Naju, a Sanctuary for Travelers

The proverbial land of milk and honey in Korea, 
Naju offers a unique glance into Korea’s rich history

Historically, South Jeolla Province is an infamous 
fighter; it was once the forefront of the Korean independence movement and later the fierce propo-
nent for democracy in a series of political uprisings. Now the region is known for its 
vibrant culinary scene and robust agriculture 
industry. Nestled in the heart of this 
place is Naju, a charming city which was 
once the province’s capital. Spanning over 
600 km, Naju offers all travelers a truly peaceful and tranquil experience.

Yeongsan Port

Naju’s flatland, the tallest peak in the city standing at 451m, and the Yeongsan River, 
one of Korea’s four largest rivers, are the 
breadbaskets of Naju’s agriculture 
scene. The region is especially renowned for producing 
the country’s most delicious pears.

Tourists can take in a view of this breathtaking 
taking river and get a glimpse of the century-old Yeongsanpo Lighthouse, Korea’s 
modern cultural relic No. 129. The more adventurous can take a river tour on a traditional hwangpo sailboat.

Address: Deokeum-ro 450, 
Gongsan-myeon, Naju-si

Hwangpo Sailboat Tel: 061 335-7008

The Naju Natural Dyeing 
Cultural Center & Museum

Silk weaving and dyes are also true 
prides of the ‘Silk City.’ It is a part of the 
region that Naju locals are excited to show 
off, and rightfully so. Naju’s indigo dye, or jjok, is not only beautiful to look at—it offers a fascinating glimpse into the country’s industrial history. Although natural dyeing has become a lost art since the rise of imported dye from Japan and other Western countries, it recently made a comeback with the public.

Admission is free and visitors can even purchase naturally dyed souvenirs nearby. The center also takes reservations on the weekends for hands-on dye workshops.

Address: Baekho-ro 379, 
Dusi-myeon, Naju-si
Tel: 061 335-0091

Famous Landmarks

Travelers will be transported back to the Joseon Dynasty in an easy ten-minute car ride from Naju Station. Some famous landmarks of this anachronistic neighborhood include Geumseonggwan, one of the oldest hotels in Korea, Moksanae, once the private home of the Naju governor and Hyanggyo, the Naju Confucian Temple and school.

Moksanae, which opened up to the public in 2009, is an especially popular tourist attraction. Reservations for a room may be needed a month in advance, but visitors can check out its courtyard and see the famous hackberry tree, which was rumored to have been struck by lightning three times. Friendly locals advise guests to touch the tree for good luck.

Soul-soothing Soup

Aside from its delicious pears, beef-bone soup, called gomtang in Korean, is the city’s representative dish. The region is so famous for its soup that there is even a street dedicated to it. The most popular and oldest gomtang restaurant is Hayan Jip, a local favorite.

The three dishes on the menu, gomtang, suyuk (boiled pork slices) and suyuk gomtang are served with nothing but kimchi. The deliciously fermented kimchi complements the rich broth filled with leek, rice and generous portions of beef.

Address: Geumseonggwan-gil 6-1, 
Naju-si
Tel: 061 333-4292

Bitgaram Innovative City

Naju is a city known to fully embrace its rich history. Hill-like tombs of kings lie next to rice paddies and houses from the Japanese occupation stand next to Korea’s first highway. Despite this close ties to the past, however, Naju is now striving to become one of Korea’s most technologically advanced cities, starting off with its ambitious development of Bitgaram Innovative City.

Located at the east of the Yeongsan River, this city is impressively modern and eco-friendly. Contemporary apartment complexes and the sleek Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO) Towers, Korea’s electric utility giant, hint at what’s in store for Naju’s future.

Naju Lake Park

In contrast to the ongoing construction of Bitgaram, Naju Lake Park provides a serene ambience to passersby. It is also the first of its kind in the region and a popular sanctuary among older locals. Set to open in the coming weeks, a park observatory will provide the best panoramic view of the city.

By Ji Hyun Rhim
jiyunrhim@kotra.or.kr