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
coil, 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.)