

## Living the life in Korea

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Without a doubt, the best decision of my life was joining the EPIK program in Korea. Before coming to Korea, I had never travelled, so arriving in a land with an entirely different culture rattled me, if only for a few months. My girlfriend and I have decided to call Korea home, at least for the medium to long term. We made this decision relatively easily, as life in Korea is great. The people, the culture, the lifestyle and the beauty appeal to us so much that we don't really want to leave this place.

Before coming to Korea, you need to be mindful of a few things. I came here thinking that it would be the same as my little suburb in Cape Town, South Africa, bar the culture of course. If you arrive in Korea with a negative attitude, forget about it. Don't even go through customs, board the next flight home and stay there. If you come to Korea thinking you can change the fact that people expect you to do your job (you are on a contract), or you expect people to speak english in a non-english speaking country, or you don't like being stared at, or you can't cope with a slight sniff and an itchy throat, GO HOME!!!

For the rest of you that have carried on reading, Korea offers a vast cultural, educational and natural experience. Not to mention that Korea also boasts the second largest metropolitan city in the world, the largest department store in the world, one of the seven natural wonders of the world, enormous fireworks all year round and some of the most beautiful architecture and scenery on the face of our planet. Don't believe me? Come see for yourself.

Native speaking English teachers in this country are treated with the utmost respect and in most cases are consulted quite frequently about the curriculum or english-speaking in general. Many of us came to this country taking our language for granted. When you see the passion that most people display toward learning english, you will be humbled. Our language is something we grew up and needed to be taught to us. We come to Korea to speak english daily and get paid doing it. Sounds like a win to me. Granted, the work is sometimes difficult, time consuming or tedious, but any other job in my country is not half as "laid-back" as what our jobs are now.

Korea, being in The East, makes for a perfect location from where one could travel and see all the asian countries nearby. My recommendation however, is to explore the country you live in. Not only is it adventurous, but it's both educational and inspiring seeing how others

live and strive to be the best at whatever they do.

Apart from all the Korean things you may or may not experience, one must remember that there are also plenty of foreign friends to be made from all over the world. Some remain close for many years to come, others are just great company for the days that you feel like the world, and the english language, has abandoned you. Either way, we feed off of each other. A word of advice; be sure to choose your friends wisely. Stay in a positive frame of mind and don't listen to all the "horror stories" without hearing the positive stories too. "Love" and respect your students and co-workers and I guarantee, you will have the same in return. Far too many people are quick to complain about their students or co-teachers or something that "rubbed-them-up-the-wrong-way". Leave that at school and deal with it there. Don't be spreading your negativity around to others. "Aint nobody got time fo dat."

I love this country and I'm sure you will too.



**Pohang Fireworks Festival**



**Architecture: Old and New (Seoul)**



**Anapji Pond, Gyeongju**