

KOREA
TOURISM
ORGANIZATION



5 Winter Attractions in South Korea

South Korea has four distinct seasons. This means that a location or vista can offer different views and experiences depending on the time of visit. In Korea, many tourist attractions have been developed to take advantage of each season's features. For New Zealanders, December, January, and February are when many people plan their vacations. These months are when Korea provides rich winter attractions that make good use of snow and ice. While Korean Air provides direct flights that connect Auckland and Seoul throughout the year, Air New Zealand's seasonal operation takes place from late October to March. Increased direct flights during Korea's winter season provides various options for scheduling itineraries. Therefore, taking a break from the hot summer and experiencing winter attractions unique to Korea is highly recommended.

1. Ski Resorts

Skiing has long been one of the most popular winter activities, enjoyed by both the general public and students on field trips, commonly referred to as 'ski camp.'

Most Korean ski resorts are concentrated in Gangwon-do province, which has the lowest temperature in winter and hosted the Winter Olympic Games in 2018.

The most renowned ones are High1 Resort in Jeongseon-gun, Alpensia Resort, and Yongpyong Resort in Pyeongchang-gun. From the capital city Seoul, it takes 2~3 hours to get to Gangwon's ski resorts by either driving, KTX train, or ski resort shuttle bus.

While skiing can be experienced in many other countries, world-class resort facilities make Korea stand out from other ski destinations. Besides ski slopes, many resorts offer a wide range of relaxation, culinary, and entertainment services, such as spa & sauna, karaoke rooms, and arcades, providing an opportunity for travellers to socialise and have fun. Also, many resorts have state-of-the-art snowmaking machines. This, combined with naturally produced snow, guarantees sufficient volume and quality throughout the ski season.



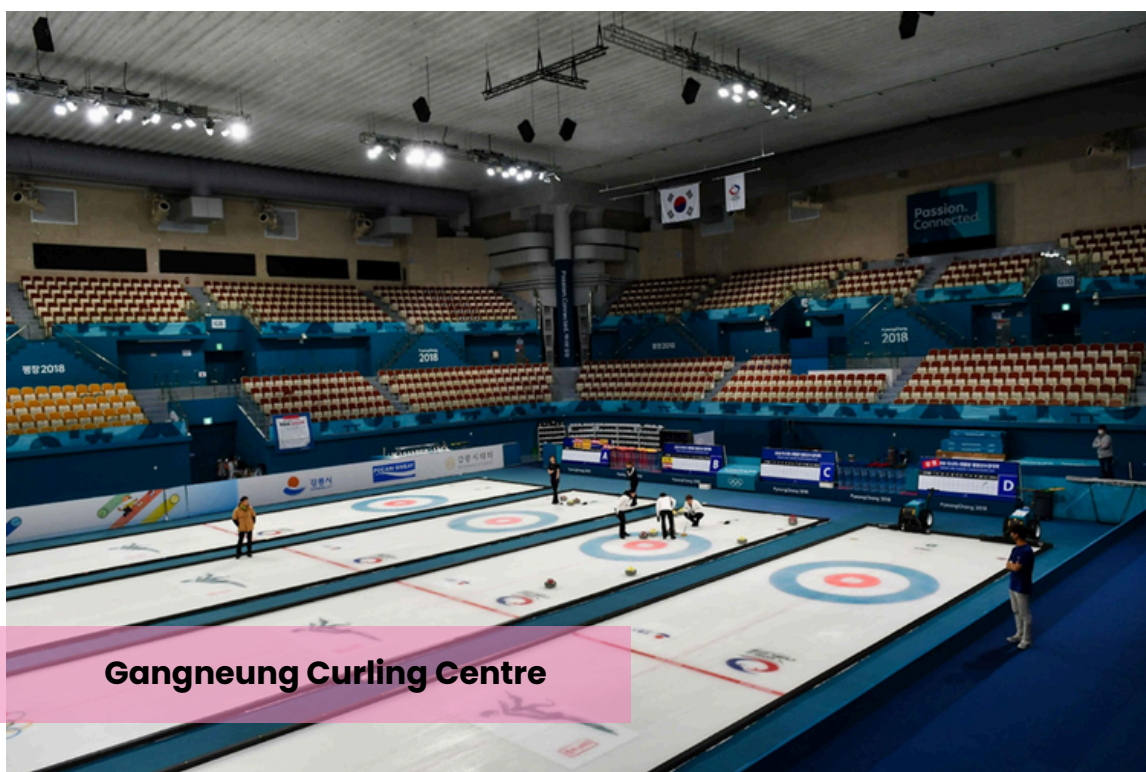
Overview of Alpensia Resort

2. Curling Centres

A nation's popular trends change over time and are often influenced by an outstanding event. During the 2018 Winter Olympics, the Korean national women's curling team, often called

"Team Kim," impressed everyone with their performance and won the silver medal. At the time, curling, which was a lesser-known sport in the country, suddenly became one of the most watched sports. "Young-mi!" the phrase the team invented to call for wiping the ice became a popular buzzword. For travellers who want to take a deep dive into the curling trend of the time, there are several curling sites that provide all the necessary equipment and a one-day class if you book in advance.

To follow the story of Team Kim, a visit to Uiseong Curling Centre in Uiseong-gun, Gyeongsangbuk-do province, is recommended. It is Team Kim's hometown and used to be the main training site. Also, Gangneung Curling Centre in Gangneung-si, Gangwon-province, was the venue of the 2018 Winter Olympics, where Team Kim competed.



3. Ice Fishing

Due to the rich ocean, lakes, and rivers in the country, various styles of fishing have developed in South Korea. In contrast to the stereotype that fishing is only for experts and predominantly older men, people of various ages are increasingly taking up fishing as a

hobby. In fact, its popularity has grown rapidly these days and has become one of the most popular pastimes in the country.

In winter, ice-fishing festivals always attract people by providing unique fishing experiences and the opportunity to taste the caught fish with other complementary Korean snacks. The most renowned ones are the Icefish Festival in Inje-gun, the Trout Festival in Pyeongchang-gun, and the Hwacheon Sancheoneo Ice Festival in Hwacheon-gun. Since they are located in Gangwon-do province, travellers can easily visit the festivals on the way to or from ski resorts.



4. Backcountry Skiing in Ulleungdo Island

Ulleungdo Island is a volcanic island in the East Sea. CNN designated the island as one of the top 10 'mysterious islands' of the world. Despite its prestigious status as a natural heritage site, the island remained a challenging travel destination, especially in winter. This was primarily due to the long distance from the mainland and with the challenging weather, ship operations to the island used to be irregular. However, Ulleungdo Island began to be recognised as a winter travel destination following the improved cruise ship access in 2021.



Ulleungdo Island

Teamax Adventure, a tour operator specialising in adventure travel, provides tours that are ideal for upper-intermediate skiers. Their “Backcountry Skiing in Ulleung Island” tour includes outdoor experience, hiking, and skiing in the snowy, steep volcanic island. More information can be found at the website ([TEAMAX ADVENTURECo.Ltd](https://www.teamaxadventure.co.uk)).



**Background Skiing in Ulleungdo Island
(Image from Teamax Adventure)**

5. Korean Winter Foods

While visiting the attractions listed above, visitors will find nearby restaurants and food carts selling Korean winter foods. Although these foods are available all year, many Koreans regard certain items as winter treats. Particularly in the case of street food where you will find an extensive choice of food carts selling winter snacks. Without having to plan and search, people can stop by whenever they feel hungry or cold. Bungeoppang is the most typical winter street food. The fish-shaped pastry is filled with either hot sweetened red bean paste or custard cream. Similarly, hotteok can be described as a Korean pancake filled with syrup made of brown sugar and cinnamon and sometimes with the addition of seeds or nuts. For people who want savoury foods, eomuk, or fish cake skewer, is highly recommended. Fish cake is made of dough consisting of flour, fish and spices. It is typically served with hot soup and soy sauce.



Fish Cake Skewers