

Hiking in Korea

Travel writer Christopher Duffy hikes up a mountain—and gets a taste of Korean culture.

On my first Saturday in South Korea, I decided to climb Mount Bukhansan. I **enjoy** hiking, and everyone told me about Bukhansan National Park. They **mentioned** its beautiful forests, clean air, and historic temples. They didn't tell me about the huge crowds that go there every weekend!

Hiking is an **activity** that's **generally** done in groups in South Korea. After following the crowd for an hour, I asked a group of hikers how far the summit was. The **leader** of the group was Mr. Choi. When Mr. Choi saw I was alone, he said, "You will hike with us." Then he **introduced** me to his friends.

We hiked together for an hour until the group decided to stop for lunch. I tried to get a sandwich from my backpack, but one of Mr. Choi's friends said, "No, no, no. You will eat with us." They **provided** a plate of pig's feet, some kimchi and a **couple** of drinks. After they **shared** their meal with me, the group decided they had walked enough. They began walking back down the mountain.

I continued climbing, and finally **arrived** at the summit. A man standing on the mountaintop introduced himself as Mr. Kim. Together we shared a bottle of makgeolli a traditional Korean drink, and admired the view.

"In Korea," he said, "we say that the people you meet on the mountain are the best people." I thought about my day on Bukhansan, and I knew he was right.