

First 90 Days in Korea — The Checklist

Whether you're visiting for a week or moving for good, the first days decide how smooth it goes.

01 Days 1–7 · Land and get running

☐ Get from Incheon Airport into Seoul

All-stop AREX train is cheapest; the express has reserved seats; limousine buses win on luggage; taxis are door-to-door. Landing after midnight has its own plan —

90dayskorea.com/incheon-airport-to-seoul/

☐ Get connected — a passport is enough for data

Travel eSIM or airport prepaid SIM for now. A real 010 number needs your Residence Card, and Korean banking apps will want that number later.

90dayskorea.com/korea-sim-card-esim/

☐ Buy and charge a T-money card

One card for subway, bus, taxi and convenience stores.

90dayskorea.com/tmoney-card/

☐ Save five numbers before you need them

119 fire & ambulance · 112 police · 1345 immigration helpline · 1330 travel hotline (24/7) · 1339 disease control — interpretation available.

90dayskorea.com/korea-emergency-numbers/

☐ Install the apps Korea actually runs on

Google Maps barely works here. Naver Map, KakaoTalk, Papago and friends do.

90dayskorea.com/apps-for-foreigners-korea/

☐ Eat well from day one

Cold-noodle menus, solo dining, markets — the food guides are the fun part.

90dayskorea.com/guide/

SHORT TRIP? This page is your whole checklist.

Pages 2–3 are for anyone staying past 90 days — that's when registration becomes mandatory.

STAYING LONGER? Book your immigration visit THIS WEEK.

Registration is required within 90 days of arrival, and HiKorea reservation slots book out 2–3 weeks ahead in peak seasons (March & September). The next two pages walk you through it.

Your Residence Card (ARC)

THE RULES, IN ONE BOX

Deadline: apply within 90 days of arrival — fines apply if you miss it.

Fee: 30,000 KRW (as of 2026 — bring cash in case cards aren't accepted at your office).

Timeline: reservation + one office visit + about 2–4 weeks for the card.

02 Documents to prepare

☐ **Passport — original plus a photocopy**

☐ **Application form**

Download from HiKorea, or pick one up at the office.

☐ **One passport photo, taken within 6 months**

☐ **Proof of residence**

Lease contract, dormitory confirmation, or a utility bill with your address. No settled address yet? A dorm confirmation or short-term housing contract can work.

☐ **30,000 KRW in cash (as of 2026)**

☐ **Your visa type's extra documents**

Students, teachers and workers each have additions — check yours in the full guide.

90dayskorea.com/korea-arc-residence-card/

03 Book the visit (HiKorea)

☐ **Reserve as a non-member with your passport number**

No ARC needed yet. Use Chrome or Edge.

☐ **Pick the office that covers YOUR address**

Jurisdiction matters — the wrong office can refuse you. Unsure? Call 1345.

☐ **Select "Foreigner Registration", set a 4-digit password**

Screenshot the reservation number — non-members retrieve bookings with number + password. Change or cancel via the same menu; the exact cutoff is shown on your confirmation.

90dayskorea.com/hikorea-appointment/

04 While you wait (about 2–4 weeks)

☐ **Choose pick-up or registered mail**

Collect at the same office, or have it mailed to your Korean address (small delivery fee).

☐ **Track your application on HiKorea, under your case number**

☐ **Moving? Report your new address within 14 days**

A separate legal obligation for registered foreigners.

After the card — the unlock list

05 Do these next, in this order

☐ Open a Korean bank account

The errand foreigners fail most often — the app route is easiest in 2026.

90dayskorea.com/korea-bank-account/

☐ Upgrade to a real 010 postpaid number

Korean banking and government apps won't accept you without a verified number.

90dayskorea.com/korea-sim-card-esim/

☐ Know how health insurance works before the bill arrives

In Korea you don't sign up — after six months, NHIS enrolls you and the bill follows.

90dayskorea.com/korea-health-insurance/

☐ Set up sending money home — once, properly

Korea tracks money leaving the country; every transfer runs through a licensed channel.

90dayskorea.com/send-money-from-korea/

☐ Type your name EXACTLY as printed on the card — everywhere

One rule prevents most Korean ID-verification failures. Free 10-second checker:

90dayskorea.com/tools/name-check/

☐ Learn the trash system before the warning sticker

Wrong bag = uncollected trash, or a fine. Volume-based bags explained.

90dayskorea.com/korea-trash-recycling/

WHY TRUST THIS CHECKLIST?

Every fee, deadline and step above comes from the full guides at 90dayskorea.com, where each one is checked against official sources (HiKorea, NHIS, government notices) and linked so you can verify it yourself. Figures change — the guides stay updated.

Just landed and overwhelmed? Read the no-panic first-24-hours guide.

90dayskorea.com/start-here/