



Island Respite

Sinan's Amtaedo and Jaeundo Islands

Sinan, Jeollanam-do Province is nicknamed “Angel Islands,” as it is an archipelago composed of 1,004 small islands; in Korean, “1,004” is pronounced the same way “angel” is pronounced—cheonsa. Most of the islands retain their organic purity. As such, the region offers a wondrous naturalscape ideal for vacationers and those who want to simply wind down and relax.

Radiant Wonders of Stone

Amtaedo Island is so named because of its many stones and rocks. At the center is Seungbongsan Mountain, also characteristically dotted with an oblique, even bizarrely structured panorama of rocks. A hike up and down to hit its peak takes three hours, making it an ideal trekking trail. Walk up while your senses tingle with the grassy oceanside aroma and your eyes feast on the vista of Dadohaehaesang National Park.

Once the sun sets, the Odo Wharf soon becomes crowded with vans and campers. The nighttime view of Cheonsadaegyo Bridge is the biggest draw. At a length of 7.22 km, it is the fourth longest of Korea's marine bridges. When the sunlight fades and dusk settles in, the bridge lights up colorfully, adding dynamic charm to the nighttime ocean view. The panorama has been recognized by the Korea Tourism Organization as one of the country's "Top 100 Locales for Night Views" (2020).



Human Charms

Interestingly, it is neither of these glamorous wonders that are the most frequented of Amtaedo's tourist spots. Instead, an elderly couple's simple, rural house is the most popular destination. Once no different in appearance than any other Korean-style rural house, their house started gaining attention once their faces were painted on the wall surrounding the house. The painting is special in the way it melds with the plant life in the couple's garden. Lush flowers and bushes complete the painting in a way that they act as depictions of the elderly woman and man's hair. The imagery of candid love must be a

heart-warmer for urbanites who pass through, noting the cohabiting immersion in nature both in terms of the elders' residency and their lifestyle.



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Islands Past Islands

Jaeundo Island is an island beyond islands; it can be reached only after passing through Aphaedo and Amtaedo islands. Once accessible only by boat, the recent opening of Cheonsadaegyo Bridge paved the way to reaching Jaeun-do by land.

It has now begun attracting more tourists as a result. This makes the island both less equipped in terms of tourist facilities, and yet more pristine as it remains relatively unscathed. For this reason, plus Jaeun-do's offering of some camping grounds, visitors often go for some relaxing and refueling family time.

Beaches With a Difference

On Jaeundo are nine beaches, each of which is unique. Of them, Baekgil Beach and Bungye Beach are relatively well-equipped with camping decks for family campers to enjoy. They provide ideal grounds to set up your tent underneath the coolness of the shade and feast your eyes on the seaside views. On Baekgil Beach especially, the beachside and the camping grounds are close enough for parents to watch their kids play on the beach while they stretch out on their campsite.

Meanwhile, the oceanside of Bungye Beach is lined by 100 pine trees. The pine tree forest gives an impression of coziness. Its waters are also shallow enough for kids to safely play in. Adding a touch of romance, the fo-

rest is bespeckled with heart-shaped benches for couples to cool down and enjoy themselves.



Camping the Glamorous Way

The archipelago’s beaches offer camping sites for van campers who want to settle with the ocean unfolding in front of them. Doing so doesn’t even come at the cost of sunburn; grassy fields and even forests provide enough shade in which to cool down.

Wind turbines often line the passageways flanking the sandy parts of the beach. Even the in-between area between the sands and the grassy fields allow makeshift shade using the trunk of your van or SUV. This is why many people either purchase or rent cars suited to such camping opportunities. Cool down, let your body slack for a bit—and in no time, you will be met with the coming of dusk and the brilliant hues of the setting sun.

A glamping site in Cheonsa Maeul Village is popular thanks to its all-around accessibility. “Glamping” is a colloquial term coined by combining “glamorous” and “camping.” The first bit denotes that there is minimal work needed on behalf of the campers, as facilities—including sanitary utilities and equipment—are provided at rental bases. Apart from ideally and snugly located glamping “rooms” for family units, some of these campsites even have trampolines for kids, decks for barbecues, table tennis courts and even gaming rooms for kids.

In With the New

It’s clear that the shifted preference in travel formats brought on by the coronavirus pandemic—more precisely, the newfound desire for privacy even in the outdoors—has focused both visitors and tour facilitators on sets of needs different from those prior to the pandemic. As for the pristine naturescapes of Amtaedo and Jaeundo, their charms have yet to be unpacked. As the recent opening of the bridge has boosted their accessibility, the islands are looking to welcome more visitors in both the near and far future.



Source: Excerpt from “Island Respite” Written by Yu Pureum, KOREA (July 2021), Korean Culture and Information Service (KOCIS), Photographed by Lee Beomsu, Korea Tourism Organization