

#SICOGA2018

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Day tour to the Demilitarized Zone

by Boglárka Kovács



Yellow ribbons for the return of North Koreans

It has been a lot of work from Servas Korea OT, to organise our excursion to the DMZ! Here I would like to express our gratitude for this amazing experience!

Visiting the one and only DMZ in the whole world is something to tell. The day started with group photos from every angle, then a roughly 2 hours trip to Imjinkak Peace Park. The visitor center is widely popular among tourists, since it's the furthest one can go without security control towards North-Korea.

After ID check we proceeded to Paju-area, DMZ zone, where lunch waited for us and much more. The 3rd Infiltration Tunnel, designed by the North for a surprise attack against Seoul, discovered in 1978, is laying 73 m below ground level. 'The hand caved tunnel could accommodate 30 thousand soldiers per hour,' said Annie NamHee Kim,

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of Servas Korea. The Dora Observatory is famous for its exceptional view on North-Korea. From the viewpoint one can see the Gaesong Industrial Complex, the Propaganda Village and even Kim Il-Sung's statue (with a binocular). The Gaesong complex, only recently closed down because of political reasons, was operated by both Koreas. Until February 2016, there was a flowering industrial contract between the North and the South, where money and physical resources were shared. Going further on, we visited the Dorsan Station, a symbolic railway station of reunification. Expressing their hopes for the future, Koreans refer to the monument as 'Not the last station from the South, but the first station towards the North.' Currently, Kim Jong-un's regime hinders the functioning of the railtracks connecting the two Koreas and with the Trans-Siberian Railways in the future, however there is hope that one day South-Koreans will be able to take the train even to Europe.

As an appropriate ending of the day tour we indulged ourselves in the delicious 'Galbi-tang', Beef-Rib soup, in the fancy Samwon Garden Restaurant. 'Sometimes even our President, Moon Jae-in eats there' adds Annie.

Fun fact

There are 20 different ways to say love in Korean. The most common is 사랑 (sarang).

Among Us~

by Lauren Gordon



Chaewan Kim, regional coordinator for Gyeonggi Province, Korea, first learned of Servas from a local newspaper article. "A Korean member from Busan described his travels with Servas in Israel" he recalled. Since joining in 2011, Chaewan has visited hosts across the world, including for the GA in NZ, and regional meetings in Kyrgistan and Indonesia (where he was hosted by our very own Indonesian delegate, Amin!) Of the conference in Seoul, Chaewan, who fills the role of activities coordinator, says he is excited to introduce Korean food and culture to the world!

Thanks Chaehwan!

Feast in the Unification-village

by Boglárka Kovács



Thongil Chon is the DMZ zone, Paju-area between South -and North Korea. Paju city, usually referred to as "peace town", is famous for its Bean-stew. This region of the Korean Peninsula is well known for its great Soy-bean crop. The villagers of Thongil, only around 100 families, grow soy and handcraft several products of it. Soy, ginseng and rice are their main agricultural products.

On our excursion day, the SICOGA 2018 participants visited one of the family-run restaurants. Our hearty lunch included several traditional dishes, like kimchi, steamed spinach, spicy oyster-mushroom&tofu soup, roasted&sweetened soy beans and different types of Bean-stew. At the restaurant we sat in groups of four and enjoyed the Asian way of sharing food. In every table there were small portions of different dishes from which one could pick and consume with steamed rice.

It is something really special, tasting those 4000 years-old dishes. Most of the places claim to keep the same preparation method since many generations. I can only recommend to anyone who visits South-Korea.

콩정식(Kong-jeongsik : Korean bean food table d'hôte)