

Discover the Republic of Korea

through The National Atlas of Korea



Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport
**National Geographic
Information Institute**

INTRODUCTION



The National Atlas of Korea details the current status of the Republic of Korea (South Korea); through maps, diagrams, and illustrations, this resource vividly portrays changes in territory, nature, economy, society, and culture that the nation has experienced over time.

The National Atlas of Korea has been published and updated by the National Geographic Information Institute of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport of the Republic of Korea since 2007. The atlas is widely used in government, academia, and education, both within and outside of the Republic of Korea. This comprehensive resource has gained international recognition for its value. It won first place at the International Cartographic Conference in 2017 and first place in Expert Voting and the Popular Vote at the International Cartographic Conference in 2023.

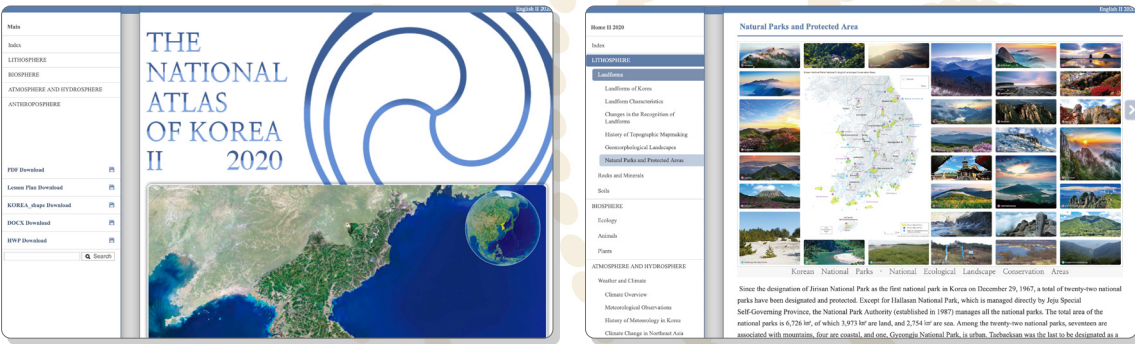
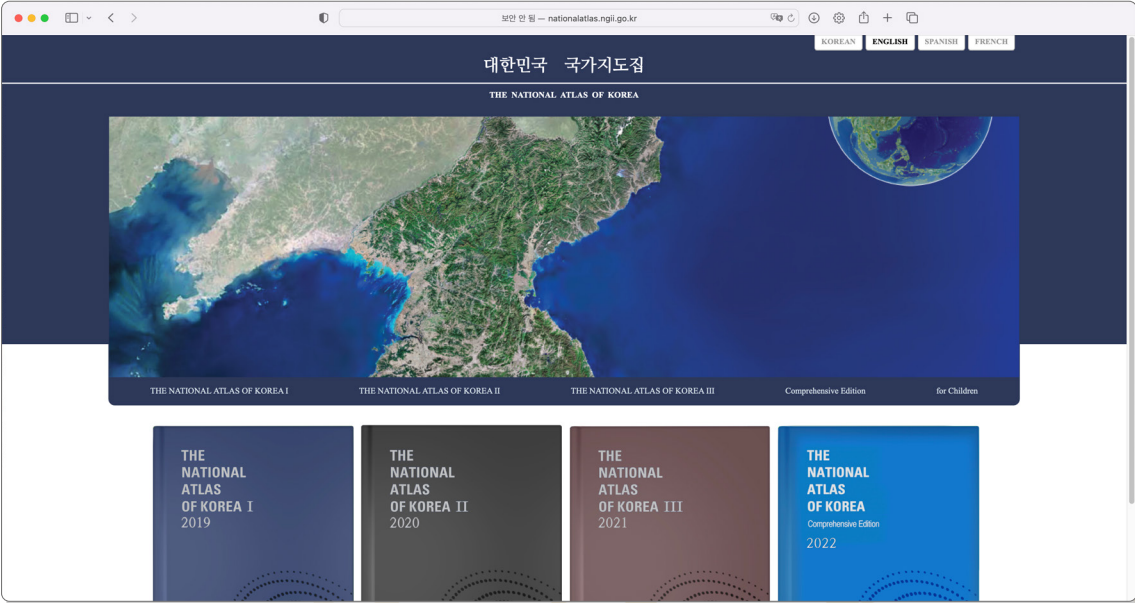


Discover Korea through the National Atlas of Korea is an excerpt from the contents of *The National Atlas of Korea: Comprehensive Edition*, published by the National Geographic Information Institute in 2023, to help those in Korea and abroad easily explore all aspects of the nation.

After reading *Discover Korea through the National Atlas of Korea*, visit the National Atlas of Korea website to learn more about this peninsula country. All the *National Atlas of Korea* editions published since 2007 are available online. Through the National Atlas of Korea website, you will find interactive maps and the atlas published in Korean, English, French, and Spanish.



the National Atlas of Korea website
QR Code

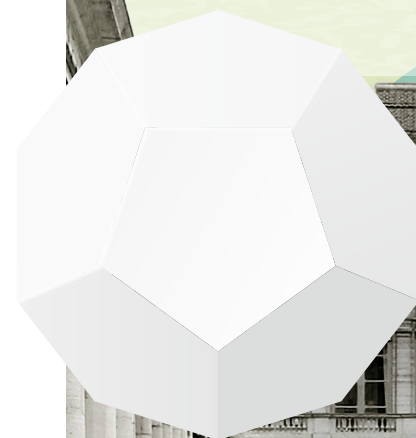




KOREA

Interactive Maps

1



Interactive Maps

In 2024, the National Geographic Information Institute developed a total of 11 interactive maps as a pilot project to enhance the educational use of The National Atlas of Korea.

Interactive maps provided by *The National Atlas of Korea* website

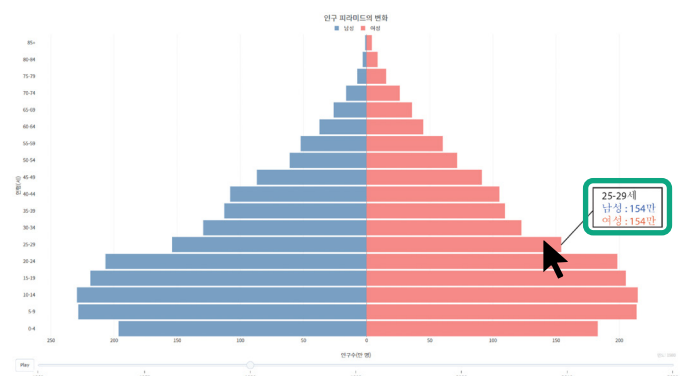


There are interactive maps showing the changes in the population pyramid of the Republic of Korea.

How to use the interactive map



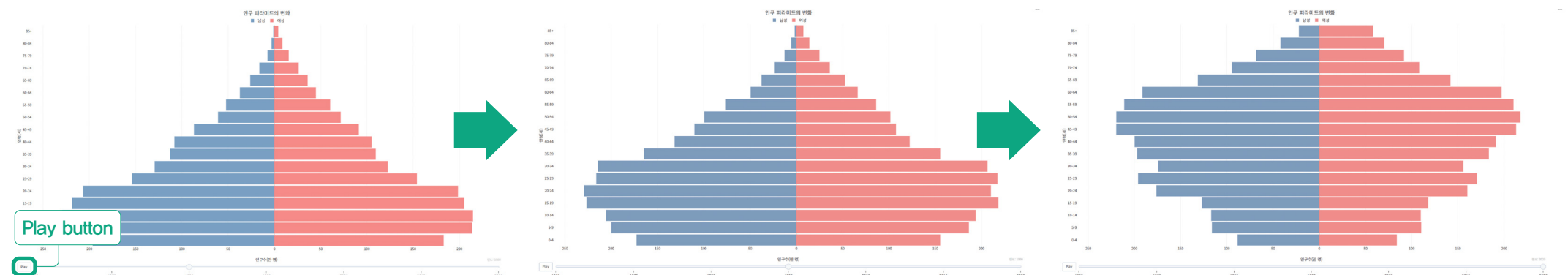
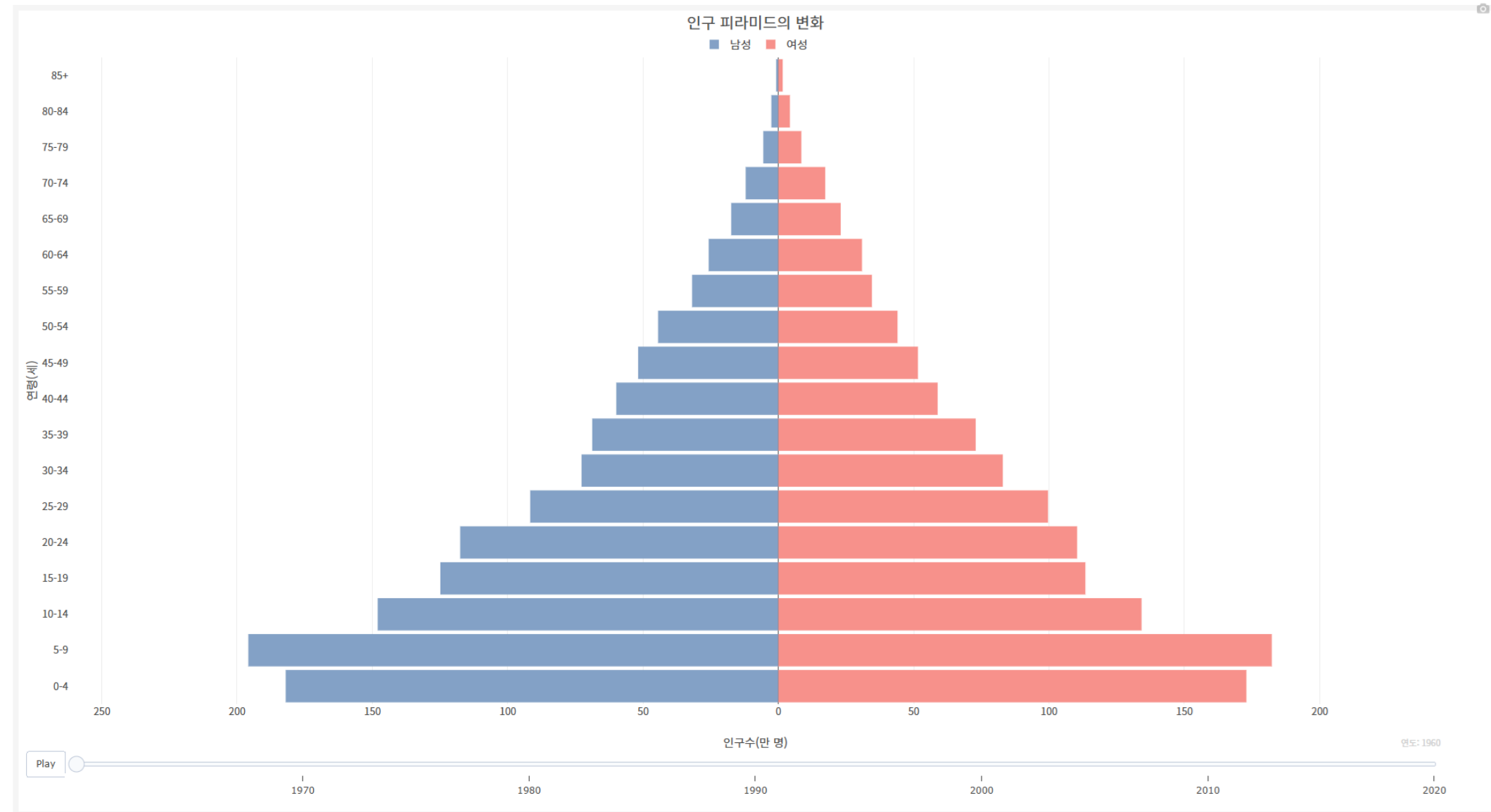
1. Click on a year as shown below to display the population pyramid for that year.



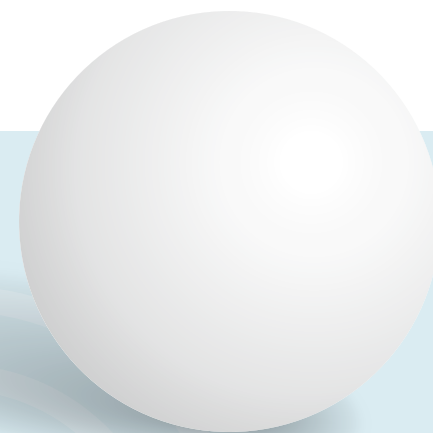
2. Place the mouse over the horizontal bar graph to display the male and female population data for that age.

Interactive Maps

* The interactive maps only work in the Acrobat Reader app.



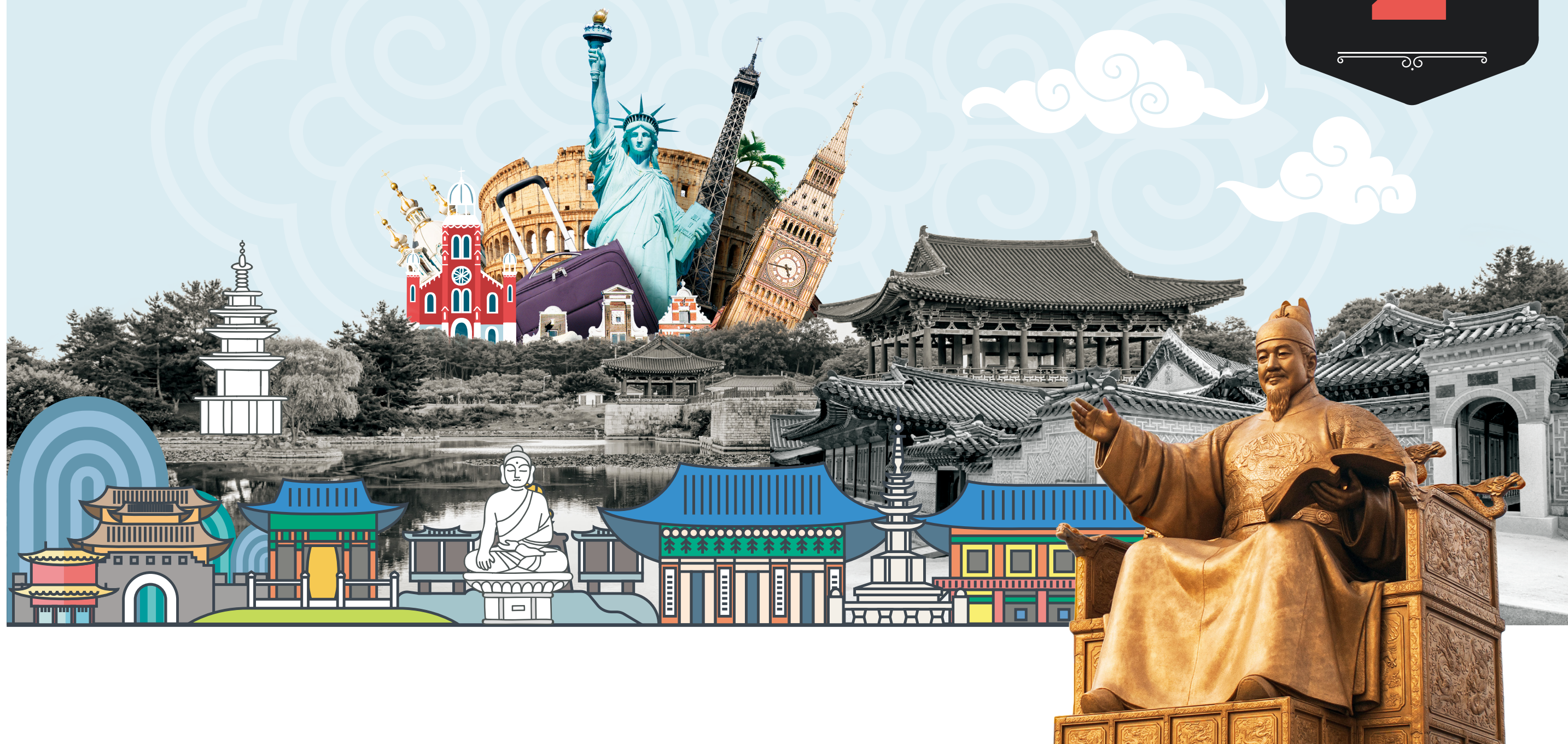
3. Click the "Play" button to view the changes in the population pyramid for each year as an animation.



KOREA

Korea in the World

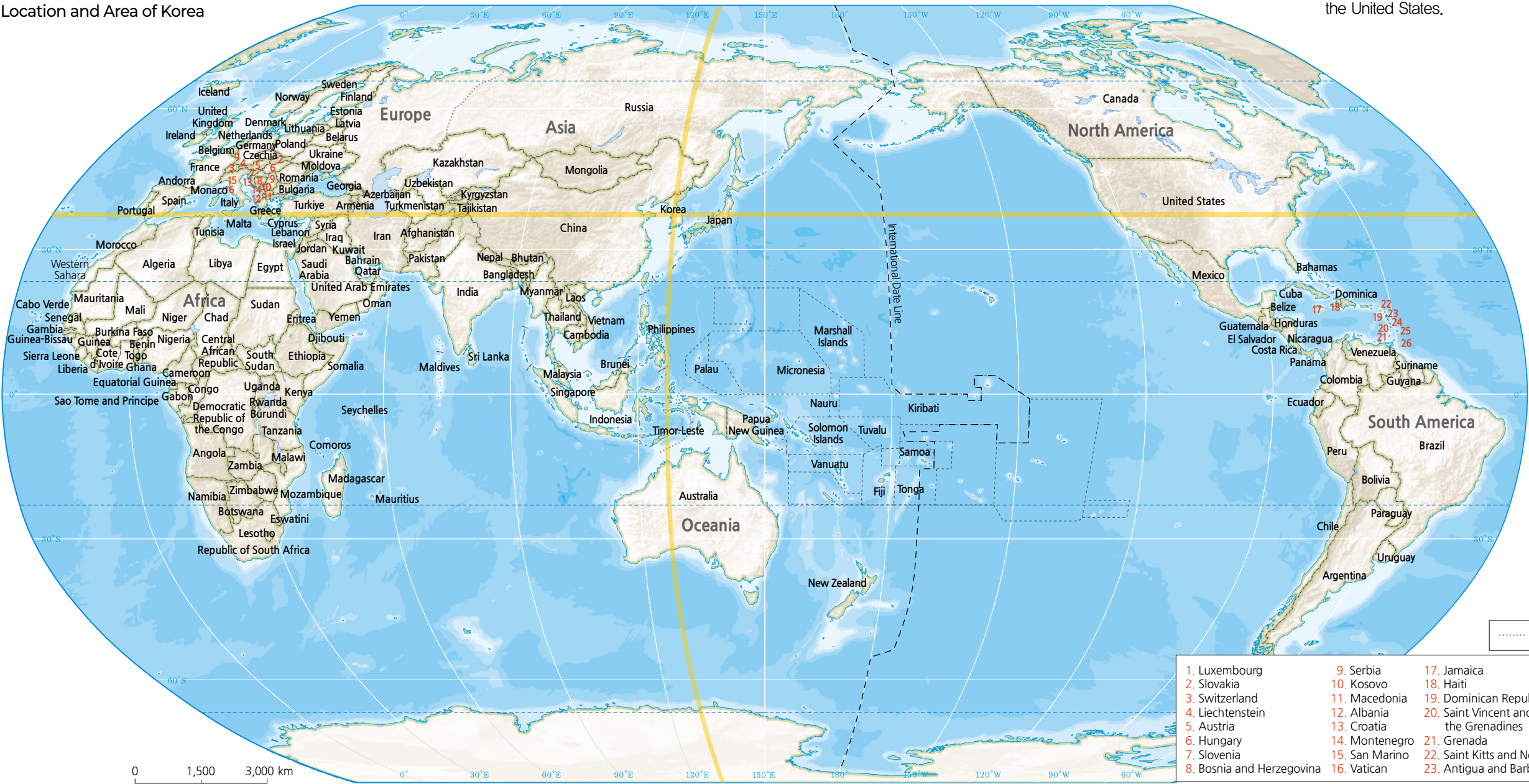
2



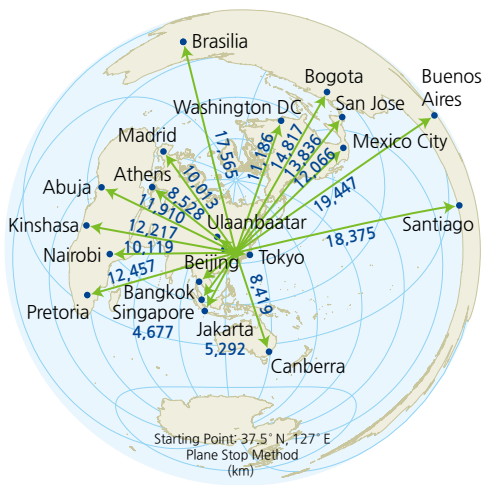
Geography

The Korean Peninsula is located where the Eurasian continent and the Pacific Ocean meet and is positioned at the heart of East Asia. This geopolitical location has enabled the Republic of Korea to have high accessibility to China and Japan, as well as Southeast Asia and Russia, making it an economic hub in East Asia, and has positioned the Republic of Korea to play an important role in establishing world peace in an era of growing political and economic competition between the United States and China.

Location and Area of Korea

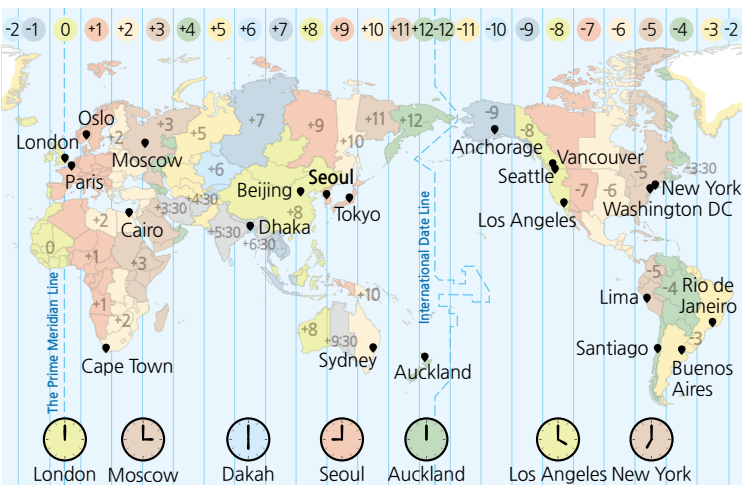


Distance to the Capital Cities



The distance from Seoul to Buenos Aires, Argentina is 19,447 km.

Standard Time



Korea uses the Korean Standard Time (KST). The standard meridian of the Peninsula is 135° E, which is nine hours ahead of Universal Time Coordinated (UTC). KST (UTC +09:00) is 9 hours ahead of the United Kingdom and 14 hours ahead of New York in the United States.

Area

The total area of the Korean Peninsula, including all of its annexed islands, is 223,617 km², placing Korea 85th among 253 countries in the world.

Climate

Korea has temperate and continental climates, with distinct changes in the four seasons. The annual mean temperature range is particularly wide.

Mountains

High mountains and mountain ranges form boundaries between climates and cultures, and have a profound impact on the ecosystem. About 70% of the land of Korea is mountainous, and the highest mountain on the Korean Peninsula is Baekdusan Mountain (2,744 m).

Major Mountains and Mountain Ranges of the World



Major Tectonic Plates



Mountains in Korea

- Baekdusan (2,744m) Site of the headwaters of the Amnokgang River and Dumangang River; it has a caldera at the summit, called Cheonji, which has a diameter of 3,550 m; it has long been loved by Korean people.
- Hallasan (1,947m) The highest mountain in the Republic of Korea, located on Jeju Island; it has a caldera at the summit, called Baeknokdam; it is a UNESCO World Natural Heritage site.



Baekdusan

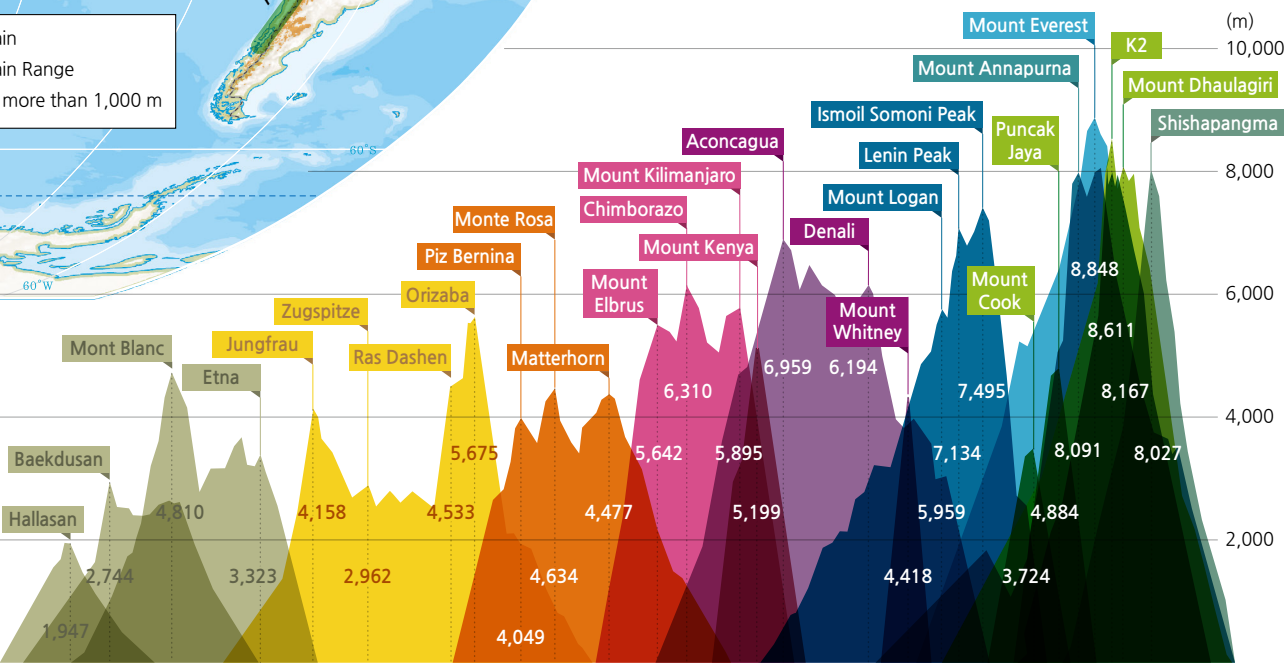


Hallasan

Major Mountain Ranges in the World

- Himalayas The roof of the world, stretching from Pakistan to Nepal and Bhutan; includes the world's highest peak, Mountain Everest (8,848 m)
- Rocky Mountains The representative mountain range of North America, stretching from Alaska to Mexico
- Alps The largest mountain range in Europe
- Ural Mountains The mountain range forming the border between Europe and Asia
- Andes The longest mountain range in the world

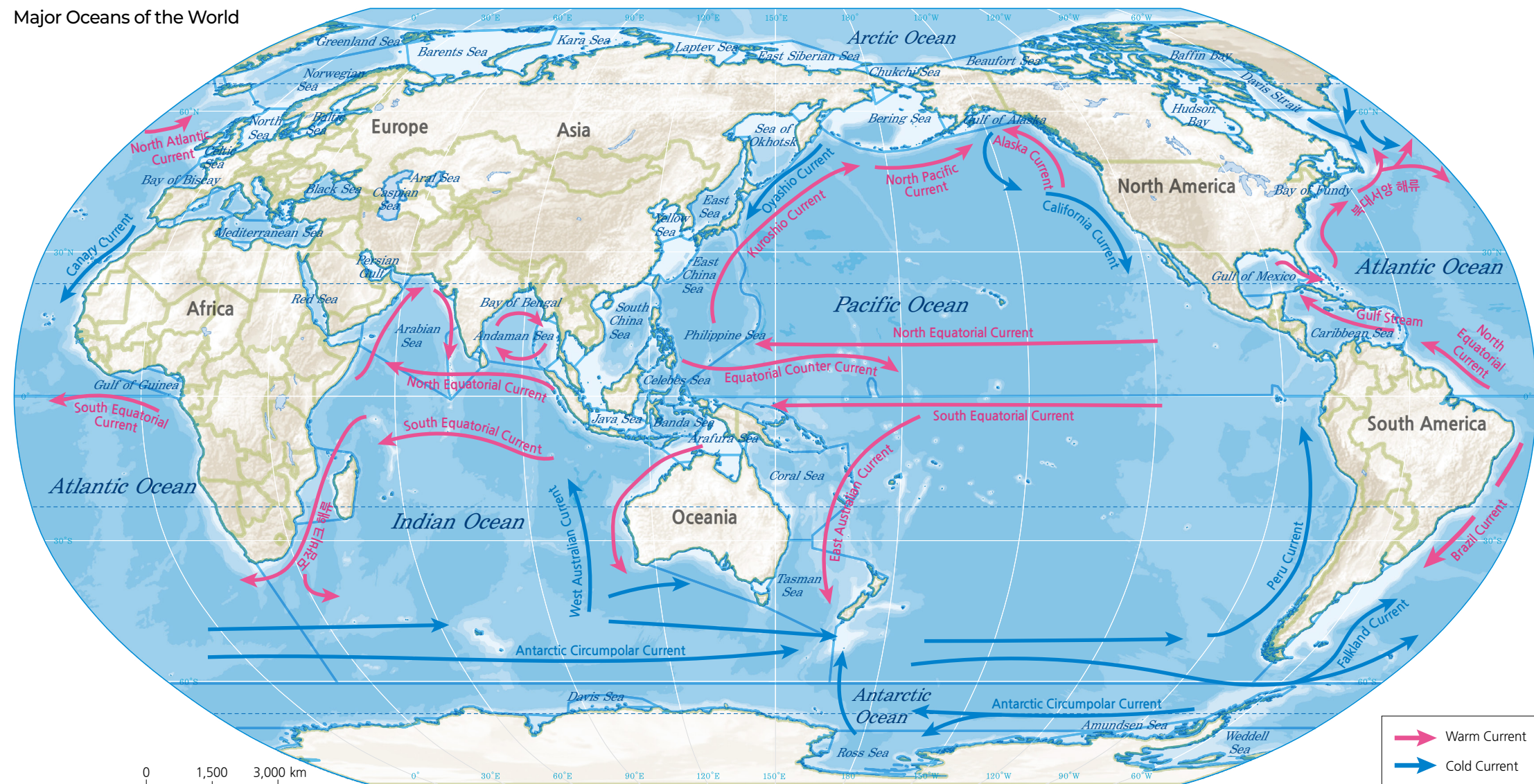
Height of Major Mountains



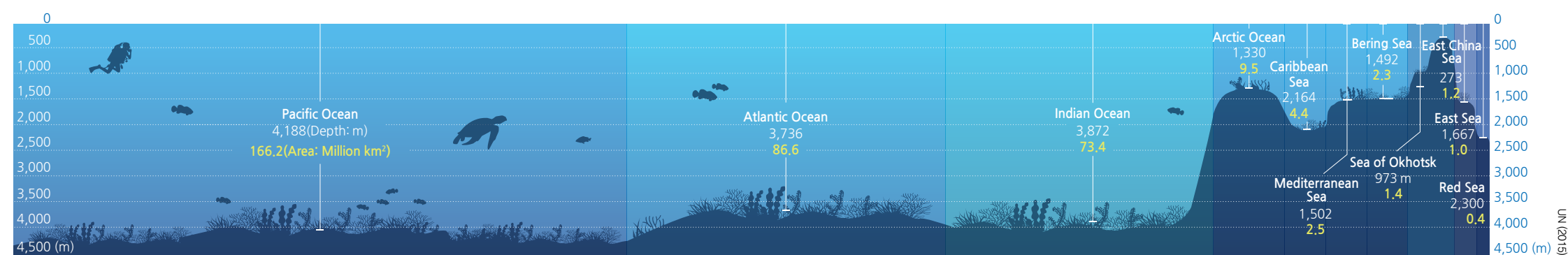
Oceans

The oceans cover two-thirds of the Earth's surface and are divided into the Pacific Ocean, Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, Arctic Ocean, and Antarctic Ocean. Ocean currents, consisting of warm and cold currents, circulate in the oceans and flow clockwise in the Northern Hemisphere and counterclockwise in the Southern Hemisphere.

Major Oceans of the World

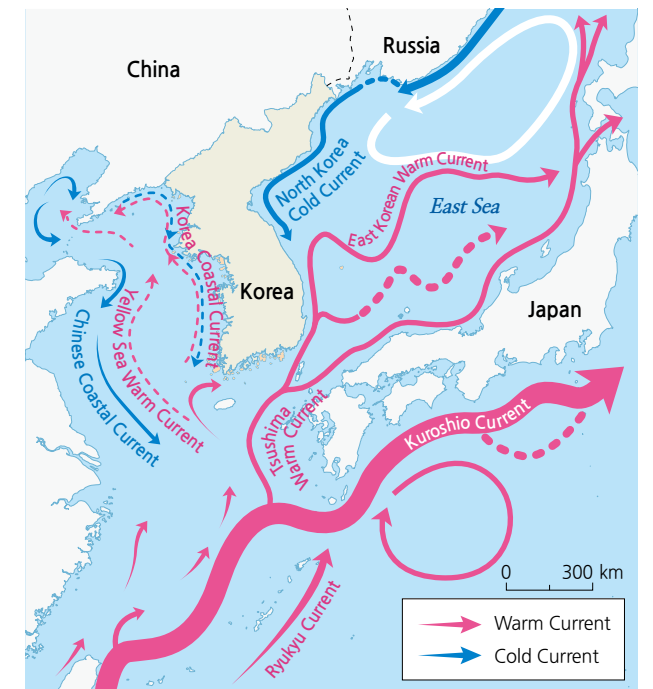


Average Depth and Area of Major Oceans



The Korean Peninsula is bordered by water on three sides (clockwise from right): East Sea, Korea Strait, and Yellow Sea.

Ocean Currents around Korea



Seas around the Korean Peninsula

- **East Sea** Ulleungdo and Dokdo are located here. It is called a microcosm of the ocean because it exhibits phenomena that occur in the ocean, such as deep sea water and circulation systems. It is also an important location for research on global climate change.
- **Yellow Sea** It has one of the largest tidal ranges in the world, with wide tidal flats.

Oceans in the World

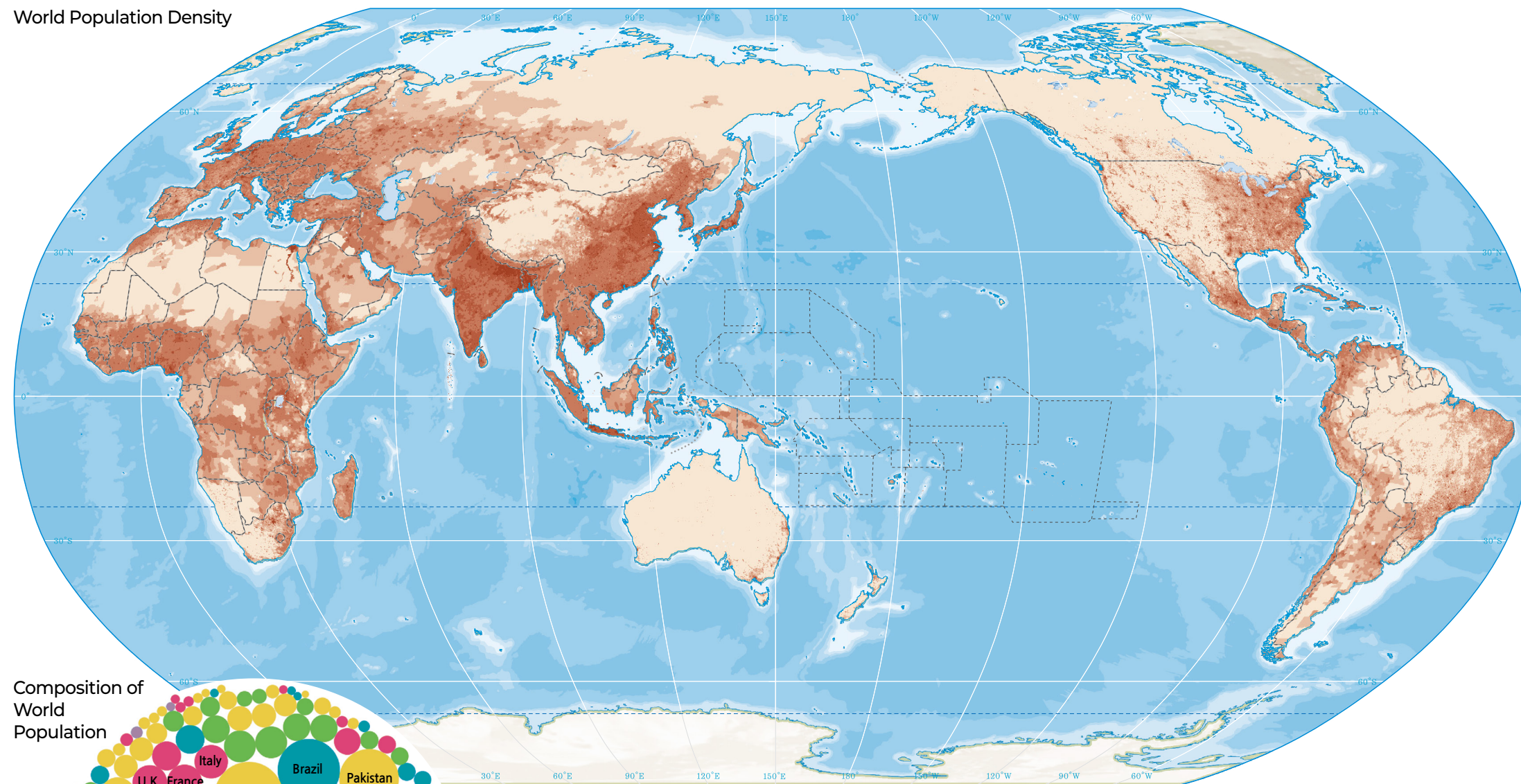
- **Pacific Ocean** The world's largest ocean, divided into the North Pacific and South Pacific by the equator
- **Atlantic Ocean** The ocean bordering Europe, Africa, and America, with a central ridge
- **Indian Ocean** The ocean bordering Africa, the Middle East, Australia, and India
- **Arctic Ocean** A conflict zone with the United States, Canada, and Russia
- **Antarctic Ocean** The ocean below 65° south latitude, separated from other oceans by the Antarctic Circumpolar Current

Population

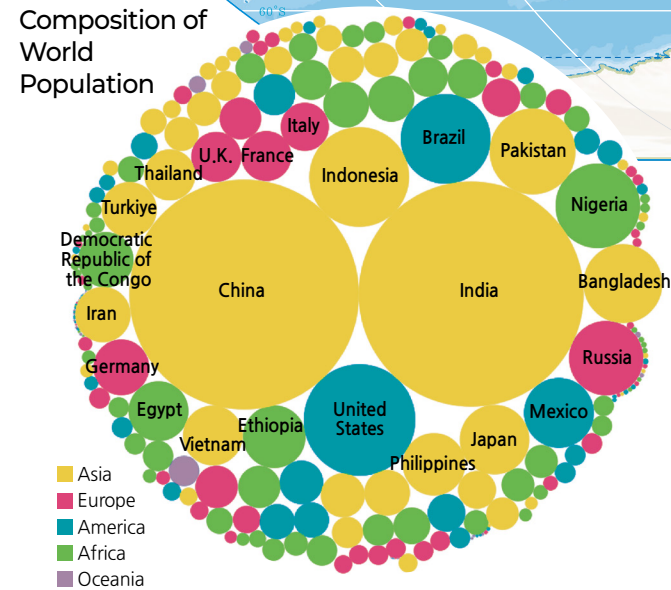
The world population reached 8 billion in 2022 and is expected to exceed 10 billion in 2058.

The population of the Republic of Korea was approximately 52 million as of 2022. The population is decreasing due to low birth rates.

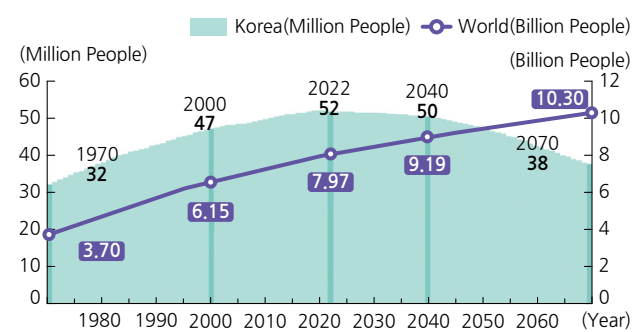
World Population Density



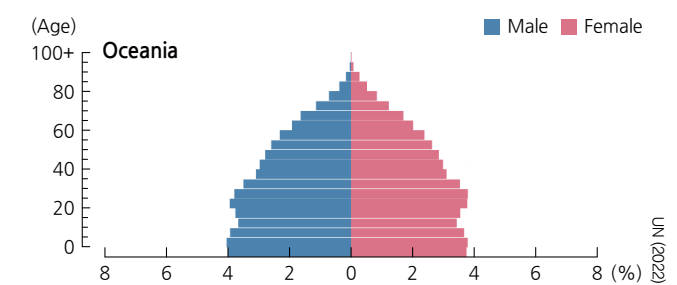
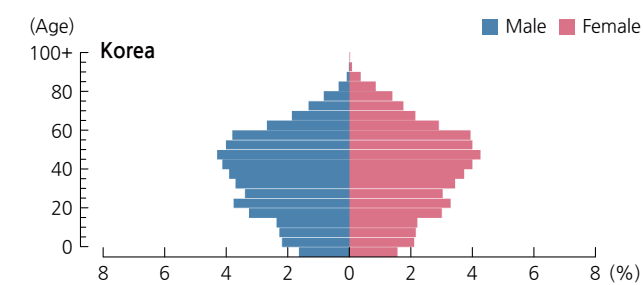
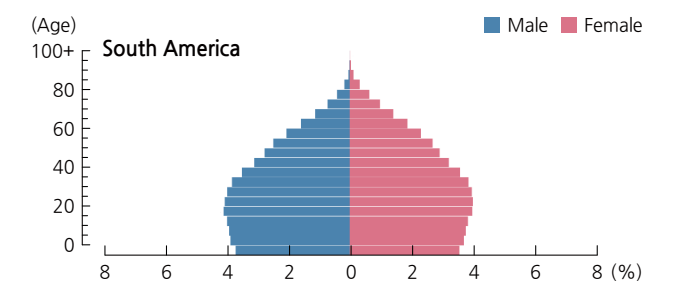
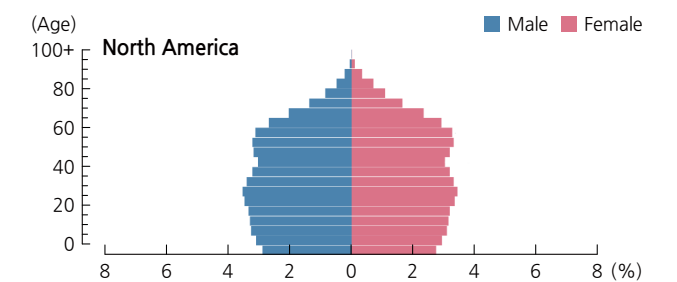
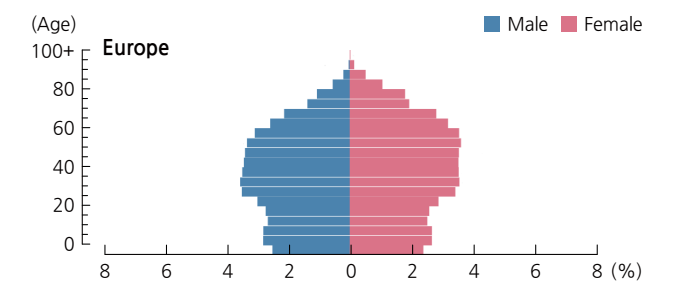
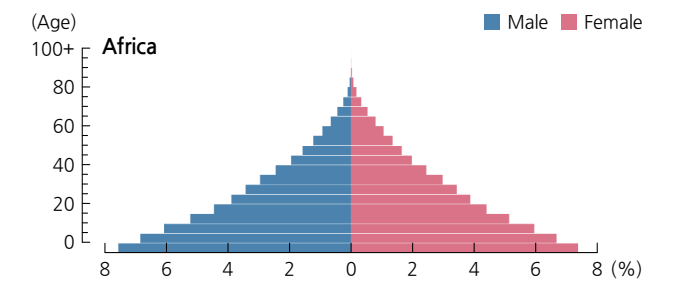
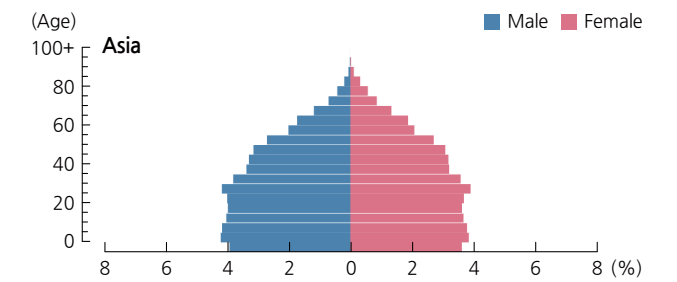
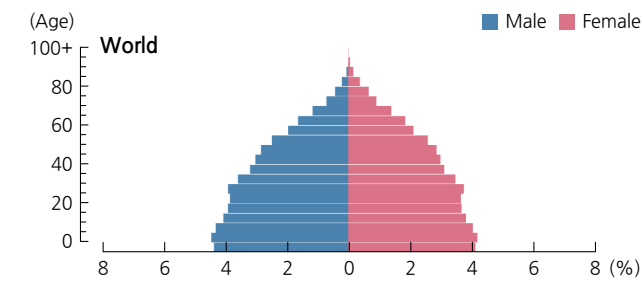
Composition of World Population



Population Trends in the World and Korea



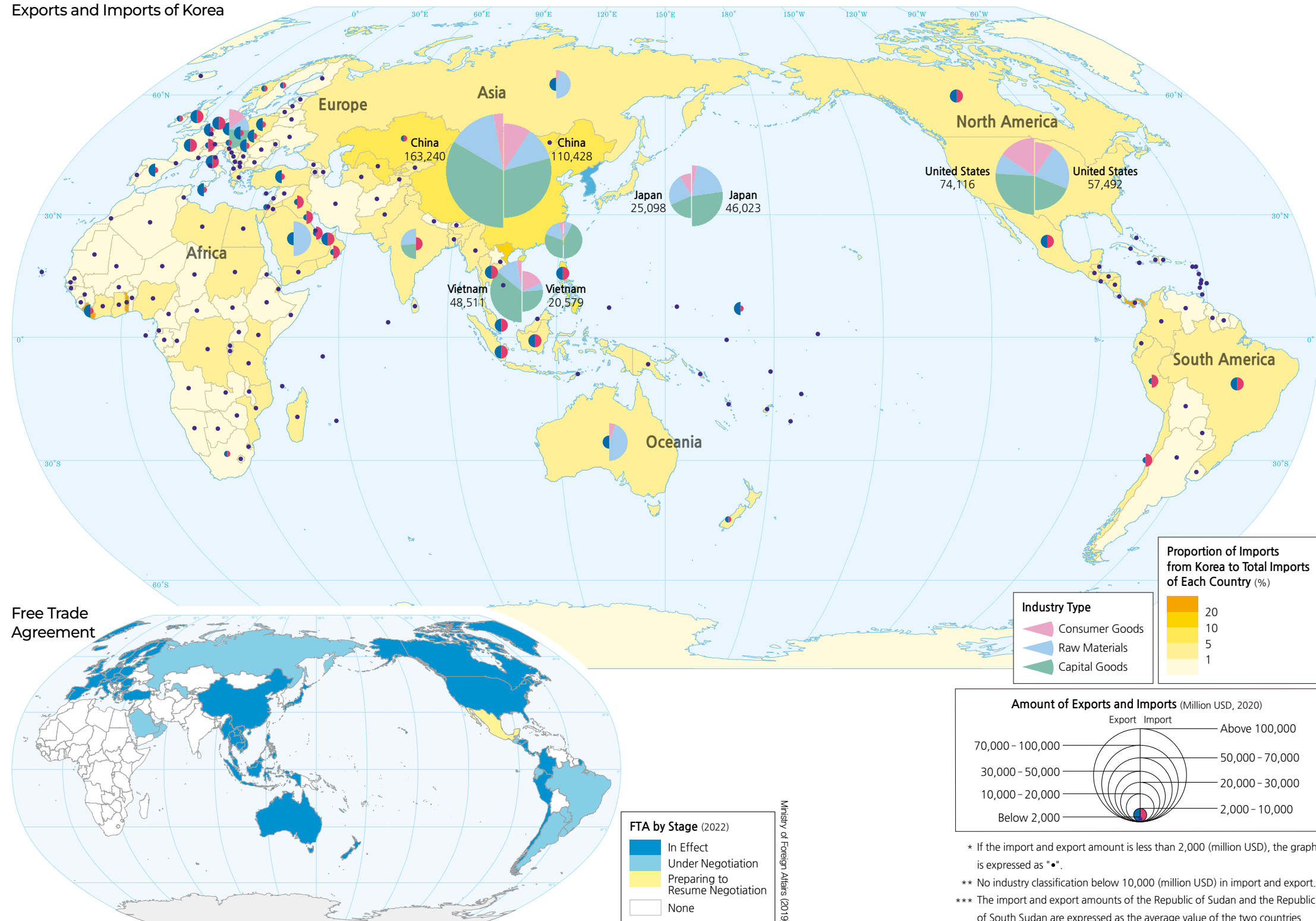
Population Pyramid by Continent



Economy

The Republic of Korea's exports were only USD 100 million in 1964. Its annual foreign trade exceeded USD 100 billion in the late 1980s, and it surpassed USD 1 trillion in 2012. The Republic of Korea is the ninth country in the world to have surpassed USD 1 trillion in annual foreign trade, followed by the United States, Germany, China, Japan, France, the United

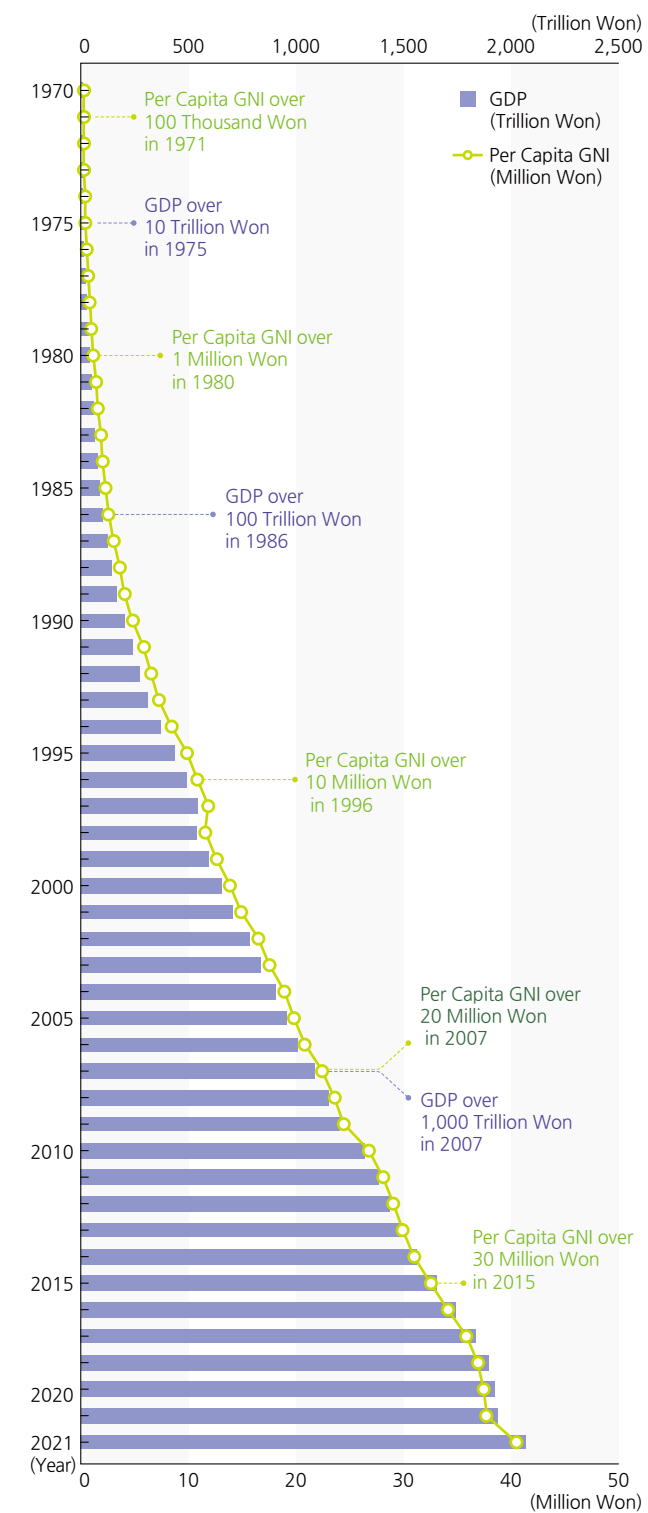
Exports and Imports of Korea



Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Italy. As of 2022, the Republic of Korea's annual foreign trade ranked 9th in the world.

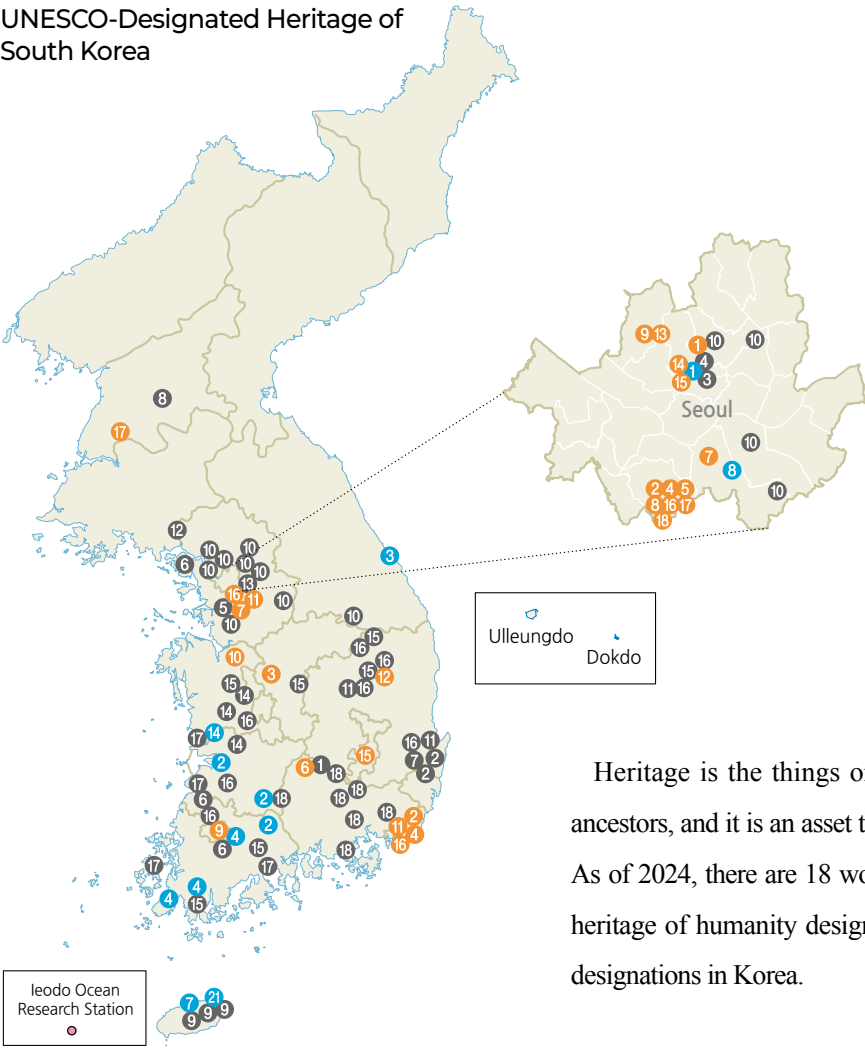
Annual per capita gross national income (GNI) was \$280 in 1970 and \$1,870 in 1980 but increased to \$32,930 in 2020. This rapid economic growth after the Korean War has been described as the "Miracle of the Han River" and Korea has been noted as "the first country to move from international aid recipient to donor," and has become a model of economic development for many developing countries.

The Growth of GDP and per Capita GNI



World Heritage

UNESCO-Designated Heritage of South Korea



Major Korean History

- Three Kingdoms of Korea (Goguryeo, Baekje and Silla)
BC 57–668
- Goryeo
918–1392
- Joseon
1392–1897

Heritage is the things or culture we have inherited from our ancestors, and it is an asset that we must pass on to our descendants. As of 2024, there are 18 world heritage sites, 25 intangible cultural heritage of humanity designations, and 19 memories of the world designations in Korea.



1 Haeinsa Temple Janggyeong Panjeon (Inscribed in 1995)
Hapcheon-dun, Gyeongsangnam-do
This storage building preserves a total of 81,240 Tripitaka Koreana woodblocks completed in the 13th century.



2 Seokguram Grotto and Bulguksa Temple (Inscribed in 1995)
Gyeongju-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do
The temple is a symbolic building of Gyeongju, the capital of the Silla dynasty. Seokguram Grotto is a monumental masterpiece in that advanced geometric, architectural, and esthetic senses, along with religious passion, are holistically realized.



3 Jongmyo Shrine (Inscribed in 1995)
Jongno-gu, Seoul
This royal ancestral shrine is dedicated to memorial services for the deceased kings and queens of the Joseon dynasty.



7 Gyeongju Historic Areas (Inscribed in 2000)
Gyeongju-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do
The protected areas contain the history and culture of Gyeongju, the ancient capital of Silla for a thousand years.



4 Changdeokgung Palace Complex (Inscribed in 1997)
Jongno-gu, Seoul
This palace served as the main palace where kings managed state affairs for 258 years from 1610 to 1868.



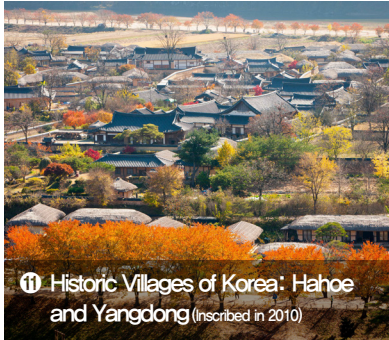
10 The Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty (Inscribed in 2009)
Seoul, Gyeonggi-do, and Gangwon-do
The Royal Tombs of the Joseon dynasty embody the history, culture, and value system of the dynasty, which lasted for 500 years.



8 Complex of Goguryeo Tombs (Inscribed in 2004)
Pyeongannam-do, Pyeongyang, Nampo, and Hwanghaenam-do
The complex consists of 63 tombs from the Goguryeo Kingdom. The styles of the tombs and the mural frescos inside them reflect the culture and customs of the people of Goguryeo.



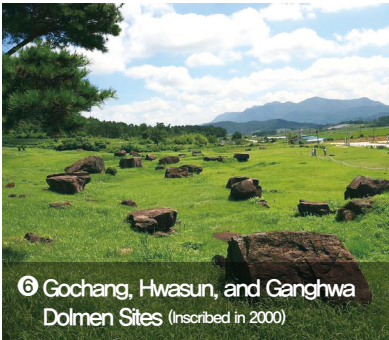
5 Hwaseong Fortress (Inscribed in 1997)
Suwon-si, Gyeonggi-do
This fortress was built by the order of King Jeongjo (1776-1800). It is considered to be an outstanding work of military architecture making excellent use of military construction techniques from both the East and West.



11 Historic Villages of Korea: Hahoe and Yangdong (Inscribed in 2010)
Andong-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do
These villages, established in the 14th and 15th centuries, are representative clan villages of Korea. They maintain the form of villages in the early Joseon dynasty, and the location and layout of the villages exemplify the Confucian culture and yangban culture of the Joseon dynasty.



9 Hallasan Natural Conservation Jeju Volcanic Island and Lava Tubes (Inscribed in 2007)
Jeju Special Self-Governing Province
The world's most beautiful cave system, the Geomunoreum lava tube system, the Seongsan Ilchulbong tuff cone rising from the sea and creating a dramatic spectacle, and Hallasan Mountain with its waterfalls and variously shaped rocks were designated as World Heritage sites.



6 Gochang, Hwasun, and Ganghwa Dolmen Sites (Inscribed in 2000)
Gochang-gun, Jeollabuk-do; Hwasun-gun, Jeonllanam-do; Ganghwa-gun, Incheon
Dolmens, stone tombs in burial sites representative of the Bronze Age, are widely distributed on the Korean Peninsula, which holds more of these sites than anywhere else in the world.

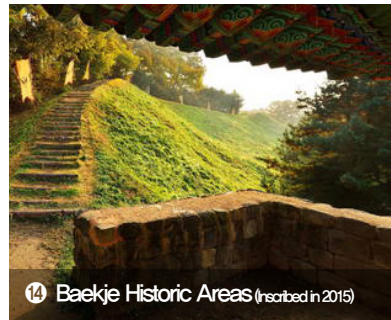


12 Historic Monuments and Sites in Gaeseong (Inscribed in 2013)
Gaeseong-si, Hwanghaenam-do
These historic monuments and sites are located in Gaeseong, the capital of the Goryeo dynasty. Gaeseong has many historical ruins, including the Gaeseong Namdaemun, Manwoldae Palace, and a cluster of seven royal tombs.



13 Namhansanseong (inscribed in 2014)
Gwangju-si, Gyeonggi-do

This fortress, a large-scale mountain fortress constructed in the 17th century, helped to defend the capital of the Joseon dynasty, currently Seoul, from attacks on the eastern side.



14 Baekje Historic Areas (inscribed in 2015)
Gongju-si and Buyeo-gun, Chungcheongnam-do; Iksan-si, Jeollabuk-do

The relics of the three capitals collectively represent the later period of the Baekje Kingdom as it reached its peak in terms of cultural development, involving frequent communication with neighboring regions such as China and Japan.



15 Sansa, Buddhist Mountain Monasteries in Korea (inscribed in 2018)
Chungcheongbuk-do, Chungcheongnam-do, Gyeongsangbuk-do, Gyeongsangnam-do, Jeollabuk-do, and Jeollanam-do

The seven monasteries established from the 7th to the 9th centuries have functioned as centers of religious belief, spiritual practice, and daily living of monastic communities, reflecting the historical development of Korean Buddhism.



16 Seowon, Korean Neo-Confucian Academies (inscribed in 2019)
Daegu, Chungcheongnam-do, Gyeongsangbuk-do, Gyeongsangnam-do, Jeollabuk-do, Jeollanam-do

The Seowon is a type of Neo-Confucian academy of the Joseon dynasty. It is an exceptional testimony to cultural traditions associated with Neo-Confucianism in Korea.



17 Getbol, Korean Tidal Flats (inscribed in 2021)
Chungcheongnam-do, Jeollabuk-do, and Jeollanam-do

These tidal flats are one of the most important habitats for conserving biodiversity and a major stopover site for globally endangered migratory waterbirds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.



18 Gaya Tumuli (inscribed in 2023)
Gyeongsangbuk-do, Gyeongsangnam-do, and Jeollabuk-do

The Gaya Tumuli is a serial property consisting of seven cemeteries created by members of the Gaya Confederacy, which persisted from the 1st through the mid-6th century in the southern part of the Korean Peninsula.



19 Tradition of Kimchi-Making (inscribed in 2015)
16 Kimjang (Making and Sharing Kimchi: inscribed in 2013)

Kimjang refers to the traditional practice of making large quantities of kimchi at once to prepare for a long harsh winter, or the kimchi made in this way. Kimjang is one of the important food traditions that reveals the unique identity of the Korean people. Through Kimjang, people work together and share information about the ingredients and methods of kimchi making.



22 Ssireum (inscribed in 2018)

Ssireum, or traditional Korean wrestling, is a popular form of entertainment widely enjoyed in Korea. It is a type of wrestling in which two players, each wearing a long fabric belt around their waist and one thigh, grip their opponents' belts and deploy various techniques to send them to the ground.



23 Yeondeunghoe (Lantern Lighting Festival; inscribed in 2020)

Yeondeunghoe, a lantern lighting festival, takes place throughout the nation. As the eighth day of the fourth lunar month (Buddha's birthday) approaches, streets are hung with colorful lotus lanterns and crowds holding handmade lanterns gather for a celebratory parade.



24 Talchum (inscribed in 2022)

Talchum, a mask dance drama, is a performing art in which masked performers humorously explore social issues through dramatic combinations of dances, songs, movements, and dialogue. Talchum conveys its underlying appeal to universal equality and criticism of social hierarchy by comically depicting everyday characters.

Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity



2 Pansori Epic Chant (inscribed in 2003)

Pansori is a genre of traditional musical storytelling with expressive singing, stylized speech, and a repertoire of narrative and gesture performed by a vocalist and drummer.



4 Ganggangsullae (Women's Circle Dance; inscribed in 2009)

A form of historical Korean group dance that incorporates singing, dancing, and playing during the first full moon in the lunar New Year and the harvest full moon that rises in the eighth lunar month during the Korean Thanksgiving holidays.



12 Jultagi (inscribed in 2011)

Korean tightrope walking is performed on national holidays such as Dano and Chuseok. The performance is conducted with music and witty conversations between a tightrope walker and the crowds.



1 Hunminjeongeum Manuscript (inscribed in 1997)

This is the original woodblock print produced when King Sejong the Great invented the 28 letters of Hunminjeongeum, the original name of Korea's official script, and promulgated them to the world in 1446. This manuscript explains the reasons for inventing new letters and the scientific principle behind the invention.



3 Jikji simche yojeol (Anthology of Great Buddhist Priests' Zen Teachings; inscribed in 2001)

This book contains the essentials of Zen Buddhism compiled by Priest Baegun in 1372 and printed in 1377. In 1972, the book was recognized as the world's first available evidence of moveable metal type printing.



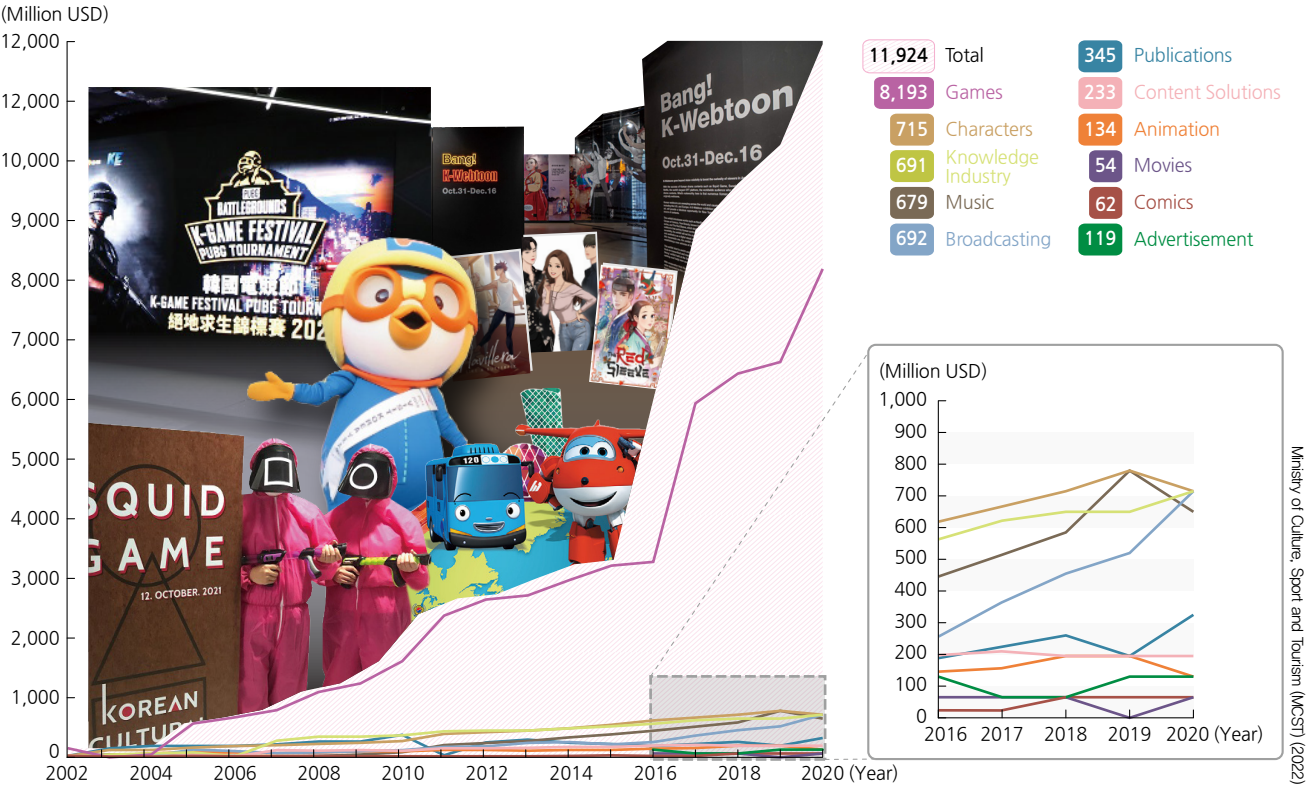
10 Nanjung Ilgi (War Diary of Admiral Yi Sun-sin; inscribed in 2013)

The handwritten diary of Admiral Yi Sun-sin covers a period of seven years of the Japanese invasions of Korea (1592-1598) from the start of the invasion until days before he was killed in the last sea battle of the war. The diary contains specific details of combat situations and his strategies, his personal views and feelings, and the lives of common people.

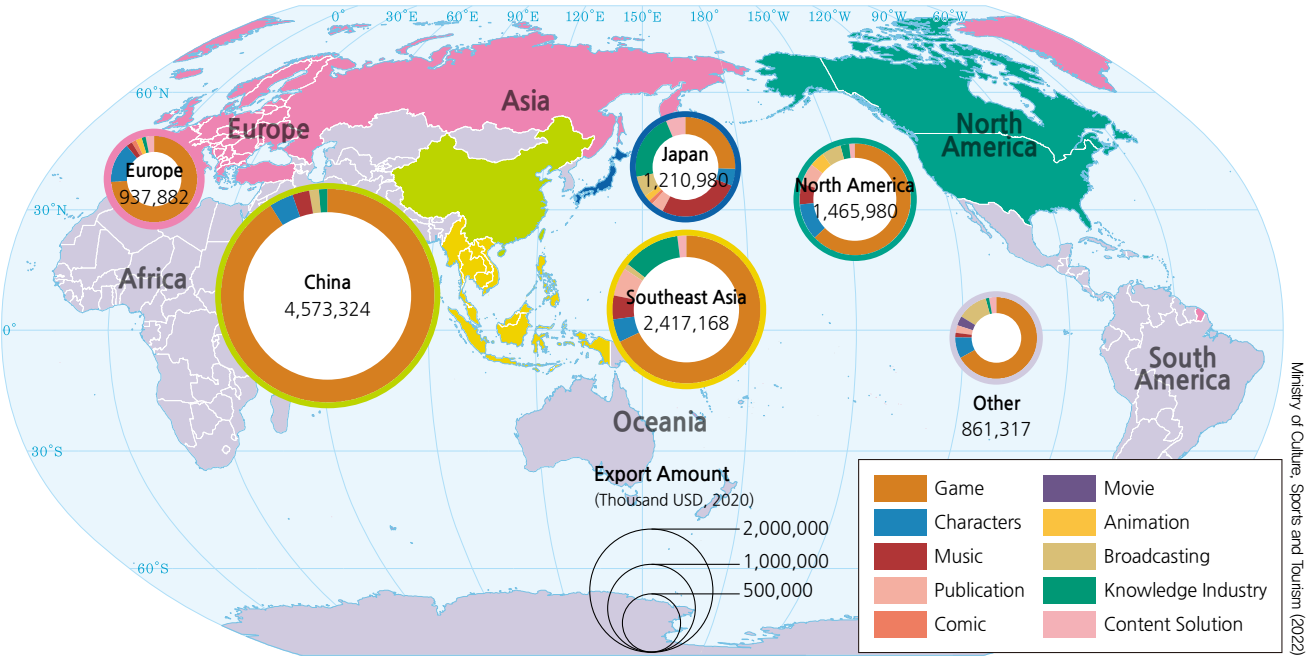
Korean Wave and Sports

Korean popular culture, including movies, dramas, songs, and characters, known as the Korean Wave, is spreading beyond Asia to Europe, South America, and other parts of the world.

Export of Korean Wave



Content Industry Exports by Region

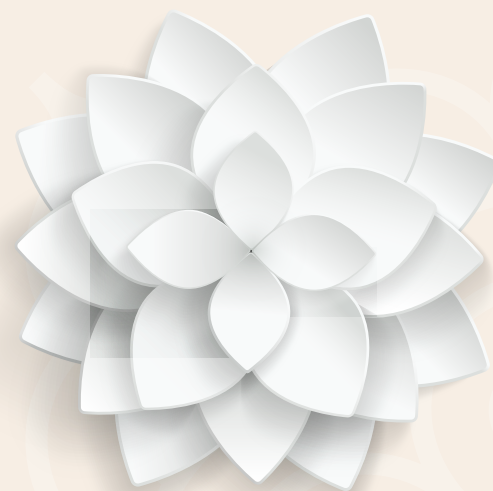
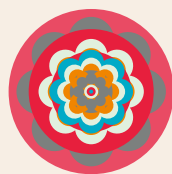


Research and Exploration

Full-scale space development began in August 1992 when the Republic of Korea's first satellite, Wooribyeol-1 (KITSAT-1), was launched in Guiana, South America, and the Republic of Korea became the 22nd country in the world to possess its own satellite. In 2022, the Republic of Korea secured its space transportation capabilities with the success of the Nuri project, in which Korea independently carried out the entire processes from design to production, testing, and launch operation of a Korean launch vehicle, Nuri (KSLV-II).

Research on Korea's Space Industry





KOREA

A Brief Overview
of Korea

3



National Territory and Symbols

Territory and Territorial Waters of Korea, Four Edges



Population and Area of Korea



Population
51,829,136 People



Area
100,412 km²

Male
25,915,207 People
(Including Foreigners, 2020)

Resident Registration Demographics
51,638,809 People
(Excluding Foreigners, 2021. 12. 31)

Female
25,913,929 People
(Including Foreigners, 2020)

Male
25,746,684 People
Female
25,829,125 People

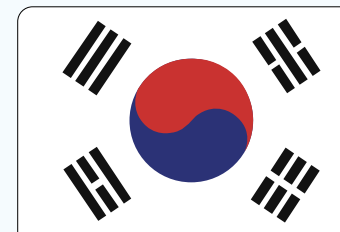
North Korea Population
25,370 Thousand People (2020)

Total Area, Korea
223,626 km²

South Korea
100,412 km²
North Korea
123,214 km²

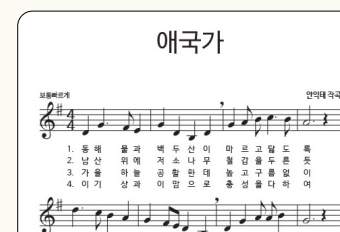
- **Forests and Fields** 63,558 km² (63.3%)
- **Farmland (Rice Paddy)** 11,099 km² (11.1%)
- **Farmland (Dry Paddy)** 7,555 km² (7.5%)
- **Roads** 3,386 km² (3.4%)
- **Plots for Building** 3,243 km² (3.2%)
- **Streams and Rivers** 2,862 km² (2.9%)
- **Other** 8,635 km² (8.6%)

Symbols of Korea



Taegeukgi (National Flag)

The Taegeukgi consists of a white background, a red and blue taeguk circle in the center, and four black trigrams, one in each corner of the flag. The white background represents brightness, purity, and peace. The taeguk denotes the harmony between the negative and the positive cosmic forces, depicting the truth of nature that all things are created and evolve through the interaction of both powers. The four black trigrams symbolize the sky, the earth, water, and fire, respectively.



Aegukga (The National Anthem)

Aegukga refers to a song that expresses love for the country. However, the term has become synonymous with Korea's national anthem. The lyrics of Korea's national anthem were first written in the early 1900s and the Aegukga was sung to the tune of the Scottish folk song, "Auld Lang Syne." In 1935, a Korean composer, Ahn Eak-tai, composed the Symphonic Fantasy Korea, the finale of which became the current melody for the national anthem.



Mugunghwa (The National Flower)

The mugunghwa, or the rose of Sharon, means "eternal blossom that never fades." Ancient records show that even before the Gojoseon era (an ancient Korean kingdom), the mugunghwa was treasured as a "blossom from heaven."

The mugunghwa blooms every day from early July to mid-October, and there are usually 2,000 to 3,000 flowers on a single tree.

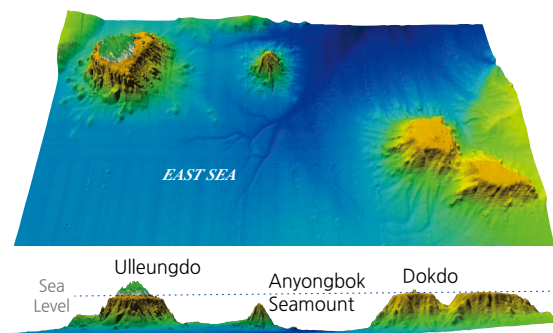
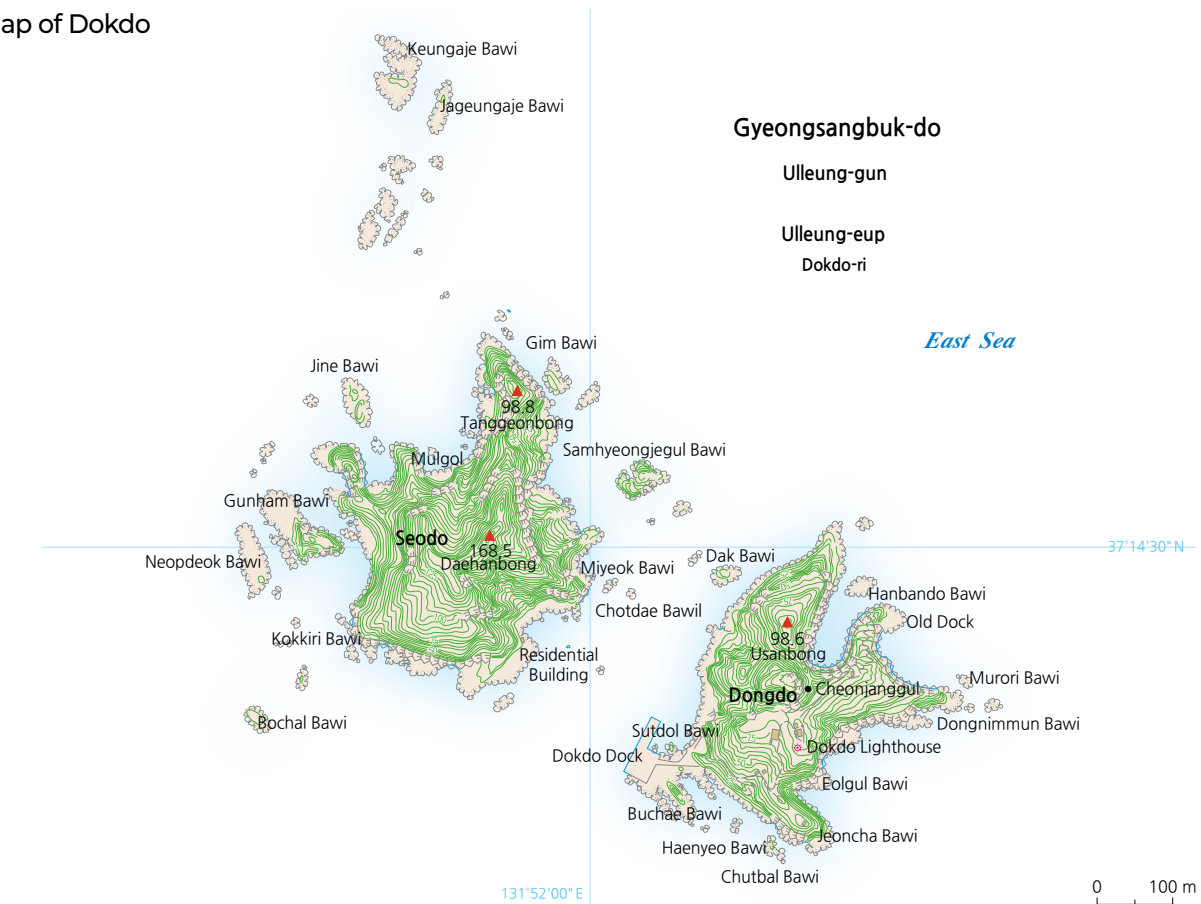


Panoramic View of Dokdo

Dokdo

Dokdo is a group of islets of the Republic of Korea and is located at the easternmost edge of the national boundary in the East Sea and in the middle of the East Sea. It consists of two large islets, Dongdo (East Island) and Seodo (West Island), and 89 smaller islets. Dokdo is a volcanic island that formed from lava that erupted from about 2,000 m below the surface of the East Sea, originating from a gigantic, round volcano (the Dokdo Seamount) with the radius of the seamount being 30 km at the bottom. It is estimated that Dokdo was formed between 4.6 million and 2.5 million years ago, which is earlier than Jeju Island and Ulleungdo.

Map of Dokdo



3D Seabed Images of Dokdo



Dokdo Guards



Dokdo Lighthouse and Taegeukgi

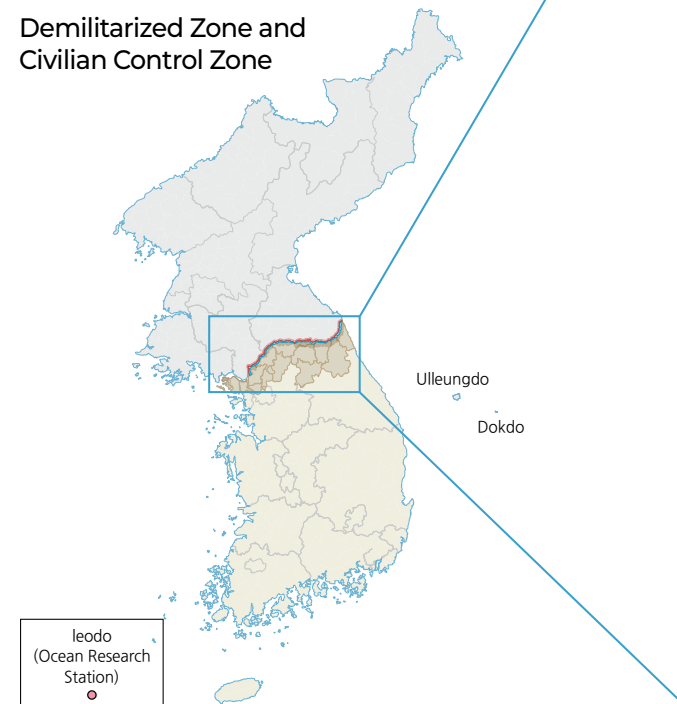


<https://www.dokdo.re.kr>



Military Demarcation Line and Demilitarized Zone

Demilitarized Zone and Civilian Control Zone



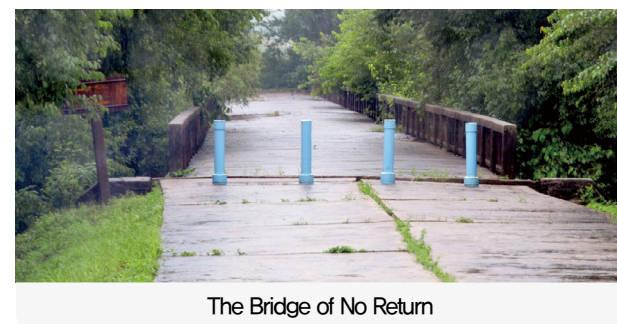
Korea is divided into the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) by the Military Demarcation Line (MDL). A 4 km-wide zone, 2 km from either side of the MDL, is designated as the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). The DMZ, where civilian and military activities are strictly prohibited, preserves diverse

natural ecosystems that are rarely found elsewhere. The DMZ has high biodiversity, mainly of mammals and birds, and a high density of natural monuments and endangered species, such as the Asiatic black bear, musk deer, mountain goats, and otters.

Military Demarcation Line and Panmunjom



Panmunjom JSA



The Bridge of No Return

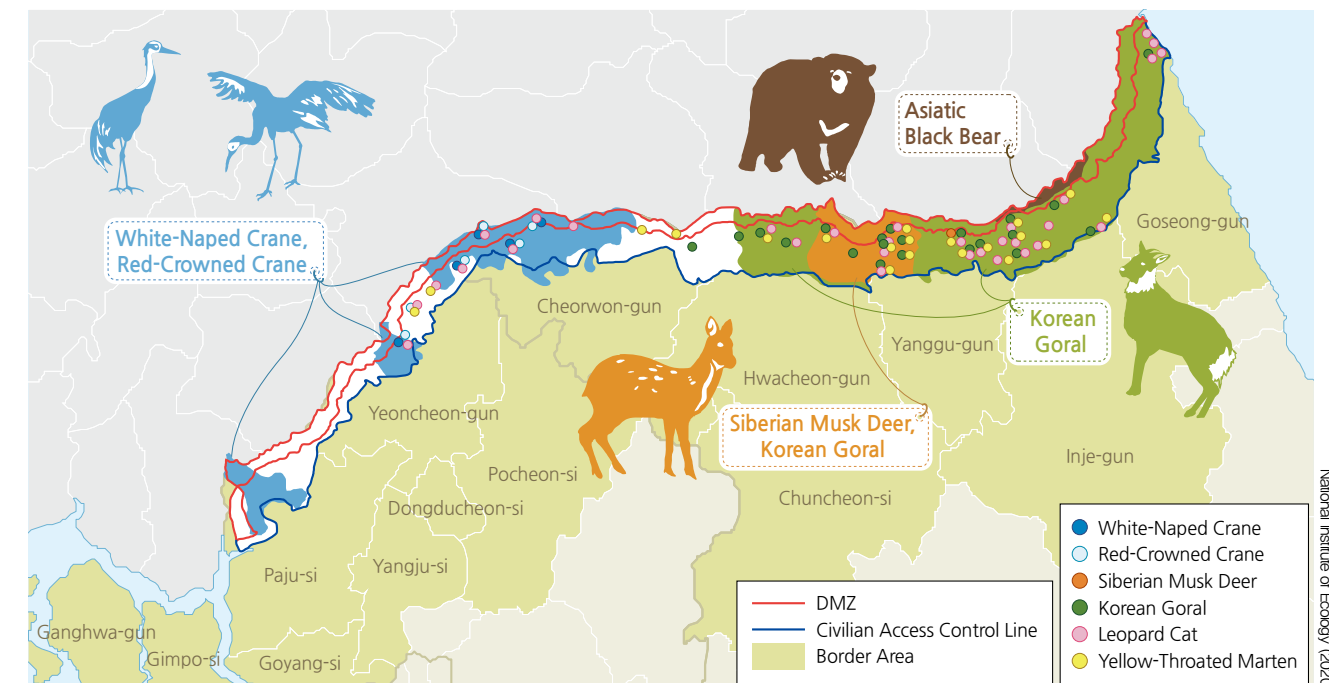


DMZ Landmine Signs

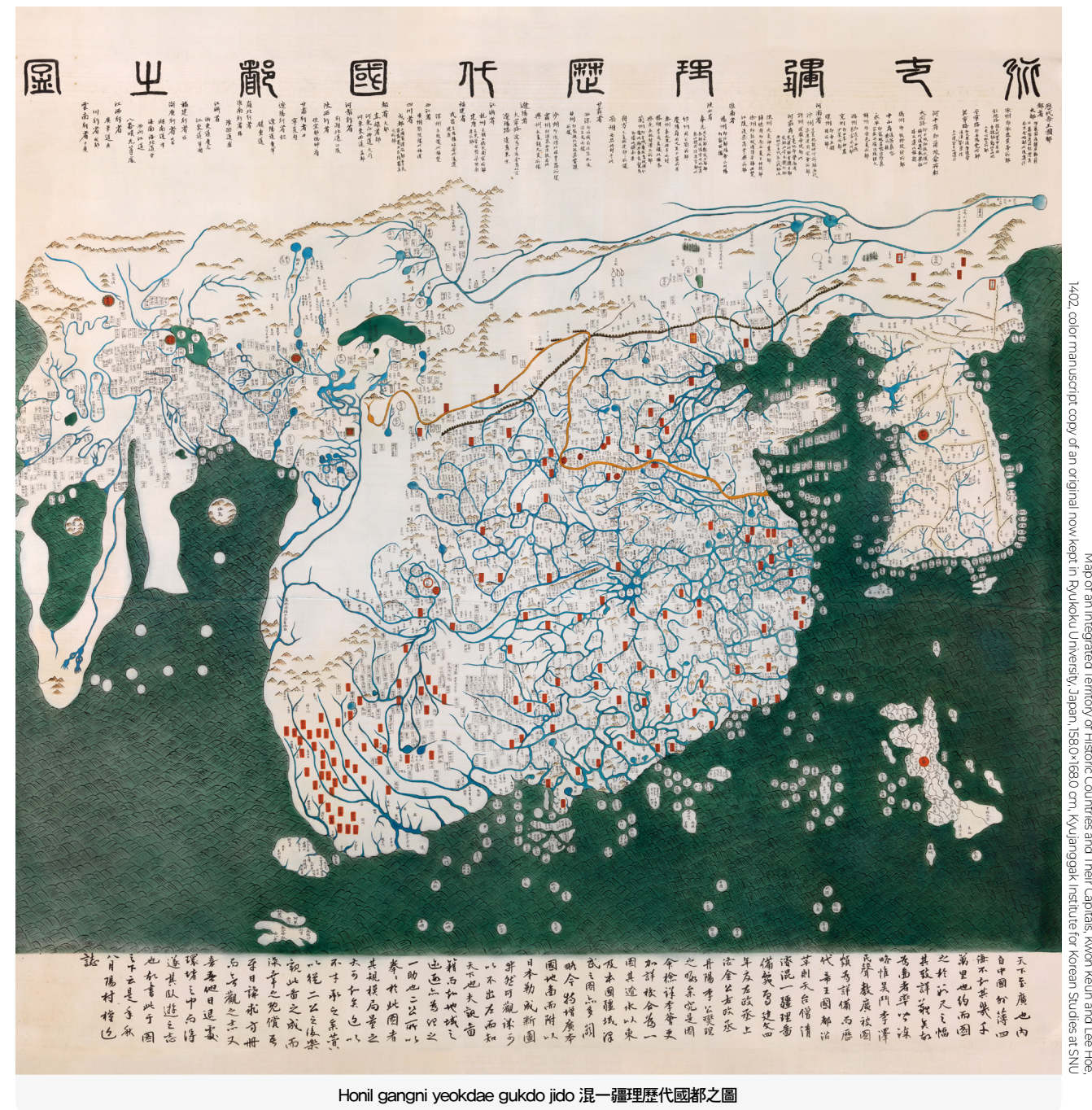


A marker for the Third Tunnel

Distribution of Animal Species around the DMZ



Ancient Maps

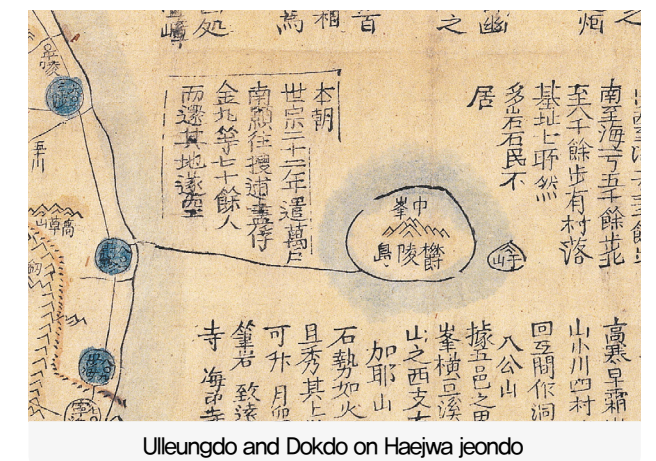
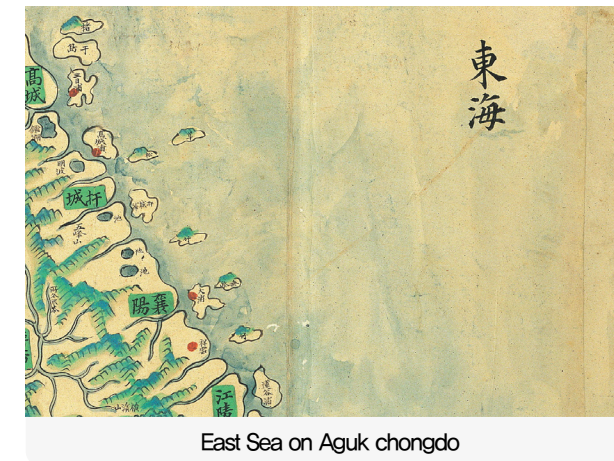


Although mapmaking in Korea dates back to before the Three Kingdoms Period, only the maps made during the Joseon dynasty now survive. The oldest existing Korean map today is the Honil gangni yeokdae gukdo jido (Map of Integrated Lands and Regions of Historical Countries and Capitals), which was made in 1402. This map is recognized as one of the best world maps among those in both Eastern and Western civilizations at the time.

The East Sea, the name of the sea east of the Korean Peninsula, and Dokdo, a territory of the Republic of Korea, can also be confirmed on old maps. The name East Sea is clearly labeled on the late 18th-century Aguk chongdo. The name East Sea also appears as the “Small East Sea” on a Western-style world map entitled Cheonhado jido.

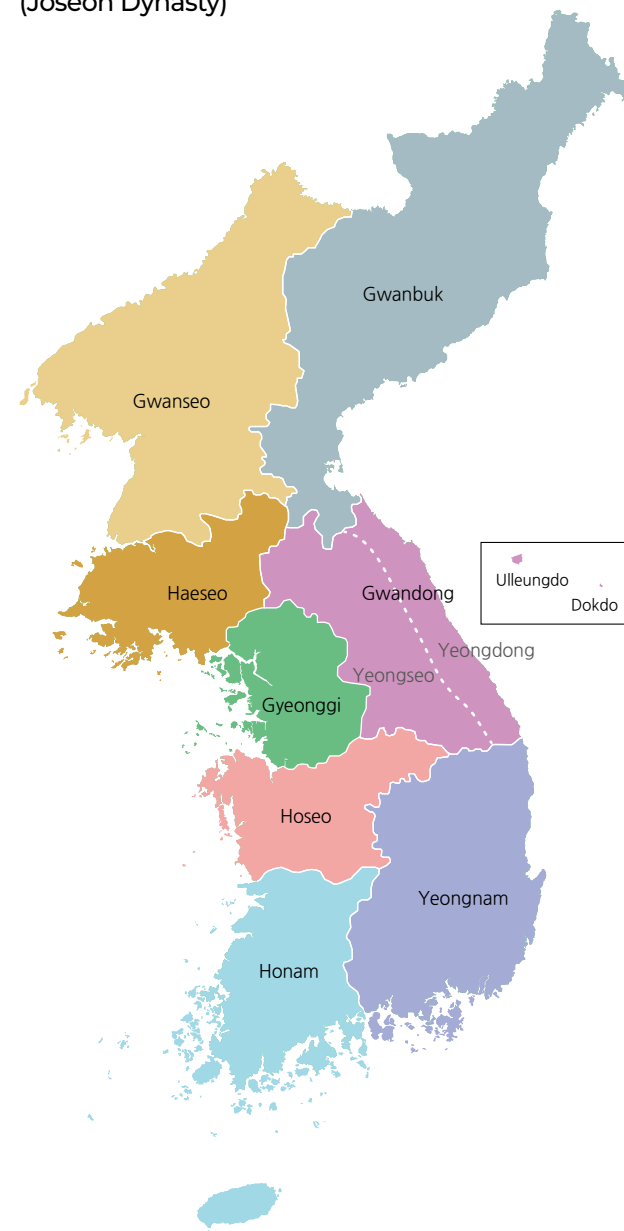
The name Dokdo also appeared on various ancient maps of Korea. It was called “Usando” during the Joseon Period. The island was marked as Korean territory on various Joseon jeondos (Maps of Korea) as well as on the Ulleungdo maps included within the maps of counties and prefectures.

The names of the East Sea and Dokdo can also be found on ancient Western maps. Many ancient maps produced in Japan also show Dokdo as part of Korean territory.



Regional Divisions

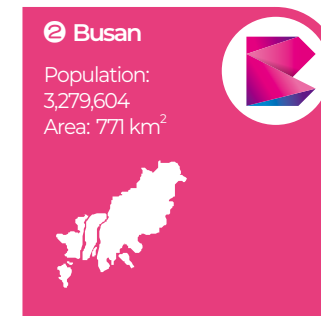
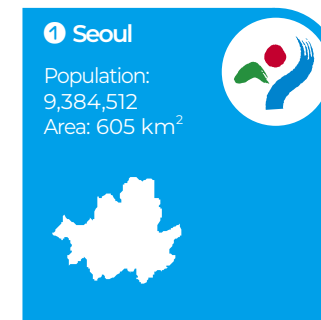
Traditional Classification of Regions
(Joseon Dynasty)



Contemporary Classification of Regions

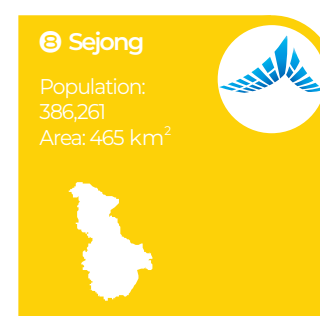
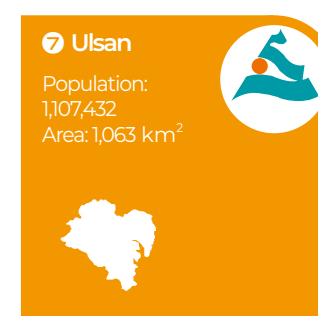
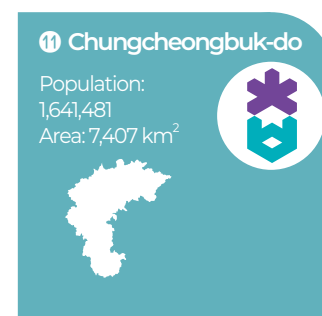
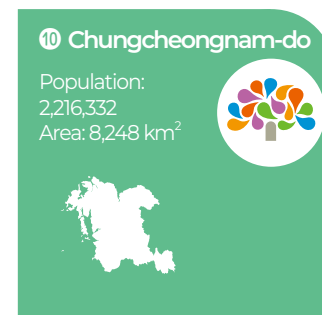
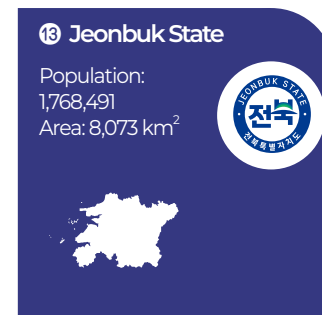
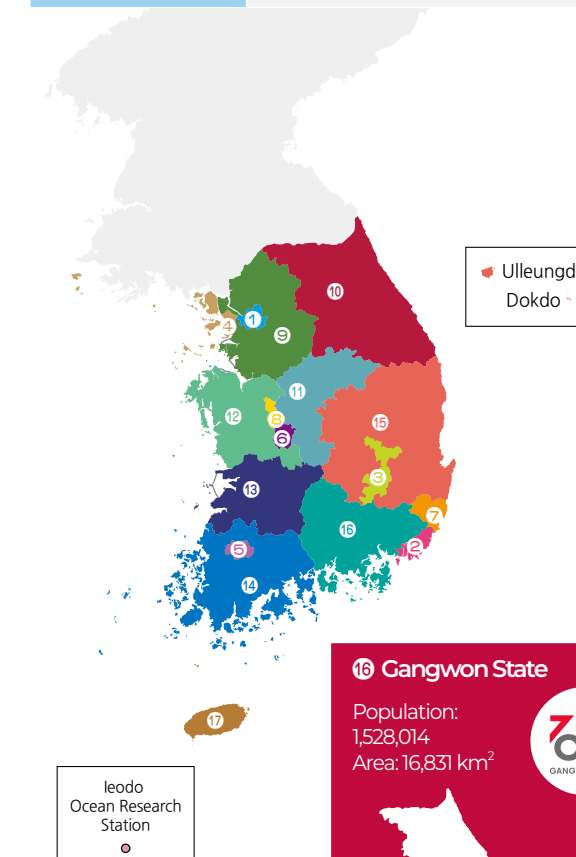
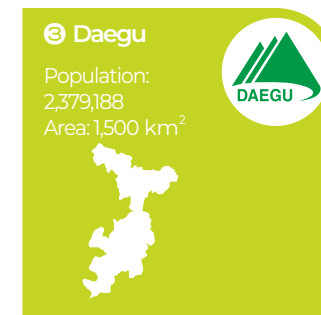


Korea is largely divided into the northern, central, and southern regions. In modern regional division, the northern region refers to the entirety of North Korea, located north of the Military Demarcation Line. The central region refers to the Seoul metropolitan area, Chungcheong Province, and Gangwon Province. The southern region refers to the area extending from Jeolla Province to Gyeongsang Province, and Jeju-do.



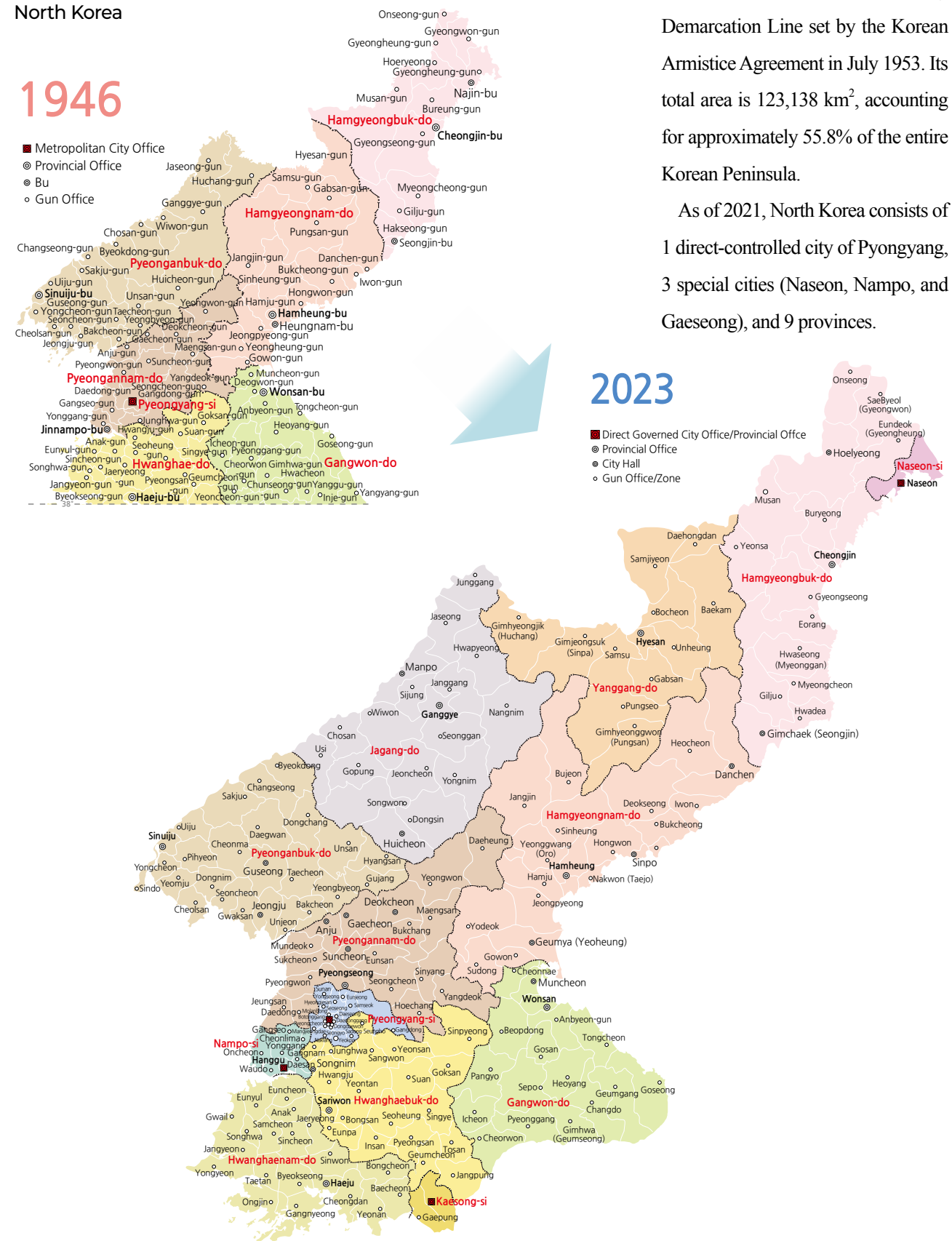
Area, Population, and Administrative Areas of Korea

Area	223,657 km ² (South Korea only 100,449 km ²) (* Area, as of December 2023)
Population (South Korea only)	51,774,521 (* Population, as of December 2023)
Administrative Areas of South Korea	One Special City, Six Metropolitan Cities, One Metropolitan Autonomous City, Six Provinces (-do), Three Special Self-Governing Provinces



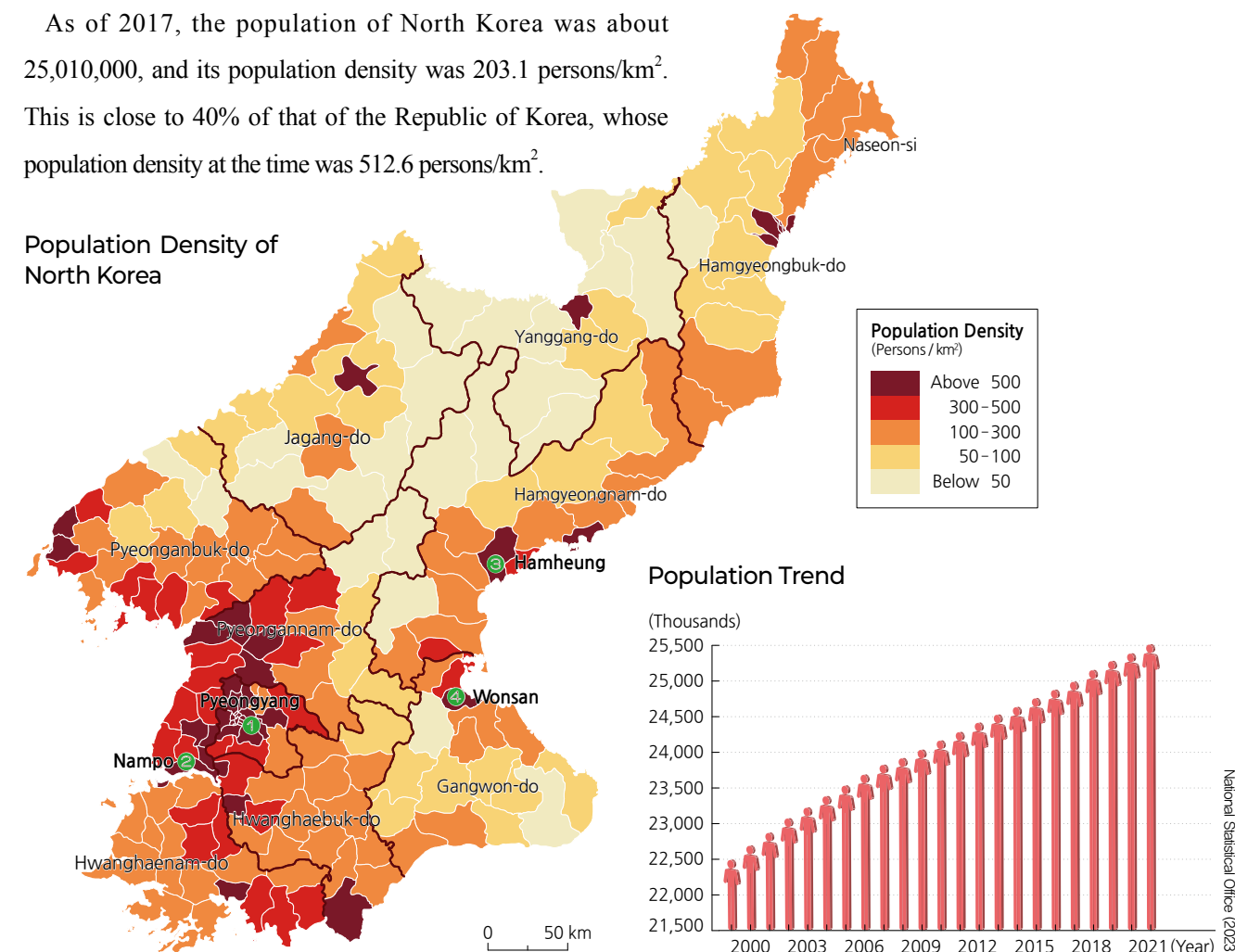
Regional Divisions

Administrative Reorganization of North Korea



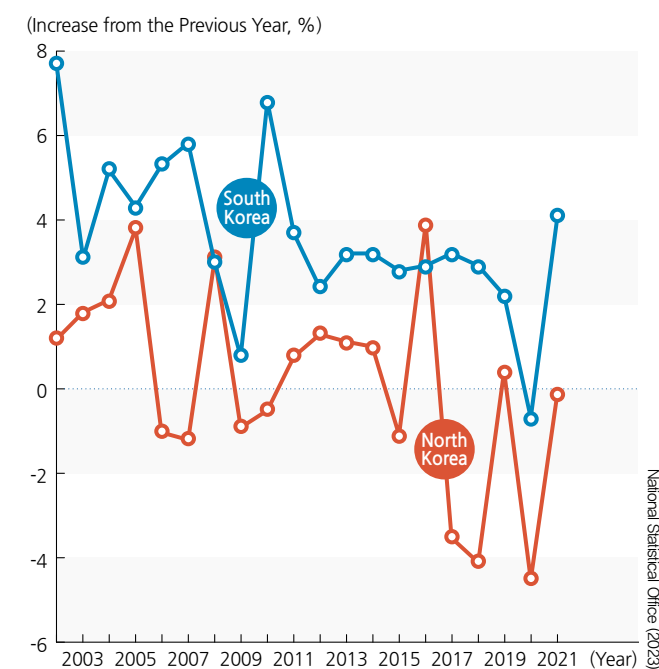
As of 2017, the population of North Korea was about 25,010,000, and its population density was 203.1 persons/km². This is close to 40% of that of the Republic of Korea, whose population density at the time was 512.6 persons/km².

Population Density of North Korea

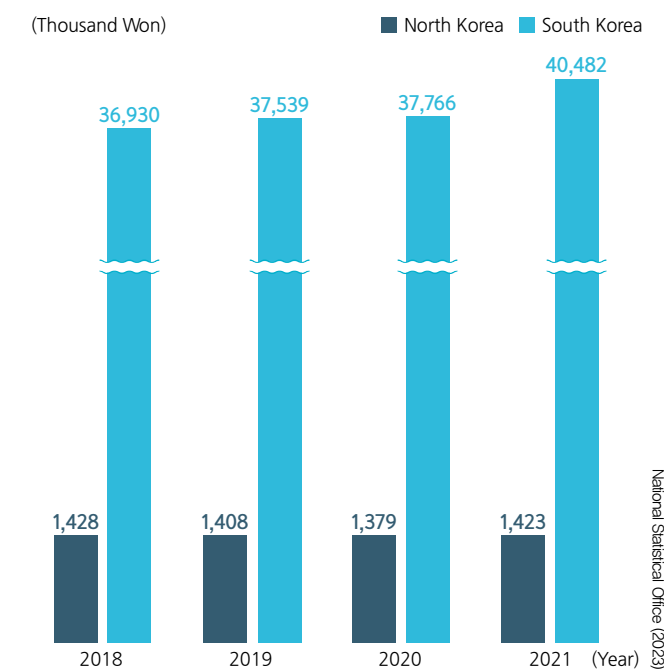


North Korea's economy is a centrally planned and unified system. North Korea, which suffered from severe economic difficulties and food shortages in the mid-1990s, showed signs of economic recovery after 1999, but has been stagnant since 2006.

Economy of North Korea



North Korea's Per Capita National Income





KOREA

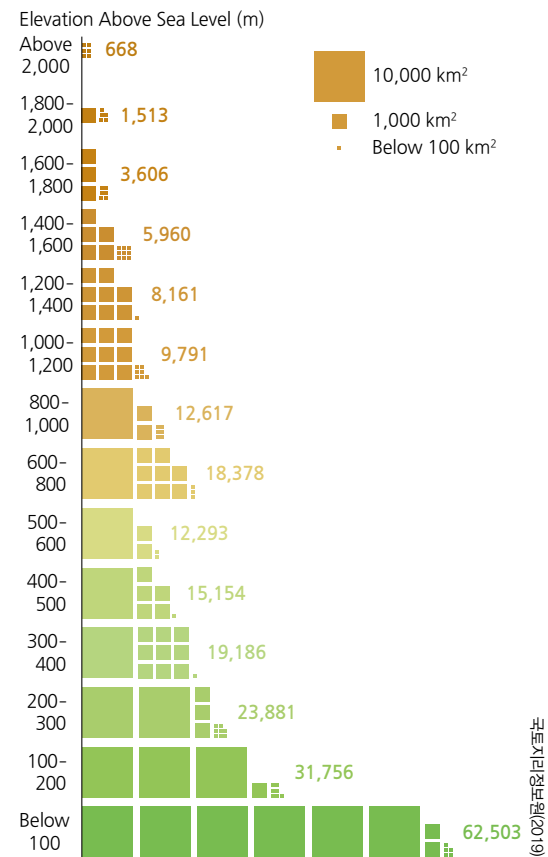
Natural Environment
of Korea

4

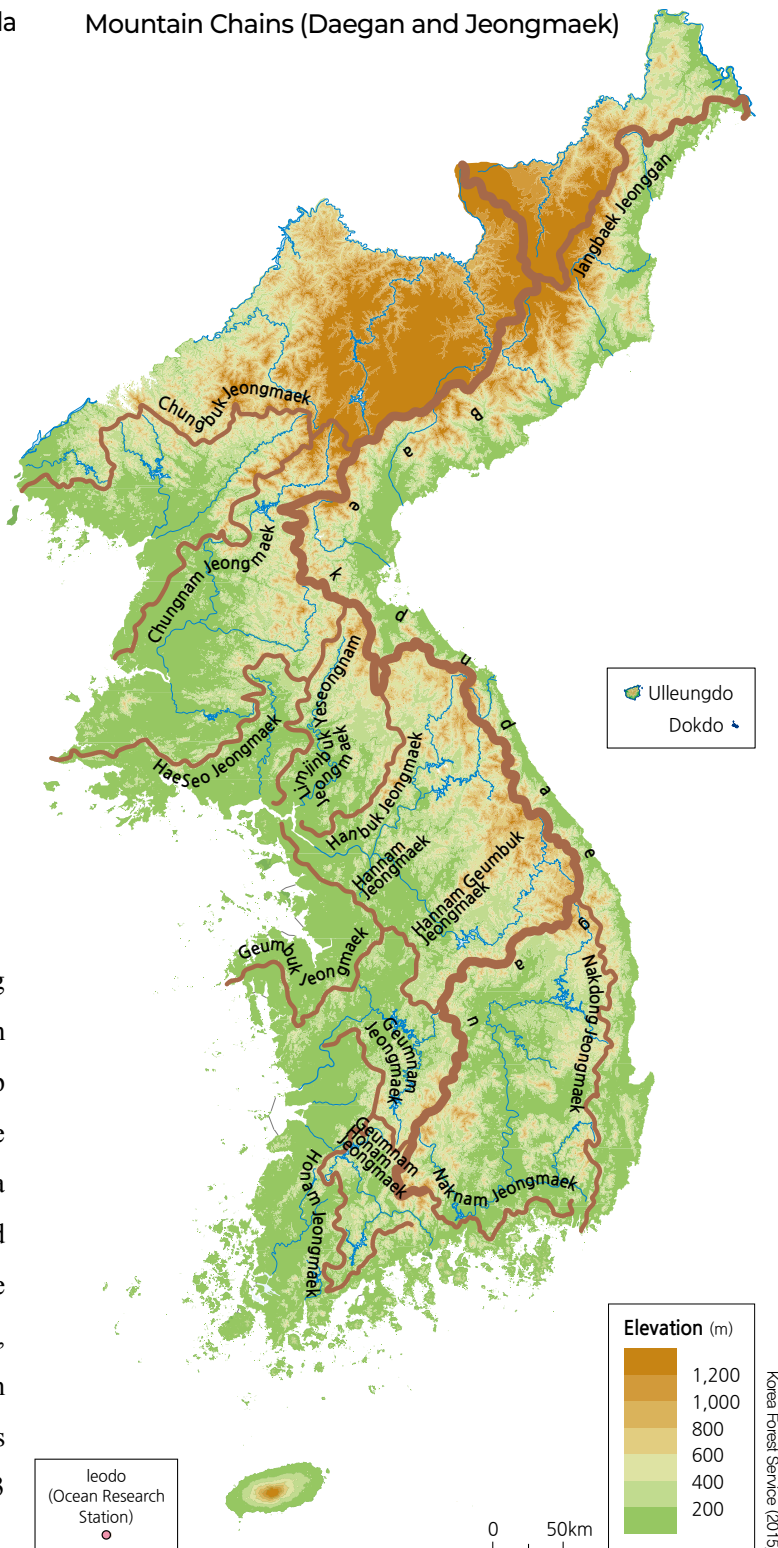
Landforms

Approximately 70% of Korea's territory consists of mountainous areas. However, the average altitude of the Korean Peninsula is about 448 m, which is significantly lower than the average for East Asia (910 m). This is because the Korean Peninsula has been subject to weathering and erosion for a long time.

Total Area by Elevation in the Korean Peninsula

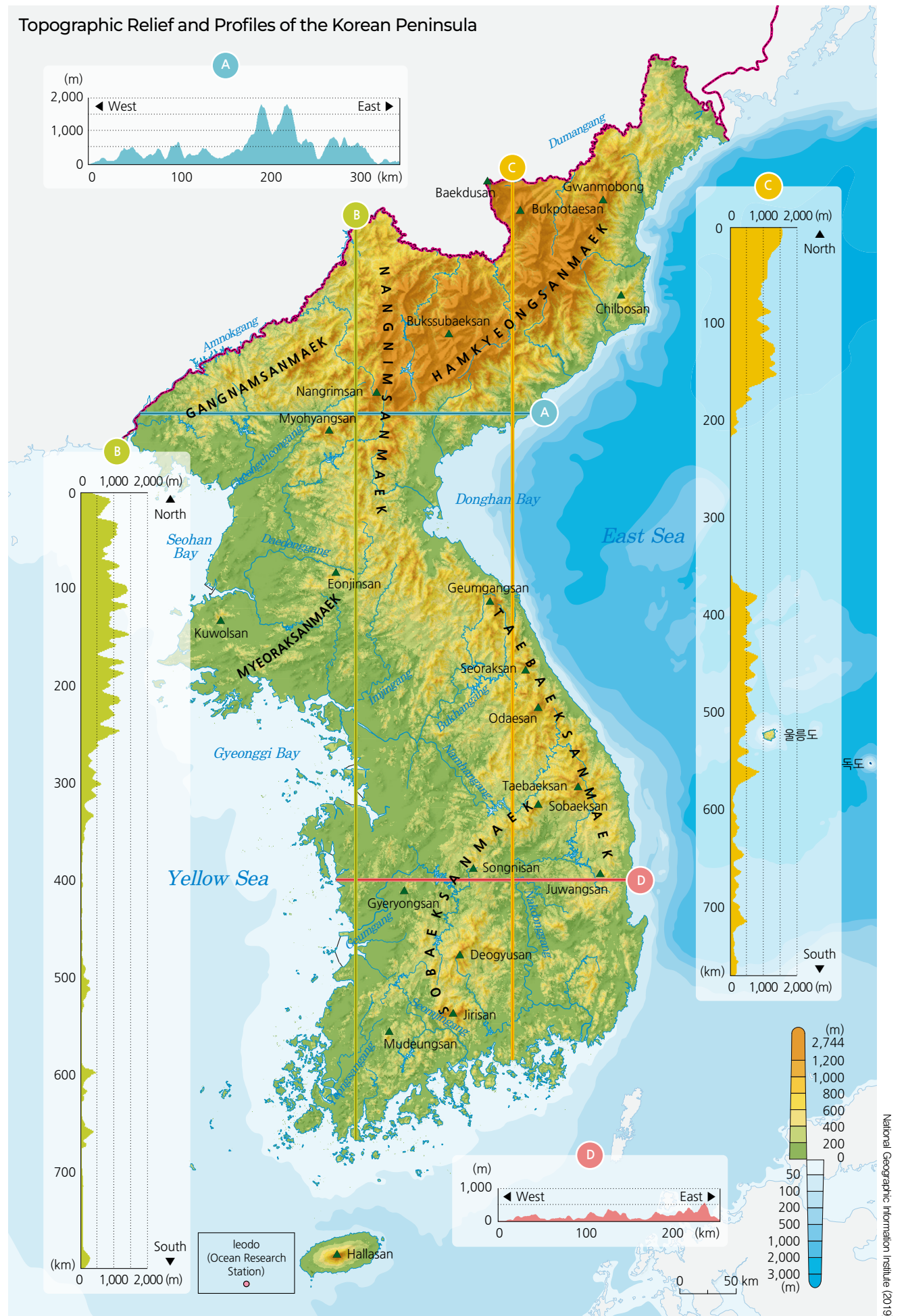


Mountain Chains (Daegan and Jeongmaek)

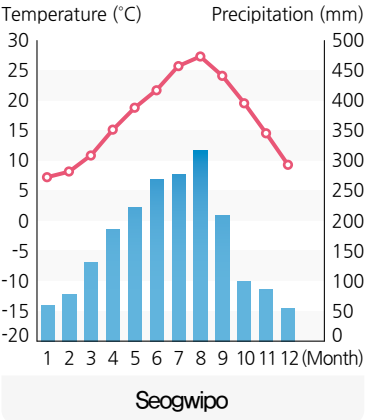
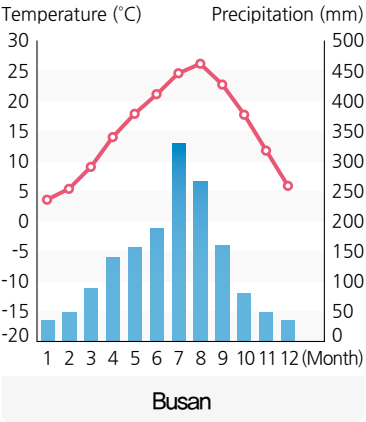
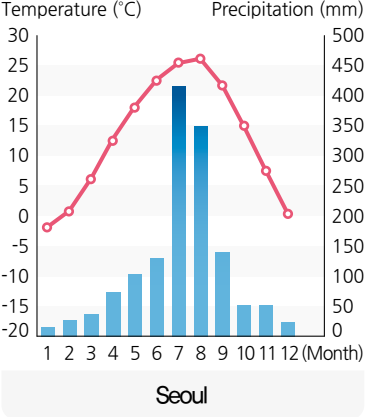
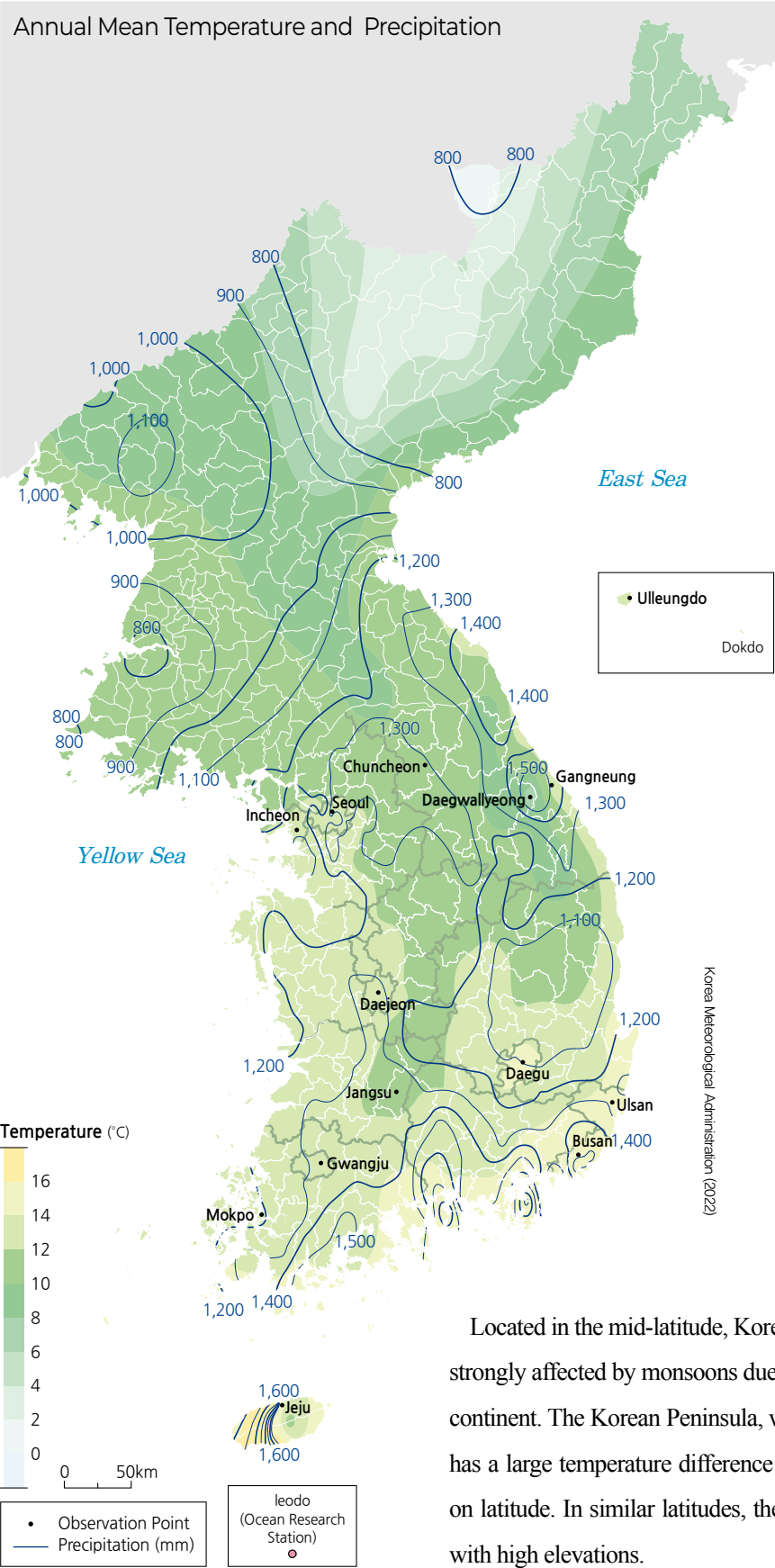


Traditional Korean geographical understanding is well portrayed in mountain ridge maps, which use lines to express the intertwined relationship of major mountains. This map indicates that the mountains forming the Korean Peninsula are a single-connected mountain range system, and the higher the altitude of the mountain range, the higher the hierarchy. Following this traditional, mountain-centric view, the mountain range system is organized into Baekdudaegan, which extends from Baekdusan to Jirisan, and 1 jeonggan and 13 jeongmaek extending from Baekdudaegan.

Topographic Relief and Profiles of the Korean Peninsula



Temperature, Precipitation, and Wind

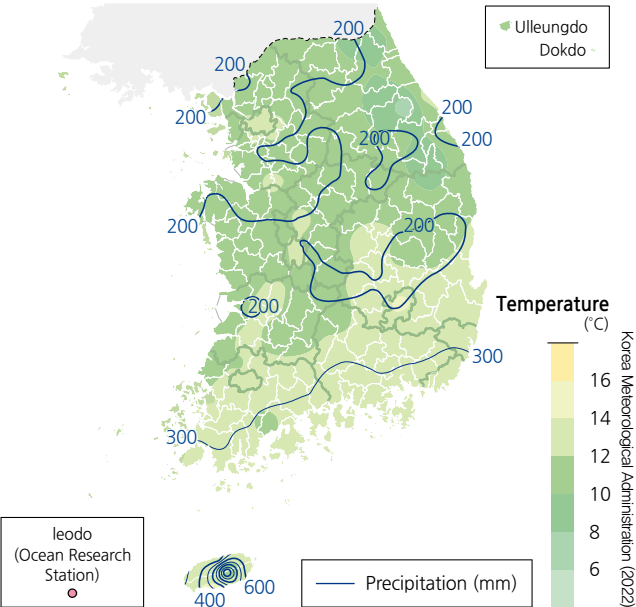


Located in the mid-latitude, Korea has distinct seasonal changes. It is also strongly affected by monsoons due to its location in the east of the Eurasian continent. The Korean Peninsula, which stretches long from north to south, has a large temperature difference between the north and south depending on latitude. In similar latitudes, the average temperature is lower in places with high elevations.

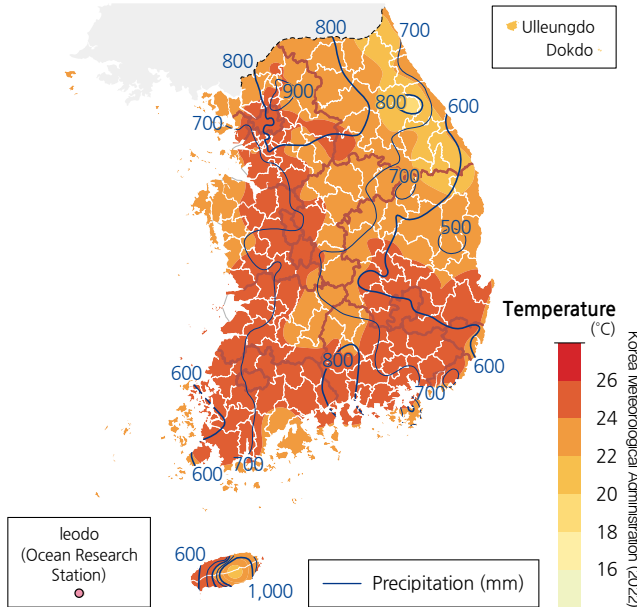
Korea is largely characterized by a continental climate due to the effects of the Eurasian continent. In winter, cold and dry winds blow due to the influence of the continent, and northerlies and westerlies are prominent. In summer, hot and humid winds blow due to the influence of the North Pacific Ocean, and south westerlies, southerlies, and south easterlies are dominant. However, the wind direction in summer is not as distinct as in winter. In summer, in addition to hot and humid seasonal winds, precipitation is concentrated due to the influence of monsoon rains and typhoons.

The Taebaeksanmaek (Taebaek Mountain Ranges) acts as a barrier to the flow of air and brings a marked difference in climate between the Yeongseo area (windward side) and the Yeongdong area (leeward side).

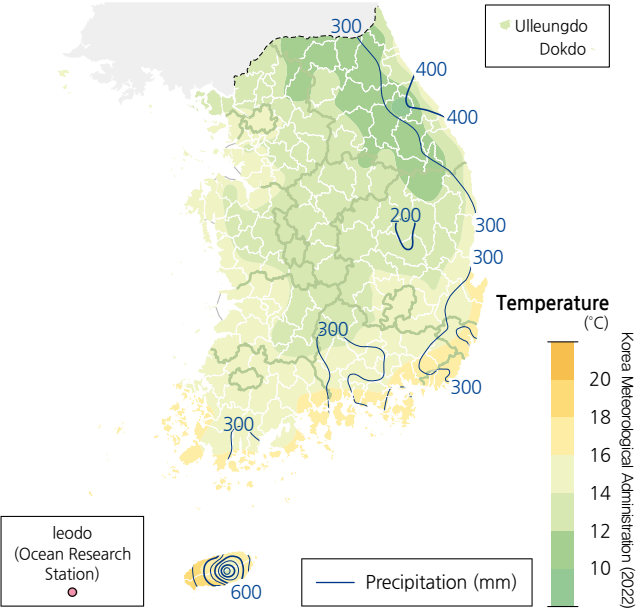
Spring Mean Temperature and Precipitation (1991-2020)



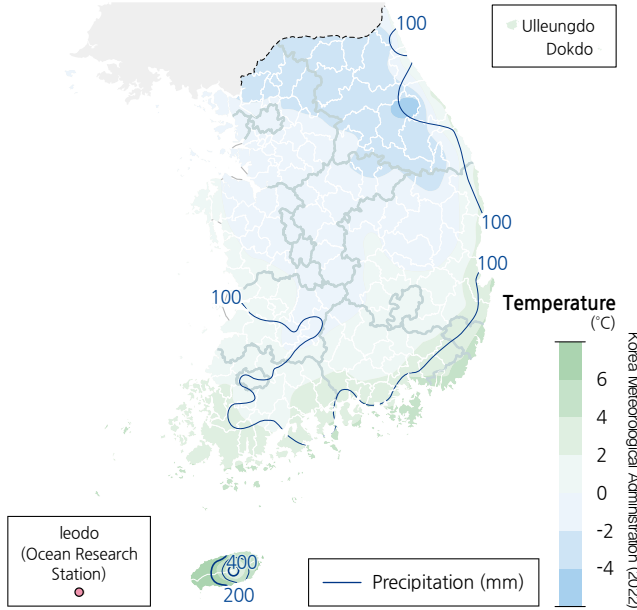
Summer Mean Temperature and Precipitation (1991-2020)



Autumn Mean Temperature and Precipitation (1991-2020)



Winter Mean Temperature and Precipitation (1991-2020)



Volcanic and Karst Landforms and Ecological Protection Area

Although Korea does not currently have active volcanoes, some volcanism occurred throughout the Mesozoic and Cenozoic eras. As a result, distinct volcanic landforms can be observed in Jejudo, Baekdusan, Ulleungdo, Dokdo, and the Cheorwon Plateau. In particular, Jeju Island has a diverse distribution of unique volcanic terrain that is rare worldwide, and in recognition of its value, it was designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2002, and was later listed as a UNESCO’s World Heritage site (2007) and certified as a UNESCO’s Global Geopark (2010).



Caldera Basin,
Gyeongsangbuk-do



Columnar Joint, Jeju



Sanbangsan, Jeju



Crater Lake (Baengnokdam,
Hallasan), Jeju



Caldera Lake
(Baekdu Mountain)



Geomun Oreum Volcanic
Cone, Jeju



Basalt Gorge and
Bidulginangpokpo Falls
of Hantangang River, Pocheon

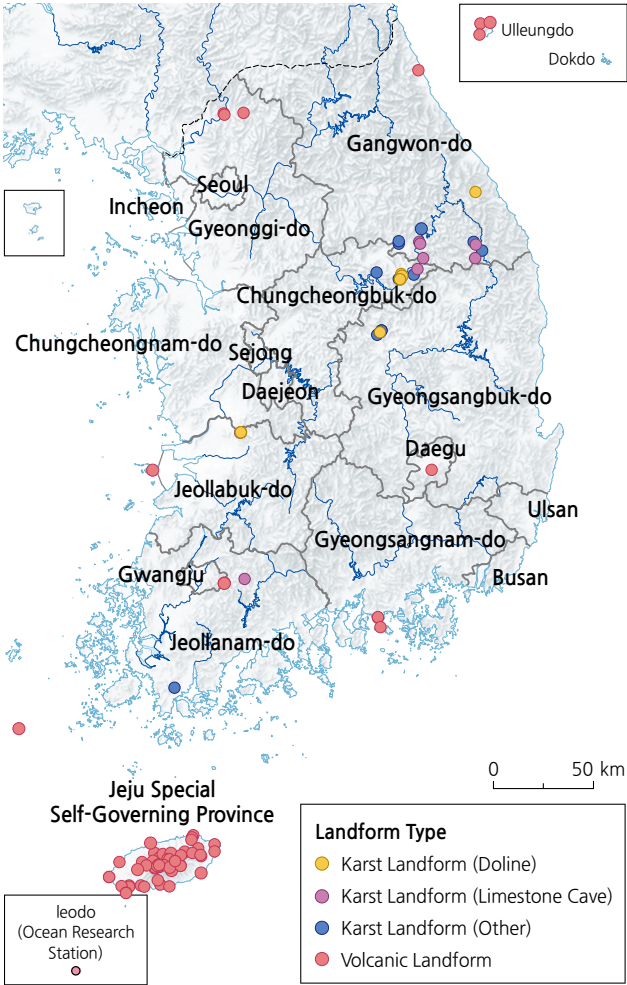


Gimnyeonggul and
Manjanggul Lava Tubes, Jeju



Limestone Cave, Gangwon-do

First Grade Volcanic Landforms, and Karsts



Karst topography is formed when calcium carbonate, the main component of limestone, dissolves in rainwater or groundwater. Dolines and limestone caves, which are representative of karst topography, are widely distributed in Korea.

The Republic of Korea protects natural ecosystems and landscapes by designating various national parks. Since the designation of Jirisan National Park as the first national park in Korea in 1967, a total of twenty-two national parks have been designated.

National Geoparks target areas with geological and geomorphological significance to carry out conservation activities. Four National Geoparks, including Jejudo, Cheongsong-gun, Mudeungsan, and Hantangang, are designated as UNESCO’s World Geoparks.

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar Convention) took place in Ramsar, Iran in 1971 to protect internationally important wetlands that function as habitats for animal and plant wildlife— waterfowl in particular. As of 2022, twenty-four registered wetlands in Korea are recognized by the Ramsar Convention.



Jirisan National Park



Ramsar Wetland (Daewangsan Yongneup)



Hallyeohaesang National Park



World Geopark (Cheongsong)



World Geopark (Mudeungsan Mountain)

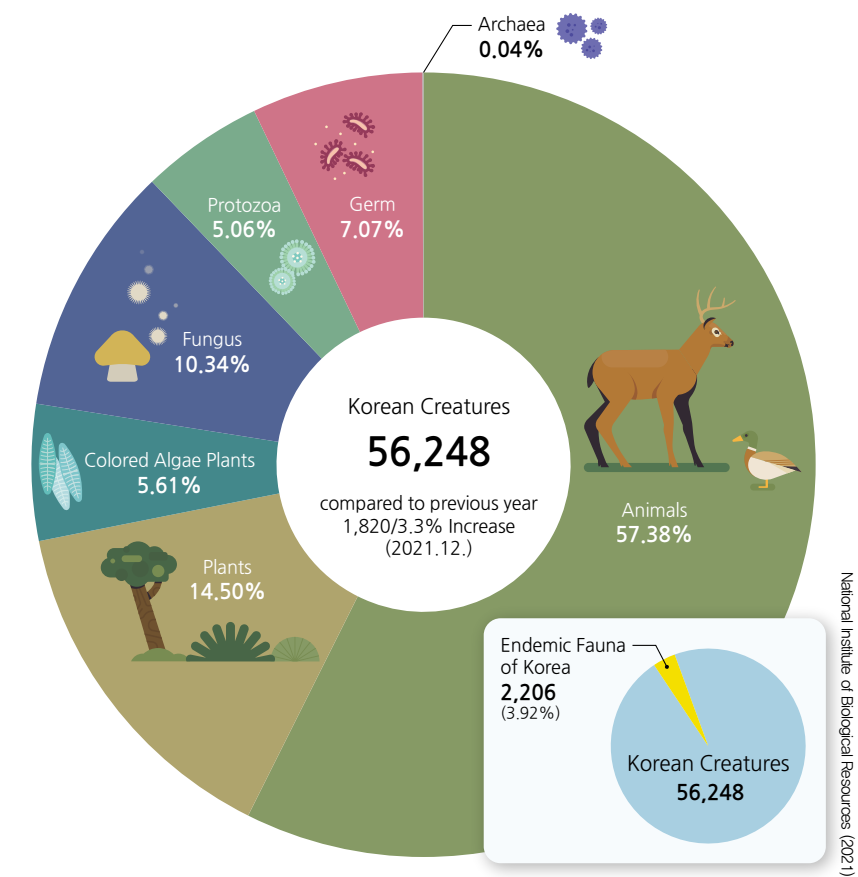


National Geological Park (Baekryeongdo Dumujin)

Conservation of Biodiversity

In Korea, approximately 100,000 species of living organisms are estimated to inhabit the land. As of 2021, 56,248 species were identified and recorded. Approximately 4% of all species found in Korea are endemic. Among the recorded species, 32,273 species, which constitute about 57% of the total, belong to the Kingdom Animalia.

Native Organisms of Korea

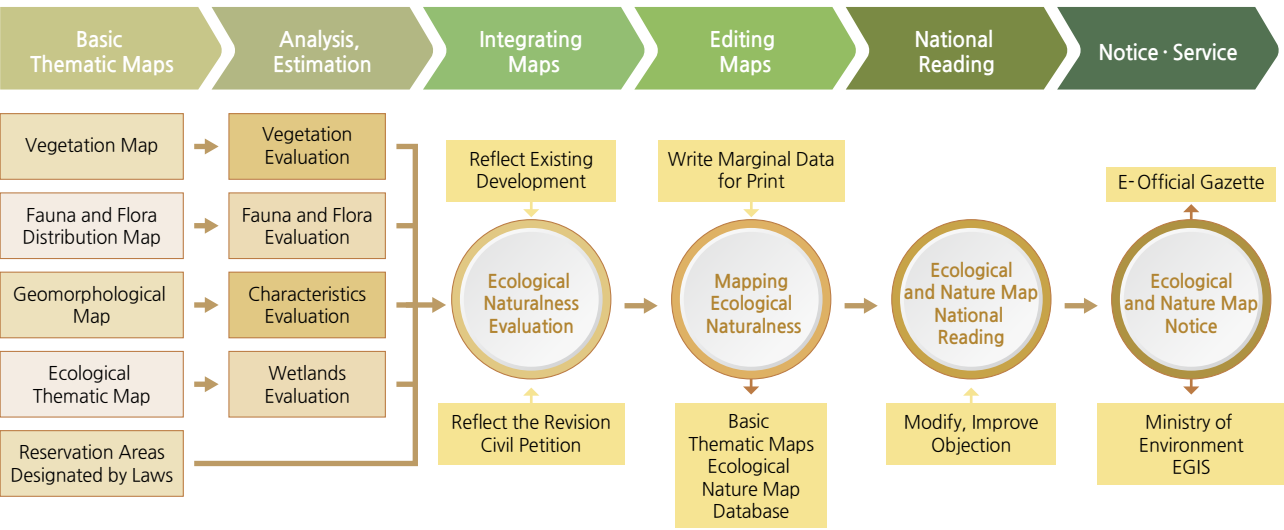


Species on Earth

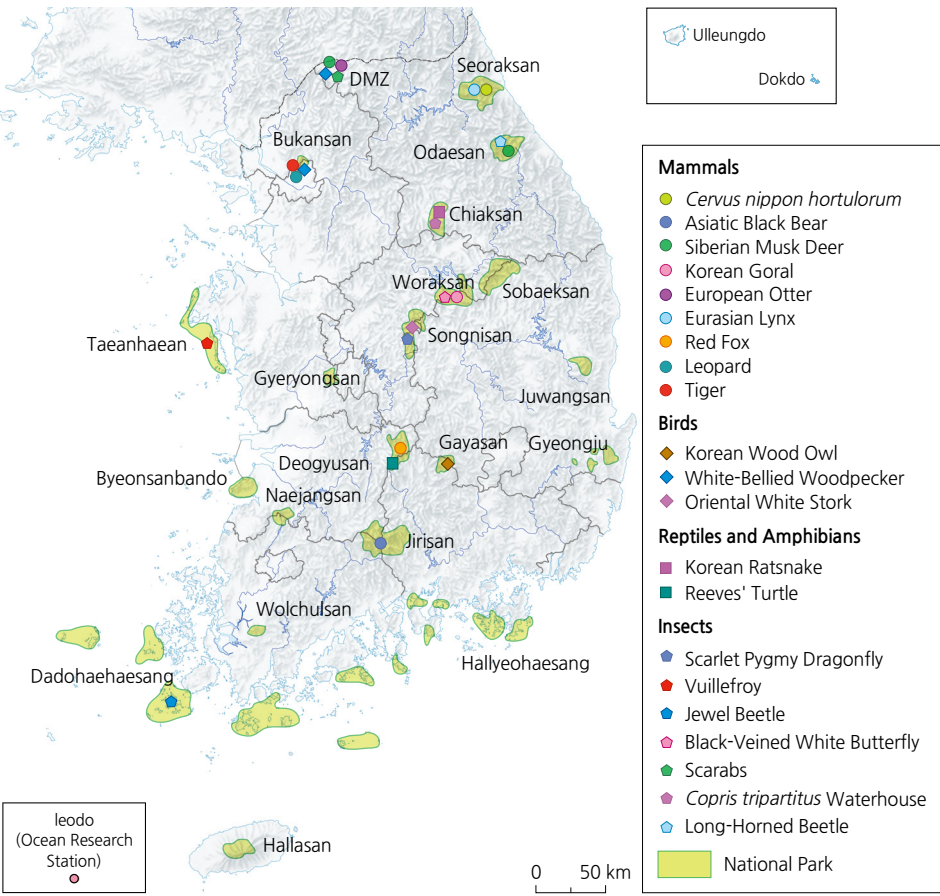
It is estimated that there are about 13 million species living on Earth. It is predicted that 25% of species will become extinct by 2025 with 70 species disappearing every day. This extinction rate is 1,000 times faster than the natural extinction rate. Conserving biodiversity is important not only because we benefit richly from biodiversity, but also because it plays a role in restoring the balance of the ecosystem in the midst of a climate crisis.

National Institute of Biological Resources (2021)

Mapping Procedure for Ecological Naturalness Map



Restoration Areas for Endangered Wild Animal Species



Korean Goral
(*Naemorhedus caudatus*)

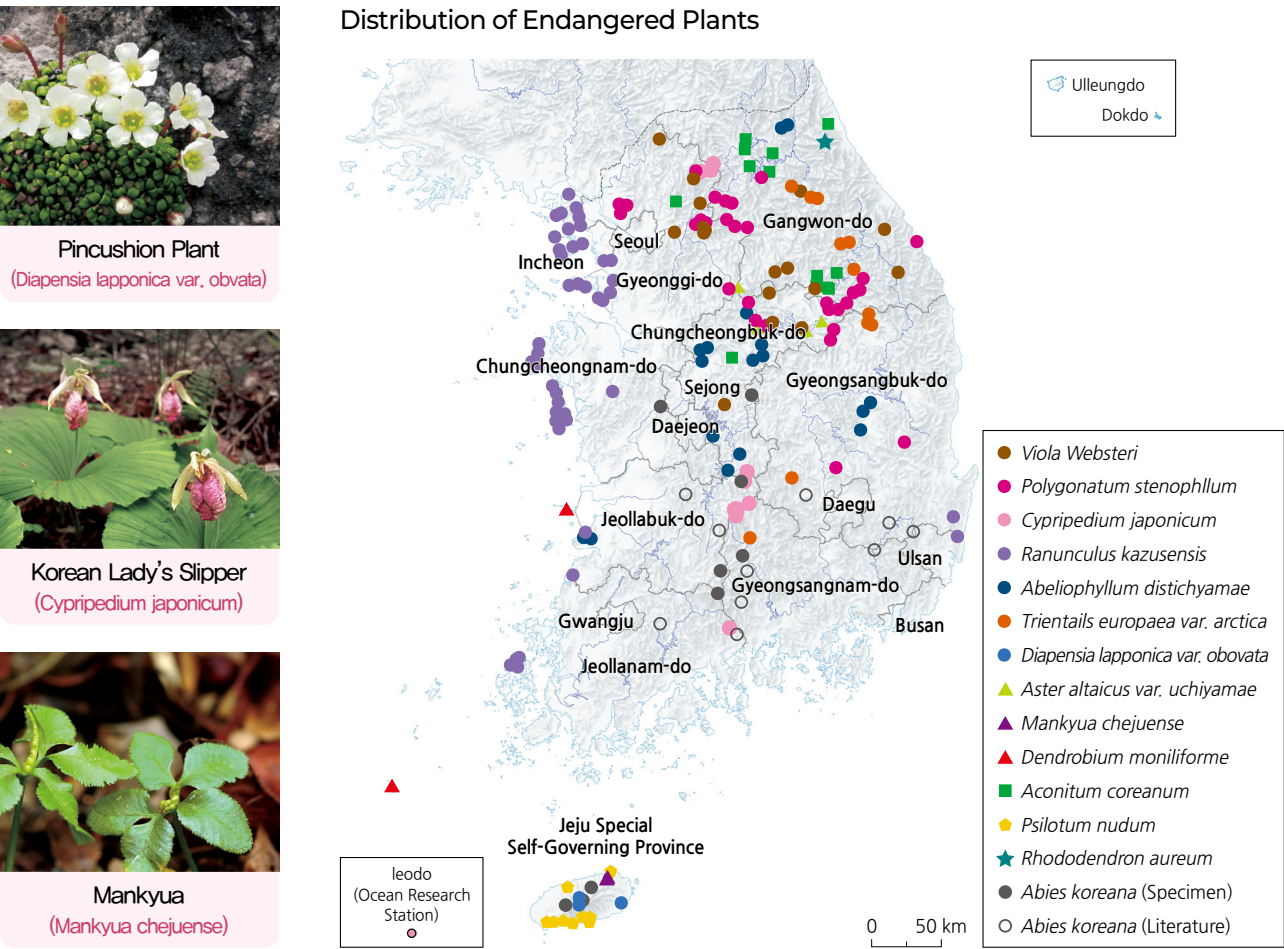


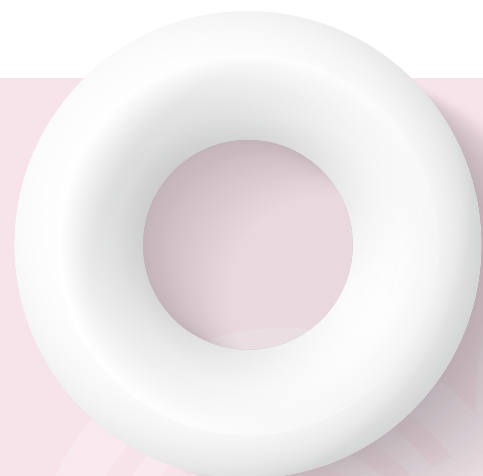
Reeves' Turtle
(*Mauremys reevesii*)



Long-Horned Beetle
(*Callipogon relictus*)

Distribution of Endangered Plants





KOREA

Human Environment
in Korea

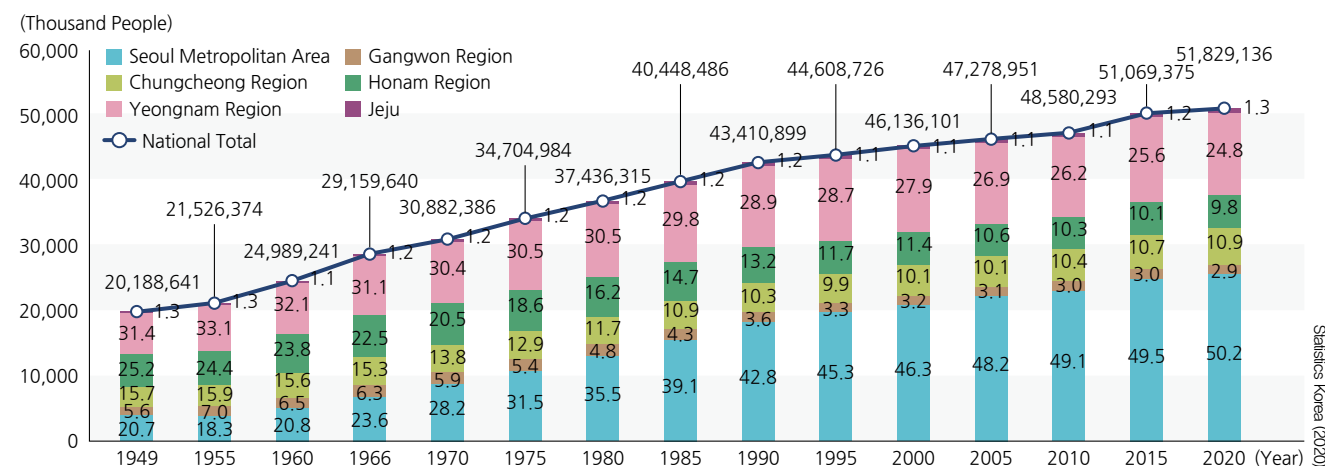
5



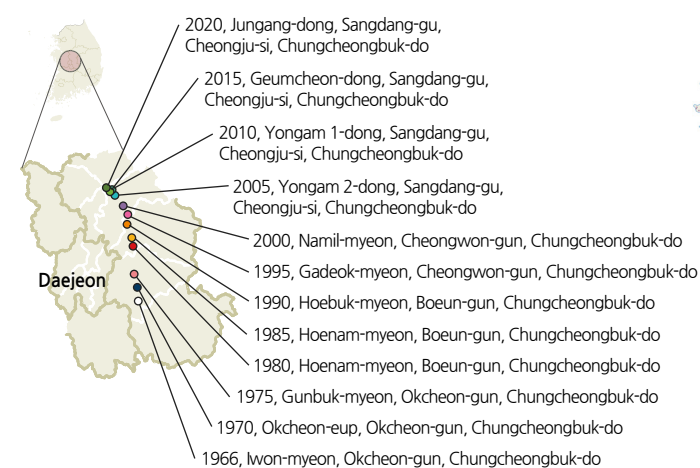
Population

The population reached 51.38 million in 2020 and it is approximately 2.6 times higher than it was in 1949. Considering population counts by region, Korea's population was evenly distributed among the Seoul Metropolitan Area, the Honam region, and the Yeongnam region by the 1970s. However, the population of the Seoul Metropolitan Area has been higher than that of the Honam and Yeongnam regions since the 1990s, and the population continues to rapidly migrate there. As of 2020, about 50 percent of Korea's population resided in the Seoul Metropolitan Area.

Proportion of Population by Region (2020)

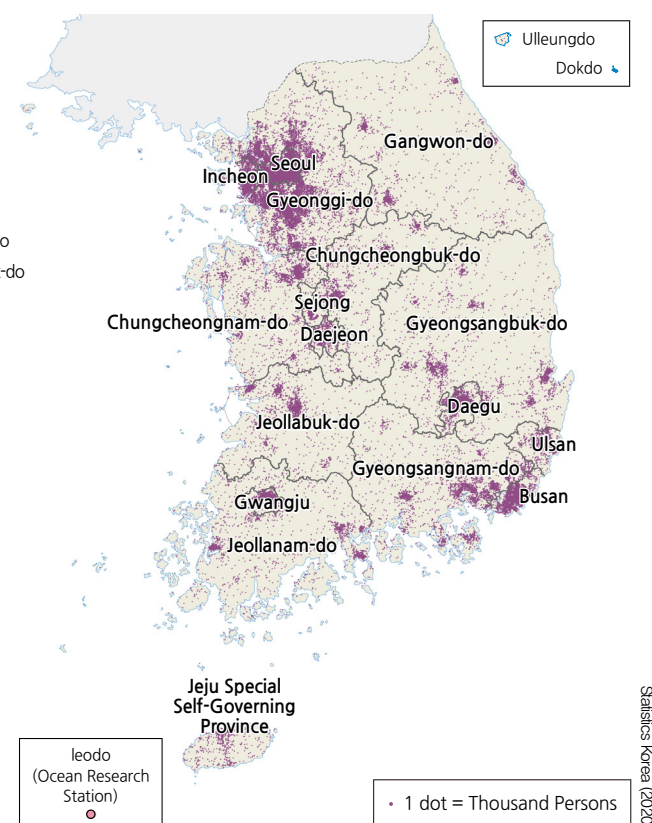


Geographic Population Centers

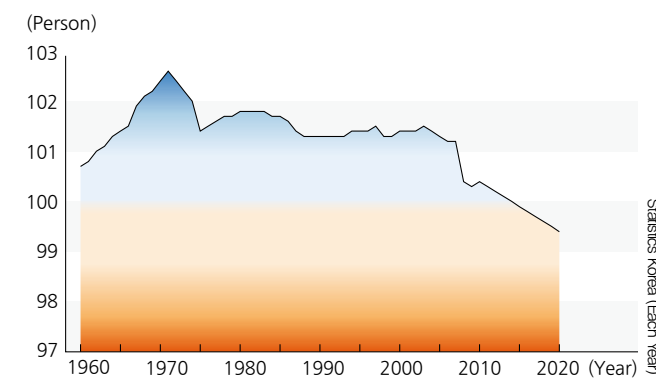


As of 2020, the population density was approximately 520 people/km², with Seoul having the highest population density. The concentration of population in the metropolitan area can also be found in the change in the population center. The population center continues to move toward the metropolitan area.

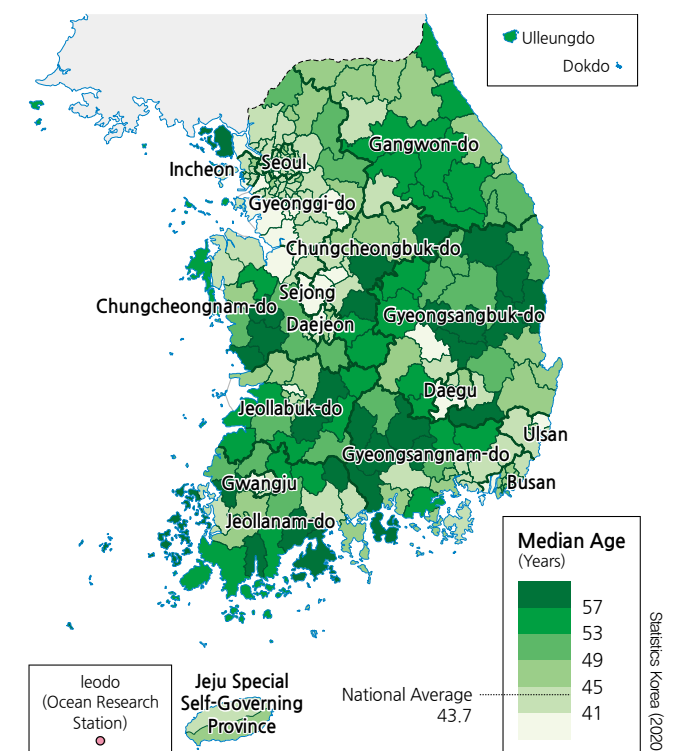
Population Distribution (2020)



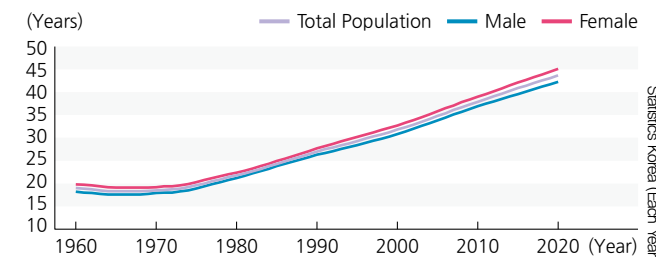
Sex Ratio



Median Age (2020)



Change in the Median Age

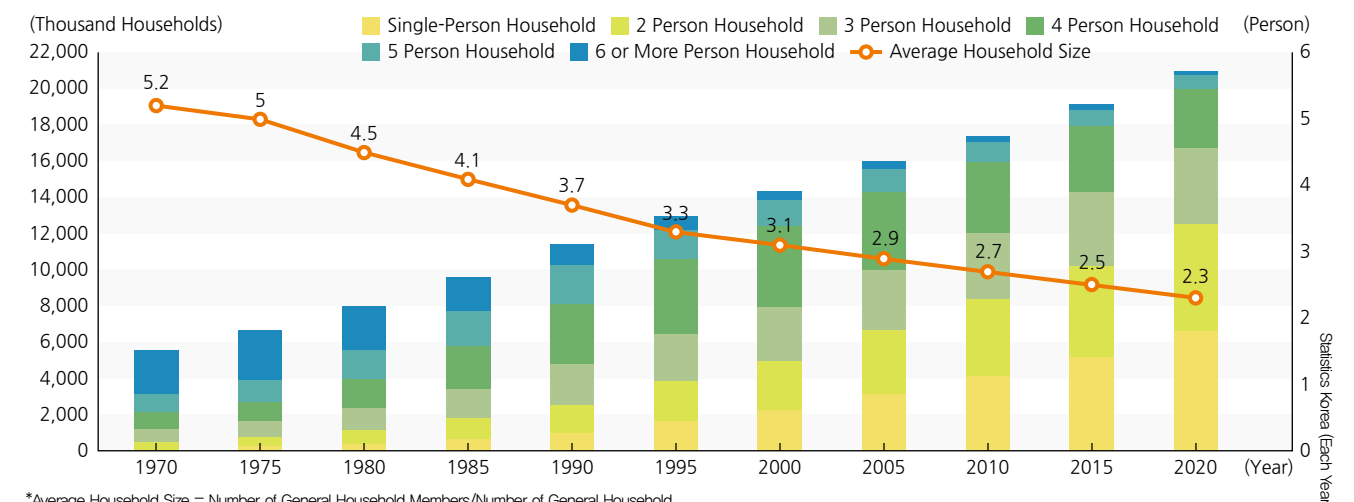


The sex ratio (male population/female population \times 100) peaked at 102.6 in 1971 and almost reached a balance at 100.1 in 2020.

The median age was below 19 years until the mid-1970s, but as the birth rate decreased, the median age continued to rise, reaching 43.7 years in 2020. The median age of the female population is higher than that of the male population, and the difference continues to increase.

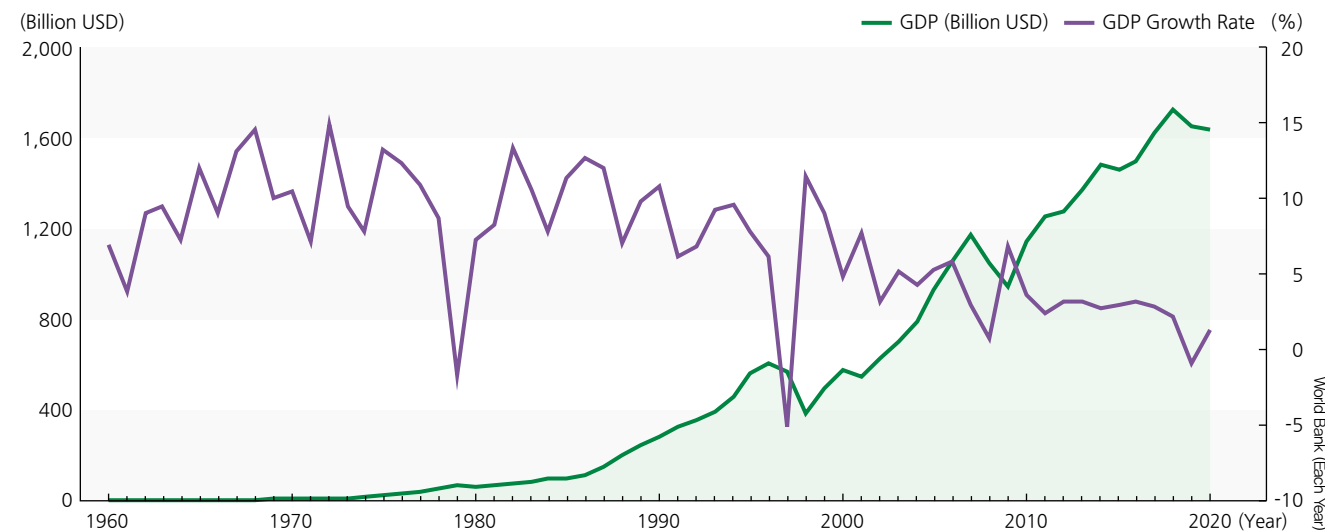
As of 2020, there were a total of 21.5 million households, and the number of households is increasing faster than the population. The average number of people per household decreased from 5.2 in 1970 to 2.3 in 2020. As of 2020, the number of households with two or fewer people was 12.5 million, accounting for about 60% of the total number of households.

Changes in Average Household Size



Economic Index and Industrial Structure

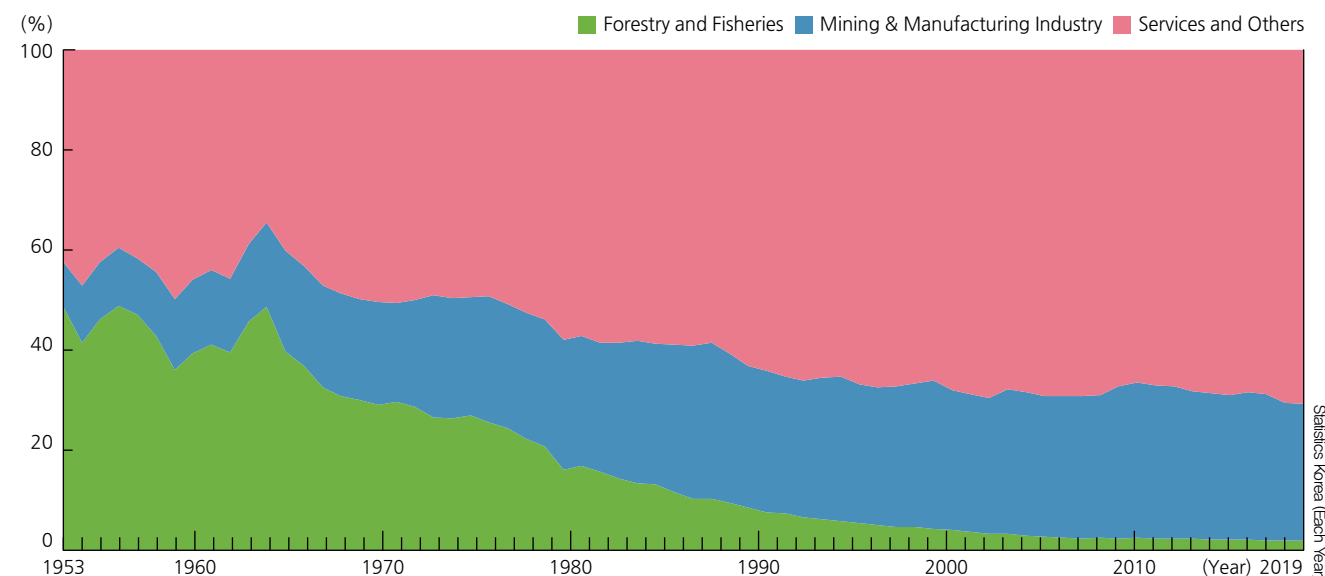
Trends in the Real Growth Rate of GDP



In 1972, the gross domestic product was just over USD 10 billion. In 2006, 35 years after it first exceeded USD 10 billion, it broke through the 100-fold increase to USD 1 trillion. This growth pattern demonstrates that Korea has achieved accelerated economic growth in a compressed time frame.

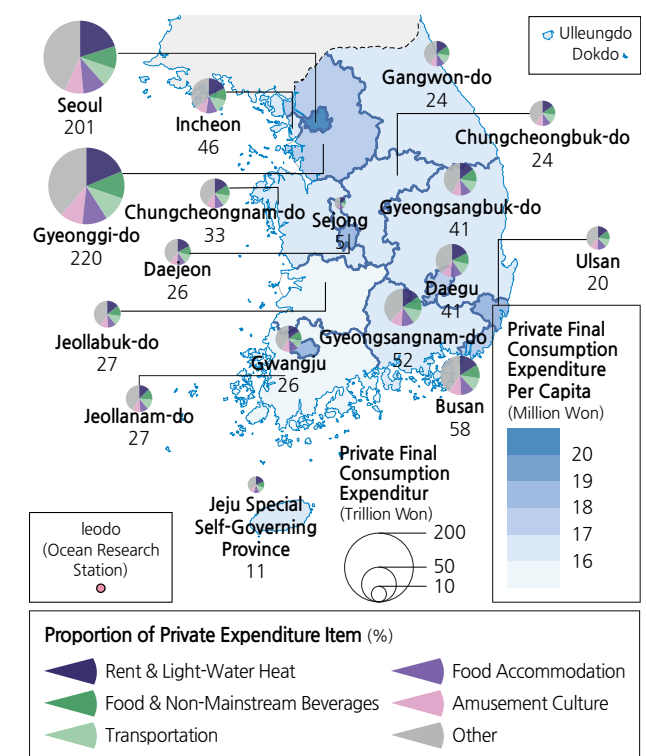
The industrial structure of the Republic of Korea has been rapidly reorganized from a primary industry to a secondary and tertiary industry since the 1970s. The development of export industries following the export-oriented industrial policy promoted since the 1970s played a decisive role in the restructuring of the industry. When considering the changes in industrial structure through changes in the proportion of gross domestic product by industrial sector, the proportion of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries has decreased rapidly, while the proportion of service industries and others has increased significantly.

Changes in GDP by Industry

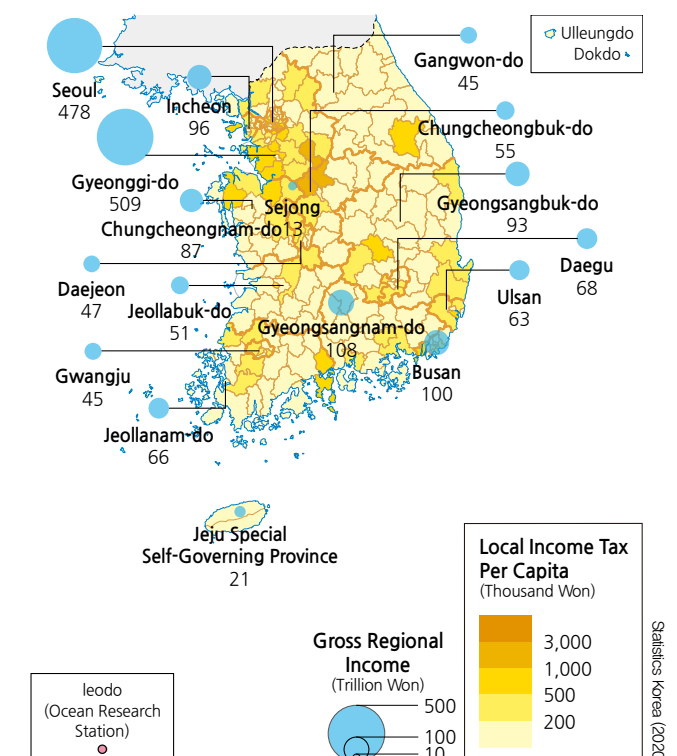


Regional total income increased by 194.7% over 19 years, from KRW 661 trillion in 2000 to KRW 1,949 trillion in 2019. Looking at the regional total income status by city and province, the regions that showed higher growth rates than the national average were Gyeonggi-do (274.2%), Incheon (259.1%), Chungcheongnam-do (243.9%), and Jeju Special Self-Governing Province (240.6%), in that order. In terms of the expenditure of households nationwide in 2019, the regions with higher per capita expenditure than the national average (KRW 24.4 million) were Sejong (KRW 35.6 million), Gangwon-do (KRW 29.5 million), and Seoul (KRW 26.9 million). When expenditures are broken down by items, essential consumer goods such as groceries and non-alcoholic beverages accounted for the highest proportion at 15.9%, followed by food and lodging (13.3%), transportation (12.0%), and housing and water, electricity, and heating (11.9%).

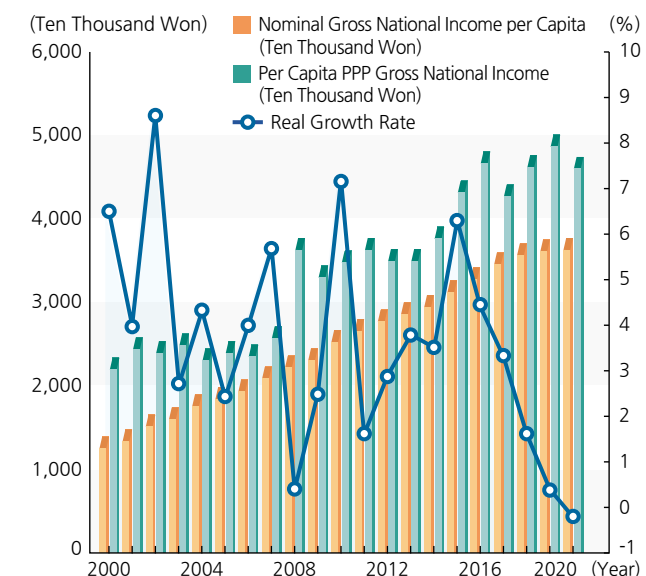
Private Final Consumption Expenditure Per Capita



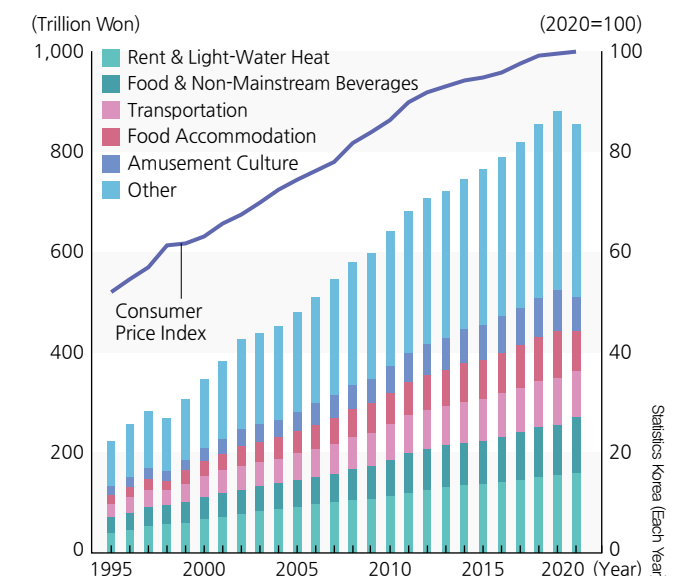
Regional GNI and Regional Income Taxes per Capita



Changes in GNI per Capita



Changes in Consumer Price Index (1995–2020)

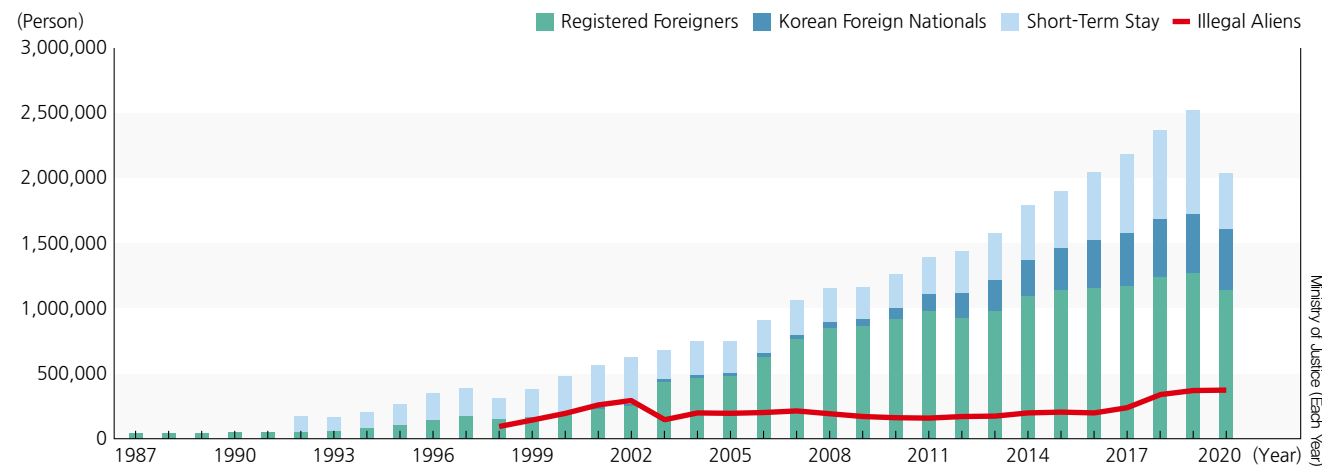


Foreign Residents and Multicultural Society

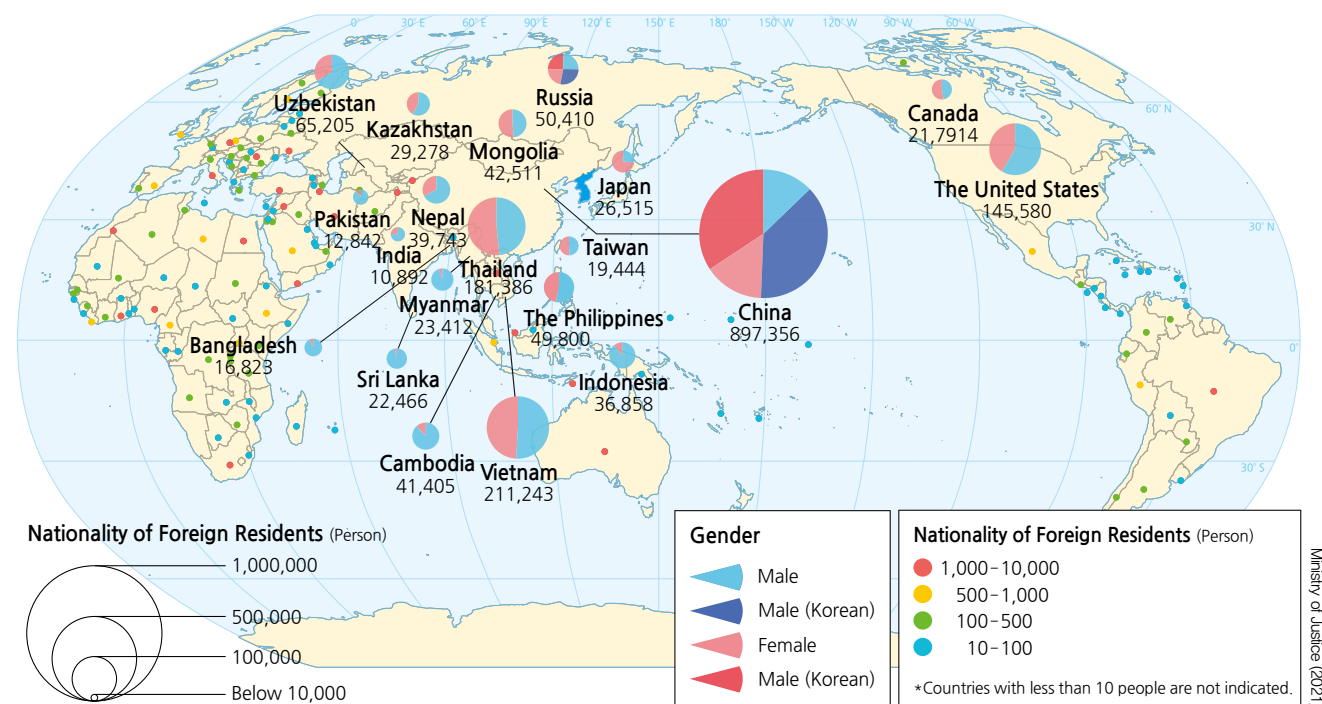
The number of foreign residents in the Republic of Korea was around 40,000 until the 1980s, but rapidly increased to 2.52 million by 2019. As of 2019, by nationality, China represents the largest foreign resident population with 900,000 (250,000 Chinese and 650,000 Korean Chinese), followed by Vietnam with 210,000, and Thailand with 180,000. By gender, there are 1.13 million men and 910,000 women. By age, those aged 25 to 34 are the most numerous.

Multicultural households are defined as households consisting of naturalized foreign immigrants or marriage immigrants and their children. As of 2021, there were about 390,000 multicultural households, accounting for 1.8% of all households,

Foreign Residents in Korea by Year (1987–2020)



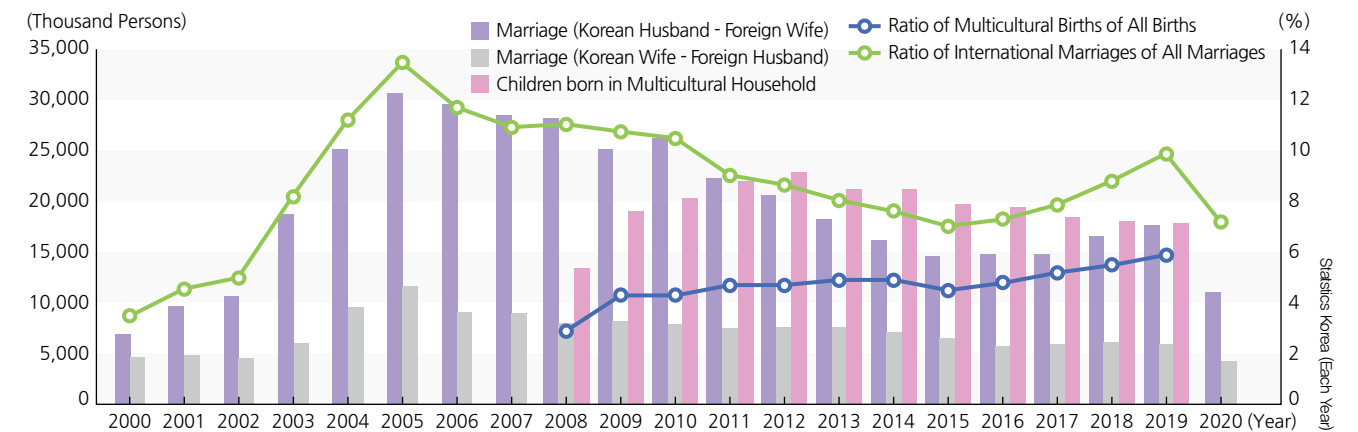
Nationality of Foreign Residents (2020)



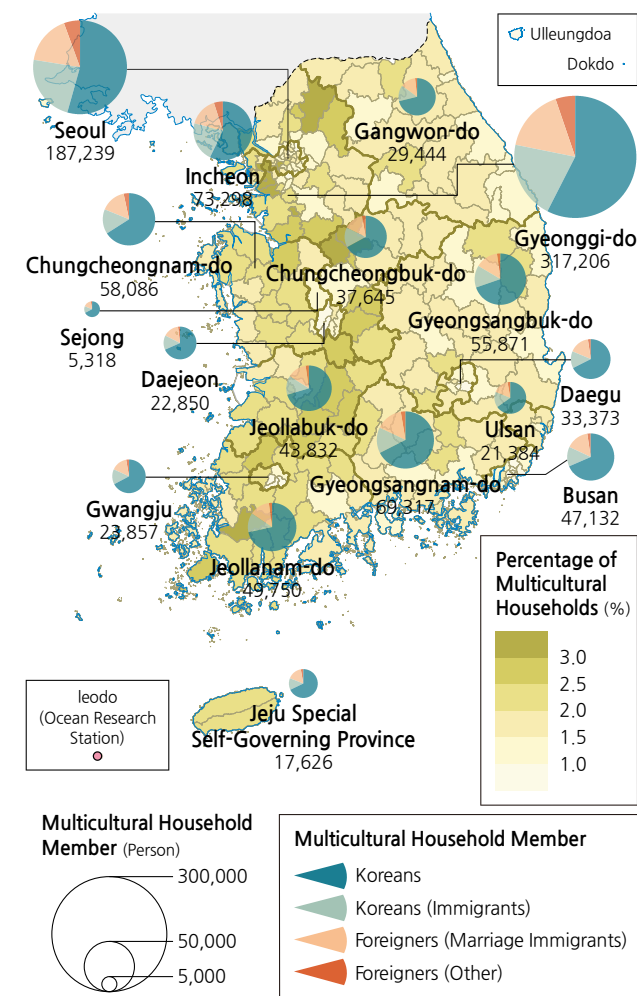
and the proportion of births in multicultural families increased to 5.5%. As the rate of multicultural marriages increases, multicultural households are gradually becoming one of the common family types.

Areas with a high proportion of multicultural households include the Seoul Metropolitan Area and Chungcheong region, where many foreign workers reside due to the high proportion of manufacturing industry jobs, as well as traditional rural areas with a high proportion of international marriages, such as Chungcheongbuk-do, Chungcheongnam-do, Jeollabuk-do, and Jeollanam-do.

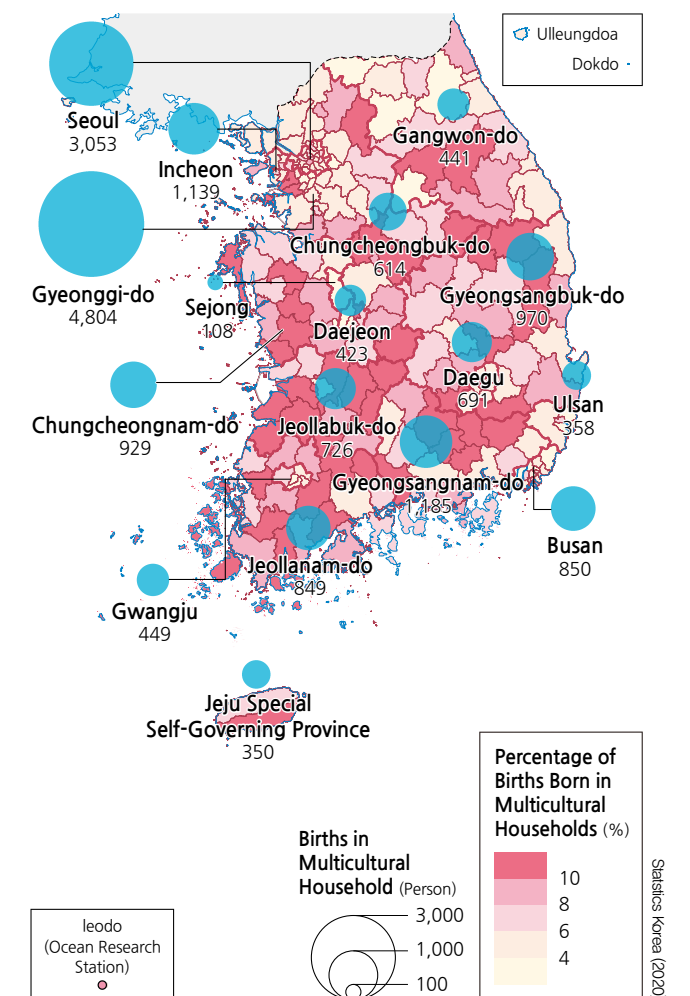
International Marriage and Children Born in Multicultural Households



Multicultural Household (2020)



Births in Multicultural Households (2019)

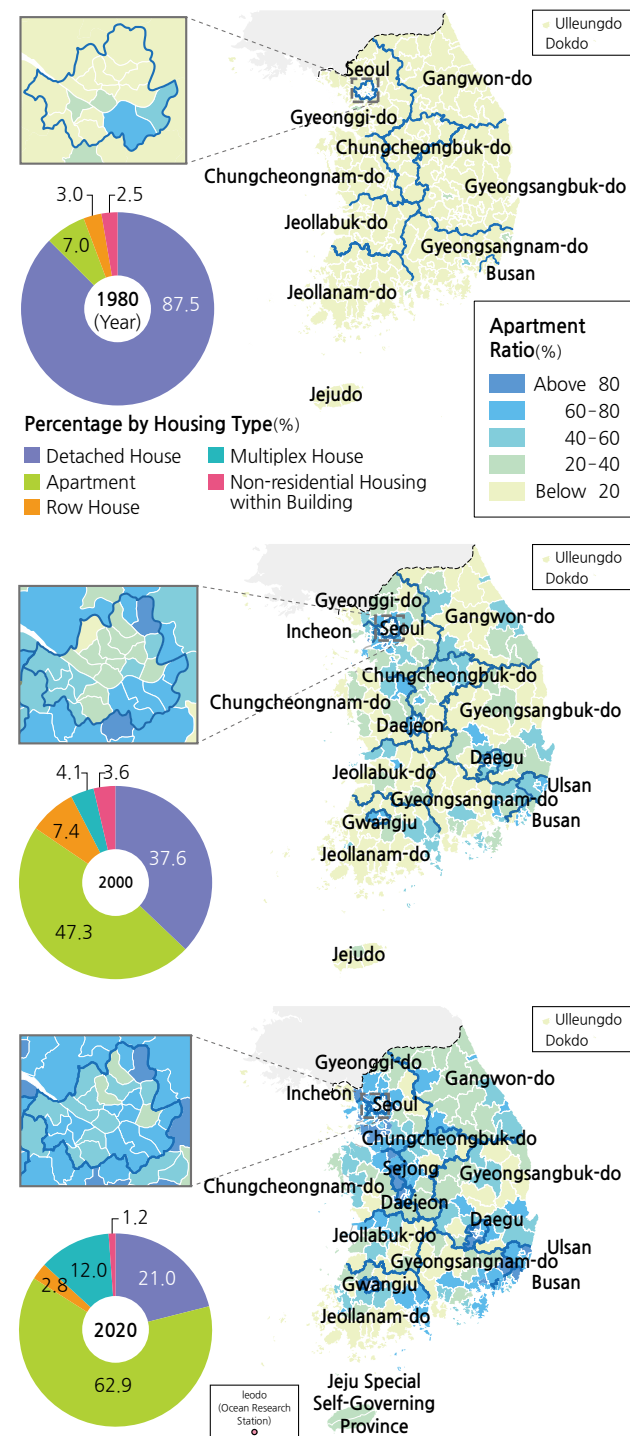


Modern Housing

Housing in Korea is officially classified as detached housing, apartments, row housing, and multiplex housing. Traditionally, the proportion of detached housing was high, but recently, the proportion of apartments has increased due to the high proportion of apartment supply. The proportion of detached housing, which was 87.5% in 1980, fell to 21.0% in 2020, while apartments accounted for 7.0% of total housing in 1980 and 62.9% in 2020.



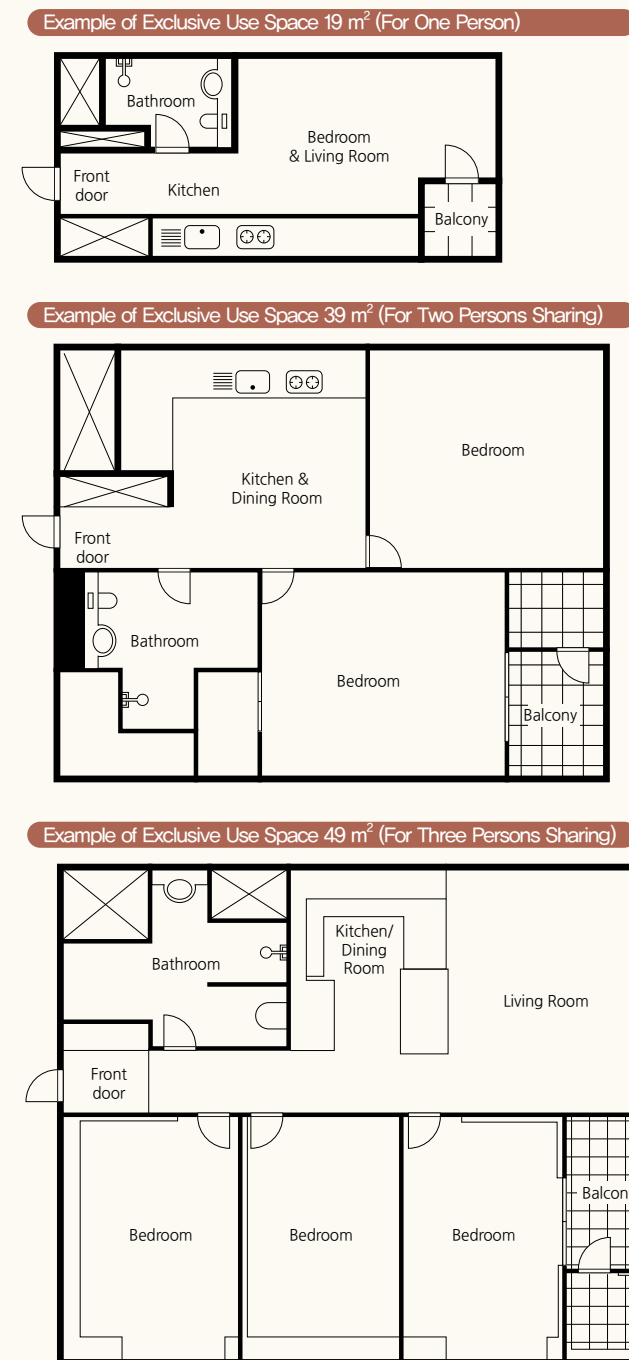
Apartment Ratio Change



Apartments are a preferred form of housing for many people because they offer the advantages of shared management and security, such as parking, play facilities, and elevators. Apartments are typically about 65 m² and 85 m² based on the area for exclusive use by the unit household. An apartment of 85 m² is generally a three-bedroom, two-bathroom unit, typical for a family of parents and children.

Recent notable trends in housing styles include the increase in single-person and two- to three-person households, and the increase in small houses and various types of rental housing reflecting government policies for young people and low-income households. In particular, in line with the increase in single-person households, the supply of small-scale urban living houses and officetels (buildings that combine residential and commercial spaces in a compact form) is increasing.

Examples of the Layouts of One-Person House or Share House



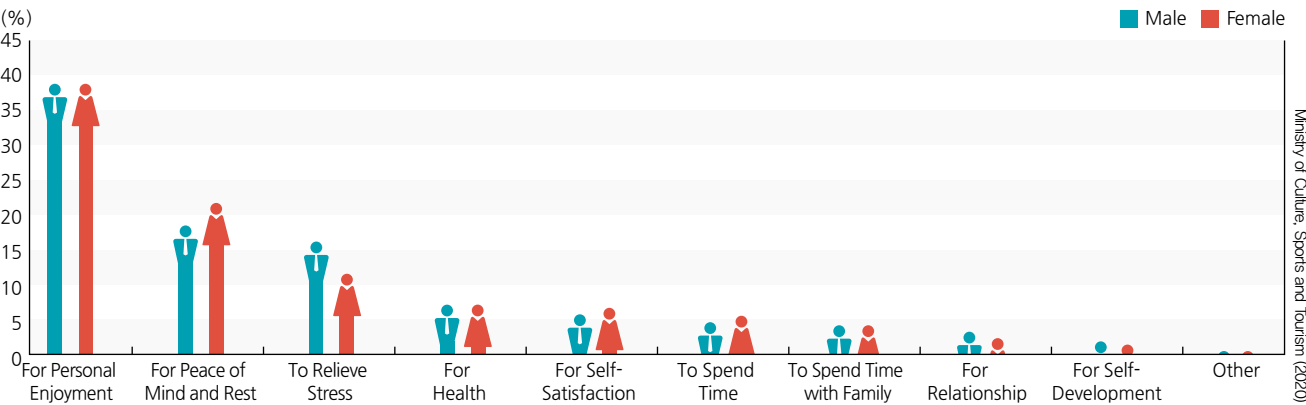
Community Facilities in Apartment Complexes



Leisure Time and Sports

Regardless of gender, the primary purpose of leisure participation is for personal pleasure; a relatively lower proportion of Korean people participate in leisure for health, socializing, and personal development. Females participate more in social activities or cultural and artistic activities to pursue emotional balance and rest. On the other hand, males participate more in recreational and sports activities to relieve stress.

Major Purpose of Leisure Activities by Gender (2020)

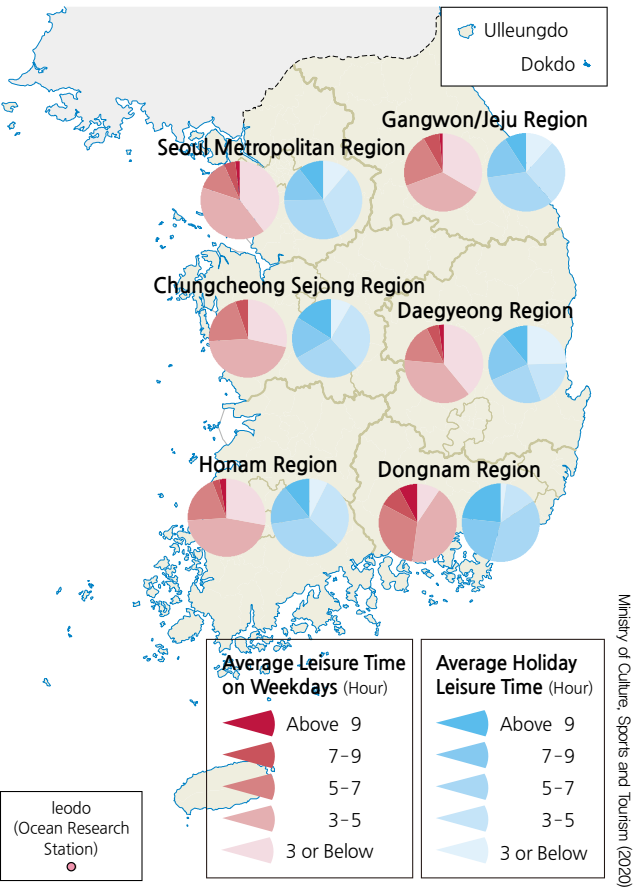


Koreans' Use of Time (2019)

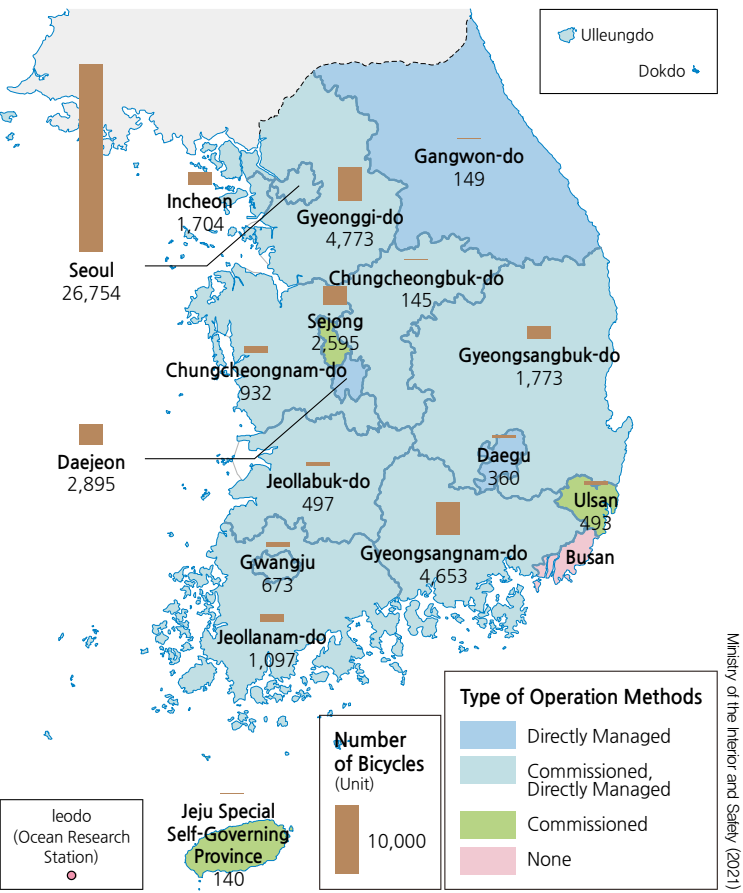


Koreans over age 10 enjoy an average of four hours and forty-five minutes of leisure time every day, excluding essential living time such as sleeping and eating, and compulsory living time such as working, studying, and moving. The average Korean goes to sleep at 11:30 pm and wakes up around 7 am.

Average Leisure Time (2020)



Public Bicycle Services (2021)



The central and local governments made a great effort to improve the Korean citizens' quality of life through increased participation in leisure activities. The governments enhanced public access to leisure by building and managing many leisure facilities such as concert halls, libraries, parks, public sports facilities, and village sports facilities, and by developing many walking tour routes and bicycle paths to encourage routine exercise.

In most cities and provinces, public bicycles—commissioned or directly managed—are available. People can pick up bicycles at rental stations using transportation cards or mobile applications. Many bicycle trails have been created along major rivers and coasts. Local governments have also built bicycle trails themed on history, nature, and culture. As a result, touring these bicycle trails and crossing the Korean territory using bicycle trails has become popular.

Distribution of Bike Trails (2021)

