



# SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

HOW TO SPEND A DAY IN BUSAN, SOUTH KOREA'S  
COASTAL-COOL SECOND CITY.

BY KAILA YU PHOTOGRAPHY BY BEN WELLER



**T**AKE SEOUL'S cosmopolitan energy, buzzing markets, and epic shopping, throw in some balmy weather and gorgeous beaches, and you've got Busan. South Korea's second-largest city, which sits on the southeastern edge of the Korean Peninsula, pairs street food with seaside breezes, traditional artisan shops with coastal hiking trails, and small-screen cred with a vibe that's more laid-back than that of its big sister, a two-and-a-half-hour high-speed train ride north. In the past few years, cruise lines have started adding the city to Southeast Asia- and Japan-focused sailings. There's also the recent Busan-centered historical drama *Pachinko*, returning to Apple TV+ for a second season. It's easy to understand why the city is ready for its moment in the travel spotlight – here's how to see its luster during a day in port.

#### 10 AM

It's a 15-minute taxi ride from Busan's cruise terminal to the Gukje Market, which opened in the 1950s and became known as a place where Korean War refugees tried to make a living by selling smuggled goods. Hundreds of stalls stocking everything from snacks to appliances – as well as an array of traditional Korean souvenirs and artisan-made goods – sprawl across a series of narrow alleys. Search for ceramic tableware, pastel-hued *hanji* lamps made from mulberry-bark paper, and hand-made tea sets, complete with satchels

of *yuja-cha* (citron tea) or *omija-cha* (magnolia-berry tea).

#### NOON

Walk over to the parasol-topped stalls of the 53-year-old Jagalchi Fish Market, South Korea's largest seafood market. Here, Korean women known as *jagalchi*

*ajumma* commandeer tanks of fresh sunfish, squid, sea squirts, geoduck, and other South Korean specialties. Sample fried shrimp, abalone soup, and seafood bibimbap from vendors, or settle in at one of the market's upstairs restaurants, such as Jacky's Seafood, known for its Korean-style sashimi and



Fresh catches and early mornings at the Jagalchi Fish Market.





Street style at Songdo Beach.

*banchan* (side dishes). Jacky, a local celebrity, holds court and recommends the day's catches, such as delicate grilled flounder, soy-marinated crab, and fresh abalone.

### 1 PM

Skip the crowds at Haeundae Beach in

favor of locally beloved Songdo, about a ten-minute taxi ride from downtown. Lounge in the sand or board the Songdo cable car, which whisks passengers over the water and a mile away to Annam Park. There, trek across suspension bridges and take a midday break in the park's Healing Forest, a name that

## FYI

"Busan is one of my favorite places – a fantastic destination for natural beauty, cultural experiences, and delicious food. Seafood lovers must try two dishes: *mulhoe*, a spicy, cold raw fish soup, and *hoe-deopbap*, raw fish and vegetables over rice with a spicy vinaigrette sauce."

– Jamie Yoo, *Virtuoso* travel advisor, New York City

nods to the meditative benefits of taking a stroll through the woods.

### 3 PM

From the seaside Buddhist Haedong Yonggungsa Temple to the cliffside, three-mile Igidae Coastal Trail, Busan doesn't skimp on panoramic views. Find some of the most impressive at Yongdusan Park, at the top of Yongdusan Mountain, where the 394-foot Diamond Tower holds one of Busan's best observation decks. There's also an aquarium, a café, and a giant statue dedicated to Admiral Yi Sun-shin, a sixteenth-century Korean naval commander.

### 5 PM

Beef, a symbol of wealth in Korea, dominates the menu at Mullebang Jeukseokgui, a 45-year-old Korean barbecue restaurant in the Nam-gu neighborhood. Try one of the most famous Korean cuts, *toshishal* – a heavily marbled and delicate hanging beef tenderloin – served *ssam*-style (wrapped in lettuce like a Korean taco). Another must-order: the umami bomb of *doenjang* (soybean paste) ramen, topped with fresh mussels.







## In Port

6:30 PM

Before heading back to the ship, walk about 15 minutes southwest to the Nampo-dong district. Beneath the neon-lit arches of its BIFF Square, named for the city's annual Busan International Film Festival, sidewalk plaques bear Korean celebrities' handprints, à la the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Amid the square's many street-food stalls, the dessert to order is *ssiat hotteok*, a deep-fried pancake filled with almonds, pine nuts, and sunflower, pumpkin, and sesame seeds, topped with brown sugar.

## Busan Calling

**CRUISE** A full day in Busan is one of 17 stops on **Regent Seven Seas Cruises'** 28-night Singapore-to-Tokyo journey through the Gulf of Thailand and South China Sea. After an overnight in Shanghai, the 746-passenger *Seven Seas Explorer* sails to the Korean city, where shore excursions include tea ceremonies, temple visits, and walking tours through the Jagalchi Fish Market. *Departure: February 7, 2024; from \$26,799.*

**Ponant's** 184-passenger expedition ship *Le Jacques-Cartier* takes cruisers from Japan's southern Amakusa region through the Seto Inland Sea on an intimate, eight-night Kagoshima-to-Kobe voyage. A mid-journey stop in Busan allows time for shopping, afternoon hikes, and visits to the city's Buddhist temples. *Departure: May 4, 2024; from \$9,340.*

Chase cherry blossoms in bloom in Aomori, sample Okinawa's fresh seafood, and beach-hop in Busan on **Princess Cruises'** round-trip-from-Tokyo sailing aboard the 2,670-passenger *Diamond Princess*. The 18-night cruise calls on nine ports in Japan, makes two stops in Taiwan, and spends six days at sea, giving travelers time between excursions to soak in the ship's onboard *onsen* baths. *Departure: May 16, 2024; from \$2,808.* ♡

**Diamond Tower** views, a *ssiat hotteok* dessert in BIFF Square, Busan's coastal sprawl, and *toshishal* with Korean sides at **Mullebanga Jeukseokgui**.



Let Alpine Adventures plan your winter vacation to Austria. Incomparable luxury moments in a typical traditional hotel in the heart of Tyrol - **Tennerhof Gourmet & Spa** and **Charme Hotel** in **Kitzbühel**.



★★★★★  
**TENNERHOF**  
Kitzbühel | Austria

Feel the History.  
Enjoy Luxury.

RELAX  
CHAT

