, the city lives up to its name, which means “comfort in the east.”

Hahoe Village is the birthplace of the Joseon-era scholar and government official Ryu Seong-ryong (1542-1607), who played an important role in defending the nation during the Japanese invasion of 1592-1598. The village has been home to the Ryu clan of Pungsan; today, 70 percent of the villagers are their descendants.

The charm of hanok, or traditional Korean houses, can be felt throughout the village. Yangjindang, Chunhyodang, Bukchontaek and Namchontaek are four of the area’s most renowned houses. Yangjindang is the oldest structure in the village. It was first built to be 99 kan large (a kan is a unit of building area and refers to the distance between two columns), but now only 53 kan remain. Across from Yangjindang is Chunhyodang (National Treasure No. 414), the family head house of Ryu Seong-ryong. The house was built by Ryu’s descendants and disciples after his death. The house was also one of the places Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom visited in 1999.

The Bukchontaek House was built by Ryu Do-seong (1823-1906), a high-ranking Joseon-era official in 1862, and the house is known for its beautiful byeo-olchae, a separated building, north of the guests' quarters. The Jooljae House built by Ryu Seong-ryong's great grandson Ryu Man-ha is also worth visiting. Namchontaek House has bamboo trees inside that add elegance.

It’s also fun to visit chogajip, or traditional houses with straw-thatched roofs shaped like mushrooms. They were inhabited by peasants, and although they may not have the beauty and grace of hanok, they boast a humble charm and coziness. The chogajip has a simple structure and consists of only necessities. While chogajip houses for the upper class consist of a main building and separate annex buildings, the ones for peasants have a single structure with small rooms connected to a kitchen in the center.

Also worth visiting in the area is Buyongdae Cliff, where you can enjoy a panoramic view of Hahoe Village and the Nakdong River swirling around it. You can get to the cliff from the village by boat, and in the old days, oarsmen rowed people across the river and back. On the cliff is Ouyeongjeongsa House, which was built by Ryu Seong-ryong as a place to pursue his studies and teach his disciples. It was here that he completed his book “Jeongbirok,” a record of the Japanese invasion of Korea. The house now accepts visitors looking for hanok accommodations. One of the perks of staying here is the peaceful view of Hahoe Village in the morning.

Across from the cliff is Mansongjeong Forest, designated a natural monument in 2006. It is said that Ryu Seong-ryong's older brother Ryu Un-yong planted 10,000 pine trees to create the forest. The trees that stand now were replanted in 1906.

Finally, you'll want to visit Wolyeonggyo Bridge, the longest wooden footbridge in Korea, at 387 meters. And there is a love story to it. A widow made a mituri, or a traditional hemp shoe, with her hair to remember her late husband, and the bridge is built in the shape of a mituri to honor the widow's love. In the middle of the bridge is Wolyeongjeong Pavilion, and the bridge connects to the Andong Dam folk exhibition hall, which displays folk materials and cultural assets that were flooded by the Andong Dam. There are water fountains along the bridge, to which visitors flock both day and night, especially when it’s a full moon.

**Getting there**

An express bus runs from the Seoul Central City Terminal to Andong Terminal. The address is Andong Village, 186-10 Jeonseo-ro, Hahoe-ri, Pungcheon-myeong, Andong-si. For more information, contact the Andong Hahoe Village at 054-852-3588 or the Andong Tourism Information Center (054-856-3013, 840-6891).

By Suk Ji Min
Assistant Manager
Investment Consulting Center
leticia@kotra.or.kr