

JIRISAN NATIONAL PARK

Jirisan National Park is located in the southern part of South Korea just inland of the central part of the southern coastline. The national park encompasses an area of 182.14 square miles (471.75 sq km) creating the largest terrestrial national park and the third-largest national park in South Korea. It serves as the GANP Ambassador Park for the country.



It has the distinction of serving as the country's first national park established in 1967 while featuring the mainland's tallest mountain. The park encompasses an area stretching across four counties. It is also the country's largest mountainous national park but gives way to Hallasan National Park on Jeju island which gets more attention.

Locally, the name Jirisan means, "the mountain of the odd and wise people." The mountain and landscape around it serve as the focal point of the national park.



The national park also provides rich heritage and cultural significance featuring seven different Buddhist temples. One of the favorite times to visit occurs when the Higan cherry trees blossom at the renowned Hwaeomsa temple.

Biodiversity is at the heart of Jirisan with approximately 5,000 different species of vegetation and wildlife. Many of the species are endemic to the region. Elk, roe, wildcat, and the Asiatic black bear are some of the favored wildlife species that visitors hope to see.

HIGHLIGHTS

This is one of the larger mountainous protected areas in Korea and that is one of the leading highlights of the national park.

➤ Jirisan

Jirisan mountain reaches a summit of 6,283 feet (1,915 m) making it the tallest mountain on the country's mainland. It is recognized as the second tallest mountain in South Korea after Hallasan on Jeju Island.

Cheonhwangbong is the highest of the peaks on the mountain with several others. The mountain also features multiple valleys and ridges creating a striking landscape. Jirisan is one of the three legendary and holy mountains for locals. Accordingly, it is home to seven different Buddhist temples.

➤ Hwaeomsa

Hwaeomsa is the largest and most popular of the seven temples found on Jirisan mountain. The temple was constructed in 544 and further developed in 643. It was later reconstructed in 1701 after being destroyed by a Japanese invasion in 1593.

PARK PROTECTION

With a strong commitment to conservation, Jirisan National Park was created as the first national park. The park protects the rich biodiversity of the terrain. One of the leading protective programs of the park revolves around the Asiatic black bear.

The national park also protects the Korean heritage found in the seven different

Buddhist temples located on the mountain. The temples reflect the cultural and religious value the locals attribute to the mountain.

