

Changdeokgung Palace, Seoul



Exterior of the Changdeokgung Palace in Seoul

A two-and-a-half-hour guided tour around the Changdeokgung Palace and its **Secret Garden** is a beloved sightseeing attraction for every tourist visiting Seoul, South Korea. This over- **600-year-old** royal establishment has gone through tumultuous times, but has never lost its essence despite the restoration performed on a few of its parts. It is no wonder that UNESCO listed the Changdeokgung Palace Complex as a World Heritage Site in 1997 for its “architecture and design” that merges “harmoniously” with the natural surroundings.

The tour of the Changdeokgung Palace begins with the grand **Donhwamun entrance**, and leads you through a stone bridge, Geumcheongyo, considered the oldest in the city, with carved mythical animals (haetae) on both sides towards the main palace – the **Injeongjeon Hall**. The building is made of incredibly ornate wood, and has an interesting interior that uniquely combines traditionally painted ceilings and throne with rather modern curtains and chandeliers lit by electricity. This variance may be attributed to the fact that the palace complex has been home to the royals till 1989, and a number of changes were made to keep the palace maintained and worth living. Next to the palace stand buildings – Seonjeongjeon (with government offices) and Nakseonjae (the royal residence). The entire Changdeokgung Palace tour can be seen in about an hour. The sightseeing does not end here; the best is, in fact, yet to come. Once you are done with the palace viewing, the tour guide will steer you through a dense forest patch and into what might look like heaven! The **Biwon** or **Huwon** or the Secret and Hidden Garden is a 72-acre landscaped plot with a huge, 300-year-old tree, lotus pool, fishing pond, fountains, water streams, and some pavilions. The Yeongyeongdang pavilion has a yangban house that was built as a study place for the prince. The **Buyongjeong** pavilion was used as a fishing spot, and the Juhapru pavilion housing a library was used extensively by the royalty and courtiers for administrative deliberations. The garden has a stream, **Ongnyucheon**, surrounding which are five comparatively small pavilions, including Chunguijeong, Soyojeong, and Taegeukjeong. An interesting characteristic of the stream is the Soyoam. It is a big rock, around which is a U-shaped water channel leading to a waterfall. There is an inscription of a Chinese poem on the rock. It is believed that the place was used as inspiration for poetry by the kings and his scholars. This incredible Changdeokgung Palace Garden tour will take about an hour and a half to complete.

Explore: *Things to do in Seoul*

Changdeokgung Palace Map



Changdeokgung Palace Facts

There are 11 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in South Korea (largest for any Asian country), many of which are in Seoul, Changdeokgung Palace Complex being one of them.

Located in the northern part of Seoul, the palace stands at the base of Mount Baekgaksan. This setting is considered favorable *pungsu*, according to Chinese architectural principles. The builders of Changdeokgung Palace, i.e., the rulers of the Joseon Dynasty, were responsible for building four other palaces as well. Changdeokgung is considered to be the most beautiful among all.

Another palace, Gyeongbukgung was initially the primary residence for the Joseon royals until it was destroyed by the Japanese in 1590s, and they had to shift to Changdeokgung. Although parts of Changdeokgung were also destroyed during the same time, it was considered luckier than Gyeongbukgung. It remained the primary palace thereafter till 1896. Changdeokgung literally means a "Palace of Illustrious Virtues."

Where is Changdeokgung Palace ?

Changdeokgung Palace is located in Jongno-gu locality of northern Seoul.

Address : 99, *Yulgok-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul, South Korea*

How to Reach ?

You can reach the palace within one hour and twenty minutes by bus from the Incheon International Airport. You can also take the subway to either the Anguk Station in Line 3 and get out from the 3rd Exit, or the Jongno 3-ga Station in Line 1, 3, and 5, and get out from the 6th Exit. The Palace complex is about 10 minutes down the Donhwamun-ro Street from Jongno 3-ga Station, and about 5 minutes from the Anguk Station.

You can also board the Blue Bus (272, 172, 171, 162, 151, or 109), or the 7025 Green Bus to reach the Palace.

Best Time to Visit

Seoul experiences a subtropical climate, and has four distinct seasons. Spring, between March and May, is pleasant yet cold with cherry blossom trees in full bloom. Summer, till mid-July, is mostly hot and humid. Then comes the rain, when the number of visitors is lower. It is in September that the city gets some respite from the incessant pouring, and autumn brings in some beautiful sights in the natural surroundings of the Changdeokgung Palace complex. Winter is cold and harsh; between November and March.

Even though, Changdeokgung Palace can be visited anytime of the year, if you wish to see the spectacular foliage of the Secret Garden, visit during the autumn season, between September and November.

Changdeokgung Palace Hours

The visiting hours of the Changdeokgung Palace Complex differ according to the seasons and tour preference.

Tour of the Changdeokgung Palace building – During the winter season, between November and January, visiting hours are between 9:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. During the spring, summer and autumn months, which is from February to May and for September and October, respectively, the timings are extended for another half an hour, till 6:00 p.m. During the rainy season, you can tour the palace in a leisurely manner, till 6:30 p.m.

Tour of the Secret Garden – The visiting hours for the Secret Garden begins at 10:00 a.m. The end time depends on the seasons; winter (November to January) – 4:30 p.m., spring, summer and autumn (February to May and September to October) – 5:30 p.m., and rainy season (June to August) – 6:00 p.m.

Changdeokgung Palace Tickets

Tickets are sold for both individuals and groups of more than 10 persons. Prices are separate for tours of the Changdeokgung Palace and Secret Garden. You can also buy a combination ticket to sightsee four palaces in Seoul, including the Changdeokgung Palace Complex. Entry of children below age 6 is free of charge.

Changdeokgung Palace Tour:

For individuals – 3,000 won for adults over age 19, and 1,500 won for youth between 7 and 18 years.

For groups – 2,400 won for adults, and 1,200 for youth.

Secret Garden Tour:

Only sold to individuals; 5,000 won for adults, and 2,500 won for youth.

More on Changdeokgung Palace

What are the coordinates of the Changdeokgung Palace?

37.5794° N, 126.9917° E

Which are the places of interest in Seoul City?

Changgyeonggung Palace, Bukchon Hanok Village, Gahoe Museum, Seoul National Science Museum, [Lotte World](#), and the Institute of Korean Royal Cuisine.

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