

# Korea, South

## Geography

Location: Eastern Asia, southern half of the Korean peninsula bordering the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea, south of North Korea

Area:

total area: 98,480 sq km

land area: 98,190 sq km

Land boundaries: total 238 km, North Korea 238 km

Coastline: 2,413 km

Maritime claims:

continental shelf: not specified

territorial sea: 12 nm; 3 nm in the Korea Strait

International disputes: Demarcation Line with North Korea;  
Liancourt Rocks claimed by Japan

Climate: temperate, with rainfall heavier in summer than winter

Terrain: mostly hills and mountains; wide coastal plains in west and south

Natural resources: coal, tungsten, graphite, molybdenum, lead, hydropower

Land use:

arable land: 21%

permanent crops: 1%

meadows and pastures: 1%

forest and woodland: 67%

other: 10%

Irrigated land: 13,530 sq km (1989)

Environment:

current issues: air pollution in large cities; water pollution from the discharge of sewage and industrial effluents; driftnet fishing

natural hazards: occasional typhoons bring high winds and floods; earthquakes in southwest

# People

Population: 45,553,882 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 24% (female 5,280,998; male 5,640,789)

15-64 years: 71% (female 15,877,182; male 16,291,183)

65 years and over: 5% (female 1,554,512; male 909,218) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 1.04% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 15.63 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 6.18 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: 0.9 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 20.9 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:  
total population: 70.89 years  
male: 67.69 years  
female: 74.29 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 1.66 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:  
noun: Korean(s)  
adjective: Korean

Ethnic divisions: homogeneous (except for about 20,000 Chinese)

Religions: Christianity 48.6%, Buddhism 47.4%, Confucianism 3%,  
pervasive folk religion (shamanism), Chondogyo (Religion of the  
Heavenly Way) 0.2%

Languages: Korean, English widely taught in high school

Literacy:  
total population: 96%  
male: 99%  
female: 94%

# Government

## Names:

conventional long form: Republic of Korea

conventional short form: South Korea

local long form: Taehan-min'guk

local short form: none

note: the South Koreans generally use the term "Hanguk" to refer to their country

Type: republic

Capital: Seoul

Independence: 15 August 1948

National holiday: Independence Day, 15 August (1948)

Constitution: 25 February 1988

Suffrage: 20 years of age; universal

Flag: white with a red (top) and blue yin-yang symbol in the center; there is a different black trigram from the ancient I Ching (Book of Changes) in each corner of the white field

## Economy

Industries: electronics, automobile production, chemicals, shipbuilding, steel, textiles, clothing, footwear, food processing

Agriculture: Principal crops - rice, root crops, barley, vegetables, fruit; livestock and livestock products - cattle, hogs, chickens, milk, eggs; self-sufficient in food, except for wheat; fish catch of 2.9 million metric tons, seventh-largest in world

Transportation

Railroads:

total: 6,763 km

Highways:

total: 63,200 km

Inland waterways: 1,609 km; use restricted to small native craft

Pipelines: petroleum products 455 km

Ports: Chinhae, Inch'on, Kunsan, Masan, Mokp'o, Pohang, Pusan, Ulsan, Yosu

Airports:

total: 114

Defence Forces

Branches: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, National Maritime Police (Coast Guard)