



"I would first and foremost like to thank the entire Masters community for the enthusiasm and engagement which it has been demonstrating more and more extensively in the past few weeks. This summer's FINA Masters Championships in Gwangju will truly be a celebration of our Aquatics family's shared passion for its sports. This is why I warmly invite all of you who have not yet registered to the Championships to book your spot, to join us for the great celebration ahead.

This month has been one of commemorations for the people of Gwangju. Indeed, the month of May is a key moment of the year for us, one where we remember the Democratic Uprising of Gwangju and celebrate democracy, peace and freedom. You will find out more about what exactly happened in Gwangju in 1980 and why democracy holds such an important place in the history, but also in the present and future of our city.

Our teams have also prepared a very practical video travel guide to accompany you from your arrival in Seoul to your destination in Gwangju. Korean hospitality is a trait of our culture that we are always proud to show to our visitors – and I can ensure you that our hospitality will be at your service to welcome you in the best possible conditions in August. But for now, we hope you enjoy the reading and the watching!"

Dr. Cho Young Teck

Secretary General of the 18th FINA World Championships Organising Committee Gwangju 2019

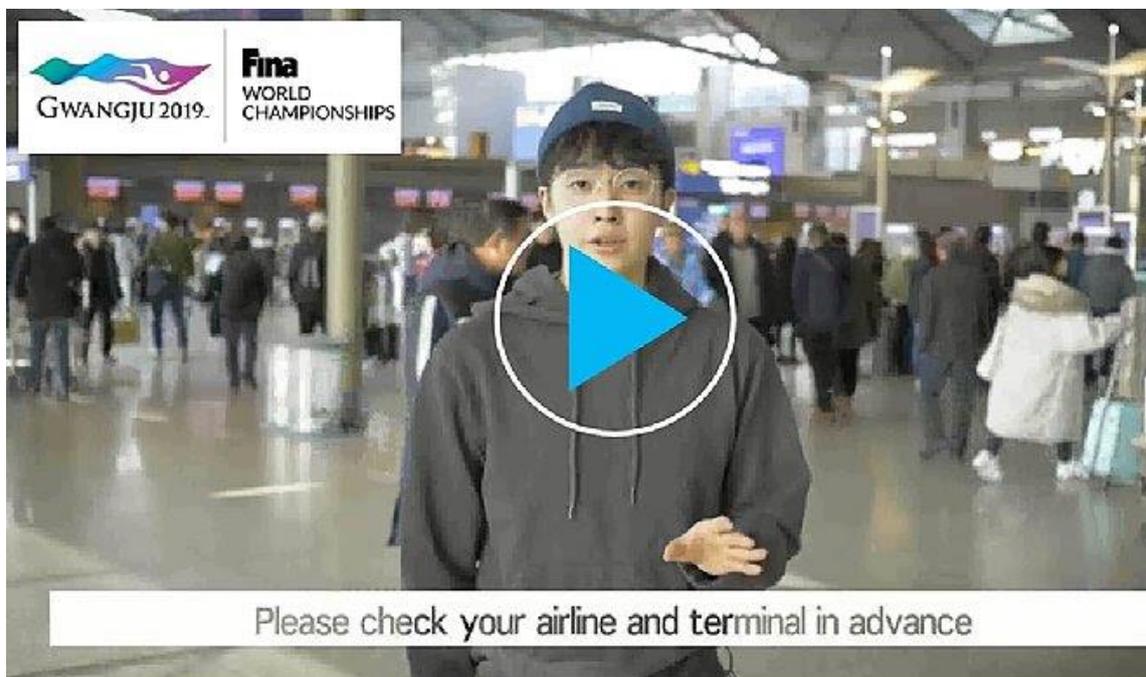
From Seoul to Gwangju in video

As we know many of you have already booked your tickets to South Korea, we thought you may now be looking for more detailed information on how to get from Seoul to Gwangju. This is why we created a series of videos destined to guide you from the second you step off the plane, through Incheon International Airport (and all its very modern facilities) to Yongsang Station in central Seoul up until Gwangjusongjeong Station via the KTX trains.

In these videos, you will see that Incheon International Airport counts all the facilities you will need to comfortably embark on the second part of your journey to Gwangju: whether you stop by the spa and showers for a bit of well deserved pampering, by the pharmacy or medical center if in need of care or simply by one of the many cafes and restaurants available for a first taste of Korean cuisine, we ensure that your arrival to South Korea will be made as enjoyable as possible. And don't worry about a dead phone or bad signal: the airport has free

WiFi and free charging spots to make sure you are never left without your digital companion!

So, without further ado, we hope that you will all enjoy this video travel guide and that it will offer you a helpful first view of what you can expect upon your arrival in South Korea this summer! Click on the video below to access the full playlist and make sure to use google chrome to avoid any display issues.



Gwangju: The City of Democracy and Peace

“Dive into peace”. A slogan that deeply resonates within the collective memory of Gwangju. One that ties the celebrations of the present to the sacrifices of the past. One which reminds us that sports exists only in peace, and one which honors recent history for bringing about peace through an insatiable quest for democracy.



The city of Gwangju has been deeply marked by the popular Democratic Uprising which took place in from May 18th to 27th, 1980, in the context of a particularly intense repression by the military after martial law had been imposed in the country. On May 18th, the students of Gwangju gathered in front of Chonnam National University to contest this repression, to stand up to the armed forces and to request democracy. They were faced with extremely violent response from the police and the army – this brought the rest of Gwangju’s citizens to the streets to show support for this movement. This resulted in long days of extremely violent riots, gravely injured protesters and many civilians were killed in their fight against authoritarianism.

Though these events contributed to the return of democracy to South Korea, they also deeply shocked the country and the world. Today, commemorations of May 18th are present everywhere in Gwangju to pay respect to the citizens who fought relentlessly for the future of their country: from the 5.18 Liberty Park, to the 5.18 Square, the 5.18 Archives or the May 18th National Cemetery.

The uprising was recognized through UNESCO’s “Memory of the World Program” and Gwangju has become a global symbol for democracy and for peace. It is for this reason that peace has been chosen as the key theme of the 2019 FINA World Championships and Masters Championships in Gwangju. It is also especially important to Koreans given the current efforts of reconciliation between North and South Korea. Peace will be at the heart of these Championships identity and will, through sports, be reinforced and shine throughout the world.

Top places to see in South Korea

Seoul - the dynamic capital



Seoul, South Korea's largest city and capital, combines modernity and tradition seamlessly: modern buildings and pop culture live alongside bustling traditional markets and historical hallmarks. The Gyeongbokgung Palace at the north of the city is a must-visit as it offers a beautiful representation for traditional Korean architecture. To gain a bit of altitude and enjoy a panorama of Seoul's skyline, go to N Seoul Tower. We suggest you visit when the sun goes down to enjoy the breathtaking light shows during a romantic dinner at one of the tower's many restaurants. Finally, Seoul is known for its markets: visit the famous Namdaemun to discover the many traditional products South Korea has to offer.

Busan – the metropolitan city at the South



Busan is South Korea's second largest city and has just as many fun activities to offer! Explore the mountainside village of Gamcheon: its colorful houses make this artistic neighborhood beautifully scenic. Take a walk along the Beach of Haeundae to enjoy some refreshing ocean breeze. This famous coastal location has plenty to offer, from delicious restaurants to typical shops – and also houses the Busan Aquarium. Finally, don't miss out on Busan's rich nightlife: go to Seomyeon to enjoy Korean cuisine in the city's finest restaurants. This is also the best place to hang out for an afternoon of shopping!

Jeju – the Island of natural wonders



Jeju Island is located south of the south Jeolla Province and is an ideal destination for those attending the Masters Championships due to its proximity to Yeosu and Gwangju. The island abounds with beautiful natural landscapes and hallmarks to visit. Seongsan Ilchulbong, a 182 metre high crater peak formed by volcanic eruptions, offers a 20 minute climb to the crater's rim, enchanting its visitors with a breathtaking view. Hallasan National Park is also worth a visit, offering beautiful hikes across densely wooded parks surrounding the Halla-san volcano. Both of these sights are classified as UNESCO World Heritage and are definitely must-sees!

Gwangju 2019 - A few pieces of important information

Registrations close on the 24th of June

Registrations for the Masters Championships will be open until the 24th of June so please remember to register if you have not yet done so. All information and link to the GMS system can be found [here](#).

Sign up to the Home Visit Program

The government of the city of Gwangju, in coordination with the Gwangju International Center, is running the **Home Visit Program**, in which visitors will get the chance visit Korean families' homes and experience Korean culture first-hand. This program has been in operation since 2009, and the host families have attended