



SOUTH KOREA



INTRODUCTION

An independent kingdom for much of its long history, after World War II, a democratic government was set up in the southern half of the Korean Peninsula. After fending off an invasion by North Korea in 1950, South Korea achieved rapid economic growth and today is a fully functioning modern democracy.

GOVERNMENT

Chief of State

President MOON Jae-in

Head of Government

President MOON Jae-in

Government Type

presidential republic

Capital

Seoul

Legislature

unicameral National Assembly or Kuk Hoe (300 seats; 4-year terms)

GEOGRAPHY

Area

Total: 99,720 sq km

Land: 96,920 sq km

Water: 2,800 sq km

Climate

temperate, with rainfall heavier in summer than winter; cold winters

Natural Resources

coal, tungsten, graphite, molybdenum, lead, hydropower potential

ECONOMY

Economic Overview

strong export-driven East Asian economy; sustainable and social policy leader; foreign aid financier; automotive manufacturing; app-based developer and exporter; global healthcare technology leader; credit suffers due to tensions with North Korea

GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) \$2.188 trillion (2020 est.)

GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) \$42,300 (2020 est.)

Industries - electronics, telecommunications, automobile production, chemicals, shipbuilding, steel

Agricultural products - rice, vegetables, cabbages, milk, onions, pork, poultry, eggs, tangerines/mandarins, potatoes

Exports \$606.7 billion (2020 est.)

integrated circuits, cars/vehicle parts, refined petroleum, ships, office machinery (2019)

partners: China 25%, US 14%, Vietnam 9%, Hong Kong 6%, Japan 5% (2019)

Imports \$541 billion (2020 est.)

crude petroleum, integrated circuits, natural gas, refined petroleum, coal (2019)

partners: China 22%, US 12%, Japan 9% (2019)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Population

51.7 million (July 2021 est.)

Population Growth

0.26% (2021 est.)

Ethnicity

homogenous

Language

Korean, English (widely taught in elementary, junior high, and high school)

Religion

Protestant 19.7%, Buddhist 15.5%, Catholic 7.9%, none 56.9% (2015 est.) note: many people also carry on at least some Confucian traditions and practices

Urbanization

urban population: 81.4% of total population (2021)

rate of urbanization: 0.31% annual rate of change (2020-25 est.)

