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LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Hanyang University provides on-campus accommodation at the ERICA Campus. The rooms at the dormitory are double rooms and are equipped with air conditioning, a bathroom, 2 single beds and other basic equipment. You can apply for a dorm by simply specifying your request in our application form. No further documents are required as you apply for the student dormitory via your application at Asia Exchange.

Check-in and check-out dates will be confirmed separately for each semester. Normally, you can check in 4 days before the start of the semester, and students can stay in the dorm for the duration of the semester. The dormitory payment is paid directly to Hanyang University. **Please see here for more information about Hanyang University accommodation.**

When you arrive at your dormitory you have to check-in. You may visit the Administration office of the Student Residence Hall 1 or 2 where you will have to provide your student ID and passport. To check in to a dormitory on campus, all students must have proof of a negative tuberculosis test that they can provide during check-in. During check-in you will also need to sign an entry application. Make sure you know your room number and password before moving in.



Aside from the on-campus accommodation, students are free to look for their own accommodation independently. If you are not staying in a dormitory, other good options for accommodation are Airbnb or a Goshiwon. Goshiwons are dormitory style apartments rented monthly which are used mostly by students or workers. In Goshiwon everyone has their own room with shared kitchen and bathrooms. The rooms are usually quite small and come with a desk, bed, TV and internet access and in the more expensive ones you might have air conditioning. Goshiwons for rent can be found walking near university areas or by internet, but the sites are mostly in Korean. The rooms go from around KRW 350 000 to KRW 450 000 in a month. There is no mandatory contract, so students can live there for a month and leave if they wish.

RENTAL AGREEMENT

Remember to make a written agreement about the amount of rent and what it includes.

It's a good idea to check the apartment before moving in and write a list of possible faults. This list can then be added to your lease as an appendix. Remember to check the safety of the area and the comfort of the neighborhood in general. Don't forget that it's easiest to sign the lease during office hours, although some exceptions have been made. You can contact private property owners or real estate agents beforehand by email, but it may take a while to receive an answer, and the prices will most likely be higher than when doing business face-to-face. If it's possible to sign the lease monthly, it is worth looking into. Please consider that if you sign a lease for the full length of your stay but wish to change accommodation earlier for some reason, it will be difficult to get your security deposit back.

Remember to find out what the policy is for incomplete months (for example, if you want to move out before the end of a month). There may be daily or weekly rates, or you may be able to make special arrangements with your landlord. However, sometimes paying for a full month can be cheaper than paying for two weeks daily.

The apartments and rooms may be differently equipped even at the same location. Not all the locations offer basic household amenities, e.g. cutlery and cookware. You can ask for them at reception, but in most cases, you must buy them at your own expense. However, the prices for such products are very affordable in Seoul. Electricity, water and Internet might need to be paid for separately monthly. Extensive use of air conditioner increases your electricity bill so pay attention to its use from the very beginning. Using AC moderately can substantially reduce your electricity bill. For ecological and economic reasons, AC should be turned off when the apartment is empty and possibly also during the nights. To avoid catching a cold, don't turn the air conditioning on too high, 25 – 28 degrees Celsius is a suitable temperature at night.

General Information and Tips for Living in Seoul

Living in Seoul offers a unique blend of modernity and tradition, making it an exciting and rewarding experience. One of the first things you'll notice is the city's excellent public transportation system. The subway is one of the most efficient and convenient ways to get around, with clear English signage at most stations. Buses are also frequent and reliable. A rechargeable **T-money card** can be used across all public transportation, including taxis. However, if you're concerned about communication barriers with taxi drivers, apps like KakaoTaxi can help you book rides easily, even if you don't speak Korean. For navigation, **KakaoMap** and **Naver Map** provide real-time transit updates and detailed directions in English, making getting around much smoother.

In terms of living costs, Seoul can be expensive, particularly when it comes to housing. Central districts like Gangnam and Itaewon come with higher rents, while more affordable options, such as **officetels or gosiwons** (budget accommodations), are available in less central areas. Depending on your housing contract, you may encounter two types of agreements: jeonse, which requires a large deposit but no monthly rent, and wolsse, which includes a smaller deposit and monthly rent. Utility costs, especially heating, can fluctuate with the seasons, with winter typically being more expensive.

Seoul is a vibrant city, but to fully embrace its culture, understanding Korean etiquette is key. Respect for elders is deeply ingrained in society, and this is reflected in language and body language. Bowing and using formal speech when addressing someone older is a sign of respect. In social situations like dining, it's customary to pour drinks for others and to receive a drink with both hands. Meals are often shared, with side dishes, known as banchan, spread across the table for everyone to enjoy. One important thing to be aware of is waste disposal. Korea has a strict garbage and recycling system, and trash needs to be separated into general waste, recyclables, and food waste, with special garbage bags designated for each category.

Although many people in Seoul speak basic English, learning some Korean will be incredibly helpful. Everyday phrases can go a long way in making life easier and more enjoyable. Language apps like **Duolingo or HelloTalk** are good for practicing, and language exchanges or local classes provide great opportunities to improve your skills.

Healthcare in Seoul is of high quality, with many hospitals offering services in English. If you plan to stay long-term, it's a good idea to register for **Korean National Health Insurance (NHIS)** to ensure you're covered. Pharmacies, known as yakguk, are easily accessible and can help with minor ailments, but for anything more serious, a visit to a clinic or hospital is recommended.

When it comes to entertainment and leisure, Seoul has a lot to offer. The city is famous for its bustling nightlife, especially in areas like **Hongdae, Itaewon, and Gangnam**, where you'll find a mix of bars, clubs, and live music venues. There are also quieter, more relaxed options, like the city's many cafés. Seoul's café culture is strong, with unique, Instagram-worthy spots scattered across the city, each offering free Wi-Fi. Shopping is another popular activity. From high-end malls like COEX to the more budget-friendly shopping districts like **Dongdaemun and Myeongdong**, Seoul caters to all tastes and budgets.

Seoul experiences all four seasons distinctly, so be prepared for weather changes. **Winters** (December to February) can be cold, with temperatures often dropping below freezing. You'll need proper winter clothing, as snow is common. **Spring** (March to May) is beautiful with cherry blossoms, though yellow dust from China can occasionally affect air quality. **Summers** (June to August) are hot and humid, with frequent rainfall during the monsoon season. **Autumn** (September to November) is generally mild and considered the most pleasant season, with beautiful foliage throughout the city.

Staying connected in Seoul is easy, as the city boasts widespread free Wi-Fi in cafés, restaurants, and public spaces. For mobile data, you can pick up a prepaid SIM card or rent a portable Wi-Fi device at the airport or major telecom providers like **Olleh** or **SKT**. Most locals use KakaoTalk as their go-to messaging app, and apps like Coupang or Gmarket are widely used for online shopping.

If you're staying long-term, setting up a bank account in Korea is straightforward, especially with banks like Shinhan or KEB Hana that offer English services. For day-to-day transactions, credit and debit cards are widely accepted, though some smaller establishments might only take cash. ATMs are plentiful, but not all of them accept foreign cards, so it's best to check before using one.

Finally, Seoul has a thriving expat community. Whether through Facebook groups, expat forums, or Meetup events, there are plenty of ways to connect with other foreigners in the city. Knowing where your country's embassy or consulate is located can be helpful in case you ever need assistance with visas, documentation, or any other legal matters during your stay.

Living in Seoul is an adventure, offering a rich blend of experiences. By understanding local customs, preparing for the seasonal changes, and making use of the city's modern infrastructure, you'll be able to enjoy everything this exciting city has to offer.



YOUR WAY ABROAD

The world has an interesting way of giving great experiences
to the ones who are passionate about their dreams.

Miia Muukkonen, Asia Exchange student

