A Walk in the Middle of the Sea

For a trek to remember, head to Somaemul Island, home to a magic path, museum and great views.

The port city of Tongyeong along the southern coast of Korea is surrounded by a scattering of islands. Among them is Somaemuldo (Somaemul Island), a picturesque locale that shines especially bright among its gem-like counterparts.

Somaemul Island is small, just about 2.5 square kilometers. You don’t really go here to stay overnight, though you can, or hit the local restaurant scene, as there isn’t really one. Instead, what you do is stay a few hours and walk—both around the island and to the one next door. Designated one of Tongyeong’s eight most scenic places, Somaemul Island attracts tourists year-round.

To get there, you need to hop on a ship at Tongyeong Port Passenger Terminal. Weekday sail times are 07:00, 11:00 and 14:30, with more on the weekends and during peak seasons. The schedule can change depending on the weather and other circumstances, so we recommend checking before you depart. An hour and 20 minutes later, you’ll be at Somaemul Island.

Step onto the beach, and across the stretch of sand you’ll notice a steep uphill path that leads to a crossroads. Arm yourself with water and snacks, as the island’s only market is at the quayside, and head up the path. Go left at the crossroads to get to Deungdaesecom (Lighthouse Island) and right to get to Mangtaebong (Mangtae Peak).

Now, if you take a left, you get to the best part of your island trek—a “magic path” that leads to Lighthouse Island. It’s a pebble path that appears twice a day at low tides, connecting by land the 80 meters between Somaemul Island and Lighthouse Island. Sure it may hurt your feet a little to go all that way stepping on pebbles, but c’mon, you get to tell people you walked across the sea. Once you’ve crossed over to the island, a 10-minute walk will get you to the lighthouse. Total walking time from the boat to the lighthouse? Two hours. And that’s including time to take photos and rest.

If you take a right at the crossroads, you can visit the Maemuldo Tariff History Museum on Mangtae Peak. This is also a great spot from which to enjoy a view of Lighthouse Island and a breathtaking view of Namhlae, or the southern sea of Korea.

Final note: The last ship from Somaemul Island to the Tongyeong Port Passenger Terminal leaves at 16:28. And don’t forget to check tide hours with the Korea Hydrographic and Oceanographic Administration (http://www.khoa.go.kr).

Source: Korea Tourism Organization
http://english.visitkorea.or.kr