

BESPOKE  
*Travel Company*

KORYO  
TOURS

# BRIDGES AND BORDERS

## JOURNEY TO THE EDGE OF THE DPRK

A Fall Weekender: October 15–17

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# ABOUT THIS TRIP

Borders. If you're anything like us, you find these almost arbitrary lines that divide civilizations to be utterly fascinating and – perhaps – even a tiny bit thrilling. And if understanding different cultures means more to you than, say, booking into a fancy hotel in Sanya, then this action-packed, expert-led weekender may be just your cup of soju.

We're confident in saying that there is no more enigmatic frontier on earth than that which surrounds the DPRK (that's the Democratic People's Republic of Korea officially, or North Korea as most of us know it). The famously hard-to-visit nation is home to around 25 million people, and has a border with China – its only real diplomatic friend – that spans well over 1,000kms, providing those of us that live here with a unique window on to a world that could not be more different.

More than just a peek behind the curtain, this deep dive into North Korea past and present will be led by frequent DPRK visitor and lively raconteur Simon Cockerell, General Manager of Koryo Tours. Over the years, Koryo's team has earned a reputation as the go-to experts on North Korea, hosting visitors like Michael Palin, and arranging countless cross border cultural exchanges from sport and film, music to architecture. Believe us when we say there is no better expert on hand in China for understanding of the country in a way few get to.

Across two action packed days, we'll get the chance to rummage for one-of-a-kind DPRK curios at Dandong's antiques market, learn the Chinese point of view on the Korean war from the museum here, and get a glimpse of North Korean villages from the river. We'll even get the rare chance to visit a Russian graveyard in the countryside of Hekou before heading back.

In short, we may not be able to take you to Pyongyang (yet), but whilst borders are closed there is no better chance to get up close and personal with one of the world's most curious countries than this.

**TRIP LENGTH:** 2 nights/3 days (Fri Oct 15–Sun Oct 17)

**PRICE:** 6,000 RMB/person (double occupancy); for single occupancy, add 500RMB. Excludes return flight

**DIFFICULTY LEVEL:** Low (small elevated 1 minute hike to the Russian grave)

**INCLUDED:** Train from Beijing to Dandong; 2 nights' accommodation, meals excluding dinner on Sunday, all transfers after arrival in Dandong, all entrance tickets, local guide and expert

**NOT INCLUDED:** Return flight ticket or overnight train depending on preference; personal expenses.





# ABOUT YOUR GUIDE

## **SIMON COCKERELL**

Simon Cockerell is the General Manager of Koryo Tours, the world's leading North Korea travel specialists and someone who has made over 180 trips to the country over the course of nearly two decades. With a fascination of not just the DPRK but the areas that surround it, their histories and quirky features, Simon is the ideal person to accompany a tour to these parts of China and will add context, stories, and much more to the experience.

Established in Beijing in 1993, Koryo Tours is the world's leading specialist in travel to North Korea and a range of other unusual and esoteric destinations. In addition to its innovative and pioneering work in opening the DPRK to tourism, Koryo has also produced a range of award-winning documentary films in the country, coordinates the annual Pyongyang Marathon, operates a humanitarian project, and has arranged high profile visits for luminaries such as British TV legend Sir Michael Palin.



# ITINERARY OVERVIEW

## DAY 1: Friday

After a 5 hour high-speed train journey from Beijing, we'll arrive in Dandong around 6pm and make our way to the Friend Plaza hotel to check in. After freshening up we'll gather to enjoy a lively dinner at a North Korean restaurant with our expert for an introduction to our weekend.

## DAY 2: Saturday

After breakfast we'll set off along the coast of the Yalu River to the Hekou countryside – with a quick stop along the way to visit a hidden gem: a cemetery for Russian soldiers – before boarding a private boat for a rare look at North Korean villages across the riverbank. Then we'll walk on the bridge the Chinese People's Volunteer Army used to cross into North Korea in 1950 and enjoy a riverside lunch before heading back downtown for a brief visit to the Korean War Museum. If time permits, we'll also take a look at Dandong's infamous 'Bridge to Nowhere'.

## DAY 3: Sunday

This morning we'll make a beeline for Dandong's curio market in search of unique DPRK souvenirs. Next, we'll get as close to North Korea as anyone has since January 2020 via a walk on the Broken Bridge and another boat ride across the river for a closer look at the other side, before heading to the airport for our flights home.



# FEATURED HOTEL

## FRIEND PLAZA HOTEL, DANDONG

This comfortable 4 Star hotel resides nearby Dandong's Moon Island, affording it views across the Yalu River and into North Korea. Western breakfast options are limited but nevertheless tasty enough, and the hotel is located close to the city's lively night market.





# DANDONG

Friday 15 October

## Friday October 15

All aboard! Our group will assemble at Beijing's Chaoyang Railway Station for the G3691 to Dandong leaving at 1.05pm and arriving at 6.04pm.

Once we arrive, we'll be whisked straight to dinner at a North Korean run restaurant in the center of town for an introductory talk from our expert, Simon Cockerell, before heading to Moon Island to check into the Friend Plaza Hotel in Dandong.



**Saturday 16 October**

### Morning

This morning we'll set off at 8.30am by road and head along the coast of the Yalu River, the boundary of two different worlds. Our destination is Hekou, but before we get there, we'll make a short stop at a cemetery for Russian servicemen from the early 1900s. This hidden gem is a place few know about and which we'll have special access to.

Then it's another one-hour drive to Hekou proper, where we'll find a broken bridge that was the site of the advance of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army into North Korea in 1950. Did you know that Mao Zedong's son Mao Anying crossed here in November of that year and never returned? He remains buried in the DPRK. We'll board a private boat for a chance to explore the beautiful river and get some rare and unique views of the terrain on the other side, then return for a hearty countryside lunch beside the water.

### Afternoon

This afternoon the group will head to the 'Museum of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea' – more prosaically known as the Korean War Museum. It's the Chinese version of events on display in this huge and impressive facility, and a new understanding and approach to the conflict is something guaranteed. Next, we'll drive to the New District of Dandong, one of China's modern semi-ghost towns and the site of the infamous 'Bridge to Nowhere' – a huge suspension bridge leading to a pile of dirt on the DPRK side – a manifestation of previous free-trade-zone plans and intentions yet to be realized.

### Evening

After a short rest at the hotel, we'll head to dinner for a slap-up meal before heading back to the hotel. Or, for those with a little energy left, a walk through the nearby night market.



Sunday 17 October

## Morning

This morning after check out, Simon will lead the group to the Dandong Curio market.

Located in an former multi-story car park, this market has a good few gems hidden amongst its rows of stalls. With its proximity to the DPRK, there are often North Korean curios here you won't find anywhere else.

Next we'll walk 15 minutes on foot to Dandong's most iconic landmark – the **Broken Bridge**, a Japanese structure bombed into the river by the US Air Force that stretches halfway out into the Yalu River and to North Korea. It's the ideal spot from which to view the DPRK on the other side and wonder what is going on over there. We'll then take a short boat trip out onto this stretch of water to get an even closer look, and learn how the border actually works (especially given that there's no boundary down the middle as you may expect).

## Afternoon

Finally, we'll enjoy lunch in a large private room at Xin An Dong Ge (a North Korean run restaurant serving tasty Chinese classics), where you'll get the chance to ask Simon any final questions before we head to the airport.

## Recommended Flights:

To Beijing Daxing: CA8642 (15:50 – 17:40)

To Shanghai Pudong: CZ6756 (16:15 – 18:40)



# FINAL NOTES ON THIS TRIP

## Health Restrictions

Unfortunately, two of the sights we will go to on this tour now require that visitors are vaccinated to enter. Therefore, we will not be able to take anyone along on this trip who has not yet had the vaccine. We do also ask you to be ready to take a Nucleic Acid Test in the days before departure should this be required (this is currently easy and inexpensive to do in almost every Chinese city). We have a special cancellation policy related to Covid-19 which is outlined in our terms and conditions on the next page.

## Is this tour safe for diplomats and journalists?

Yes. This trip is no different from any other in China and we partner with CITS (the government run tour agent) locally to ensure everything is being done according to local tourism regulations. Likewise, we do not visit any risky or forbidden areas on this tour.

## Can South Korean citizens come on this tour?

Unfortunately, the Republic of Korea National Security Law forbids South Koreans from any unauthorized contact with anyone from the DPRK, and so out of an abundance of caution, we will not be able to accommodate you on this tour if you are from the ROK.

## Accommodation

Pricing is based on double occupancy, so if you prefer to stay in a room by yourself, please pay the single supplement.

## How to Book

To reserve a place on this tour, or if you have any questions, please email us at [info@bespoketravelcompany.com](mailto:info@bespoketravelcompany.com) and we will send you a reservation form and payment instructions.



# TERMS & CONDITIONS

Bespoke Travel Company Ltd. does not own or operate any entity which is to provide goods or services. It purchases transportation, restaurant, ground handling and other services from various independent suppliers and individuals. All such persons and entities are independent contractors. As a result Bespoke Travel Company Ltd. is not liable for any negligent or willful act of any such person or entity or of any third person. Similarly, it is Bespoke Travel Company Ltd.'s policy that no fees for our services should be paid directly to third party suppliers by the customer. Bespoke Travel Company Ltd. is not liable for any cash misplaced or misappropriated by any third party. In the event of illness or other unforeseen circumstances on the part of the third party supplier resulting in non-provision of services, Bespoke Travel Company Ltd. will endeavour to find a similar replacement, or should a suitable replacement not be available, all monies paid for the service shall be refunded to the customer.

In addition and without limitation, Bespoke Travel Company Ltd. is not responsible for any injury, financial or physical loss, death, inconvenience, delay or damage to personal property in connection with the provision of any goods or services whether resulting from but not limited to acts of god or force majeure, illness, disease, acts of war, civil unrest, insurrection or revolt, animals, strikes or other labor activities, criminal or terrorist activities of any kind, overbooking or downgrading of services, food poisoning, mechanical or other failure of any means of transportation or for failure of any transportation mechanism to arrive or depart on time. Similarly, there are many inherent risks in tours such as great wall hikes, which can lead to illness, injury, or even death. These risks are increased by the fact that trips take place in remote locations, away from immediate medical facilities. Passenger assumes all such risks associated with participating in any such tour.

**Insurance and Safety:** Each guest of Bespoke Travel Company Ltd. should obtain full insurance coverage for accident, loss or injury during any tour undertaken. During the tour, the tourist assumes all risks related to participation of the tour. Bespoke Travel Company Ltd. is not liable to any guest for any direct, indirect or consequential damages.

**Amendments:** Bespoke Travel Company Ltd. will endeavour to assist if the customer requests any date/time changes more than 24 hours prior to the date of service. Changes are subject to availability of suppliers and are free of charge provided any additional fees or charges arising from the amendment are payable by the customer. Amendments to the itinerary, other than date/time changes, will be billed at Bespoke Travel Company Ltd.'s standard Trip Customisation rate of 800RMB/hour, except in the case of last minute bookings and changes (see above).

**Overdue Payments:** Payments that are more than 2 weeks overdue will incur an additional late payment fee amounting to 10% of the total invoiced amount each week until the invoice is paid in full.

**Covid-19 Group Tour Cancellation Policy:** Due to Covid-19, Bespoke Travel Company Ltd. recognises that plans may change unexpectedly. In the event of an outbreak in the region you are traveling from (e.g. Beijing/Shanghai), you may be required to provide a negative nucleic acid test at your own expense in order to travel / be accepted at the group's chosen hotel. In the event that the hotel refuses to accept foreign and/or Chinese guests even with a negative test, the tour will be cancelled and you will be refunded according to the Covid-19 Sudden Outbreak Cancellation Policy laid out below.

If the region (not province) we are traveling to is deemed medium or high risk by the Chinese government, and we are subsequently no longer able to visit the sights/hotels included in the itinerary, the trip will be cancelled and the Covid-19 Sudden Outbreak Cancellation Policy will also apply. However, in the event that the region we are traveling to is deemed low risk by the authorities, and the destination hotels included in the itinerary are still accepting both foreign and Chinese guests, the trip will go ahead and the standard Group Tour Cancellation Policy will apply. Please note that if you choose not to travel, not to take a Covid test or are advised not to by your company/organisation less than 28 days before the tour, we will not be able to issue a full refund. The customer must give Bespoke Travel Company Ltd. notice of any cancellation in writing. The following charges are payable by the customer in accordance with the number of days prior to the service date notice is received by Bespoke Travel Company Ltd.

## Sudden Outbreak Cancellation Policy

Days prior to service date  
From booking to tour date

Percentage of full tour fee owed to Bespoke  
0%

## Standard Group Tour Cancellation Policy

From booking to 28 days before  
27-14 days before the tour  
14 days or less before the tour

50%  
80%  
100%

**Governing Law & Dispute Resolution:** These terms and conditions shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of China. Any disputes arising out of or in connection with these terms and conditions shall be resolved through consultations. If the consultations do not lead to an agreement within thirty (30) days of the commencement of consultations, any party has the right to submit the dispute exclusively to the Arbitration Center. The arbitration shall be conducted in accordance with China's administered arbitration rules in force when the notice of arbitration is submitted in accordance with these rules. The seat or legal place of arbitration shall be in China. The arbitration award shall be final and binding. The parties agree to be bound thereby and to act accordingly. The parties hereby waive any right of appeal on the merits and/or any point of law.

## **Bespoke Travel Company Ltd.**

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