



Coldplay: Goyang Stadium on 16th, 18th, 19th, 22th, 24th, and 25th April
Experience a sky full of stars as Chris Martin and his band rock the house.

Seoul

SPRING SYMPHONY

Do this year's plans include watching Coldplay in South Korea? Be sure to extend your visit, for there's much to see and do

words by **Kunal Bhatia** and **Shuvajit Payne**



GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Seoul from Delhi.



With pleasant spring weather, blooming cherry blossoms, and as many as six Coldplay concerts lined up, Seoul is the place to be this April. There are stunning monuments and heritage neighbourhoods to explore,

cutting-edge galleries and diverse shopping avenues to visit, boisterous karaoke bars, and globally loved pop-culture trends that originate here—all ensuring that no moment is dull.

WHERE TO GO

The capital's centuries-old history is best unravelled

at Gyeongbokgung Palace, a sprawling complex built by the Joseon kings in the 14th century. Catch the colourful Guard Changing in front of the Gwanghwamun Gate before exploring the pavilions and ceremonial halls that lie beyond. The futuristic Dongdaemun Design Plaza, designed by



WHERE TO STAY

Sono Calm Goyang

Offering sleek rooms with city vistas, this hotel is close to the concert venue. Three restaurants and a rooftop pool make for a wholesome stay.

Kintex by K-tree

The hotel has an eye-catching façade and is also not too far away. They have a cinema too.

K-Hills The Terrace

Located in Paju-si, this lakefront property, with balconies, offers stunning views of the city.



Chris Martin: Getty Images; Changing of Guard Ceremony: Kunal Bhatia and Shuvajit Payne; Rest: Shutterstock

Zaha Hadid, is a cultural centre straight out of science fiction. Inside its sensuously-curved form are rotating exhibits, a design museum, and chic stores. Don't miss the rooftop lawns for some iconic views.

Stretch your legs and catch some respite at Cheonggyecheon Stream, a regenerated stream and urban park sprawling across 11km (which passes under 22 bridges) downtown. Once covered by a highway, it's now a vibrant urban space much loved by locals and visitors alike.

WHAT TO EAT

A hearty bowl of *bibimbap* is a must, and Gogung serves this wholesome goodness of rice topped with vegetables, meats, and egg yolk in earthen bowls. Be sure to get *kimchi* and some *banchan* (side dishes) too. For Korean barbeque, head to Namyeongdon, a name quite literally meaning 'a mouth full of delicious pig'. Servers grill the cuts of *hangeongsal* (pork shoulder) and *gabrisal* (pork jowl) to perfection. For contemporary fine dining, two-Michelin-starred Mingles shines

with assorted *mandu* (dumplings), *seon* (steamed vegetables stuffed with meat), *sundae* (pork sausages), and *doenjang* (soybean) crème brûlée.

WHERE TO SHOP

Namdaemun, in the city centre, has everything from snacks to *hanboks* (traditional clothing). Myeong-dong is a must for skincare and fashion brands. For handmade crafts sold by artists, go to Hongdae Free Market. Lastly, there is Starfield COEX Mall, said to be the largest underground mall in Asia.

FACING PAGE

Cherry blossoms in Seoul typically bloom from early to mid-April

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

The Changing of the Guard ceremony at Gyeongbokgung Palace; Namdaemun Market is the best place to pick up souvenirs; Dongdaemun Design Plaza is renowned for its 24-hour shopping and cafés.