

MARCH 2025

# UNITED ON THE TROK

**Heather  
MacLeod:**  
*Resilience  
and Recovery*

**STRENGTH, BALANCE,  
AND GOOD VIBES:  
PILATES WITH MANDY**

**DISCOVERING TAIPEI:  
A CITY OF CONTRASTS**





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**나비**  
대축제

2025

4.25.금 - 5.6.화

함평엑스포공원 일원

**HAMPYEONG EXPO PARK**



**HAMPYEONG BUTTERFLY FESTIVAL**

주최 | 함평군 주관 | 함평축제관광재단 후원 | 문화체육관광부 농림축산식품부 환경부 전라남도 전라남도교육청 한국관광공사 ex 한국도로공사 KORAIL 한국관광공사 (사)한국농수산식품유통공사

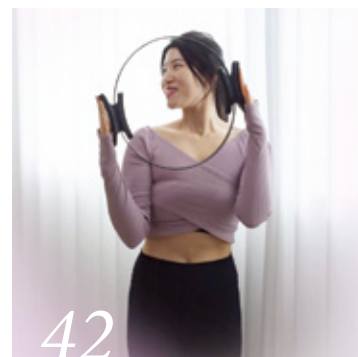




## Resilience and Recovery: Navigating Trauma, Healthcare, and Life After Amputation

This month we honor Heather's strength and resilience. Her journey through recovery after amputation showcases her courage and determination to reclaim independence. Part one of this three-part series offers valuable lessons in resilience and self-advocacy for civilian employees stationed abroad.

Cover: Heather MacLeod  
(Captured by Melissa Rae Studios)



## Strength, Balance, and Good Vibes: Pilates with Mandy at Pure Balance Korea



## Discovering Taipei: A City of Contrasts

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# UNITED ON THE ROK

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*United on the RoK* Magazine is a magazine with a military community focus that is distributed to United States Forces Korea installations within the Republic of Korea.

This magazine aims to connect readers to the diversity of our communities and showcase what South Korea has to offer from culture and travel to food and family, and more. Contents of *United on the RoK* are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the United States Government, the Department of Defense, or Oriental Press. All content within *United on the RoK* Magazine is written by non-paid, volunteers within the military-connected communities across the RoK. Articles within *United on the RoK* are written independently and non-sponsored, with no monetary compensation or products received in exchange for the author's opinions, reviews, or mentions in the magazine.

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Cherry Blossom.  
Photo captured by Ysamar Gómez.



# C

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Sat 10am-3pm • Sun/Holidays Closed



## EDITOR'S NOTE

*Dear Readers,*

As we step into spring, a season of renewal and growth, we reflect on how this time of year inspires transformation and resilience. It's a season of blossoms, balance, and the beauty of embracing change—much like the themes we're exploring in this issue. This month's edition is full of stories that celebrate strength, courage, and the spirit of adaptation. From the empowering practice of Pilates in South Korea to navigating the life-changing experience of moving abroad, we delve into the ways women embrace challenges and emerge stronger.

The season of cherry blossoms in South Korea serves as a beautiful backdrop for our feature on the many ways spring brings new beginnings, whether it's a "spring reset" through journaling or discovering the power of sacred sounds for chakra alignment. We also hear from inspiring individuals like Heather, whose journey through trauma, recovery, and resilience after amputation is a testament to the power of the human spirit.

As we celebrate the blossoming beauty of the season, we also look at how the vibrant cultural landscape of Korea continues to shape our understanding of beauty, health, and wellness. From insights gained through life-changing travel and volunteer experiences, these articles offer a refreshing perspective on how our environments impact personal growth and well-being.

Additionally, we explore some of the lighter side of life—whether it's enjoying the delish dishes of Smoke Town in Itaewon or exploring Taipei's mix of modernity and tradition. We even delve into the world of baseball in Korea, where passion for the sport meets community spirit.

We hope these stories resonate with you and spark a sense of empowerment as we all move through our seasons of change. Let's celebrate the women who have made an impact on our communities as we are reminded that each of us is a part of this greater journey of resilience, strength, and transformation.

Here's to the season of growth and the endless possibilities that spring brings.

Warmly,

Jetta Allen, Editor in Chief  
*United on the RoK Mag*



1. Cathay Williams enlisted in the Army using the name William Cathay, Nov. 15, 1866. She informed her recruiting officer that she was a 22-year-old cook. He described her as 5' 9", with black eyes, black hair and black complexion. An Army surgeon examined Cathay and determined the recruit was fit for duty, thus sealing her fate in history as the first documented black woman to enlist in the Army even though U.S. Army regulations forbade the enlistment of women. She was assigned to the 38th U.S. Infantry and traveled throughout the West with her unit.
2. In 2016, Maj. Kristen Griest became the first female United States Army infantry officer and was the first woman to graduate from the Army's famed Ranger School.
3. Senator Tammy Duckworth, an Iraq War veteran and Purple Heart recipient who lost both legs in combat, made history as Illinois' first reelected female Senator and the first disabled female member of Congress. The former Black Hawk pilot and Lt. Col. continues her dedication to veterans' affairs and reproductive rights while serving in the U.S. Senate.
4. Selected in 2022, Lt. Amanda Lee (left) is the first female pilot in the U.S. Navy Blue Angels flight demonstration squadron. She is the first woman F/A-18E/F demonstration pilot. Capt. Kelsey Hastings (right) made history as the first woman to lead a Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon.
5. In 2014, Adm. Michelle Howard (Ret.) made history by becoming the first four-star woman in Navy history.
6. In 2015, Air Force Lt. Col. Christine Mau (Ret.) led the way for all women in aviation, becoming the first United States female pilot. Her first flight was across the Florida skies at Eglin Air Force Base in the F-35 Lightning II.

\*The appearance of U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.



LIVE MUSIC&ARTS

Events & Festivals



MAR22-23

Kenshi Yonezu 2025 World Tour / Junk

Inspire Arena  
globalinterpark.com



APR12-13

2025 2NE1 CONCERT  
WELCOME BACK-ENCORE  
IN SEOUL

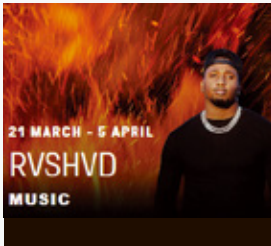
KSPO DOME  
globalinterpark.com



MAY05

Ghibli & Disney OST Concert

Lotte Concert Hall  
lotteconcerthall.com/eng



APR01-05

RVSHVD

April 1 Camp Walker  
April 3 Kunsan AB / April 4 Osan  
April 5 Humphreys  
Armed Forces Entertainment



APR16-25

Coldplay : Music of the  
Spheres Delivered By DHL

Goyang Stadium  
globalinterpark.com



MAY17

Hans Zimmer Live

Inspire Arena  
globalinterpark.com



APR04

Belcea Quartet: World String  
Quartet Series III

Lotte Concert Hall  
lotteconcerthall.com/eng



APR20

Voice of phantom with  
La Poem

Lotte Concert Hall  
lotteconcerthall.com/eng



MAY23-25

Seoul Jazz Festival  
PAT METHENY: DREAM BOX/  
MOONDIAL TOUR

GS Arts Center  
globalinterpark.com



APR04-13

Musical Don Juan French  
Original Tour

Opera Theater, Seoul Arts Center  
sac.or.kr/site/eng



APR25-26

EDC Korea

Inspire Arena  
globalinterpark.com



OCT21

OASIS Live '25

Goyang Stadium  
globalinterpark.com



MAR07-DEC31

Changgyeonggung Palace  
Illuminates with Moonlight  
Lotus Show

- Venue: Area of Chungdangji Pond at Changgyeonggung Palace
- Inquiries: +82-1522-2295
- Operating hours: 19:00-21:00 (Hours subject to change)
- Fees: 1,000 won

Starting March 7, 2025, Changgyeonggung Palace offers Moonlight Lotus Show, an enchanting media art show set against the serene backdrop of Chungdangji Pond. Following its enthusiastic reception as a special program at last year's Royal Culture Festival, it has become a regular night tour program, inviting visitors to witness the magical fusion of digital media art, history, and nature. The event features eight captivating themes, showcasing the palace's scenery through stunning media art facades.



MAR28-30

Goryeong Daegaya Festival

Areas of Daegaya History Theme Park & Daegaya Museum  
www.festdgy.com



APR03-06

2025 Seoul International  
Buddhism Expo

- Venue: COEX Hall C
- Opening hours: 10:00-18:00
- For those interested in attending, contact Mr. Harry Shin at his email: harry0017@naver.com
- Event Details: <https://www.coexcenter.com/events/2025-seoul-international-buddhism-expobexpo2025/>

The 2025 Seoul International Buddhism Expo, hosted by the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, promises to transform the COEX Convention & Exhibition Center into a vibrant celebration of Buddhist culture from April 3-6. This prestigious event serves as a global gathering point where traditional Buddhist arts meet contemporary spiritual practices, offering visitors a unique opportunity to explore the rich tapestry of Buddhist heritage.



ONGOING -JUN08

JUNJI ITO Horror House

DUEX Busan  
globalinterpark.com



APR08-MAY06

2025 Taeon World Tulip  
Exhibition

- Venue: Korea Flower Park
- Address: 400 Kkotjihae-an-ro, Taeon-gun, Chungcheongnam-do
- Website: [koreaflowerpark.com](http://koreaflowerpark.com)
- Inquiries: +82-507-1497-5536
- Operating hours: 09:00-18:00
- Fees: Adults 14,000 won / Senior citizens & Groups 12,000 won / Children & Teenagers 11,000 won

Taeon Tulip Park presents the largest flower festival in Korea and offers excellent photo opportunities. The festival venue is divided into sections, which are decorated in different styles according to the annual theme, allowing visitors to enjoy the sight of colorful tulips among creative and fun backdrops.



MAY02-06

Boseong Green Tea Festival

Area of Korean Tea Cultural Park & Boseong tea fields  
[www.teafestival.kr](http://www.teafestival.kr)



APR25-MAY06

Hampyeong Butterfly Festival

- Venue: Hampyeong Expo Park
- Address: 27 Gonjea-ro, Hampyeong-gun, Jeollanam-do
- Website: [www.hpftf.or.kr](http://www.hpftf.or.kr)
- Inquiries: +82-61-320-2238

The arrival of spring, blooming flowers, and fluttering butterflies signal the start of the Butterfly Festival in Hampyeong. The festival features exhibitions on flowers, butterflies, and insects, along with cultural and art performances highlighting environmental themes. At the Butterfly Ecology Center, visitors can view fascinating butterfly and insect specimens from around the world. Popular eco-activities include kite flying, visiting the dairy farm, and playing traditional folk games. A beloved family activity is catching butterflies in small bottles and releasing them into the flower gardens. The festival also offers a lively food market and special performances on Children's Day.



JUN14-15

2025 World DJ Festival

Seoul Land  
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Hey You, Daegu!  
Here's the news in Area IV

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**NEW  
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\*\*\* Travel to Camp Corral upon request\*\*\*

To contact the AREA IV NPSP office please call  
COM 0503-363-5126 DSN 763-5126  
OR EMAIL: [alejandra.m.moreno-alomar.ctr@army.mil](mailto:alejandra.m.moreno-alomar.ctr@army.mil)

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• Score an 80+ in the first three attempts on the test in AER's Loan Portal ([www.aerhq.org/loans](http://www.aerhq.org/loans)).

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**  
The training is thanks to a \$1 million donation by the Association of the United States Army, and the training videos provided by Installation Management Command and the Army G-9 Team - along with the USAA.

**HOME  
IS  
WHERE  
THE  
ART IS**

Discover the incredible talent within our Area IV Community at our inaugural ARTIST SHOWCASE! Don't miss this celebration of creativity and artistry.

**WHEN:**  
Showcase: March 17-21  
Meet & Greet: March 21 & 22

**WHERE:**  
CAMP WALKER-  
COMMUNITY CENTER

**WHAT:**  
Experience a diverse collection of artwork created by the talented military community of Area IV. From paintings to sculptures and everything in between, this showcase highlights the creativity within our community

POC Katie Burson - [katiejoburson@gmail.com](mailto:katiejoburson@gmail.com)

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**Session B:** 10:30am - 11:30am

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4, 11, 18, 25 February  
11, 18, 25 March  
8, 15, 22, 29 April  
6, 13, 20, 27 May

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# The Ultimate Guide to Solo Travel:

## *How to Do It Safely and Confidently*

By Kimberly Kephart

*Thinking* about going solo on your next trip? As Beth Santos, founder of Wanderful, says, "We aren't always made to believe that it's okay to love ourselves or to love traveling solo. But the reality is that if you can be your own best friend, you can be your own best travel companion."

Whether it's a weekend getaway or a month-long adventure, solo travel is a game-changer. It's all about exploring on your own terms, meeting new people, and seeing the world in a totally different way. I can remember embarking on my first international solo trip to Iceland, the anxiety was high, my palms were sweaty and I felt out of place. However, when I landed in Iceland, I put one foot in front of the other and just started going. It's like something kicks in.

But I know, you still might be wondering how to get started, don't worry! Here's everything you need to know to travel solo with confidence and a little bit of fun.

### Why Solo Travel?

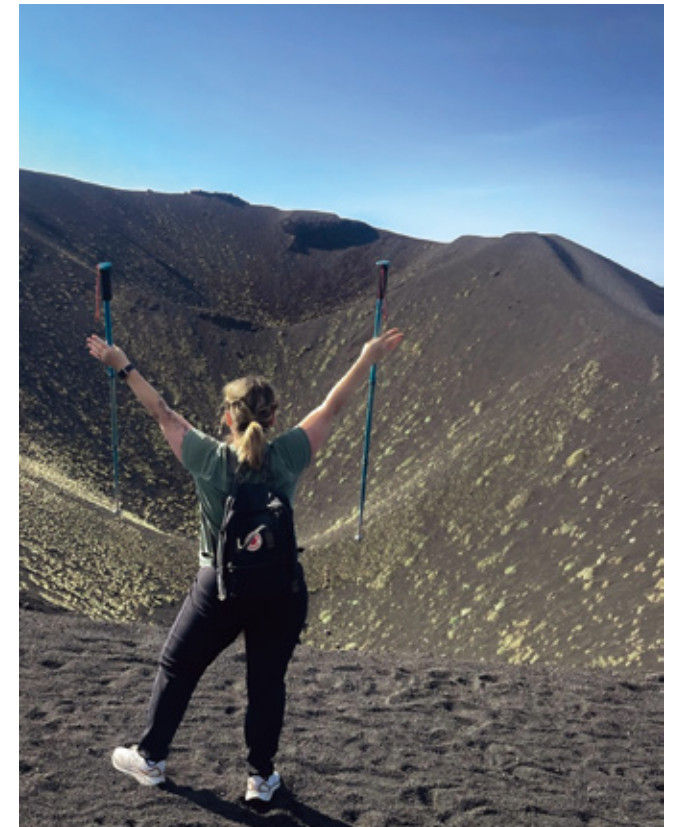
First off, why go solo? For one, you get to decide exactly what you want to do and when. You're free to explore at your own pace—no one's rushing you through that beautiful museum or holding you back from that amazing food stand. Also, no one is going to judge you if you have 2 or 3 cups of Gelato. But beyond the freedom, solo travel offers:

- **Self-Discovery:** It's the perfect chance to learn more about yourself. You'll discover how you handle new challenges and what really excites you about travel.
- **Freedom:** You get to choose every detail of your trip—no compromises, just pure freedom to explore exactly how you want to.
- **Meeting People:** When you're solo, you're more likely to chat with locals or fellow travelers, making it easier to meet new friends along the way.

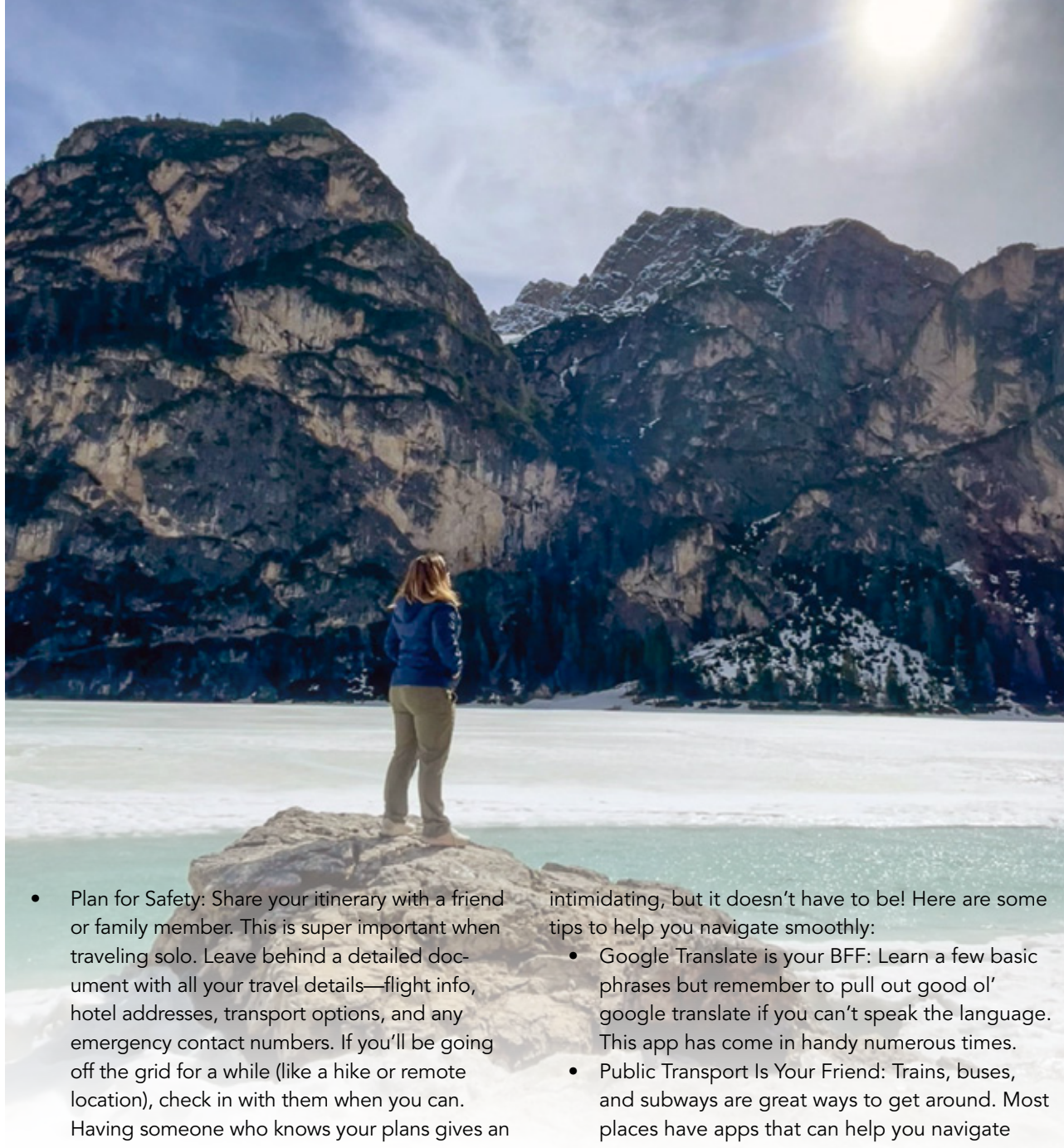
### How to Get Ready for Your First Solo Trip

Ready to hit the road? Here's how to get started and feel good about it:

- **Start Small:** If this is your first time, try a shorter trip close to home. Maybe a weekend in a neighboring city, or even the city you live in. Check into a hotel room and get some much needed R&R or go explore the city you call home. It's a great way to dip your toes into solo travel without too much pressure. There is nothing wrong with exploring your new duty station in small bouts.
- **Do Your Research:** Take some time to learn about your destination. What's the best way to get around? Are there any local customs you should know? A little bit of research will make you feel way more comfortable when you get there. However, don't overwhelm yourself with all the information out there. Go with your heart and lead with empathy. All anyone wants you to do is to meet them where they are.
- **Pack Light:** Remember, you'll be carrying your own bag, so pack light! Stick to the essentials and leave some room for souvenirs. A daypack for your essentials (like snacks, water, and your camera) will come in handy. There's also nothing wrong with packing heavy either.







- **Plan for Safety:** Share your itinerary with a friend or family member. This is super important when traveling solo. Leave behind a detailed document with all your travel details—flight info, hotel addresses, transport options, and any emergency contact numbers. If you'll be going off the grid for a while (like a hike or remote location), check in with them when you can. Having someone who knows your plans gives an extra layer of safety and peace of mind.
- **Join a Community:** For female solo travelers, joining a community like Wanderful can be a great way to feel more connected and supported. Wanderful is an amazing global network of women travelers who share tips, organize meet-ups, and create travel experiences designed for solo women. Whether you're looking for advice, travel buddies, or even local guides, Wanderful offers a welcoming, supportive space for women to travel confidently and safely.

### Getting Around as a Solo Traveler

Traveling alone in a foreign country can sound

intimidating, but it doesn't have to be! Here are some tips to help you navigate smoothly:

- **Google Translate is your BFF:** Learn a few basic phrases but remember to pull out good ol' google translate if you can't speak the language. This app has come in handy numerous times.
- **Public Transport Is Your Friend:** Trains, buses, and subways are great ways to get around. Most places have apps that can help you navigate public transit easily.
- **Stay in Social Accommodations:** Hostels, guest-houses, and boutique hotels are perfect for solo travelers. You'll meet others and possibly join group activities—like tours or evening hangouts.
- **Join Group Activities:** If you're craving company, consider joining a local walking tour, cooking class, or group hike. It's a great way to see the sights and meet fellow adventurers.
- **Group Trips:** Maybe you aren't quite ready for solo trips, but maybe you can do solo-ish trips. Look for sustainable and ethical choices to get you started on your journey. Companies like Laura Ericson Group trips offer choices that meet this criteria.

### Staying Safe While Traveling Solo

Safety's a big deal when traveling solo, but with some common-sense precautions, you can enjoy your trip worry-free:

- **Trust Your Gut:** If something feels off, it probably is. If you're uncomfortable in a situation, walk away and trust your instincts.
- **Keep Your Important Stuff Close:** Store your passport, cards, and money in a secure spot—maybe a money belt or hotel safe.
- **Blend In:** Keep a low profile by dressing like a local, especially in tourist-heavy areas. It'll help you avoid unwanted attention and feel like a part of the city.
- **Tech to the Rescue:** Use apps to help you get around (Google Maps is a lifesaver) or even translate signs and menus. It'll make solo travel feel a lot easier!

### Making the Most of Your Solo Adventure

- Solo travel is all about the experience, so take full advantage of it! Here's how to make the most of your time:
- **Soak It All In:** Take a deep breath and enjoy your surroundings. Whether it's a bustling market or a peaceful sunset, don't rush. Solo travel lets you move at your own pace.
- **Connect with Others:** Don't be shy! Whether it's a fellow traveler, a friendly local, or even a shop owner, talking to people can make your experience even more special.
- **Capture the Memories:** Keep a travel journal, snap photos, or make short videos of your adventures. Those memories will be priceless when you look back on your trip.

Here's a little story from my own travels: I set off on a solo hiking trip through the Dolomites, a mountain range in Italy. I had my trusty journal with me, and one evening, while watching the sunset behind the peaks, I pulled it out to jot down my thoughts. What started as a simple note turned into a full-on reflection about how I'd grown during the trip—how confident I felt navigating the trails alone, how much more connected I was with nature, and how open I had become to new experiences. That journal entry, which I almost didn't take the time to write, has be-

come one of my most cherished memories of the trip. It's incredible how much more meaningful a journey can feel when you take the time to write it down and process it in the moment.

### Solo Travel for Women

Solo travel can feel especially daunting for women, but there are so many amazing and safe destinations for solo women travelers. Here are a few extra tips:

- **Dress Comfortably:** Go for clothing that makes you feel both comfortable and confident. You don't have to blend in completely, but keep it simple and modest, especially in more conservative areas.
- **Stay Connected:** Let someone know your plans. Check-in regularly, and share your itinerary with a family member or friend back home. It's always good to have a trusted contact who knows where you'll be and when. That extra layer of security can bring peace of mind.
- **Trust Yourself:** Don't be afraid to speak up if something doesn't feel right. Whether it's politely declining help or asking for directions, trusting your gut is key.

### Ready to Go?

Solo travel is an incredible way to see the world, connect with new people, and learn more about yourself. So, why wait? Whether you're heading to a nearby city or planning your dream adventure, pack your bag, trust yourself, and go for it! The world is waiting for you, and there's no better time to start your journey.

### About the Author

Kimberly Kephart is a freelance travel writer and destination content creator, collaborating with global brands and destination management offices. Based in Vicenza, Italy, Kimberly is passionate about exploring the globe and sharing her insights through her blog, Kimberly Kephart Travels, and on Instagram at @kimberlykepharttravels. As she pursues her Travel Coach Certification with the Travel Coach Network, Kimberly continues to craft comprehensive travel resources that inspire and empower fellow military spouses and solo travelers to embark on meaningful, sustainable journeys.







# How Moving to Korea Changed My Perspective on Beauty and Skincare

By Krystal Key

*Growing* up, no one ever sat me down and taught me how to properly care for my skin or even how to take care of myself as a woman. Skincare routines, the importance of hydration, or how to protect my skin from aging were things I just didn't know about but was just figuring things out as I went along. For the longest time, my approach to beauty was simply covering up imperfections with makeup. For me, makeup wasn't

something I saw as something fun or artistic. I used it as a shield to hide my hyperpigmentation, scars, and uneven skin tone.

But over the years, people in my life encouraged me to explore beauty and self-care. Still, it wasn't until I moved to Korea that my entire perspective shifted. In Korea, skincare isn't just about looking good. It's a part of everyday life, a form of self-care, and even a way to slow down and be present. I started doing my research, looking for ways to get rid of my dark spots,

improve the wrinkles on my hands and feet, and take better care of myself overall. Now, I've embraced skincare not as a chore, but as an act of love for myself.

## The Culture of Beauty in Korea

One of the most significant cultural differences I noticed after moving to Korea is the emphasis placed on skincare rather than makeup. While makeup is still a big part of beauty culture, the belief here is that great skin is the foundation of beauty. Skincare is deeply ingrained in Korean culture, with people starting routines at a young age and treating it as an essential part of their day, just like brushing their teeth.

Unlike in the West, where skincare often focuses on fixing problems after they appear, Korean skincare is all about prevention. The goal is to maintain healthy, hydrated skin before issues like wrinkles, dark spots, or acne even have a chance to develop.

And it's not just about the face. People don't talk enough about how important it is to take care of the skin on your neck, hands, and feet. The neck is one of the first places to show signs of aging, and our hands and feet go through so much every day, yet we rarely give them the same attention we give our faces. I never really thought about this until I noticed how much Korean beauty brands focus on hand creams, foot masks, and even neck creams.

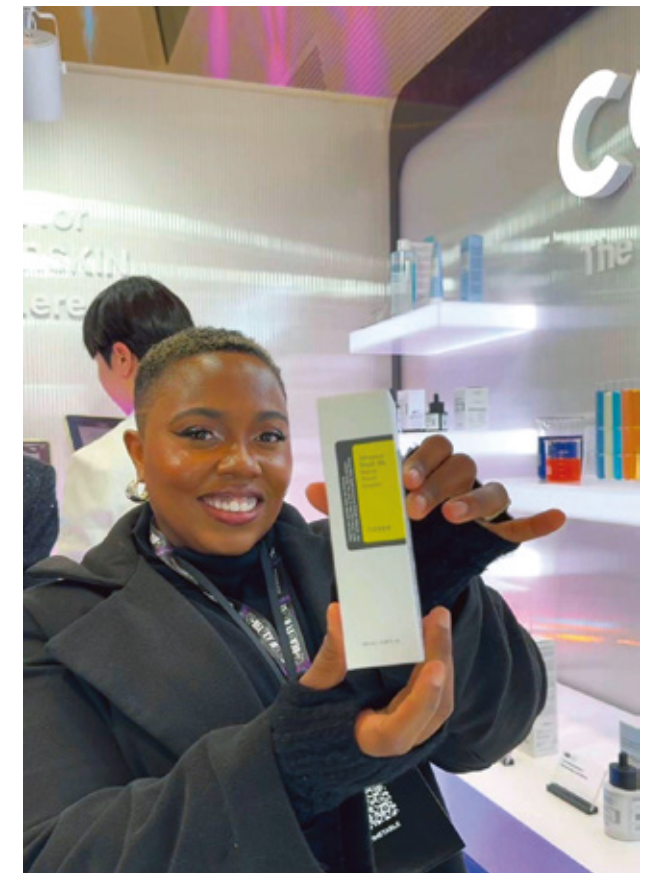
## Morning vs. Night Routine: Why You Need Both

Another thing that changed my perspective was understanding the difference between a morning and night skincare routine. Before, I washed my face, threw on some lotion, and called it a day. But I learned that morning, and nighttime skincare serve two very different purposes.

**Morning Routine:** The focus is on protecting the skin from environmental damage such as UV rays, pollution, and dirt. It's about keeping your skin hydrated and shielded throughout the day.

**Night Routine:** This is when the actual repair happens. Your skin regenerates while you sleep, so the focus should be on deep hydration, nourishing ingredients, and targeting specific skin concerns like hyperpigmentation or fine lines.

Now that I understand this difference, I tailor my routines accordingly, no longer focusing just on cleansing. I ensure my skin is getting what it needs at the right time of day.



## The 10-Step Korean Skincare Routine

If you've heard anything about Korean skincare, you've probably come across the famous 10-step routine. Now, I know what you're thinking. "Ten steps! Who has time for that?" But here's the thing. It's not about doing all ten steps every single day. It's about layering your skincare in a way that suits your skin's needs. Some people only do a few steps, while others go all out. The key is to listen to your skin.

Here's a breakdown of the routine:

1. Oil-Based Cleanser: Removes makeup, sunscreen, and excess oil from the skin
2. Water-Based Cleanser: Cleanses sweat, dirt, and any remaining impurities
3. Exfoliator (2-3 times a week): Helps remove dead skin cells, revealing smoother, brighter skin
4. Toner: Balances the skin's pH and preps it for better absorption of products
5. Essence: A lightweight hydrating treatment that nourishes the skin
6. Serum/Ampoule: Targets specific concerns like dark spots, wrinkles, or acne





7. Sheet Mask (2-3 times a week): Provides deep hydration and treatment benefits
8. Eye Cream: Hydrates and prevents fine lines around the delicate eye area
9. Moisturizer: Locks in hydration and strengthens the skin barrier
10. Sunscreen (Morning Only): Protects against UV rays, the most significant cause of premature aging. At night, instead of sunscreen, you can use a sleeping mask or heavier moisturizer to deeply hydrate your skin while you sleep.

#### *How Skincare Changed My Relationship with Beauty*

Since embracing an actual skincare routine, my relationship with beauty has completely changed. I used to rely on makeup to cover imperfections, but now I use makeup because I enjoy it, not because I feel like I need it. My skin is healthier, and I feel more confident without makeup. It's not about having "perfect" skin. It's about having skin that I feel good in.

I've also noticed how much of a difference skincare makes for my mental health. Taking time to care for myself feels grounding, even if it's just a few minutes in the morning and at night. It's a small act of self-love that sets the tone for my day and helps me unwind before bed.

#### *Encouraging Other Women to Embrace Their Beauty*

It can be overwhelming to start a skincare journey, especially if you weren't taught about it growing up. I encourage you to see skincare not as a chore but as an opportunity to care for yourself. You don't need to follow 10 steps or buy expensive products. You need to find what works for your skin and stick with it. If there's one thing I've learned, it's that beauty isn't about perfection. It's about care. Taking care of your skin is taking care of yourself. And that, to me, is the true essence of beauty.



#### *About the Author*



Krystal Key is a digital content creator, lifestyle influencer, and proud military spouse living in South Korea. With a BS in Computer Information Systems and an MBA in Business Administration, she masterfully blends technical expertise and creative storytelling to support military families and newcomers navigating life overseas.

As the founder of Adventure Awaits Us Now, Krystal crafts practical guides on South Korea's public transportation, local attractions, and expat life, empowering others to embrace new adventures with ease. From exploring Korea's vibrant café culture to uncovering the latest K-beauty trends and culinary gems, she highlights the best of Korean culture while supporting local businesses.

You can follow Krystal's journey as she inspires her audience to explore South Korea with confidence and curiosity across Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube: @adventureawaitsusnow And look for upcoming articles in our future issues from Krystal!

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# Resilience and Recovery: Navigating Trauma, Healthcare, and Life After Amputation

By Heather MacLeod

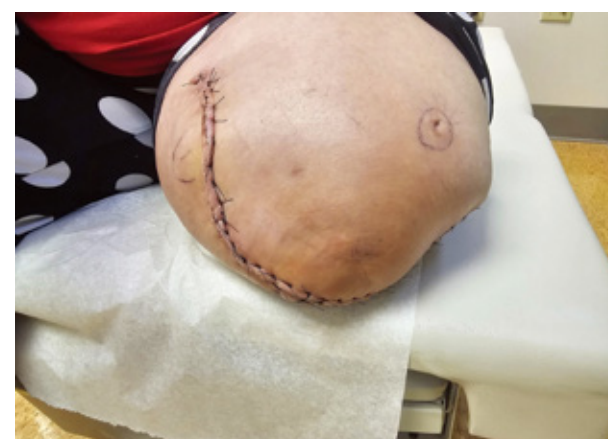
*It's* been nearly a year since a simple trip to a South Korean cafe ended in a catastrophic nightmare in the parking lot. It began as a dislocated leg which became a life-threatening injury when an overlooked severed artery led to compartment syndrome. Delayed care and refusal to transfer me to a specialized hospital resulted in the eventual loss of my leg above the knee. That night changed my life forever and exposed the challenges of navigating foreign healthcare systems. From delays in treatment and language barriers to financial pressures, it taught me critical lessons about self-advocacy, the importance of engaging with a patient advocate, and the critical need to inform leadership immediately after any emergency incident requiring medical treatment.

As an Air Force veteran and civilian employee, I navigated a medical system that, at times, felt like a series of roadblocks rather than a support structure. Now, looking back on this challenging journey, I can see not only the hurdles but also the gifts that have come from it.

## Expatriates Navigating Foreign Healthcare Systems

Navigating healthcare in a country other than your own can sometimes result in harrowing experiences, as was the case when I had my leg reset in South Korea without the aid of painkillers. It was, without question, the most painful moment of my life. The process of resetting my leg not only caused excruciating pain but also led to my artery being severed—a life-threatening complication that drastically altered my future. The refusal to administer painkillers beforehand was a shock, rooted in a difference in medical practice or cultural norms that I was unprepared for, highlighting the stark contrast between the expectations I had based on U.S. healthcare practices and the reality of rural emergency treatment in South Korea.

Understanding that you will need a heightened level of advocacy in medical situations, using your medical evacuation benefits can be tied up in miles of red tape, and difficulties related to the time difference, which



adds to the additional barriers, is important to note. One recommendation would be to use your chain of command including accessing the United States Army Pacific Command (USARPAC) to ensure timely medical evacuation. Utilize your network of contacts both professional and personal. Having your network advocate for you on your behalf in areas they are capable of and write Congress representatives can make a huge difference if you are experiencing barriers to care.

## The Long Road to a Prosthetic Limb

Obtaining a prosthetic leg was one of the most difficult parts of this process. Due to differences in the medical processes between my insurance, Aetna, and the Korean healthcare system, it took six long months of negotiations to finally receive a prosthetic leg. Physical therapy in Korea was an adjustment for me compared to physical therapy stateside. Communication barriers can impact the care you are used to, but if you know this ahead of time, you can ensure you are clear on the processes for your rehab and recovery. Ask questions, bring your translation apps, and know it can take time for both parties to understand.

Being wheelchair-bound during that time presented additional challenges. Physically, I began to develop issues with my stomach and liver. Emotionally, it was a living rollercoaster with many wins that did test my faith and peace. Logistically, I learned how difficult it can be to learn to navigate Korea with a wheelchair. It was a harsh reality to wake up and see a world that is not always inclusive of those with disabilities and mobility issues. The challenges ahead of me resonated loudly, yet I continued to live my life, travel, and build a new normal, embracing the strength that comes from adapting to “what life throws at you.”

## A New Chapter with My Prosthetic

At the beginning of November 2024, Aetna finally sent funds for a prosthetic leg in the mail. Upon opening the letter, I just wanted to do a happy dance. Receiving my new leg brought a profound sense of freedom—and with it, a renewed determination to embrace each challenge. Just two days after getting the prosthetic, I took a flight to Malaysia. Initially in my wheelchair, I decided to attempt walking to my seat. Though I didn't feel fully prepared, I reminded myself, “I'm not ready, but I'll try.” This attitude has guided me through each step of this course, one uncertainty after another.





Returning to South Korea was a choice I made to find closure. I wanted to return to a life where I chose, a community I loved, and the career I worked hard for every day. I refused to let my accident define me, where I lived, or my future and overall independence. The choice to return was not just for myself but to also provide reassurance to those who had stood by me.

**A Shift in Perspective**

Now I see life through a lens I might never have looked through otherwise. In hardship, I found grit; in limitations, I found purpose. Friends and colleagues now reach out to me when they experience injuries abroad, asking about their options and resources. Though returning to the military treatment facility for care and follow-up treatment isn't always possible, I'm grateful that my story has helped others think proactively about their healthcare options.

**Writing as Healing and Purpose**

Through this change in my life, I've found a new calling in writing, which has become both a therapeutic outlet and a way to share my story with others. I now

have books on Amazon, writing employment-related topics under my real name and using my "creepy" pen name, Raven Atwood, for books that teach history through mystery. Writing allows me to channel the tenacity I've developed, turning my hardships into stories that educate and inspire. I plan to write a book detailing the full story of this accident. My book will not only help me to process my accident but to shed light on the unique facets of navigating foreign healthcare systems as expatriates.

**Living with Purpose**

People often ask me if I am secretly struggling, wondering if I am truly at peace as I appear. The truth is, I haven't felt the weight of depression or long bouts of sorrow. I've had to acknowledge the reality that my accident might have shortened my lifespan. Yet, I want my children, family, and friends to know that my time here is spent helping others, encouraging those who are struggling, and showing what it means to prevail with courage and resolve.

In sharing my story, I hope to inspire others to find strength in the face of adversity. This journey has taught me to face each day with gratitude, knowing that my life, while different, is no less fulfilling or meaningful.

If you are reading this and want to support this cause, share your story, or give insight into policy changes and advocacy, please reach out. Check back next month for Part 2, A Life-Altering Journey: Advocating for Change in Civilian Employee Healthcare Overseas.

**About the Author**

Born in Trenton, Michigan, and a proud Air Force veteran, Heather now serves as an Army civilian. Passionate about exploring new places, Heather enjoys traveling throughout South Korea, immersing in its rich culture and vibrant landscapes.



# Springtime Magic in South Korea:

## *A Season of Blossoms and Beauty*

Written by South of Seoul and Jetta Allen  
Photography by Jetta Allen, Ysamar Gómez, Se Hoon Lee, Nabin Mewahang,  
Photos by AnnieLou, Bryan Watkins Photography

Spring in South Korea is nothing short of breathtaking. As winter's gray, wet, and cold fades, the country undergoes a mesmerizing transformation. Vibrant bursts of color appear in pillowy bunches of petals, turning the cities and countryside into a dreamy wonderland. The blossoms symbolize renewal and hope, reminding us that everything in life is only for a season. The picturesque landscapes seem straight out of a movie, making spring a must-experience event nationwide.





### A Symphony of Blossoms

Many people unfamiliar with Korea's spring flowers often label them cherry blossoms. However, the season boasts an array of stunning flowering trees, including cherry plum, plum, flowering quince, pear, hall crabapple, apricot, flowering almond, and peach blossoms. White and purple magnolias also adorn the treetops—be sure to look up! On United States military installations around Korea, you can spot these near Humphreys Army Lodging and Yongsan Garrison's main road across from Dragon Hill Lodge. Azalea bushes add even more purple, red, and pink splashes along retaining walls. With so many flowers adorning Korea's landscapes, all you have to do is look!

### Spring Festivals & Travel Tips

Korea celebrates spring with festivals across the peninsula. Planning ahead is essential, especially if accommodations are needed. Hotels fill up quickly, and cherry blossom forecasts can shift due to weather changes. To avoid the largest crowds and traffic issues, consider visiting locations during the week and arriving early for the best photo opportunities.

Additionally, spring inspires seasonal menus at many cafes. Be sure to try the Osulloc Cherry Blossom Tea from Jeju Island, known for its vibrant aroma and sweet, citrus-like taste. You can find it at the commissary, in the Osulloc store in Insadong, in Jeju, and online. And check your local cafes for cherry blossom latte creations or desserts.

### Art Inspired by Nature

Korea's artistic community draws deeply from nature. In Yeosu, the country's pottery capital, cherry blossoms inspire exquisite kimchi pots and ceramic designs. Artists and photographers from around the world visit Korea in spring to capture its stunning landscapes. Tahni Osterman, a Seoul-based oil painter, beautifully captures Korea's seasonal beauty in her works on Facebook, Instagram, and her website. She also offers Sip and Paint classes in Seoul—an unforgettable way to celebrate spring.



### Must-Visit Cherry Blossom Destinations

Here are some of the top destinations to enjoy cherry blossoms in South Korea:

#### *Jinhae Festival*

- Gyeonghwa Station and Yeojwacheon Stream offer Instagram-worthy views.
- Jehwangsang Park provides a panoramic cityscape from its observatory.



#### *Gyeongju*

- Visit the historic Silla Dynasty capital, where cherry blossoms adorn ancient stone walls.
- Explore Bulguksa Temple and Seokguram Grotto for breathtaking heritage sites.



#### *Jeonju*

- Rent a hanbok and stroll through Jeonju Hanok Village for stunning traditional backdrops.
- Walk along Jeonjucheon Stream, where cherry blossoms line picturesque stone fences.





**Daejeon**

- Blossoming trees line the Korea Institute of Science and Technology campus.
- Donghaksa Temple in Gyeryongsan Mountain offers serene, flower-filled landscapes.

**Seoul**

- Seokchon Lake transforms into a pink wonderland with petals floating on the water.
- Gyeongbokgung Palace is a prime spot for han-bok-clad photos amid blooming trees.
- Everland Theme Park boasts a diverse floral display beyond cherry blossoms.

**Pyeongtaek & Nearby**

- Sopung Garden offers a tranquil waterside view lined with blossoms, especially enchanting at night.
- Gakwonsa in Cheonan features a variety of cherry blossoms, including King Blossoms and weeping varieties.
- Pyeongtaek Cherry Blossom Festival near Pyeongtaek University announces its dates just days before—watch for updates!

**Suwon Gyeonggi Provincial Government Complex Festival**

- Walk along Suwon Fortress and immerse yourself in a historical springtime setting.
- Paldsan Mountain's tree-lined streets create mesmerizing flower tunnels.

**Taeon Tulip Festival**

- Held at Korea Flower Park, this event spans 30 acres with tulip mosaics and large plant sculptures.
- Stay overnight in a pension near Taeon's scenic beaches for a perfect spring getaway.

**Hidden Cherry Blossom Gems**

- Not all cherry blossom spots require attending a festival. Here are a few quieter locations for a more relaxed experience:

**Pyeongtaek River Drive or Bike Ride**

- Stunning, cheery trees line the scenic route from Camp Humphreys to Anjung-eup.
- Cyclists should stick to the bike path, as road traffic can be unpredictable.

**Lake Drive in West Paengseong, Pyeongtaek**

- A picturesque drive near a tranquil lake offers breathtaking views.

**Ichung-dong University Campus, Pyeongtaek**

- This beautiful campus is covered in cherry blossoms, making it a great spot for Osan Air Force Base residents.

**Pyeongtaek River Walk**

- Stroll past Tong Bok Market towards the river for a vibrant, bloom-filled promenade.

**Seize the Season!**

Blossom season is fleeting, with dates based on forecasts that can change due to unexpected weather. One strong wind or rainstorm can shorten the season, so be sure to catch the blooms while they last! For the latest updates on cherry blossom forecasts, follow In My Korea on social media.

Now is the time to clear your calendar, take a few vacation days, and immerse yourself in Korea's magical springtime beauty!

- <https://blog.southofseoul.net/awesome-blossoms-cherry-blossom-info/>
- <https://blog.southofseoul.net/10-best-cafes-for-cherry-blossom-viewing/>
- <https://blog.southofseoul.net/spring-festivals-in-south-korea/>
- <https://blog.southofseoul.net/spring-blossoms-korea-pyeongtaek/>
- <https://thesoulseoul.net/cherry-blossoms-korea/>

**About the Authors**



**South of Seoul:** Founded in 2015, the South of Seoul team consists of volunteers on three continents working together to support English-speaking people traveling or living in South Korea. South of Seoul volunteers work with organizations and individuals across South Korea to improve equitable access to information across South Korea. Much of South of Seoul's information focuses on Pyeongtaek, Gyeonggi-do, South Korea. Blogs published under the authorship of "South of Seoul" include blogs compiled by multiple volunteers to improve access to standardized information unrelated to individualized personal experiences.

Website: <https://blog.southofseoul.net/>  
Facebook: South of Seoul  
Instagram: south\_of\_seoul  
Download the South of Seoul App

**Cherry Blossom Forecast**

Jeju	March 22
Busan	March 23
Jeonju	March 26
Yeosu	March 26
Jinhae	March 26
Gwangju	March 27
Daejeon	March 29
Pohang	March 29
Gangneung	April 1
Seoul	April 1
Incheon	April 4

**This is a forecast ONLY. Depending on weather, these dates could change.**

Info from The Soul of Seoul blog



Jetta Allen is an author and photographer living at USAG Humphreys. She has a spouse in the Army and a son. Together her family enjoys South Korea while memorializing their great adventures in pictures and travel tips for others. Her photography shows her love of nature with a stylized perspective. Jetta is also an Education Consultant and Special Education Advocate who pursues the civil rights of those in her community through advocacy and community improvement efforts.



# 2024 Best of Pyeongtaek Poll Winners

## Your Guide to the Best Eats, Drinks & Hangouts!

By Melissa Edwards-Whittington & South of Seoul

### Celebrating Community Favorites: 2024 Best of Pyeongtaek Poll Winners

In 2016, South of Seoul began hosting the Annual Best of Pyeongtaek Poll. This event was created to celebrate the city of Pyeongtaek's delicious restaurants, helpful services, and fun activities. In addition, the poll gives residents an opportunity to support the people and places that make Pyeongtaek special for them.

While the poll is not an official research study, it is a fun way to show what the community loves while helping both newcomers and longtime residents find the best spots in Pyeongtaek. In addition, this poll is open for public voting and goes beyond the South of Seoul network to provide genuine feedback from English-speaking international residents.

Businesses are only listed in a total of three categories to provide diverse results and keep from having any one specific location from winning all the awards. In addition, community members are allowed to cast votes daily during a two-week period to encourage participation and recognition. Businesses receive certificates to proudly display at their locations, recognizing their achievement.

### South of Seoul: Building Community and Information for Expat Life in Korea

Founded in 2015, South of Seoul (SOS) is a volunteer-led organization committed to helping expats settle into life outside of Seoul. Through Facebook groups, a blog, and a smartphone app, SOS connects international residents with essential services, cultural experiences, and local businesses. Furthermore, their Public Health Program delivers essential information to assist individuals in navigating Korea's healthcare system. With resources like the 'Best of Pyeongtaek Poll Winners' list, South of Seoul supports expats in smoothly adjusting to and enjoying the distinctive mix of city and rural life outside of Seoul.

### Restaurant and Cafe Winners of the 8th Annual Best of Pyeongtaek Poll

Let's check out the results of the 8th Annual Best of Pyeongtaek Poll and find out the top restaurants or cafes that have earned the admiration of locals and expats alike. Whether you have been a Pyeongtaek resident for a while or have just arrived, this list will help you to discover the area's favorite spots.

In order to make it easier for you to explore the area and enjoy the winning locations, we have provided the locations' Korean addresses and phone numbers which will make finding directions in Naver easier.



### PYEONGTAEK'S BEST MEAT RESTAURANTS

**Best International Grilled Meat: BRAAI REPUBLIC**  
경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정소평로 17-1 2층  
0507-1304-7567  
Instagram: braairepublic.pt

**Best American BBQ Restaurant: SMOKETOWN**  
경기 평택시 팽성읍 신흥북로 49번길 28-3  
0507-1491-9312  
Instagram: smoketown.official

**Best Pork Galbi Restaurant: HWA HWA & THE TASTY GRILLED SHORT RIBS (Tie)**

**Hwa Hwa**  
경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정로 39 2층  
0507-1436-8602

**The Tasty Grilled Short Ribs**  
경기 평택시 현신1길 33  
0507-1416-0369

**Best Korean BBQ Restaurant: ARIRANG**  
경기 평택시 팽성읍 두리길 1-4 아리랑갈비  
031-656-2933

**Best All You Can Eat Grilled Meat Restaurant: SODODUK & MYEONGRYUN JINSA GALBI (Tie)**

**Sododuk**  
경기 평택시 팽성읍 팽성대교길 142  
031-658-9300

**Myeongryun Jinsa Galbi**  
경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정소평로 91 1층  
031-618-9910

**Best NOT Fried Chicken: SOUS VIDE CHICKEN PUB**  
경기 평택시 비전2로 212 좋은메디타워 1층  
031-657-8181  
Instagram: ingeunjumin\_sousvidechickenpub

**Best Fried Chicken: HO CHICKEN & BRUXIE (Tie)**



**Ho Chicken**  
경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정순환로104번길 35 110호  
031-658-5727

**Bruxie Chicken and Waffles Humphreys**  
경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정순환로222번길 86 1층 브럭시  
0507-1471-7751  
Instagram: bruxiek

**Bruxie Chicken and Waffles Songtan**  
경기 평택시 목천로 64-3 신장동161-2  
031-666-1200

**Best Duck Restaurant: PUMPKIN DUCK SHABU SHABU**  
경기 평택시 장안로길 56-70 복숭아꽃살구꽃건물 1층  
0507-1330-2372

### PYEONGTAEK'S BEST RESTAURANTS

**Best Date Night / Best Family Restaurant: LITTLE GREECE**  
경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정소평로 91 리틀그리스  
0507-1414-8983  
Instagram: littlegreece.official

**Best Pub / Sports Bar: NOM CRAFT BEER PUB**  
경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정소평로 37-1 6층  
0507-1444-2063  
Instagram: nombeerco





PYEONGTAEK’S BEST INTERNATIONAL RESTAURANTS

Best South American Restaurant: CEVICHE 210

경기 평택시 쇼핑로 12  
031-665-4698  
Instagram: ceviche210

Best African Restaurant: BRAAI REPUBLIC

경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정소핑로 17-1 2층  
0507-1304-7567  
Instagram: braairepublic.pt

Best Filipino Restaurant: NORTH LUZON GRILLERS & PINOY BAR & GRILL (Tie)

North Luzon Grillers

경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정소핑로 20  
031-8094-0508

Pinoy Bar & Grill

경기도 평택시 팽성읍 안정리 113-97  
010-5558-8676 (no phone number listed in Naver)  
070-8181-8722

Best Thai Restaurant: EATHAI

경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정순환로 108 2층 eathai  
0507-1312-2722

Best Italian Restaurant: ITALIAN TABLE

경기 평택시 함박산8길 21 1층 101호  
0507-1476-5537  
Instagram: Italian.table

Best Fusion-Mexican or Mexican: QUE RICO

경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정소핑로 38-2 1층  
070-7776-3424  
Instagram: querico.korea



Best Vietnamese: PHO VIETNAM

경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정순환로164번길 39-4  
031-691-9584

Best Aegean: LITTLE GREECE

경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정소핑로 91 리틀그리스  
0507-1414-8983  
Instagram: littlegreece.official

Best Indian: MOUNTAIN RESTAURANT

경기 평택시 평택2로 10  
031-651-3612  
Instagram: mountain\_restaurant

Best Japanese Restaurant: SAM'S SUSHI

경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정순환로222번길 96 1층  
031-691-0160

PYEONGTAEK’S BEST COMFORT FOOD

Best Korean Soups or Stews: Budaejjigae

경기 평택시 쇼핑로 39-1  
031-666-2768

Best Meat Pies: BILTONG BOX & DELI

경기 평택시 안정로29번길 29

*Location is moving. Will be closing temporarily at the end of March and re-opening in new location two blocks down on the same street at the beginning of April.*

New Location:

경기도 평택시 팽성읍 안정순환로 172번길 43  
010-4794-3103

Best Shabu-Shabu: PUMPKIN DUCK SHABU SHABU & SODAMCHON SHABU SHABU (Tie)

Pumpkin Duck Shabu Shabu

경기 평택시 장안웃길 56-70 북송아꽃살구꽃건물 1층  
0507-1330-2372

Sodamchon Pyeongtaek Riverside Branch

경기 평택시 오성면 당거1길 41 금선빌딩 2층  
031-684-0311  
Instagram: sodamchon.pyeongteak

Best Wings: NOM CRAFT BEER PUB

경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정소핑로 37-1 6층  
0507-1444-2063  
Instagram: nombeerco

Best Cold Sandwiches: GOOD NEIGHBOR

경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정소핑로 57 1층  
0507-1321-1275  
Instagram: hellogoodneighbor

Best Hot Sandwiches: EPHPHATHA

경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정소핑로 33 1층 에파타  
0507-1304-9617  
Instagram: ephphatha\_cheesesteak

Best Burgers: COCO SALSA

Humphreys Ville:

경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정소핑로 29 1동 1층  
0507-1378-6266

Songtan

경기 평택시 중앙시장로25번길 10 1층  
0507-1347-8361  
Instagram: cocosalsa01

*There is also a location located in Brownstone Apartments and in Sosabeol.*

Best Tacos: QUE RICO

경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정소핑로 38-2 1층  
070-7776-3424  
Instagram: querico.korea

Best US Style Sushi: SAM'S SUSHI

경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정순환로222번길 96 1층  
031-691-0160

Best Japanese Ramen: A-RAMEN & MENYAGO (Tie)

A-Ramen

경기 평택시 평택2로 12 2층  
0507-1397-7670

Menyago

경기 평택시 고덕여염10길 41 1층  
0507-1479-9927  
Instagram: menyago\_godeok

Best Fish & Chips: FISH AND CHIPS

경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정순환로104번길 23  
031-655-0130

Best Pizza: ELDORA RESTAURANT

경기 평택시 팽성읍 신흥북로29번길 27 1층 109호  
0507-1323-5102  
Instagram: eldorarestaurant

Best 'Western' Breakfast or Brunch: LE PAIN

경기 평택시 팽성읍 신흥북로49번길 22 jk상가  
0507-1339-5336  
Instagram: le\_pain\_

Best Korean Brunch: HOCUS POCUS ROASTERS

경기 평택시 장안웃길 12 호커스포커스 로스터스  
031-662-7783  
Instagram: hocuspocus.roasters



Best Conveyor Belt Sushi: IJJIBANG SUSHI

경기 평택시 서두물로35번길 113 1층층 101호호  
0507-1415-3408

Best Buffet: SHABU ALL DAY BUFFET

경기 평택시 만세로 1662 A동  
0507-1370-4706

PYEONGTAEK’s BEST PLACES For DRINKS

Best Craft Beer: NOM BEER COMPANY

경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정소핑로 37-1 6층  
0507-1444-2063  
Instagram: nombeerco

Best Korean Traditional Alcohol: OMG DRINKS MARKET

경기 평택시 통복시장로13번길 8  
010 9995 3293 (phone number not in Naver)  
Instagram: omg\_farm\_market

Best Shots and Cocktails: AWOL LOUNGE

경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정순환로138번길 45 2층  
0507-1441-9203  
Instagram: awol.lounge

Best Wine Bar/Cafe: Bottle Shop Godeok

경기 평택시 고덕국제3길 12 102호 바틀샵 평택고덕점  
0507-1407-7153  
Instagram: bottleshop\_pyeongtaek

PYEONGTAEK’s BEST CAFES, BAKERIES & DESSERTS

Best Hip/Cool Kids Cafe / Best Coffee Roasters: TUFF ENOUGH

Poseung Branch

경기 평택시 포승읍 포승향남로 11 단독건물 터프이너프 카페  
0507-1349-9597

Sosabeol Branch

경기 평택시 평택3로 80  
0507-1352-0659  
Instagram: tuffenuffroaster



**Best Epic Cafe / Best View Cafe Space: ARCHIVE CAFE**  
경기 평택시 오성면 강변로 468  
031-8029-0100  
Instagram: archive\_cafe\_

**Best Dog Cafe: RIVERUN CAFE AND DOOLEY'S PETS**  
Closed as of January 2025  
경기도 평택시 현덕면 덕목5길 106-33  
0507-1369-1110  
Instagram:

**Runner-up: Rainbow Dog Cafe**  
경기도 평택시 학현리 464  
031-681-8777  
Instagram: rainbau\_cafe

**Best Cozy Neighborhood Coffee Shop / Best Tiny Bakery: 292 LU BAKERY**  
경기 평택시 팽성읍 팽성대교길 99 제 2통  
0507-1331-6285  
Instagram: 292lu\_bakery

**Best Professional Bakery: DEWDROP**  
경기 평택시 팽성읍 신흥북로29번길 40-5  
0507-1305-9170  
Instagram: dewdrop\_cafe

**Best Pumpkin Spice Latte: CAFE LOUIS**  
경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정로 19  
010-4864-2393 (number not in Naver)  
Instagram: cafelouiscoffee

**Best Western Cookies: CAFE HANGOUT**  
경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정순환로222번길 95  
0507-1335-9522  
Instagram: pt.cafe.hangout

**Best Western Donuts: COSMIC CAT DONUTS**  
경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정순환로222번길 93-3  
0507-1460-0702  
Instagram: cosmic\_cat\_donuts



**Best Bagels: COSMIC CAT CAFE & BAGEL**  
경기 평택시 팽성읍 안정순환로 155-8  
0507-1447-7782  
Instagram: cosmiccatcafebagel

**Best Hotteok: SONGTAN MARKET HOTTEOK**  
In front of the Songtan Post Office  
경기 평택시 탄현로 336  
031-662-9100

**Best Souffle Pancakes: FREDDY CAFE**  
경기 평택시 유천로 73  
0507-1438-2884  
Instagram: freddy\_coffee\_roasters

**Best Frozen Desserts: BEE & HONEY CAFE**  
경기 평택시 현덕면 현덕로 748  
0507-1403-0998  
Instagram: beenhoney

**Check out the Naver List for all the addresses of the Best of Pyeongtaek locations:**  
Best of Pyeongtaek24  
<https://naver.me/xwmdjuo1>

**About the Author**

Melissa Edwards-Whittington has been in Korea for over 7 years. She and her husband have a YouTube channel, "KimchiRednecks", where they share about life in Korea, places to eat and visit in Korea, and cooking. They also have a YouTube channel, Shining With KimchiRednecks, dedicated to their hobby of making whiskey and brandy at home. They are also parents to three precocious senior Shih Tzu daughters, Minion, Sookie, and Mayhem who are featured often in their social media.

As Social Media Marketing Manager for *United on the RoK* Mag, Melissa brings her passion for the military community to life through compelling digital content. Her expertise spans content creation, social media marketing management, and community engagement through connectedness.

Melissa further extends her community impact through the South of Seoul, a local organization enhancing expatriate life in Korea. Through her online media management with South of Seoul, original content, established blog presence, and fostering multiple groups for language exchanges and content creators, she offers unique insights into life in South Korea. She has also volunteered for Pyeongtaek Insight as part of their content creation team. Her work consistently bridges cultural gaps while fostering connections within the international community.



Follow Melissa and her family here:  
YouTube: @kimchirednecks / @shiningwithkimchirednecks  
Instagram: @kimchirednecks  
Facebook: KimchiRednecks  
South of Seoul Blog: [www.blog.southofseoul.net](http://www.blog.southofseoul.net)

**Embrace the Best of Pyeongtaek**

The 8th Annual Best of Pyeongtaek Poll reflects the votes of the community based on favorites for 2024. These locations reflect a taste of what makes the Pyeongtaek area so unique. Check out these beloved spots and see if you find some new favorites too!

Keep an eye out in December 2025 or January 2026 when South of Seoul will release the 9th Annual Best of Pyeongtaek. Your votes mean so much to the local businesses as they work hard to bring you the best they have to offer.

Follow South of Seoul: [www.southofseoul.net/linktree](http://www.southofseoul.net/linktree)



Check out South of Seoul's Facebook groups: Pyeongtaek Food & Fun, Pyeongtaek Living, Pyeongtaek Family Fun, Pyeongtaek Travelers, Health and Wellness in Korea

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A delicious handmade burger like no other!

Korean-style burgers that Americans love!

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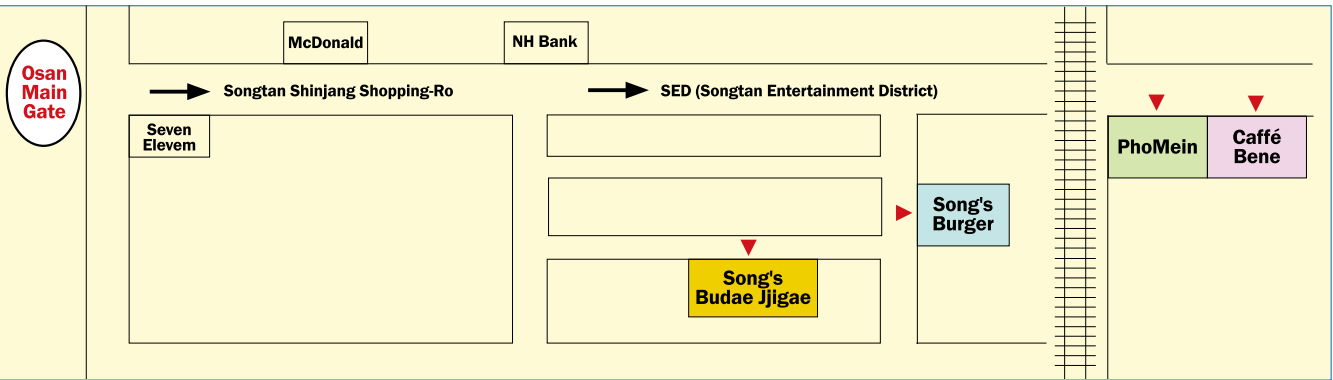
Caffé bene 031-664-0101

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Spicy, rich, and delicious soup! Come try it now!

Located in the market alley in front of Osan AB  
031-611-6466







# Baseball in Korea

Written by Cord Scott, UMGC Okinawa  
Photographed by Leslie Preddy

It is spring and that leads to many things, one of which is baseball. While called “America’s pastime” baseball has also been popular around the world, particularly after United States forces brought the game to Korea during the Korean War. If you haven’t experienced a Korean baseball game, you should. But before we discuss the game and its atmosphere in Korea, it is important to look at the teams.

The current Korean Baseball Organization (KBO) consists of ten teams. It was formed in 1982 and has some team names that may sound familiar to Americans, but only due to team names from other sports.

The season is 144 games long, as opposed to the Major League season of 162 games in the United States. Unlike American teams, Korean teams are named not for the city they play in, but for the corporation that sponsors them.

Like the American leagues, several teams share a town. The largest city, Seoul, has the most teams, with four: the Doosan Bears (Doosan makes heavy machinery for construction), the Kiwoon Heroes (Kiwoon is a securities firm), the Kia Tigers, and the LG Twins (LG makes a variety of appliances). Other teams include the KT Wiz from Suwon, with their mascots Vic and Dory (say it fast, and it’s ‘victory’); the SSG Landers

from Incheon; the NC Dinos from Changwon; the Samsung Lions from Daegu; the Lotte Giants from Busan; and the Hanwha Eagles from Daejeon. As with the Japanese or American leagues, there are foreign players on every team. In this case, the foreigners are usually Americans or from the Western Hemisphere.

While the rules are the same, the atmosphere most certainly is different. The best way to describe watching a Korean baseball game is that it’s a baseball game, with an American football crowd. There are bands, cheerleaders, and t-shirt cannons. Theme music is played when a batter is up. The season runs at the same general time as the season in the United States, from April to October.

The Korean Baseball Hall of Fame is a bit more difficult to get to, however, as it is located on Jeju Island. Jeju also serves as one of the locations for winter league/spring training sites. This allows the teams to try out players and positions in relative warmth. The other location used by some Korean teams is the Japanese prefecture of Okinawa. To that end, there are occasionally intermural games between the Japanese and Korean leagues.

There are some players who will go from the KBO to the Major Leagues in the US, but it is not as common as players in the KBO. The interest in the MLB in Korea is quite apparent, as team hats are available everywhere goods are sold. Some of the logos or color schemes are similar to American teams. Lastly, the opening games of the 2024 MLB season were held in Seoul, with the Los Angeles Dodgers playing the San Diego Padres. While Korea also has professional basketball, football (soccer for Americans), and hockey leagues, it is the baseball league that brings in considerable crowds. So if you want to experience something that is familiar, but unique to Korea, get out to the stadium, and watch some baseball!

## Where Can You Find Information

If you’re interested in attending a game, you can purchase tickets through the KBO website, ticket services such as Klook, and various other sites. You can also check out your installation’s MWR travel or outdoor recreation programs for routinely scheduled trips. At Osan, their Information, Tickets, & Travel program often goes to baseball games for as low as \$40. These trips will provide tickets, transportation to and from the game, and a translator to support your group as well.



## About the Author

Cord A. Scott has a Doctorate in American History from Loyola University Chicago and currently serves as a Professor of History for the University of Maryland Global Campus for Asia. He is the author of Comics and Conflict, Four Colour Combat, and the Mud and the Mirth: Marine Corps Comics of WWI. He has written for several encyclopedias, academic journals such as The International Journal of Comic Art, The Journal of Popular Culture, The Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, and several books on aspects of cultural history. He has lived all over the Pacific and currently resides in Okinawa, Japan.



# Strength, Balance, and Good Vibes:

## *Pilates with Mandy at Pure Balance Korea*

Written by Melissa Edwards-Whittington  
Photography by Anna Lonborg

### More Than Just a Workout

At Pure Balance Korea, Pilates with Mandy is more than just an exercise routine—it's a transformative experience that bridges the gap between physical strength and mental well-being. Mandy Seonghwa Park has a master's degree in Sports Science and a bachelor's degree in Counseling. Utilizing her seven years of experience teaching in Korea and Toronto, she uses her expertise in movement, physiotherapy, and awareness of mental well-being to design personalized programs for clients focusing on physical and mental health. Each session is tailored to the individual needs of her clients incorporating yoga, weightlifting, and CrossFit elements with Pilates. Mandy's holistic methods for her sessions ensure that no matter if your goal is injury recovery, improving posture, or building strength, both mind and body are supported.

### A Personal Journey to Pilates

Mandy's journey with Pilates began with a simple goal—weight loss. However, she soon realized that Pilates has more intense benefits. "As I kept going, I felt the connection between mind and body," she shares. "I loved fully focusing on myself for 50 minutes, exchanging positive energy through exercise. It was

such a meaningful experience that I wanted to share it with others."

Practicing Pilates transformed both her body and mind-set. "Physically, it has improved my core strength, posture, and overall body awareness. I have increased flexibility and stability. And ultimately, it has enhanced my weightlifting, yoga, and running performances. Mentally, Pilates has taught me the value of mindfulness and being present. I have reduced stress and a sense of balance in my daily life. Over the years, Pilates has become more than just an exercise—it's a way of living that emphasizes harmony between the mind and body."

Inspired by the quote from the Dutch philosopher, Desiderius Erasmus, "Prevention is better than cure," Mandy believes that focusing on preventing injuries and improving posture is key to long-term health and fitness.

### A Beginner-Friendly Approach

Many beginners to Pilates express anxiety over starting this workout, whether it be the machines resembling torture devices or the exercises being too difficult or requiring lots of flexibility. However, Mandy believes that it is an excellent workout for everyone and ensures that first-timers feel comfortable. Her beginners' sessions generally

begin with stretching and simple core exercises. The goal is to start by focusing on correct movements before introducing the equipment. She gradually progresses with her clients, building their strength and confidence in each session.

For those hesitant to try Pilates, Mandy offers a simple perspective: "Think of it as trying something new, like visiting a new café for coffee. It's an experience. Getting started is as easy as booking a trial session for a one-on-one or two-on-one class."

### Personalized Sessions for Every Need

When Mandy is teaching, her style includes patience, sincerity, and active listening. Each session, she adjusts the workout based on the client's needs, taking into consideration their daily well-being and any issues or chronic pain sharing that she "always checks how my clients are feeling—both physically and emotionally. This information helps me decide which movements to avoid and what areas to focus on," she explains.

For example, if a client did weightlifting the day before and feels stiff, she'll focus on stretching. She may incorporate gentle movements with cardio elements if they're low on energy. Even with acute pain, she adapts sessions to provide safe, effective movement tailored to the client's needs.

### One-on-One vs. Two-on-One Sessions

Pure Balance Korea currently offers two class session options:

- One-on-One Sessions: For one-on-one sessions, Mandy plans exercises and modifies the intensity based on the individual client, which creates a personalized session each time.
- Two-on-One Sessions: In two-on-one sessions, two clients (friends or partners) share the class, which is at a reduced price compared to the one-on-one sessions. Mandy's goal is to take into consideration both clients' health and concerns, providing both clients with a rewarding class. In addition, if one client is stronger or more flexible than the other, she will offer modifications to exercises so that both clients can confidently participate.

### Pure Balance Korea's Holistic Approach to Wellness

Pure Balance Korea also offers chiropractic care, massage therapy, and Pilates. They believe in a complete,

holistic approach to health and wellness beyond just providing pain relief.

- Chiropractic care: While the focus of chiropractic care is on aligning the spine and ensuring proper nervous system functions, it also relieves pain, improves posture, and mobility
- Massage therapy: Releasing muscle tensions, reducing stress, and improving circulation by massage therapy makes spinal adjustments more effective and long-lasting.
- Pilates: Pilates reinforces the benefits of both spinal care and massage. In addition, clients see more body strength and improvements in their posture, flexibility, and core stability

These three therapies create a combined cycle of recovery and strength. While Pilates builds strength, helping to maintain balance, chiropractic care restores alignment, and massage relaxes the muscles. Pure Balance Korea's holistic approach offers clients long-term health and well-being by helping them manage chronic pain, recover from injuries or simply move and feel better.



### Finding Pure Balance Through Pilates

Mandy describes the post-Pilates feeling in one word: "Balance." She explains, "I've always struggled to find balance in life, and I'm still working on it. Everything requires moderation, but that's the hardest part—whether it's work-life balance or relationships. Pilates helps me center myself, bringing both my body and mind back into alignment. After I have had a great session, I am so refreshed. And my genuine hope is that my clients find the balance that they've been looking for, too."

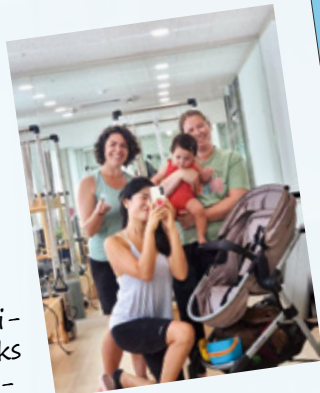
Book your session with Mandy at Pure Balance Korea to start your journey towards a strong and balanced body.



## TESTIMONIALS

### Monica Hoffman: More Than Exercise, It's Therapeutic!

I cannot recommend Mandy 송와 Park at Pure Balance highly enough! Her approach to Pilates is truly transformative. Each session feels like a personalized journey tailored to my specific needs that day. Whether I've been dealing with tension, soreness, or simply needing to refocus, she takes the time to understand my concerns and craft therapeutic exercises that address them directly. Mandy's hands-on guidance ensures my form is always correct, which has been a game-changer for my progress and safety. It's clear she genuinely cares about her clients and views Pilates as a form of therapeutic movement, not just exercise. Thanks to her expertise and attention to detail, I leave every session feeling stronger, more aligned, and more in tune with my body.



### Anna Lonborg: Pilates the Game Changer

I've been dealing with autoimmune and chronic pain for the past 12 years, and finding a form of exercise that works with my body has been challenging. However, working with Mandy at Pure Balance has been a game-changer. I see her twice a week, and she is incredibly considerate of my injuries while helping me progress. Mandy takes the time to listen to my needs and adjust each session to ensure I'm working within my limits while still building strength and improving my mobility. Her thoughtful approach and expertise have made such a positive difference in my physical and mental well-being, and I truly look forward to every session and will miss her when we PCS.



### Melissa Edwards-Whittington: From Chronic Nerve Pain to Strength and Movements

**Working** with Mandy has been truly life-changing for me. When I first started Pilates, the machines felt intimidating—almost like stepping into a new kind of torture program. As someone living with multiple sclerosis and chronic nerve pain, and overweight, I wasn't sure what to expect. When I started in August, I did two-on-one sessions with a friend and those sessions were personalized by Mandy to meet both of our needs, including modifications when necessary. Now, I am taking one-on-one sessions with Mandy, where she continues to push me past my preconceived limits. I have built strength, improved my posture, lost weight, and rehabbed injuries. Mandy challenges me, supports me, and celebrates every milestone with me.



This journey with Mandy has helped me to deal with my chronic nerve pain and find strength and beauty in the movements of Pilates.

### Frank Wright: From Chronic Pain to Relief, My Journey with Pilates and Seonghwa's Expertise



**As** a Gulf Vet living with chronic pain, I've spent years searching for relief. For a long time, the pain felt like it was just a part of who I was—a constant companion that I couldn't escape. Despite seeing multiple doctors, undergoing deep sports massages, and trying acupuncture over the past four years, nothing seemed to provide lasting relief. But that all started to change when I found

Seonghwa and her Pilates class.

Three months ago, I decided to try something new. I had heard about Pilates and how it could help with mobility, so I decided to give it a shot. From the very first class, I knew there was something different about her approach. She's not just a Pilates instructor—she's an intuitive healer who understands the body on a deeper level.

What stood out to me right away was how Seonghwa was able to assess my body and adapt each movement to meet my needs. She took the time to really understand my limitations, and instead of pushing me past what I could handle, she worked with me to find movements and stretches that worked. There was no one-size-fits-all approach. Seonghwa understood that each body is unique, and she adjusted on the fly to ensure I was doing what was best for me.

Why does pilates work for chronic pain? Pilates is not just a workout; it's a method of moving your body that focuses on strengthening, lengthening, and improving flexibility. For someone with chronic pain, Pilates can be a game changer because it's designed to be gentle on the body while also improving its function. Through controlled movements, Pilates can help realign the body, increase mobility, and strengthen muscles that may have been weakened or neglected.

For me, Pilates with Seonghwa was the missing piece. It's not about pushing through pain; it's about finding the right movements that help your body heal and function better. It's a reminder that healing doesn't always come from what we expect—it often comes from slowing down and listening to our bodies.

Reflecting on the last few months, I'm amazed at how far I've come. I feel more mobile, stronger, and most importantly—pain-free. It's hard to put into words just how much this transformation has meant to me. I feel like I've been given a second chance to live life without being held back by pain.

If you're struggling with chronic pain or just looking to improve your mobility, I encourage you to explore Pilates with Seonghwa. She is a teacher who listens to your body and understands your needs. Her approach can make all the difference, and you might just find that, like me, relief is possible.

### Natalie Nakamura: Building Core Strength and Balance

## When

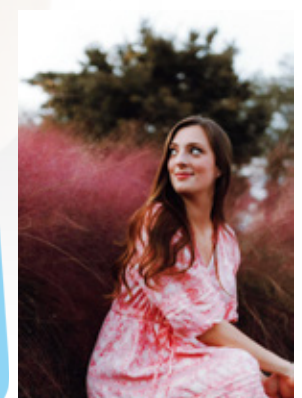
I first moved to Pyeongtaek, I was looking for an option besides the regular gym. I wanted to work on my core strength and balance. I saw many recommendations for Pilates and decided to attend a trial session with Mandy. I immediately fell in love with Pilates. It is not only a physical exercise, but also very stimulating mentally. Mandy is such an amazing trainer, has vast knowledge, and is very patient. After two months, my posture is better, my core is stronger, and I am definitely more balanced.



### About the Photographer

Anna Lonborg is a versatile creative with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC). Previously, Anna worked as a fashion designer specializing in product development, where she collaborated on designs and oversaw the production process from concept to completion. As a military spouse, she has lived in Korea for nearly five years, where she now works full-time as a career counselor but pursues her love of creating through photography (@Photos\_by\_Annielou).

In addition to her professional pursuits, Anna is a full-time stepmom to a high schooler who is a senior at



Humphreys High and a wife to her active-duty Army husband. In her free time, she enjoys painting, traveling, and spending time with her family. Her experiences as a military spouse and her travels have shaped her perspective, making her a strong advocate for adaptability and growth in both career and life.



# Specialized Volunteers *Enhance* USO Mission Delivery

By Douglas A. Boltuc, USO Korea Country Director

## The Power of Volunteerism in America's History

The spirit of volunteerism is resplendent in the collective American psyche. This deeply rooted tradition reflects the nation's values of selflessness, community service, and civic responsibility. From the earliest days of America's founding, volunteers have played a pivotal role in shaping the social fabric of the United States, by responding to the needs of individuals, families, and communities in times of crisis, emergencies, and war. This spirit of helping others not only strengthens communities but also embodies the core principles of unity, compassion, and social progress that define the American identity.

## The Role of the USO in the US Military Community

Within the US military community – the military itself being a tremendous volunteer institution for the past five decades – service members and their families find numerous ways to contribute to the well-being and resiliency of the community. Particularly in the overseas environment, wherein many military spouses are not in the workforce for a variety of reasons, volunteerism provides a means to hone important professional skills while also enabling networking opportunities to meet others. Likewise, it underscores the legitimacy of the organization and robust support by those who donate their time and talents. Many fantastic organizations offer volunteer opportunities to service members, spouses, and in some cases, even military children; of all of these organizations on military installations, one that particularly offers a wide range of these opportunities is the United Service Organizations, the USO.



▲ Volunteers assist with morale boost events at the USO Lounges along the DMZ.

Many people are familiar with USO airport lounges worldwide as well as USO centers on military installations. The USO strengthens the well-being of the people serving in America's military and their families. Traditionally, we have done this by keeping them connected to family, home, and country throughout their service to our nation. And a significant aspect of this endeavor is due to our robust Volunteer Corps. The USO is a very large organization, with a little over eight hundred full-time staff members globally; in sharp contrast, we are also proud to say that we have more than 30,000 volunteers worldwide.

## USO: The People Behind the Force

So, what exactly do volunteers contribute to the USO? Members of the military community are familiar with the most common roles of USO Volunteers which include greeting patrons at the front desk of our centers, assisting at special events, welcoming and cheering at homecomings, or simply by providing a listening ear. Our volunteers are the reason service members and their families know they can count on the USO as a place to relax and feel welcomed. However, more recently, our teams have broadened volunteer positions in order to appeal to a wider community of interest. I would like to illustrate some of these specialized volunteer positions that we have adopted in our USO Centers here in Korea.

## Specialized Volunteer Roles at USO Korea

First and foremost, we have learned over time that the best recruiter of a new volunteer is someone who currently volunteers themselves. USO Volunteers share their experiences with friends and members of their unit by describing what they do, the people with whom they interact, and the gratification they experience. This largely draws additional people from the community who are interested in sharing this great opportunity. As such, the first specialized volunteer position is the Recruitment and Training Volunteer. USO Casey in Dongducheon has successfully implemented this important position which focuses on both identifying potential volunteers and providing them with the necessary training. This role involves assisting new people who are interested in becoming a volunteer, particularly those from a 9-month rotational unit, by training them over the weekend so they can begin their volunteer activities quickly and seamlessly. Moreover, USO Casey

is responsible for two unstaffed lounges along the DMZ at Warrior Base in Paju and Rodriguez Live Fire Complex (RLFC) in Youngpyeong. Again, specialized volunteers assist the staff by periodically traveling to these remote locations to replenish drinks and snacks for the members of all of our training units to enjoy.



▲ Volunteers lead tabletop role playing games (TTRPGs).

## Serving at Air Mobility Command and Outreach Locations at Osan Air Base

USO Osan in Songtan has developed two specialized volunteer positions that support its unique mission. The team at USO Osan conducts welcomes and farewells for the arrivals and departures of military families at the Air Mobility Command (AMC) Terminal. These flights are oftentimes at non-standard workday hours. The volunteers assist tremendously in preparing and distributing care packages to the newly arrived personnel while also offering snacks and drinks for those awaiting departure. Similarly, USO Osan also conducts outreach programs at Kunsan Air Base and Gwangju Air Base, both of which are quite a distance away from Osan. Again, volunteers who have the time and interest to assist provide critical capabilities for the team to travel to these installations



quarterly to provide programs and offerings to US Service Members stationed at these remote locations.

Welcome to Korea Briefings and Building Community at Maude Hall

At USO Humphreys – Maude Hall in Pyeongtaek, volunteers deliver the “Welcome to Korea Briefing.” Since the vast majority of new arrivals to Korea process through Maude Hall – also known as the One Stop – it has become an information nexus for the community. As such, the USO team has designed a tailored briefing that informs newly arrived patrons of the programs and offerings at all five USO Centers and three Unstaffed Lounges in Korea. Our volunteers frequently present this briefing to newly arrived patrons. Another interesting volunteer option at Maude Hall is one of our signature programs, the Dungeons and Dragons Adventurer’s Guild, which we conduct each Saturday. A growing community of interest has developed and several volunteers have served in the specialized volunteer position of Dungeon Master. These volunteers, demonstrating knowledge and experience in tabletop role-playing



▲USO volunteers conduct welcomes and farewells for arrivals and departures of service and family members at the Air Mobility Command (AMC) Terminal on Osan Air Base.

games (TTRPGs), lead guests through curated fantasy campaigns and gameplay of Dungeons & Dragons, Pathfinder, Fallout, and a variety of other TTRPGs.

Engaging Youth and Promoting Cultural Exchange at Sentry Village

Across the installation at USO Humphreys – Sentry Village, our dedicated volunteers play a key role in coordinating and facilitating the Youth Dungeons & Dragons program, providing an immersive and creative experience for young participants. Through their commitment and enthusiasm to this specialized volunteer position, they help foster teamwork, problem-solving, and imagination in an engaging environment. Additionally, patrons at this center have increasingly inquired about language classes, prompting volunteers to teach conversational skills in such languages as Korean, German, and Arabic to diverse learners. These specialized volunteers help create an inclusive space that promotes language learning and cultural exchange.

Special Delivery, Supporting Expecting Parents at Camp Walker

Nestled in the city of Daegu, USO Walker has developed several specialized volunteer positions to support their local programs and core programs; one such core program is Special Delivery. This program provides baby showers and a touch of home for parents-to-be, who are often far away from their families, friends, and support networks during pregnancies and within the first few months of infancy. Special Delivery combines baby shower games, local guest speakers, drawings for traditional baby shower gifts, and cultivating community connections. Additionally, USO Walker has responsibility for the unstaffed lounge at Camp Carroll in nearby Waegwan. Specialized volunteers assist the staff in replenishing snacks and drinks, as well as designing and running programs for the troops and families on Camp Carroll.

Corporate Outreach, Behind-the-Scenes Volunteers at USO Korea

Finally, at the Area Office, which has overall responsibility for all USO operations in Korea, we have a specialized volunteer position that assists with corporate outreach. A very important part of USO operations is to solicit corporate sponsorships and conduct fundraising activities. This specialized volunteer position assists the Country Director with scheduling meetings, conducting correspondence, in some cases providing language translation, and coordinating with venue staff for events.

Although not very publicly visible, this specialized position plays an extremely important role in posturing USO Korea for future mission delivery.



▲Volunteers support Special Delivery, which provides baby showers and a touch of home for parents-to-be.

These descriptions highlight some of the many specialized volunteer opportunities offered by USO Korea. If you are looking for a way to give back to your community, consider volunteering at your local USO; likewise, if you have an idea or an interest in a specialized area, please stop in and discuss it with your local Center Operations Manager. You can continue to exercise your talents before you return to the workforce or you can learn some new skills – we will even help you to capture these onto your resume. Accumulated volunteer hours assist in promotion points and specific skills that may greatly enhance your marketability for future employment. We also love to recognize our volunteers with appreciation events, USO swag, Mission Awards, and Presidential Volunteer Service Awards (PVSA). Volunteers power community organizations every day by creating solutions for community needs, building bridges between cultures, and being the welcoming face to newcomers and visitors alike!

Joining the USO volunteer team provides an incredible opportunity to give back, enhance your skills, and make an immediate impact in the lives of service members and their families - we can’t wait to have you on the team and for you to be part of something truly meaningful.

Learn more and register to be a volunteer at: <https://korea.uso.org/support/interested-in-volunteering>

About the Author

Doug Boltuc has been the Country Director of USO Korea since 2017. In this capacity, he oversees the USO staff and volunteers as they conduct the mission delivery of USO programs and offerings at five Centers, three unstaffed lounges, and eleven remote locations across the Peninsula. Additionally, he interacts with senior military leadership for priorities, US diplomatic leaders for support, as well as the Korean and expatriate business community for sponsorship and donations. Doug is a retired US Army Officer with many years of service in Korea and the Middle East, and is most passionate about contributing to the resiliency of military service members and their families overseas.



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# Coping with Change During Spring

By Adaptable Human Solutions



*As* you dust off your winter boots, just as the trees welcome new blossoms, you may also begin to welcome spring which offers new possibilities. As we enter into spring the possibility to explore, go outdoors, or try something new may be on the horizon. Change can feel exciting, but it can sometimes feel challenging. Springtime can be



associated with major life transitions as it is the season in which many major life transitions occur, such as marriages and graduations. Approximately 15% of service members and their families will begin relocation in the spring, though many service members will also begin receiving Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders by spring.<sup>1</sup> These changes can trigger agitation, anxiety, and even depressive feelings because managing change can be difficult.<sup>2</sup> However, there are many ways that we can prepare for these changes, such as practicing mindfulness to help us cope and adapt to new changes and new possibilities in our lives.

## Coping with Change

One may find initial resistance to changes, then acceptance and emerging problem-solving skills to adapt to changes. Coping is a way that one can deal with and attempt to overcome challenges in stressful situations. In general, finding a healthy routine that includes a good diet, routine exercise, and good sleep hygiene as well as maintaining manageable goals can be helpful during times of change.

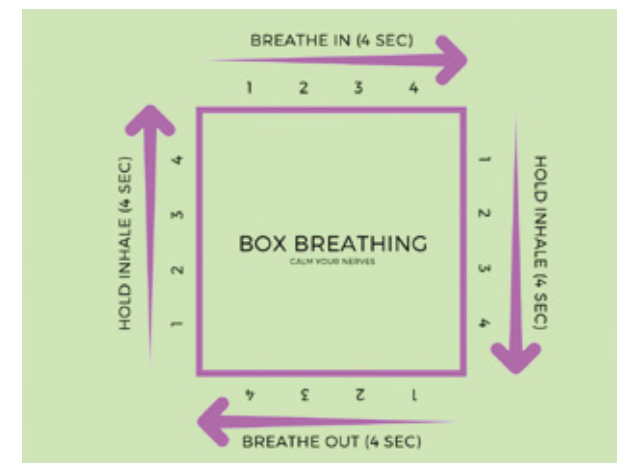
Managing internal thoughts and being aware of behaviors and mind-body connections can also be useful in managing difficulties around change. Some tips for improving calmness can include using positive reframing, breathing exercises, slowing down, and increasing one's support network.

**Positive Reframing.** This happens by thinking about a negative or difficult situation in a more positive light. Possibly consider what can be learned through challenges. Or think about what other possible benefits could exist that had not been considered at the surface. Sometimes, it helps to think about what someone else might think about the situation in order to consider alternative interpretations of the situation. This cognitive behavioral technique can help you re-orient your mind to see possibilities and other solutions which in turn could help you make new choices that make you feel more positive.<sup>3</sup>

**Breathing exercises.** Using diaphragmatic breathing can help you to calm your nerves and help your body regulate. When your body experiences stress, it activates the fight-flight-freeze stress response. This tells your sympathetic nervous system to prepare and sends oxygen to your arms and legs to manage stress and lessens oxygen to the prefrontal cortex where we make decisions. This can leave one feeling overwhelmed and make it difficult to think. Deep breathing can help relax and activate the parasympathetic nervous system which tells the brain to calm down your sympathetic nervous system.<sup>4</sup>

A simple exercise of box breathing can help reduce stress and help calm the mind through visualization. Sitting comfortably in a chair with your feet grounded on the floor begin by breathing out slowly and visualize a box as you do this activity.

1. Inhale through your nose for four counts, paying close attention to how your lungs and stomach fill with air.
2. Hold your breath for four counts.
3. Exhale for four counts.
4. Hold for four counts.








**Practice Slowing Down and Being Present.**

Practice slowing down and connecting to the present time and surroundings to relieve anxiety. Try using the 54321 grounding technique noticing 5 things you see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste around you. This can help you unwind, get connected to what is around you, and de-stress when your mind is racing. Practice connecting to your five senses as you step outdoors. Pay attention to all that is around you through what you see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. This can help you stay present and help you build new memories and connections without having you think too far ahead.

## Anxiety Busting!

The next time your mind is stuck on anxiety and worry, try the following simple exercise!

Look around you and notice:

-  **5 things you can see:** Your hands, the sky, a plant.
-  **4 things you can feel:** Feet on the ground, the chair.
-  **3 things you can hear:** Birds chirping, your breath.
-  **2 things you can smell:** Coffee, your lunch, clothes.
-  **1 thing you can taste:** A mint, gum, the fresh air.

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**Ask for help.** This may be the time to go to your network of supports through family, friends, or local community resources. Connecting to others can help normalize the experience and help improve connectedness during a difficult time. Therapy may also help provide professional supportive guidance. Therapy can work to help provide short or long-term confidential support that can allow you to process concerns at your own pace and directly practice skills to help improve coping skills.

Military service members and families face many transitions and it is important to know that no one has to go through these changes alone.



Adaptable Human Solutions (AHS) is with you wherever you are, offering confidential and compassionate support for individuals, couples, and families to offer support in stress and anxiety management, relationship and family issues, military and expat life challenges, trauma recovery and more. Services are offered in English and Korean, off-post or online. Tricare, FSBP (AFSPA), CIGNA, and other insurances are accepted.

For more information, please feel free to connect with us.

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# THE KING OF BATTLE

## *The Legacy of the United States Field Artillery*

Written by Jetta Allen

Photography by Michelle U. Blesam, John French, Margaret Go, Felix Mena, Eric Park, Kerry Schulz

**Field** Artillery has played a key role in the United States Army since 1775. From simple cannons made from cast iron and bronze to advanced high-grade steel machinery, Field Artillery within the Army and Marines has evolved into modernized combat elements that combine precision, power, and technological innovation; employing advanced systems that would have seemed like science fiction to their Revolutionary War predecessors. Known as the 'King of Battle', Field Artillery has shaped the outcome of countless conflicts by providing fire support to ease in the maneuvering of forces and to maintain battlefield dominance through long-range precision strikes. As the battlefield continues to evolve, these units remain an indispensable force multiplier in modern military operations. To grasp the profound impact of Field Artillery in shaping our American military force, we must trace its history from the colonial battlefields to today's fire support systems. This journey reveals more than just military evolution - it tells the story of American engineering, ingenuity, determination, and the unwavering commitment of so many service members and individuals within our military community to protect our nation's values and freedoms.

**American Revolutionary War (1775-1783):** In 1774 the United States Continental Congress was formed. A year later, in 1775, Congress created the Continental Army, paving the way for the establishment of the Field Artillery Branch. The Continental Army Field Artillery was equipped with cannons and howitzers, primarily used for bombardment during sieges and open-field battles. During this period, the Army's Field Artillery branch began to take shape. However, it lacked standardization and specialized



▲ This Revolutionary War Reenactment shows the two-wheeled cannons that were moved into battle with carriage-drawn horses. Captured by John French.

training that would later shape the branch into its strong fighting force of the present.

**Early 19th Century:** After the American Revolution, the United States Army began formalizing its artillery. In March 1802, President Thomas Jefferson established the United States Military Academy at West Point to begin the specific training and standardization that was missing during the American Revolution. At West Point, soldiers became trained as artillery officers. Following the establishment of a military academy, Field Artillery regiments would then be formed and incorporated into the United States Army and later the Marine Corps.

**Civil War (1861-1865):** The American Civil War marked a major turning point for Field Artillery. The United States Army introduced rifled cannons, which had greater range and accuracy. The development of better ammunition, like the explosive shell, significantly changed artillery



▲ A CH-47 from 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade lifts a howitzer from 2nd Battalion, 77th Field Artillery Regiment during an artillery raid deployment readiness exercise at Rodriguez Live Fire Complex, South Korea on 10 October 2023. U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Margaret Go.

tactics, allowing for more precise fire support. Artillery was essential in battles like Gettysburg, where both sides relied on massed artillery to support infantry operations.

**Post-Civil War to World War I:** In the late 19th century, artillery continued to evolve with innovations in fire control and technology. The United States Army modernized its artillery forces, restructuring them into separate units. By World War I, Field Artillery had become a crucial element of modern warfare.

**World War I (1914-1918):** By World War I, advancements in artillery—including more accurate targeting, larger-caliber guns, and new ammunition created a deadly force on the battlefield. Field Artillery's long-range firepower allowed it to target enemy troops, supply lines, and fortifications, crucial for breaking the stalemate of trench warfare. It softened enemy defenses and disrupted supply lines while supporting infantry and tanks in offensive and defensive operations. As a result, Field Artillery became essential for both breaking through and shaping strategy during the war.

**World War II (1939-1945):** The United States Field Artillery expanded dramatically during World War II. The Army employed various artillery pieces, from light to heavy guns, howitzers, and anti-aircraft artillery. The introduction of mechanized artillery, like the M7 Priest self-propelled gun, revolutionized mobility on the battlefield. The M7 Priest's main armament was an M2A1 105mm howitzer, with a secondary armament of a 12.7mm M2 Browning HB machine gun. All of this was engineered into a movable, tank-like, heavily armored, military vehicle with a 7 man crew. No longer requiring towed artillery units, these mobile fire

support units were integrated with infantry, armor, and air forces to create coordinated fire support in combat.

**Cold War and Beyond (1947-Present):** After World War II, artillery evolved with technological advancements, including guided missiles, improved fire control systems, and automation. The development of the M109 howitzer in 1963 and its variants represented the United States Army's continued focus on modernizing artillery for rapid deployment and precision targeting. During the Gulf War, Iraq War, and Afghanistan War artillery played a vital role in combined arms operations, with increasingly sophisticated systems allowing for modern technology, like precision-guided munitions, increasing the effectiveness and accuracy of fire support in contemporary combat. With advanced targeting systems and real-time communications, artillery units can now deliver highly targeted strikes on enemy positions, minimizing collateral damage and increasing effectiveness on the battlefield. This shift towards precision enables artillery to play a crucial role in both conventional and asymmetrical warfare.



▲ A M270A1 MLRS rocket launcher assigned to 210th Field Artillery Brigade fires a reduced-range practice rocket during a regularly scheduled, routine live fire exercise. 210th Field Artillery Brigade conducts live fire training exercises throughout the year in order to certify MLRS crew members and maintain readiness. US Army photo by Staff Sgt. Felix Mena, 210th Field Artillery Brigade Public Affairs Office.

**Korea War (1950-1953):** In 1950, the Division Artillery, known as DIVARTY, fired in support of the United States, the Republic of Korea, and United Nations forces in South Korea until the cessation of the war. The Division arrived in Korea, via Pusan, on 23 July 1950, becoming the first unit to reach Korea directly from the United States. The Warrior Division was the first unit to break out of the Pusan Perimeter and led the Eighth Army's Drive to the Manchurian Border. The 2nd Infantry Division was awarded the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation on 29 September 1950 for the defense of the Naktong River line against enemy attack. On 5 February



1951, the 23rd Regimental Combat Team moved into the narrow valley of Chipyeong-ni. On 13 February 1951, the 23rd Regimental Combat Team, with the attached French Battalion, was cut off and surrounded by four Chinese Divisions. For more than three days the 23rd Regimental Combat Team and the 1st ROK Division bravely fought in freezing weather, killing over 5,000 Chinese and causing the Communist Chinese Forces to withdraw. The Battle of Chipyeong-ni was the first Maj. or defeat for the Chinese and proved to be the turning point of the Korean War. In April and May 1951, the 2nd Infantry Division was instrumental in smashing the Communist's Spring Offensive as they fought for hilltops in the Iron Triangle, Pork Chop Hill, Baldy Hill, Bloody Ridge, and Heartbreak Ridge. During the Korean War, 20 2nd Infantry Division Soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor. The Division was awarded the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation on 26 October 1953, for valor in combat and excellence in the training and integration of ROK forces into their ranks. The 2nd Infantry Division emerged as the most decorated Division from the Korean War. DIVARTY remained in Korea from 1965 until reflagging in 2006, later activating in 2014 at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. In September 2021, the 2nd Infantry Division Artillery relocated to Camp Humphreys, Korea to support the 2nd Infantry Division in the Korean Theater of Operations. If on Camp Humphreys, be sure to check out the 2nd Infantry Division, Eighth Army, and Korean Theater of Operations Museum which tells the stories of soldiers in the Korean Theater of Operations experience since 1950.

### Redlegs Throughout History

"Redlegs Do It Best" is a coined phrase in the Field Artillery branch, but there is a long history behind its meaning. The term "Redlegs" is a nickname that dates back to the 19th century and is used to refer to service members in Field Artillery, both in the Army and the Marine Corps. The origin of the nickname comes from the distinctive red trim that was part of the artillery uniforms during the Mexican-American War (1846–1848). Artillery soldiers wore uniforms with red piping on their pants, which set them apart from other branches of the military. This red trim became an identifiable symbol of the Field Artillery, and over time, those in the branch began to be affectionately called "Redlegs". The nickname stuck and has since been embraced by the Field Artillery community. It symbolizes the pride, heritage, and camaraderie that has played a key role

in our country's military operations throughout history. The United States Field Artillery Association keeps documentation of "Legendary Redlegs". Among them are Alexander Hamilton, George Washington Whistler, Edgar Allen Poe, Former United States President Harry S. Truman, Babe Ruth, and Reggae artist Shaggy all of whom have contributed to the legacy of the Redlegs.



▲ Artillerymen from the 2nd Battalion, 77th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division fire the M77A2 Howitzer during a combined arms live-fire exercise alongside the Republic of Korea Army at the Mugun-ri Training Center in Paju, Gyeonggi-do, Korea. The annual exercise is designed to strengthen the combined defense posture and Alliance response capabilities based on scenarios that reflect diverse threats within the security environment. The rigorous training will ensure the Alliance is ready to defend the Republic of Korea and promote security and stability in Northeast Asia. U.S. Army photo by 210 Field Artillery Public Affairs.

### 2nd Infantry Division in South Korea

The 2nd Infantry Division is the last permanently forward-stationed division in the United States Army. As part of the great ROK-U.S. Alliance, the Division's mission is to deter aggression, and if deterrence fails, ensure it is ready to "Fight Tonight" to defend the Republic of Korea. Forged during the Korean War, the great ROK-U.S. Alliance is an equal partnership committed to the strong defense of Korea. Today, the 2nd Infantry Division patch is spread out across the world. On 3 June 2015, The ROK-U.S. Combined Division was activated to improve the abilities of Combined Operations. The ROK 16TH Mechanized Brigade, partnered with the Combined Division, accumulates expertise in combined warfare and the Warriors of the 2nd Infantry Division/ROK-U.S. Combined Division stand ready – to "Fight Tonight!"

### 35th Air Defense Artillery Brigade

The 35th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Brigade is the sole ADA unit deployed on the Korean Peninsula, tasked with countering missile threats. Equipped with advanced systems like the Patriot missile defense, it is

the only active unit capable of providing integrated, rapid defense against a spectrum of hostile missile attacks. Positioned strategically, the brigade plays a critical role in both deterrence and defense, ensuring the protection of U.S. and allied forces, as well as South Korean assets, against growing regional threats. "Ready in Defense"



▲ A Soldier from 2nd Battalion, 77th Field Artillery Regiment conducts a "patch trade" with a South Korean artillery soldier after a combined live fire exercise at Rodriguez Live Fire Complex. U.S. Army photo by Capt. Kerry Schulz.

### Field Artillery Today and the United States Field Artillery Association

Field Artillery continues to play a vital role in modern military operations and the United States Field Artillery Association (USFAA) stands as a key advocate for its evolution, efficiency, and the professional development of artillerymen. The USFAA is dedicated to fostering camaraderie and promoting the ongoing education of the artillery community. Through its networking opportunities, programs, and commitment to preserving the rich traditions, the USFAA ensures that today's artillery forces are not only prepared to meet the demands of contemporary warfare but also continue to honor the legacy of those who served in past conflicts. Whether on the battlefield or through advocacy efforts, the association plays a pivotal role in strengthening the expertise and morale of the Field Artillery.

### The Legend of Saint Barbara

Like many military branches, Field Artillery has its own lore and legends. Saint Barbara was the beautiful daughter of Dioscorus, a man who was said to have pagan beliefs during the third or fourth century. Though imprisoned and eventually tortured to her

death, his daughter would not renounce Christianity. After her death, her father was said to have been killed by lightning from above, godly vengeance some said. The Christian church venerated her as a Saint around the seventh century. Today Saint Barbara is the patron saint of Field Artillery and "regarded as the sainted patroness of those in danger from thunderstorms, fire, and explosions" according to the USFAA.

### The Legend of Molly Pitcher

During the American Revolutionary War women supported the battlefield in many ways. From lending first aid and tending to the wounded to maintaining Army camps and delivering supplies, women played a vital role in the war. Unknown to many, cannons during that time had to be cooled with water to prevent warping and even exploding. Women would be utilized to carry water to the firing line to cool down the cannons. They would quite literally "pitch" or throw the water on the cannons while also providing water to soldiers. Mary Hays McCauly, born 13 October 1754, was an artilleryman's wife and water pitcher, joining in battle with her husband at the Battle of Monmouth. While several versions of this legend tell of her heroic efforts, the themes remain the same, Mary Hay McCauly kept cannons firing when her husband fell to heat or injury. Her story would become legendary, garnering her recognition from General George Washington before he became our first President. She would even go on to receive a veteran's pension from the state of Pennsylvania for her service during the Revolutionary War.

Mary Hays McCauly's name would come to be synonymous with the nickname "Molly Pitcher." Some say this



▲ Molly Pitcher at the Battle of Monmouth. June 1778 by American historical painter Alonzo Chappel. Courtesy of the National Archives Catalog.



nickname came about from her and her husband's nicknames Molly, others say it was because she was a water pitcher who helped on the front lines. Regardless of its origin, her name and heroic efforts as a gunner's spouse are still remembered today by the Field Artillery.



### Legends, Traditions, and Honor

In the United States Army, the Saint Barbara's Ball is a tradition specifically celebrated by the Field Artillery branch. This formal event honors Saint Barbara and is considered a prestigious and important occasion for those involved in artillery, serving as a means to preserve the history and camaraderie of the branch. The ball is typically held annually and serves as a social event for service members and their families to come together, celebrate the traditions of the artillery branch, and honor Saint Barbara's role in protecting them from harm. During the ball, there are usually speeches, a formal dinner, and awards or recognition for outstanding service within the artillery community. The event blends legends, traditions, and honor through reflection on the sacrifices made by those serving in the Field Artillery and the overall military community.

At the Saint Barbara's Ball, the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara honors individuals who have exemplified the highest standards of integrity and moral character, demonstrated exceptional professional competence, served the United States Army or Marine Corps Field Artillery with dedication and selflessness, and made significant contributions to the advancement of the Field Artillery, earning the respect of their seniors, subordinates, and peers alike. The Ancient Order of Saint Barbara is a prestigious distinction awarded to a select group whose enduring commitment to the Field Artillery reflects the spirit, honor, and selflessness that Saint Barbara symbolizes. This recognition is reserved for those whose lifetime of exceptional service to the United States Army or Marine Corps Field Artillery sets them apart from their peers in the Honorable Order. It represents the highest level of achievement within the

Order of Saint Barbara.

The Saint Barbara's Ball recognizes more than just service members. The Artillery Order of Molly Pitcher honors individuals who have made significant voluntary contributions to improving the Field Artillery community. The Esteemed Artillery Order of Molly Pitcher represents an even higher honor, recognizing those who have dedicated their careers to the Field Artillery, mentored junior-level spouses, and shared the spirit of Molly Pitcher with the military and beyond.

### Honoring Excellence: 2025 Awardees

#### Esteemed Artillery Order of Molly Pitcher

2ID/DIVARTY: Mrs. Kensheilah D. Young

#### Artillery Order of Molly Pitcher

- 2ID/DIVARTY: Mrs. Alyssa Crone, Mrs. Dena Jaroszewski, Mrs. Julieme Kim, Mrs. Shantel Lang, Mrs. Joy Wang
- 210FAB: Mrs. Lindsay Hapney, Mrs. Cynthia Stanbury
- 35th ADA: Lauren Kollmann
- USFK/CFC: Mrs. Jetta Allen, Mrs. Hyo Youn Kim, Mrs. Jeonghyun Park
- 8th Army: Mrs. Jennefer Acevedo

#### Honorable Order of Saint Barbara

21D/DIVARTY: Maj. Stephen Stafford, Capt. Dawna Casanova, Capt. Ryan Crone, CW2 Brian Lang, Command Sgt. Maj. Armando Delarosa, Sgt. 1st Class Brenton Witherow

210 FAB: Lt. Col. Daniel Blankenhorn, Lt. Col. Immanuel Mgana, Maj. Tityina Clarke, Maj. Brandon Doble, Maj. Lee Harrison, Maj. Yandy Leyva, Maj. Michael Terry, Maj. Hardy Temoney, Capt. Andrew Chiang, Capt. Nancy Gomez, Capt. Joseph Hubble, Capt. Daryldan Manlangit, Capt. Graham Morgan, Capt. Jin Park, Capt. Sehyeon Park, Capt. Carrick Porter, Capt. Christina Rimbey, Capt. Joshua Ryan, Capt. Paul Shelton, Capt. Daniel Stanbury, Capt. Andrew Winters, CW2 Nathan Li, CW2 John Paylor, CW2 Jeimmy Tuufuli, Command Sgt. Maj. Glen Hapney, Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey Joseph, 1st Sgt. Erick Fountain, 1st Sgt. George Sumrall, 1st Sgt. Andrew Watson, Master Sgt. Robert Spurlock, Sgt. 1st Class Cameron Bornowski, Sgt. 1st Class Kyle Bowen, Sgt. 1st Class Terrance Chamberlin, Sgt. 1st Class Earl Friolet, Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Gibb, Sgt. 1st Class Sean Henry, Sgt. 1st



▲ The drinking of the grog is a rite of passage for those who have served in the United States Field Artillery and are newly inducted into the Honorable Order of St. Barbara.

► The empty table at the St. Barbara's Day Ball is a symbolic and poignant tradition. It honors fallen soldiers and military personnel, especially those who have died in service to their country.

Class Kassi Jaksch, Sgt. 1st Class Peyton Jones, Sgt. 1st Class Nathan Knight, Sgt. 1st Class Frank Murphy, Sgt. 1st Class Clarence Norton, Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Strevel, Sgt. 1st Class Lawrence Washburn

35th ADA: Brig. Gen. Jin Pak, Maj. Sharrod Quillen, Capt. Christopher Lopez, Capt. Eathan Mall, Capt. Thomas Lee, Capt. Igor Semenov, 1st Sgt. Gerald Harness, W01 Buchanan, CW2 Robles, Sgt. 1st Class Tate, Sgt. 1st Class Ezekiel Sandoval, Sgt. 1st Class Njenja, Sgt. 1st Class Craig Rodgers, Staff Sgt. Park, Staff Sgt. Arturo Del Villar, Sgt. Salgado, and Sgt. Libut.

USFK/CFC: Lt. Col. Young Choi, Maj. Jacob Cook, Capt. Alex De Giovanni, Capt. Shane Song

8th Army: Col. Samuel Yi, Maj. Avron Bloom, Capt. Kinnidie White, Sgt. Maj. Jose Montanez, Master Sgt. Jason Gloud

1-37 FAR: Capt. Michael Kelley, Capt. Johnathan Philley, Capt. Payton Rengel, Capt. Benjamin Whiddon, Capt. Joanna Zalewski, 1st Lt. Rockeem Carey, 1st Sgt. Vicente Valerio, Sgt. 1st Class Nickson David, Sgt. 1st Class Kepas Edgar, Sgt. 1st Class Mark Lieber, Sgt. 1st Class Stephan Pemberton, Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Rutter, Sgt. 1st Class Michael Santos, Sgt. 1st Class Scott Summy

*\*The appearance of U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.*



▲ The Order of Molly Pitcher recognizes individuals including spouses, civilians, and military personnel who have voluntarily given their time and effort to improve the Field Artillery community.

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# Things I Wish I Knew Before Moving to Korea

By Bianca Del Carmen

*After* 12 years of living in South Korea, I've had my fair share of culture shock and eye-opening experiences. For those who have made the move and are living here, you know that moving to a new country can be exciting, scary, and stressful all wrapped into one! Beyond the everyday adjustments, settling into your new life around the installation and integrating into Korean society can take some effort and patience. Looking back, here are a few things I wish I had known before moving to South Korea—things that would have made my transition here much smoother.

## Moving Abroad Comes with a Lot of Struggles

Growing up, my family moved between states more times than I can remember, so like most of our readers, I'm no stranger to change. However, I quickly realized that moving abroad is a completely different experience from moving around stateside. Not only is the language completely different, but so is the food and culture, which can take some time to adjust to. While



I had some knowledge of these differences before coming to Korea, I wish I had fully accepted that things would still be difficult at times—and that is okay.

The struggles don't define your time in Korea; what matters is how you react to each tough situation. Rather than dwelling on the difficulties, you can choose to make your time in Korea memorable and fun, even when faced with challenges. Culture shock hit me more than once, but instead of letting it overwhelm me, I used those moments to learn, grow, and eventually fall in love with life here, maybe you can too.

## Learning Korean Is a Game-Changer

You don't have to become fluent in Korean, but learning basic phrases will make your life so much easier. Learning the language can help you build stronger relationships and make more friends because you are putting in the effort to learn the language. Koreans truly appreciate when foreigners try to speak their language, even if it's just the basics. Knowing key phrases will make daily interactions—shopping, banking, ordering food—so much smoother. The earlier you start learning, the less frustration and confusion you'll experience. Ultimately, making the effort to learn Korean will make your time here far more enjoyable. As someone who has been in Korea for 12 years and is now teaching Korean full-time, I really see the importance of starting to learn the language from the very beginning of your stay. Even if it is just a few words or phrases here and there, start now, not later!

## Social Norms Are Unspoken But Important

There are a lot of social norms in Korea that you'll need to adjust to quickly. For example:

- Giving and receiving things with two hands is a sign of respect.
- Speaking loudly on public transportation is frowned upon.
- Taking off your shoes when entering a home is a must.
- Age hierarchy influences friendships and conversations.

Some of these customs make perfect sense, while others may take some getting used to. I've learned that it's best to go with the flow and follow local customs when living in a foreign country—it makes life much easier.

## Public Transportation Is Amazing (But Can Be Crowded)

I can say, without a doubt, that Korea's public transportation system is one of the best in the world. As someone who has been to over 20 different countries, I have seen and experienced other transportation systems, but Korea's is on a different level. The subway, buses, and trains are efficient, clean, and affordable! That being said, rush hour can be intense, and the crowds can feel overwhelming at times. Learning to navigate the subway system early on is a lifesaver, and using apps like Kakao Metro will help you get around in all the major cities in Korea. In addition to learning how to use buses and subways, if you enjoy traveling to different cities on the weekends, it's important to get familiar with the Korail app to check train times across Korea. While you're in Korea, I highly recommend taking advantage of all the travel opportunities available.

## Life Without an ARC Can Be Frustrating

I originally came to Korea as an English teacher, which meant I had to get an Alien Registration Card (ARC). Not everyone on SOFA status needs one, but having an ARC makes life much easier.

Whether it's paying for parking in parking lots that only accept Korean cards, enrolling your kids in day-care, traveling in and out of the country, or signing up for online services, having an ARC makes you feel more self-sufficient. The application process might be tedious, but it's worth considering if you want a smoother experience in Korea.

## Adjust Your Expectations for Restaurants in Korea

Even after all these years, one thing I still struggle with is the common no-modification rule at many restaurants. If I ask for a small change—like adding avocado to a sandwich—the answer is often a firm “NO.” It can be frustrating, especially when the



ingredient is available and I'm willing to pay extra. This kind of rigidity was hard to accept at first, but I've learned to work around it. My best advice? Find restaurants you love where you won't feel the need to ask for substitutions. Korean cuisine is incredibly diverse, so take the time to explore and discover your favorite dishes. Try as many foods as possible—you won't know what you like until you try!

## Final Thoughts

Moving to Korea is an incredible experience, and hopefully sharing these experiences will help your transition be much smoother. If you are here, embrace the culture, stay open-minded, and give yourself time to adjust. Korea has so much to offer, and with the right mindset, it can truly be an experience you'll never forget.

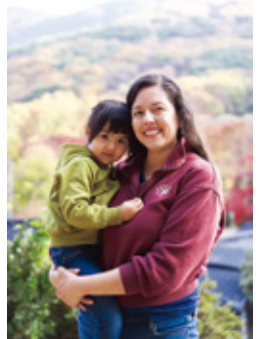
If you are coming to Korea, living in Korea, or leaving soon, check out The DMZ to the Sea PCS Resource Guide. (Website: [www.humphreysunited.org/dmz-to-the-sea](http://www.humphreysunited.org/dmz-to-the-sea))



## About the Author

Bianca Del Carmen was born in Las Cruces, New Mexico. As a military-connect child, she grew up all around the world, allowing her to experience many cultures. Bianca graduated from the W. P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University with a major in Business Marketing.

Bianca has lived in South Korea for over 12 years now and resides with her husband in the Daegu area with their three children. As the founder of the Boram Language Institute, Bianca offers lessons in English, Korean, and Mandarin to students online.





# Sacred Sounds

## Exploring Meditation Through Singing Bowls and Chakra Alignment

Written by Chunghee Jung, Harry Shin, and Editorial Team  
Photography by Jetta Allen / Image by Gerd Altmann



In the serene halls of Korean Buddhist temples, the deep resonance of singing bowls has guided practitioners toward mindfulness for centuries. These sacred instruments create more than just beautiful sounds - they offer a pathway to deeper meditation and spiritual awareness. As the gentle tones wash over you, they invite both beginners and experienced practitioners to explore the ancient connection between sound, breath, and inner balance. This exploration of singing bowl meditation, rooted in Buddhist traditions yet accessible to all, offers practical insights into how these harmonious vibrations can align with our body's energy centers, or chakras, creating a foundation for profound meditation experiences.

### ***The Art of Awakening Sound: Playing Your Singing Bowl***

The sacred art of playing singing bowls begins with understanding their unique composition. Crafted from a unique blend of metals - including copper, tin, zinc, iron, and precious metals like gold and silver - each bowl possesses its own distinctive voice. This creates instruments that resonate with specific frequencies, measured in Hertz (Hz), giving each bowl its unique therapeutic pitch and tone.

There are two primary techniques to bring these ancient instruments to life. The first, known as the striking method, involves gently tapping the bowl's rim with a mallet, creating an immediate, bell-like resonance that ripples through the space. The second technique called the rim method, requires a more meditative approach - slowly and steadily circling the bowl's outer rim with the mallet. This creates the bowl's signature "singing" sound, a sustained resonance that builds in intensity as you maintain consistent pressure and speed.

The voice of a singing bowl transforms dramatically with the choice of mallet size. The material covering the mallet head also plays a crucial role in sound production. Larger mallets, typically wrapped in thick leather or felt, create deeper, more rounded, and resonant tones that build slowly and sustain longer. These large mallets produce those rich, fundamental frequencies that resonate with lower chakras, making them ideal for grounding practices and deep meditation work. In contrast, smaller mallets, especially those with thinner padding, awaken brighter, more immediate tones from the bowl. Their lighter touch brings forth higher overtones and harmonics, creating a more crystalline sound that speaks to the upper chakras. Some practitioners find these smaller strikers particularly effective for precise energy work or when seeking to stimulate specific points of awareness. Wooden or bare mallets, though less common, create distinct, bright tones that experienced practitioners might use for specific purposes. Mallets covered in wool, often red in color, create a subtle, wide sound. Understanding these subtle differences allows practitioners to choose the right tool

for their intended practice, whether seeking deep relaxation or energetic activation.

For beginners, start with gentle, mindful movements. In your left hand, place the singing bowl in your palm, supporting with only your palm, and your fingers flat, not touching the sides of the bowl. You can also play a singing bowl placed on a surface. Next, hold your mallet, keeping your wrist relaxed. Whether striking or moving your mallet around the rim, remember that these instruments respond best to a balanced touch - not too forceful, not too timid. The bowl will guide you, revealing through its song when you've found the right pressure and rhythm.



### ***The Ripple Effect: Understanding Singing Bowl Benefits***

Each singing bowl is believed to vibrantly affect chakras because the bowls' frequencies resonate with the chakras' natural energy frequencies. The gentle resonance of the singing bowls offers far more than just melodic tones - they open doorways to profound physical and emotional well-being. As the bowl's vibrations ripple through the air, they create a natural pathway to relaxation, helping to lower stress hormones while guiding practitioners into deeper states of meditation. These sacred instruments become trusted companions in the journey toward mindfulness, their sustained sounds anchoring wandering minds to the present moment.

Beyond meditation, singing bowls serve as powerful tools for emotional healing. Their soothing frequencies help release the grip of anxiety and fear while promot-



ing emotional balance and resilience. The bowls' vibrations work in harmony with our body's natural rhythms, potentially stimulating cellular healing and promoting nervous system relaxation. For those seeking deeper spiritual connection, these instruments have traditionally been used to align and balance chakras, creating energetic harmony throughout the body.

Perhaps most practically, singing bowl meditation can become a natural aid for better sleep. When incorporated into evening routines, the practice helps quiet racing thoughts and ease the transition to restful sleep. Whether you're a seasoned practitioner or new to meditation, singing bowls offer an accessible gateway to deeper awareness and contemplation, their ancient wisdom resonating with modern needs for peace and balance.

*The Seven Chakras: Mapping Your Body's Energy System*



Ancient wisdom recognizes seven vital energy centers flowing through our body, each one a distinct powerhouse of physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Imagine these chakras as glowing, spinning wheels of energy along the spine, each emitting a different color:

- The Root Chakra (Muladhara) anchors us at the base of the spine, establishing our sense of security, grounding, and connection to the physical world. It's associated with the color red.
- The Sacral Chakra (Svadhithana) pulses just below the navel, nurturing our creative essence and emotional depth. It's associated with the color orange.
- The Solar Plexus Chakra (Manipura) is the third energy center that radiates personal power

- and self-confidence, influencing how we move through the world. It's associated with the color yellow.
- The Heart Chakra (Anahata) is centered in the chest and serves as a bridge between our earthly and spiritual nature, fostering our capacity for compassion, love, and connection. It's associated with the color green.
- The Throat Chakra (Vishuddha) located at our throat is our fifth energy center that governs self-expression and truth-speaking, enabling authentic communication. It's associated with the color blue.
- The Third Eye Chakra (Ajna) rests between the brows, awakening our intuitive wisdom and inner vision. It's associated with the color indigo.
- The Crown Chakra (Sahasrara) is positioned at the top of the head, where our individual consciousness meets universal awareness, enhancing our spiritual connections and ability to attain enlightenment. It's associated with the color violet.

*Understanding Bowl Frequencies for Each Chakra*

Each chakra, like a unique musical note in the symphony of our being, resonates at its own distinctive frequency. From the deep, grounding vibrations that anchor our Root Chakra to the ethereal high notes that stimulate our Crown Chakra, our energetic system, these centers create an ascending scale of consciousness within us. The magic of singing bowls lies in their ability to "speak" directly to these energy centers through the universal language of vibration. When a bowl's resonant tone matches the natural frequency of a chakra, a subtle yet powerful harmony emerges. Imagine each chakra as a flower - the bowl's vibrations are like sunshine, encouraging it to open and align with its highest potential.

Traditional wisdom teaches that this vibrational matching serves as a tuning fork for our whole being. Just as a skilled musician can tune an instrument to perfect pitch, these sacred bowls can help tune our subtle energy system to its natural state of balance. When our chakras vibrate in harmony, they create a clear channel for the life force to flow, supporting not just spiritual growth but our overall well-being. Each chakra has a specific frequency and associated note, lending specific effects.

- The Root Chakra (Muladhara) has a frequency

- range of 194-396 Hz, in the key of C. The low, grounding vibrations from the bowls enhance stability and security.
- The Sacral Chakra (Svadhithana) has a frequency range of 210-480 Hz, in the key of D. The vibrations stimulate creativity and emotional expression. The Solar Plexus Chakra (Manipura) has a frequency range of 264-528 Hz, in the key of E. The bright, empowering tones energize self-confidence and personal power.
- The Heart Chakra (Anahata) has a frequency range of 341-594 Hz, in the key of F. The gentle, soothing vibrations encourage love, compassion, and emotional healing.
- The Throat Chakra (Vishuddha) has a frequency range of 384-672 Hz, in the key of G. The clear, focused tones promote communication and self-expression.
- The Third Eye Chakra (Ajna) has a frequency range of 426-720 Hz, in the key of A. The high-pitched, calming vibrations enhance intuition and clarity.
- The Crown Chakra (Sahasrara) has a frequency range of 480-963 Hz, in the key of B. The ethereal, transcendent tones connect to higher consciousness and spirituality.



As we conclude our exploration of singing bowl meditation and chakra alignment, remember that this ancient practice offers more than just momentary peace - it provides a pathway to profound transformation. The marriage of sacred sound and energy work creates a unique opportunity for healing and growth, accessible to both beginners and experienced practitioners alike. Whether you're drawn to the scientific precision of frequency matching or the spiritual aspects of chakra balancing, singing bowls offer a versatile tool for your wellness journey.

As you begin or deepen your practice, approach it with both curiosity and reverence. Let the bowls' resonant tones guide you toward greater awareness of your body's energy centers. Their vibrations remind us that we, too, are instruments of consciousness, capable of producing our own harmonious frequencies when properly tuned. In a world often filled with discord, these sacred sounds invite us to return to our natural state of balance, one resonant note at a time.

May your journey with singing bowls and chakra alignment continue to unfold, revealing new layers of understanding and awareness with each session. After all, in the realm of spiritual practice, every ending is simply a new beginning.

*About the Authors*

Chunghhee Jung is the Former Senior Vice President Overseas of the International Dharma Instructors Association. She is a professional meditation teacher and certified Buddhist Instructor. With a deep passion for exploring the mind, she majored in psychology to understand the intricate workings of human consciousness, including neuroscience. She enjoys sharing the benefits of meditation, introducing Korean culture to service members and their families, and promoting cultural exchanges at Osan Air Base, USAG Humphreys, and Seoul.



Harry Shin is a Certified Meditation Instructor accredited by the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism. He enjoys introducing Korean culture to U.S. service members and their families and promoting cultural exchanges by leading a Facebook community called "Enlightenment Community at Osan Airbase and Camp Humphreys."



The Delish Dish  
맛있게 드세요

# Smoke Town at Itaewon

By Kate Nelson



Missing a little country and a little Texas? Then Smoke Town at Itaewon is the place for you! You can have your fill of BBQ with a choice of four different sauces. Settle into a comfy, leather booth and get ready for a good carving of meat and choice of sides.

Smoky flavors combine with the unique Korean presentation of bright pink cabbage. Lemonades and sodas are there to complement the salty dishes. So much deliciousness to enjoy while you sit back and listen to a collection of country and soft rock songs. We loved the mini water kegs presented at the table.

**TASTY HINT:** Lunch is the time to go. There's never any wait during lunch. Just sit down and order from the kiosk. A friendly kitten robot will deliver your drinks!

**EXTRAS:** Open 11:30-14:30; 17:00-21:00. Side entrance for people with disabilities, although Itaewon is not the most wheelchair-accessible area of Seoul.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Noksapyeong Station Exit 4, take the 110 bus to the Itaewon Firehouse bus stop and cross the street. (The Noksapyeong Station from the Dragon Hill Lodge is through the pedestrian gate and to the right.)

Smoketown Itaewon  
124-1 Itaewon-dong  
Yongsan-gu Seoul  
<https://naver.me/FFGmICkW>

**BONUS:** If you're near Pyeongtaek, check out their location by USAG Humphreys!

Smoketown  
68 Anjeong-ri  
Paengseong-eup Pyeongtaek-si Gyeonggi-do  
<https://naver.me/GYCXVrKp>

## About the Author

Kate enjoys experiencing new cultures and worldviews while sharing the love of God. As a military spouse, she encourages her children to bloom where planted and enjoy the 'now' moment in their lives. She is a graduate of Eastern Mennonite and Liberty University.



## Red Ginseng

### Korean Ginseng Duty Free Shop




## JUNG KWAN JANG



**DHL (Dragon Hill Lodge) 1st floor - Market Square**

## CUSTOM TAILOR SHOP AT DRAGON HILL LODGE





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# Falling in Love with Rejection

By: Naomi Nubin-Sellers

*Why* has one never said, "I'm so pleased to announce that I have been rejected?" The short answer is no mystery. People often keep their rejection to themselves, viewing them as failures or believing that because they did not meet some societal expectation of success they are somehow unworthy. The line between acceptance and rejection is sometimes quite slim, highlighting the paradox that defines our lives. The truth is, we live in a dichotomous world where opposite ends of the spectrum—good/ bad, success/failure, acceptance/rejection—carry tremendous weight in our lives. These include where we live, who we date, clubs we join, our jobs, and, thus, our livelihoods and overall quality of life. Navigating this balancing act can feel equivalent to performing on a trapeze wire, requiring flexibility, coordination, and adaptability to propel ourselves and our families forward. But what if I told you that although it can stir painful

feelings to be denied, rejection is NOT all bad? In fact, it is a necessary part of character development and personal growth, and the Spring season is the perfect time to remember this juncture.

Spring is often accompanied by warmer weather, a welcomed change for all who experienced the bone-chilling cold of winter. In the animal kingdom, many new babies are born, a reflection of the more hospitable environment. The world then looks to the Spring season as a renewed time to celebrate new life while surviving the previous harshness that we all had to navigate. Thus, Spring can also be characterized as a restored opportunity to take stock of the challenges we've faced, how we overcame those struggles, and how we matured along the way. In this light, rejection, and failure are significant parts of these processes. They push us to survive until circumstances become more hospitable, sometimes even forcing us into a type of metamorphosis, allowing for the vital development of our

character. This "Spring evolution" works to prepare us for the future that lies ahead. But we often cannot produce this integral growth without the painful sting of rejection or failure. Too often, we avoid situations where rejection is possible, choosing instead the comfort of sidestepping our fears. But, by doing so, you also deny yourself the opportunity to grow into the person you need to be to thrive in the next phase of your life. So, I encourage you to move forward bravely and practice gratitude for all of your opportunities—regardless of the outcome. Most importantly, remember that giving yourself grace in the face of challenges is key to helping you healthily deal with rejection and failure.

This notion begs the question: If rejection is unavoidable in life, then why does it feel so awful? Intuition would tell us that it is part of our social nature to want to be accepted—by our friends and families, the communities we hold dear, and even within our workplaces. This desire for social

acceptance does not know nor understand the boundaries that separate our personal from our professional lives. So, in both our quest for intimate relationships and fulfilling our career dreams, rejection can often derail our confidence, damage our self-image, and lead to the self-sabotage of avoidance, which can hurt our future aspirations. But there is a hidden message in rejection. It is a necessary component of social development; you can think of it as life's built-in self-improvement mechanism. From childhood, we are introduced to rejection, be it on a much smaller scale, and throughout our lives, the stakes seem to increase, but the feeling often remains. From a minor inconvenience to a gut-wrenching setback, being turned down can frequently feel like our lives are out of control or even like we are not worthy of the opportunity. Yet, facing rejection head-on can allow us to practice the emotional resilience we need to forge a new path. This experience helps us to become more adaptable and courageous in the face of adversity.

Rejection, in addition to the feelings it produces, also offers us a chance to evolve into the person we need to be in the next step of our life. A transformation? Is that really what makes rejection a necessity? I understand that this may not be what you want to hear, and truth be told, in my own experiences, I didn't want to hear it either. But consider this—if we were handed everything we ever



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Summer 2024, Volume 13, Issue 2

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### GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

**Congratulations 2024 PhD Graduates!**



Jack McDonald  
(Jeffrey Church, advisor)



Sarah Mallams  
(With Jeffrey Church)



Gathoni Kimondo  
(Jennifer Clark, advisor)

**Graduate Student Naomi Nubin Receives Fellowships**



In Fall 2023, Nubin was awarded a PhD dissertation fellowship from the Mercatus center located at George Mason University. In addition to her fellowship at GMU, she was also awarded the 2023 Jo Ann Robinson Gibson Dissertation Award. This award was granted from the Association for the study of Black women in politics, and this competitive award is only granted to one individual per year, nationally. Nubin will also take on an instructor role for the Race Ethnicity and Quantitative Methods course at the ICPSR Summer Program.

**NOTE FROM THE CHAIR**



Thanks to everyone for an exciting Spring semester! We had a lot of great events this semester, including a conference on AI, a Q&A with a former Attorney General, visiting scholars, and much more. This semester, we've also seen faculty and graduate students continue to partner to publish co-authored cutting-edge research. I have long thought that a real strength of our program is the close mentorship relationship that our faculty have with the graduate students, which leads to student success both in degree completion and in placement after graduation. Enjoy this news and please stay in touch!

-Jeffrey Church

**Graduate Student Research Series**

This spring semester the UH political science department kicked off the **Graduate Student Research Series**, a regular workshop where graduate students practiced their presentation skills and received feedback on research in progress. Organized by Professors Jae-Hee Jung and Michael Kittner, the event included the following presentations:

- "Balanced Cynicism: Identifying Negative Partisanship in Measures of Political Cynicism"  
PRESENTED BY: Lucas Lothamer (1/24)
- "The Impact of Critical Events on the Attitudes of Independents"  
PRESENTED BY: Ting-Wei Weng (2/14)
- "Firm Engagement in the UN Global Compact"  
PRESENTED BY: Rebecca Da Costa (2/28)
- "Executives' Attacks on Courts in Latin America (2009-2018)"  
PRESENTED BY: Eugenia Artabe (4/3)
- "A Formal Model of Redistributive Preferences Under Conditions of Sociotropic Sufficiency and Scarcity"  
PRESENTED BY: Amanda Austin (5/1)

**Graduate Students Poster Session**

The PSGSA hosted a poster session event for graduate students giving them the opportunity to present the research they had been conducting in their classes. Throughout the event, students obtained feedback about their research from faculty and fellow students. The event was held May 8th from 3PM- 5PM at The UH Student Center South Multipurpose Room. A big thank you to everyone who attended the poster session!



desired, would we ever grow? Unfortunately, I do not have the answer to this. But I do know that it is universally scientifically accepted that things that do not grow and do not evolve, will likely perish. This is not to say that you will literally die if you do not learn to accept rejection, but it does guarantee that you compound your struggle if you do not know how to transform negative aspects of your life into a new positive view. But there are ubiquitous things in life; rejection

is one of those certainties. Even early man had to continuously adapt to stay alive. Learning to hunt, fish, and build seems a far cry from the magazine, smartphone, or laptop on which you are reading this column, right? Today, developing the skills we require to move forward is more refined. Resilience, enhanced leadership, advanced critical thinking, or improved emotional intelligence are often the rewards we reap when we overcome adversity in the form of rejection.



Moving forward, we should all aim to treat the rejections as advanced skill-building opportunities. With each instance of rejection, we face a eureka moment. An essential (and sometimes surprising) lesson that you need to learn in preparation for the next phase in your life. The concept of love, what it means, and how to recognize whether you are genuinely experiencing it is the subject of another column. But broadly, “falling in love with rejection” provides us the necessary space to appreciate our failures by facing rejection and accepting the lessons accompanying those failures. This process allows us all to grow while being aware of how our intentional evolution can help prepare us for the unknown. So go forth, applauding your ability to put yourself out there, celebrating your capacity to be courageous, and always practicing self-love in all its forms.



**About the Author**

The column “Diamonds in the Rough” is about embracing the challenges of family, career building, and all the possibilities in life. The author, Naomi Nubin-Sellers is a current PhD Candidate, holding Bachelors and Masters degrees in the social sciences. In addition, she is a current instructor for a program housed at the University of Michigan. Her career aspirations include data-driven policy research, higher education, and non-profit services tailored to young mothers. She currently resides in Pyeongtaek, South Korea, with her active-duty spouse and four beautiful children who range from ages 6 to 17.

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Department of Political Science

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Winter 2023, Volume 12, Issue 1

GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

PHD Student Receives Prestigious Fellowship



PHD student Burak Giray has received a DAAD PRIME Postdoctoral Fellowship that will fund him for 18 months to do research in Germany and Sweden. Giray was one of 22 fellows selected from 231 applicants for this prestigious grant. He will be working on a project that will create an original dataset on the effect of public services that international peacekeepers provide to countries in conflict. Congratulations also to Giray who graduates with his PhD from our program in December 2022.

PHD Student Awarded Elinor Ostrom Fellowship



PHD Student Naomi Nubin has been awarded an Elinor Ostrom Fellowship from the Mercatus Institute at George Mason University. The Fellowship funds Nubin's travel to George Mason to attend several workshops and seminars over the course of the academic year to learn about markets, culture, and morality from an Austrian school of political economy.

GRADUATE STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Lukuyu June, Myriam Shiran, Ryan Kennedy, Johannes Urpelainen, and Jay Taneja. "Purchasing power: Examining customer profiles and patterns for decentralized electricity systems in East Africa." *Energy Policy*

Giray, Burak. "Public Support for UN Missions and Attacks on Peacekeepers: Evidence From the Democratic Republic of the Congo." *Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy*

Badas, Alex, Billy Justus, and Siyu Li. "Assessing the Influence of Supreme Court's Shadow Docket in the Judicial Hierarchy." *Justice System Journal*

CONGRATULATIONS PHD GRADUATES

Burak Giray, "UN Peacekeeping Operations: Conflicting Interests and Effectiveness". (Adviser: Tyson Chatagnier)

Samad Kerimov, "The Onset and Outcomes of Biased Mediation in International Conflicts". (Adviser: Tyson Chatagnier)

Hui Zhou, "Making Bureaucracy Accountable: Three Essays on Bureaucratic Accountability in China." (Adviser: Ling Zhu)

PHD Student a Finalist in UH Competition



PHD Student Myriam Shiran (far right in picture) was a finalist in the 3 Minute Dissertation Competition put on by the UH Graduate School. Participants had to do a 3 minute "elevator pitch" about their dissertations. Ms. Shiran's dissertation examines conservative backlash against women politicians following the implementation of electoral gender quotas in Sub-Saharan African countries.

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# Jello-O for Your Face?

## The New Hydrogel Masks Revolutionizing Skincare

Written by Alison Rock / Photography by Anna Lonborg and Alison Rock

I'm not suggesting that you put Jell-O on your face but, I do want to introduce you to Re:luz products, including a new line of face masks that are made from Hydrogel, a revolutionary ingredient in K-beauty. When you open the package the mask is like a really thin, very delicate translucent sheet of gelatin. It's so very different from anything else that I've ever tried.

While many people get irritated skin from paper and woven fabric masks, this new form shouldn't cause skin irritation. In addition, Re:luz manufactures their masks without synthetic preservatives to minimize adverse effects on sensitive skin and the company works to sterilize the ingredients, eliminating dangerous pathogens. Re:luz embraces innovative technology that allows for the manipulation of the molecule, reducing its size so the active ingredients can penetrate deeper into the skin than products made from standard methods.

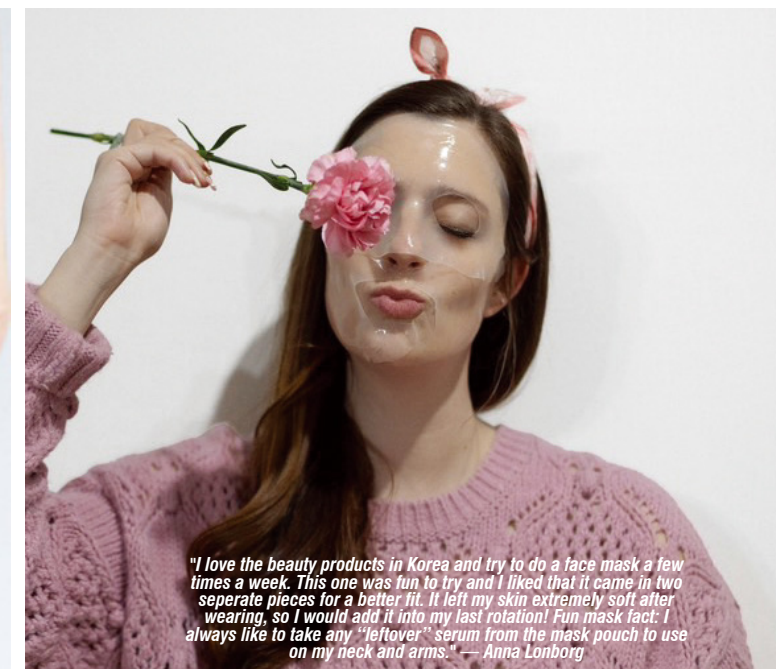
So, what does that mean to you and why is it innovative? Simply put, many products on the market are soaked in chemicals and compounds that claim to have all kinds of skin benefits. For example, hyaluronic acid is known to increase one's natural collagen production to help decrease fine lines and wrinkles. But if a molecule is too large, it may sit on the skin's surface instead of getting absorbed into the dermis, the middle layer of skin, where collagen is produced.

Re:luz has developed 4 innovative masks to address a variety of skin concerns. They have figured out how to reduce the hyaluronic acid molecule to one hundredth its original size so the Hyaluronic Acid Sheet's active ingredients can penetrate as deep as possible maximizing the product's benefits and brightening the skin. They also make a Glow Lumi-



nous sheet to calm irritated skin, A Vital Energy Sheet to improve skin texture, and a Hydrogel Lifting Band to address the chin and jawline.

This concept is very intriguing to me, so I decided to give it a try. I started with a clean face and applied the Hyaluronic Acid Sheet. It's a wild experience, again, not like any other face mask I've ever used. It's a very thin gel sheet mask. There is a bit of a learning curve with application as I tore the first one, I applied. That didn't affect its performance as you can just smooth it



down on the skin, but I got better the second time I tried the mask. The mask's consistency is that of a thin sheet of jelly, but it's not sticky, it's smooth and silky. It comes in two pieces, one for the top half of your face and another for the bottom. After using it my skin was really soft. I have super dry skin and my face felt a bit tight, so I was compelled to moisturize but my skin felt extremely soft and smooth.

Since my skin tends to be dry and needs to be moisturized, I decided to try Re:luz's Deep Section Hyaluronic Acid skin trio, consisting of a toner, serum, and cream. All the products I tried have absolutely no scent. The key ingredient in the Deep Section Hyaluronic Acid Toner and Serum is derived from Centella Asiatica known for its anti-inflammatory/antioxidant/anti-aging properties. The serum has a very gel-like feel. Not sticky, just a spongy gel-type texture. It absorbed well and I was able to apply the cream quickly after. The Deep Section Hyaluronic Acid Cream is made with five ceramides that are designed to protect, prevent, and provide the moisture skin needs to be radiant and elastic. It was pillowy soft and creamy. My skin felt moisturized, but it wasn't greasy. After moisturizing, it was easy to apply my foundation on top of it.

Currently, you can purchase Re:luz products directly from their website here in Korea. The mask packs run about 35,000 won for 5 masks. The Deep Section Hyaluronic Acid skin trio retails for 105,000, but they quite often run promotions on their website. Make sure to shop sales as I have seen the trio on sale for 40,000



▲ Re:luz Hyaluronic Acid line. (Photo captured by Alison Rock)

won. Since this product is new and unique it's being used in Korea in many dermatology clinics and esthetic care shops. You may even see people on your next flight wearing the mask in the air; as that practice is going viral. It's designed to be worn for 20 or 30 minutes but, in reality, it lasts much longer so some beauty advocates are using it to stay moisturized and protected from dry airplane air. Give it a try as I guarantee it won't be like any other face mask you've tried before.

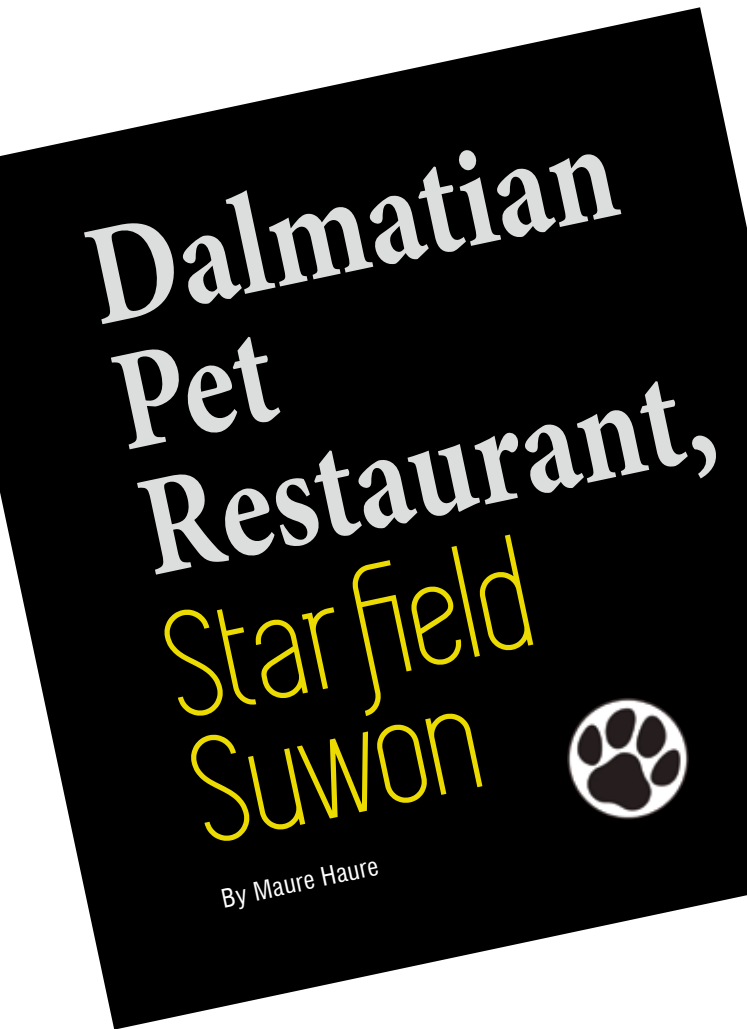
Re:luz Official Website: <https://reluzofficial.com/>



### About the Author

Alison Rock is a graduate of the University of Southern California. She lives in Korea with her husband and teenage sons. She enjoys cooking, painting, and jewelry design and recently started a YouTube channel reviewing K-beauty products. [www.youtube.com/@AlisonRockUSA](https://www.youtube.com/@AlisonRockUSA)





**Who** wouldn't love to have a meal with their fur baby? By meal I mean, your fur baby and yourself sitting at a meal table, where you are in your seat and your fur baby is in their seat! You both browse the menu, you choose your appetizer, meal, and beverage. Afterwards, you choose your fur babies meal from the pet menu, also their beverage... huh, water. To have a monthly standing date year-round, would be cool. Is there such a place...hmm?

Well, there is such a place at the Suwon Starfield Mall. Located on the first floor in the food court, between the entrance door and Molly's fur baby story, you will find it.

The Restaurant is called Dalmatian Restaurant. You can drive or take the subway. The food is amazing, especially the pasta dishes. Our two pets loved the experience. What if you don't have a pet? That's not a problem. There are seating areas



for those who are just interested in exploring something new.

"Pet dining where you can eat with your pet in a friendly space."

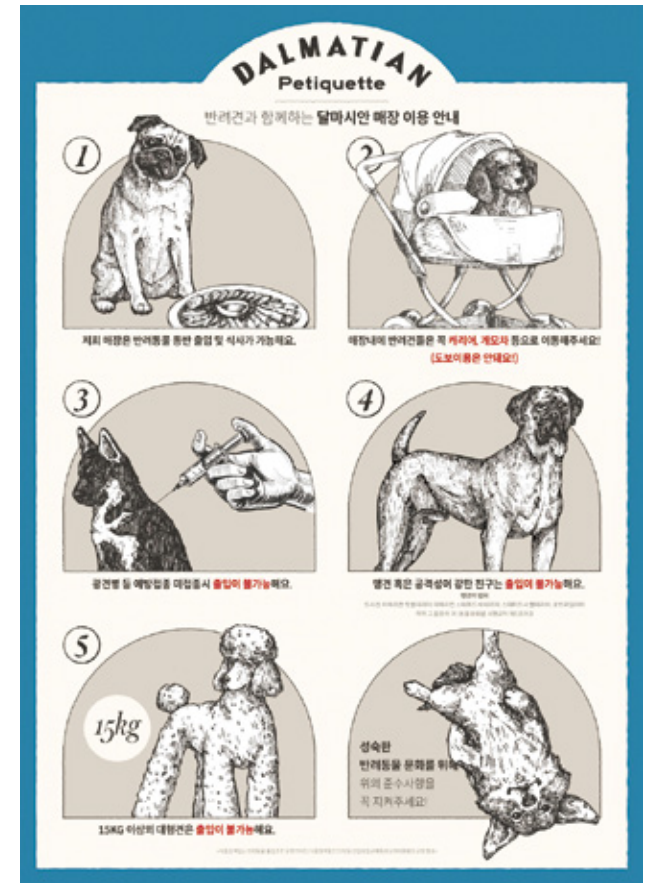
#### Tips and Accessibility:

- Hours: Daily, 10:30am-10:00pm
- Reservations: Group and individual reservations can be made at Catchtable.
- Amenities: Amenities include wifi, a waiting space, highchairs, and group seating.
- Strollers: A stroller, don't worry about it, there is stroller parking.
- Wheelchair: The mall is wheelchair accessible with elevators in the parking structures and mall shopping spaces.

Find them on Instagram: [dalmatian\\_suwon](#)

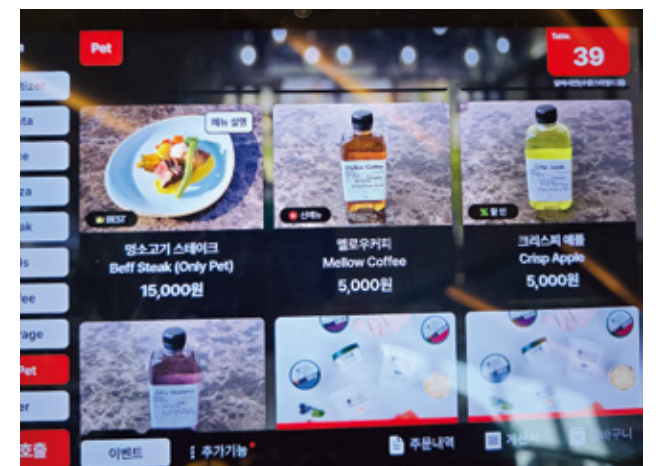


[NAVER Map]  
Dalmatian Starfield Suwon Branch  
111-14 Jeongja-dong Jangan-gu,  
Suwon-si Gyeonggi-do  
<https://naver.me/GYCRiZp>



#### Dalmatian Petiquette Guidelines for Bringing Your Pet to Dalmatian Stores.

1. Pets are welcome to enter and dine in our store.
  2. Please ensure your pets are transported in carriers, strollers, or similar inside the store! (No walking allowed!)
  3. Entry is not permitted for pets that have not been vaccinated against rabies and other diseases.
  4. Dogs with aggressive tendencies or behavior are not allowed to enter.
  5. Large dogs weighing over 15kg are not permitted entry.
  6. Respect pet etiquette. Please keep an eye on your pet!
- \*Photos shared from the Dalmatian Naver Company Site.





# SPRING RESET

## *Journaling Your Way to Mental Clarity*

Written by Tyrese Cook  
Photography by Jetta Allen



*As* the seasons shift, there's a natural inclination to embrace new beginnings. Spring, with its promise of renewal and growth, serves as the perfect time to reset—not only in our homes but within ourselves. Military life can often leave us feeling mentally cluttered. Spring offers an opportunity to take a step back, reflect, and focus on what truly matters to us. One of the most powerful tools is journaling. Journaling is not just a creative outlet; it is a therapeutic practice that fosters mindfulness, and emotional awareness, especially as we navigate the complexities of life.

### **The Power of Journaling for Mental Clarity**

Journaling is more than just a way to document your day. It's intentional in that it invites you to sit with your thoughts and emotions, allowing them to surface in a safe, non-judgmental space. When life gets overwhelming, journaling becomes a grounding tool that helps you make sense of the world around you. Whether it's stress, anxiety, or unresolved emotions, journaling gives you the space to untangle the mess inside and bring order to your thoughts.

The expression of frustration, fears, and hopes offers a sense of emotional release. By putting pen to paper, you externalize internal struggles, making it easier to manage them. Additionally, journaling has been shown to improve emotional regulation and reduce stress by allowing individuals to confront their feelings head-on rather than suppressing them.



### **Spring as a Time of Renewal for Mental Health**

Just as we declutter our homes and refresh our spaces during the spring cleaning process, it's essential to engage in a mental reset as well. Spring is the perfect time to let go of old emotional baggage and invite new, healthier practices into our lives. The longer days, the blooming flowers, and the fresh air serve as gentle reminders that change is possible. Allow spring to inspire an internal shift, prompting us to take a closer look at our mental state and begin the work of rejuvenating our minds. This season has a unique energy about it—a feeling of optimism that can serve as a catalyst for change.

### **Journaling Prompts for a Spring Reset**

The transition into spring invites us to slow down, pause, breathe, and reflect - not only on our surroundings but on our mental health. With the fresh

start that it brings, it's a wonderful time to embrace a reset. Below are some journaling prompts designed to help you as you move through this season.

#### ***What are three things I want to release this spring?***

Spring is the perfect time to let go of things that no longer serve you; a season of shedding. Whether it's physical clutter, old habits, or mental baggage. I encourage you to reflect on any negative thought patterns, unhelpful behaviors, or emotions you've been carrying. Example: You might choose to release the expectation that every place you live has to feel "perfect" right away, allowing yourself more flexibility in settling in.

#### ***What does mental peace look like for me right now?***

Mental peace is a state we all long for, but it looks different for everyone. Take some time to describe your ideal mental state. Think of creative ways to make this mental peace a regular part of



your life. Example: For you, mental peace might mean carving out a few quiet moments for yourself on the weekend.

**How can I show myself love in a new way this spring season?**

Reflect on how you can show yourself love in ways that are sustainable and meaningful - ways to nurture your mind, soul, body, and spirit. Example: Taking a long walk in nature, or scheduling an intentional act of solitude such as reading a book you've been putting off.

**Create a list of ways you will be more mindful in your daily routine.**

Creating healthy habits can have a profound impact on your mental health. Reflect on the practices you would like to introduce into your life this spring. Example: Starting each day with a few minutes of deep breathing before checking emails, or pausing to appreciate the small victories while focusing on gratitude before your daily routine.

**How has military life shaped my current emotional state, and how can I navigate that in a healthy way?**

Military life can have a profound impact on our emotional well-being, offering both challenges and growth. Take time to reflect on how your experiences in the military have shaped your emotional landscape. Example: Frequent moves have helped you develop resilience or independence, but you may also find moments of isolation that are more difficult to navigate.

**Take a look at a nearby green space. Use your senses and write down what you see, hear, smell, and/or taste.**

Nature offers us moments of peace and grounding- especially in new environments. Each place you're stationed offers new ways to connect (even on bad air quality days!). Take a few moments to explore your natural surroundings. Example: What do you notice in the natural world today? Do you hear birds chirping? Do you notice the scent of flowers blooming? The taste of fresh spring air?

**Who do I want to be for myself and others this season?**

Consider the version of yourself you want to nurture. Who do you want to show up as for



yourself, your family, friends, and coworkers? Example: You might decide to be more present and less focused on “doing it all.” You may want to develop your leadership skills by organizing a spouse event seeking or new professional growth opportunities.

**How can I make this spring memorable?**

Spring is full of potential for new memories. What small or big moments do you want to savor? Example: Plan a weekend road trip to a nearby city or cultural festival.

**What can I learn from spring?**

What can this season of change reveal to you? Example: Spring can teach you patience as the flowers bloom.

**What am I looking forward to?**

Reflect on both big and small moments that fill you with hope and excitement. Example: You may be looking forward to exploring a new cafe, or hobby, or simply reconnecting with friends as you build new relationships at your current duty station.

**A Gentle Reminder:** It’s important to recognize when it might be helpful to seek additional support. If you find yourself feeling stuck, overwhelmed, or uncertain, seeking professional help can be incredibly valuable. A therapist or counselor can offer an unbiased perspective, guidance, and support as you navigate complex thoughts and emotions. Never hesitate to ask for support when you need it. Sometimes a fresh perspective is what we need to move forward.

**Making Journaling a Consistent Habit**

The true benefit of journaling comes from consistency. It’s not about writing long, elaborate entries every day, but rather about making it a part of your daily routine. By setting aside 5-15 minutes each day to journal, you can create a habit that supports you. Over time, you’ll notice that journaling may become a natural way to process your thoughts and feelings. One of the most beautiful aspects of journaling is that it doesn’t require any special tools or skills. You don’t need to be a writer to benefit from this practice; all you need is a notebook and the willingness

to be honest with yourself. In fact, the more authentic you are in your journaling practice, the more effective it becomes.

**Spring Into a Clearer Mindset**

As you embark on your spring reset, consider journaling as a vital tool. Through reflection, release, and intention-setting, journaling offers an opportunity to declutter your mind and make room for renewal. By embracing this practice, you not only enhance your mental health but also strengthen your ability to navigate the challenges that come with military life. With a clear mind, you’ll approach each day with a sense of peace and purpose, ready to embrace the opportunities that spring brings.

*\*The information provided in this article is for educational and informational purposes only and is not intended to replace professional mental health treatment or to serve as a diagnosis or treatment for any health condition. This article does not establish a client/therapist relationship between the author and the reader. Readers should consult their own licensed medical or mental health providers for personalized advice and treatment for any concerns related to their health or well-being. Always seek the guidance of your own qualified professionals regarding any specific questions or concerns you may have regarding your health.*



**About the Author**  
Tyrese Cook, also known as Re, is a devoted military spouse and proud mother to five daughters—including two sets of twins—who brings warmth, insight, and a touch of humor to every subject she explores. Tyrese, a non-denominational Christian with a master’s degree in social work, is a licensed social worker in Ohio and Kentucky who practices therapy. Drawing on her faith and expertise, she is passionate about mental health and committed to helping others reach their full potential with compassion and understanding. Recently featured with her family on CNN, United on the RoK, The OCO-NUS Project, and The Goode Show. Tyrese’s life and work reflect her deep commitment to family, love, and resilience. Outside of her work and family life, she delights in cooking creative meals, diving into captivating books, and experiencing the world’s diverse cultures. Follow her journey on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram at @AuthenticallyRe.



# Discovering Taipei

## *A City of Contrasts*

By Dan Romano



*The* drive from the airport to downtown Taipei was a journey through time, a captivating blend of old and new. The city unfolded like a faded photograph, with a unique charm that hinted at a rich history and vibrant future. As we traveled around the city streets, people moved with a gentle rhythm and seemed focused on the simple pleasures of daily life, with little regard for the world around them. The blend of ancient temples and modern skyscrapers created a unique urban experience.

The distinct character of Taipei can be seen at the sites, markets, and restaurants that hummed with vibrant energy and a symphony of sounds from bustling traffic, the gentle hum of conversation, and sizzling street food. The most bizarre site was the unusual number of claw machine stores! In the city, their bright neon lights entice one to enter with the promise of winning a wide variety of items. If you decide to take the three-hour direct flight to Taipei, here are five attractions to consider and more.



### *Liberty Square*

A trip to Taipei would not be complete without visiting Liberty Square which is a great first stop. The square includes the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall, two brilliantly colored National Performance Halls, and the Gate of Integrity with many beautiful gardens and walking trails. The memorial hall is dedicated to Chiang Kai-shek who was the President of the Republic of China. When they were defeated by the Communist Party in 1949, he retreated from mainland China to Taiwan where he continued to lead and develop the Republican Party of China until his death in 1975. This is a significant factor in why Taiwan has developed differently and considers itself separate from China.



### *Temples of Taiwan*

It should be illegal to visit Taiwan and not take a trip back in time at one or more of the temples! Most of Taipei's early settlements were developed around a temple. The temples are much of the centerpiece of the cities today and have remarkable inscriptions, ceramics, and statues to admire. Here are three temples to consider for your visit.







Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall



Lungshan Temple



Dalongdong Baoan Temple

## Lungshan Temple

If you are looking for mercy, blessings on the sea or in war, or are getting married, Lungshan Temple, also known as Dragon Mountain Temple, is the temple to pray. A centerpiece for tourists, it is where many Taoist, Buddhist, or Confucian worshippers pray. They give offerings such as food, flowers, or incense to the deities in exchange for blessings or answers to prayers. There are many different gods that worshippers pray to including Guanyin (觀音), goddess of mercy, Mazu, goddess of the sea, Guan Yu (關羽), the god of war, or Yue Lao (月下老人), the god of marriage. This temple is located closer to the city center, so expect it to be crowded.

## Dalongdong Baoan Temple

If you are looking for good health and quick recovery, Dalongdong Baoan Temple, also known as Taipei Baoan Temple, is where to go. While Longshan Temple is dedicated to several gods, this temple is dedicated to one, Baosheng Dadi (保生大帝), who is the god of health and medicine. Naturally, worshippers bring gifts and pray for good health, full recovery from illness, and protection from disease. In 2003, Dalongdong Temple was recognized by UNESCO and inducted into the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation.

## Temple of Confucius

If you are hoping for a good grade on that test or academic success, the Confucius Temple, also known as Kong Miao or Temple of Literature, is the temple for you. This temple is dedicated to the values and educational principles of the philosopher K'ung Fu-tzu (i.e., Confucius). Worshippers and students come here to pay respect and ask for blessings for academic success! The teachings of Confucianism can benefit us in other ways too. It is a system of beliefs that can positively impact our behavior and lives by practicing five virtues: kindness, goodness, honesty, modesty, wisdom, and trustworthiness. Confucianism considers family

as more important than any individual and has a profound respect for parents. Confucianism is not a church with religious leaders or holy beliefs, it is a way of life that comes from within everyone.

## Taipei Botanical Garden

The Taipei Botanical Garden is in the middle of an urban area and includes more than 3,000 plant species in one of 17 distinct gardens with several ponds and waterfalls. It is a place for anyone to appreciate the sprouting of spring, summer lotus flowers, or fall leaves. As the seasons change, so do the gardens as various planets grow. It also serves as an academic research center and offers visitors several educational programs and events. The garden is a beautiful place to spend the day walking under the canopy of trees and enjoying its natural beauty. The botanical garden is only one of about ten parks in the city worth visiting.

## Taiwan's High-Speed Rail Station

Located in the city's center, it is the largest railway station in terms of building scale and traffic volume. Today it is considered the most significant transportation hub in northern Taiwan. The station is popular with an eclectic range of people and is a place to try some of the many different dishes Taipei has to offer. The centerpiece of the station is the huge beautiful grand concourse with marble walls and floors where commuters transit, folks sit to rest and children play. It is surrounded by many restaurants, cafes, and boutique pastry stores. On the second floor, you will find a wide variety of authentic Asian restaurants with two food courts and dozens of other restaurants to choose from. The station is worth a visit for a meal, coffee, or to buy boxed pastries for the road! While we did not venture on the city's mass transit, the taxis and the hop-on-hop-off bus were very convenient!

## Claw Machine Arcades

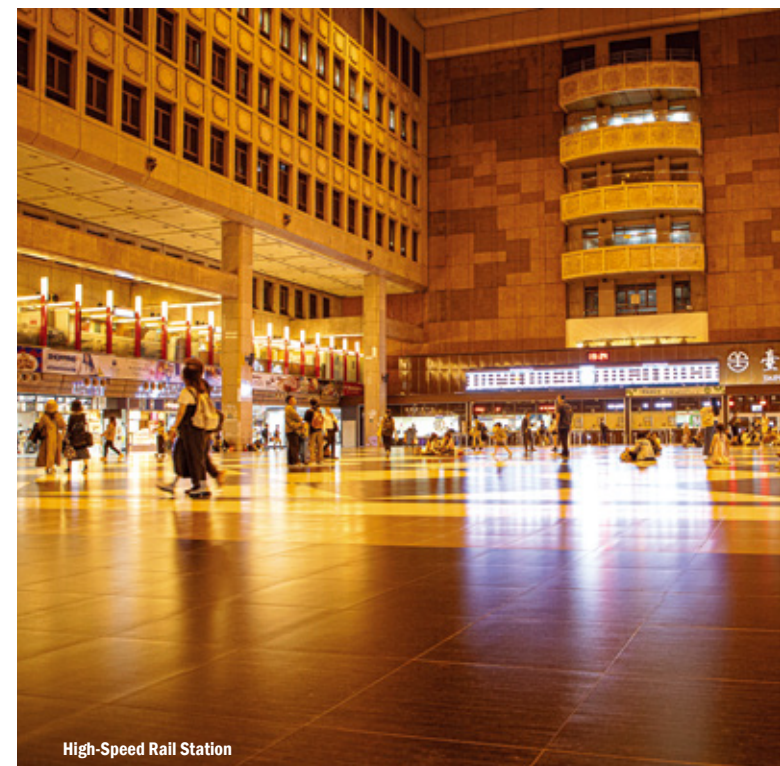
It was evident Taipei had a peculiar obsession with claw machines! These arcades filled with



Taipei Confucius Temple



Botanical Garden



High-Speed Rail Station





High-Speed Rail Station



Starbeary

claw machines are a common site, so why not try this Taipei experience? Even if you are not a claw machine expert, for a few dollars it is a guaranteed laugh. We estimated that Starbeary, which is the largest store in Taipei, has upwards of 200 machines to choose from. You might walk away with a giant plushie, cosmetics, a food or drink item, or even a toy for your pet! If you are lucky, you might win something, but you are guaranteed to leave with an interesting experience.

## Make Taipei Your Next Trip

There is no shortage of day and night markets to explore where you can snack on local favorites or feast at Su Hung near Liberty Square or any of the other 4-star Michelin restaurants. Visitors should experience the view of the entire city from the top of Taipei 101, Taiwan's tallest building. If you're into art and culture, add the National Palace Museum to your itinerary, it has the world's largest collection of Chinese art treasures. Be sure to walk through nature or take in a concert at Da'an Park, and visit the nearby Flower and Jade Market. Maybe you can get lost in the nightlife or visit (or stay at) the Grand Hotel, a popular historic five-star hotel known for its Chinese palace architecture and culture. Taipei has a lot more to see and do!

## Navigating Potential Language Barriers

Before embarking on any trip, I always contemplate the potential language barriers, and this trip was no different. I wondered if the barrier would be significant since I only know two Chinese words: 'hello' and 'thank you,' which I contend are the most important words to know in any language. Throughout this trip, these words combined with a lot of pointing and nonverbal kindness served me well, and as expected, there were no issues. One day, a truly kindhearted lady, who only spoke a few words of English, encapsulated the essence of overcoming language barriers with three simple, yet profound words.

*She said, 'smile world same.'*

This is a perfect reminder for any traveler that a smile transcends all language barriers and can help unite us in kind ways. Taipei, smile, and go check it out!

## Travel Resources

Aircraft and Personnel Automated Clearance System

<https://apacs.milcloud.mil/>

Theater Travel Requirements, Travel Tracker/Individual Antiterrorism Plan (TT/IATP)

<https://www.pacom.mil/Resources/Travel-Requirements/>

US Department of State: Bureau of Consular Affairs

A visa is not required for a stay of less than 90 days with a US Passport.

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Taiwan.html>

Taiwan Visa Application Form

<https://visawebapp.boca.gov.tw/>

Guide to Taiwan

<https://guidetotaiwan.com/en>

Department of Information and Tourism, Taipei City Government

<https://www.travel.taipei/en>



### About the Author

Dan Romano retired from the Air Force after 30 years of service. Dan was based at United States Forces Korea for several years over two assignments. He recently returned and enjoys living in Korea.

He is a nature lover, photographer, and traveler. His adventures take him to some of the most beautiful places in the world where he captures the beauty of nature both on land and in the water.



The Grand Hotel



Botanical Garden





Spring in Seoul. Captured by Sidiki Kyem.

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