

안국어

KOREAN FOR SOCIAL LIFE

Nightlife & Cultural Playbook

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Where to go, how to drink with grace, and how cold-approach (헌팅) actually works in Korea — plus a one-page cheat sheet you can glance at on the way in.

LESSON 3 OF 6

01 The Venues 어디서 노나

Each Seoul district has a personality. Pick the room that matches your night: a chill pojangmacha chat, a heonting-pocha pickup scene, or a loud Gangnam club. Knowing the map makes you sound like you actually live here.

KOREAN	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	NOTE
홍대	<i>Hongdae</i>	young, artsy, indie clubs & bars	students, energy, cheaper
이태원	<i>Itaewon</i>	international, mixed crowd	easiest for English speakers
강남	<i>Gangnam</i>	upscale, big flashy clubs	dress sharp, pricier
포장마차	<i>pojangmacha</i>	street tent bar — soju & snacks	great for real conversation
헌팅포차	<i>heonting-pocha</i>	"pickup" pub — staff intro tables	built for meeting strangers
호프집	<i>hopeu-jip</i>	beer pub	casual, group-friendly
노래방	<i>noraebang</i>	karaoke room	classic late-night group move

02 Drinking Etiquette 술 예절

Korean drinking has real manners, and respecting them earns instant goodwill. The big three: pour with both hands for elders, turn your head away when you drink in front of them, and never fill your own glass first.

KOREAN	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	NOTE
건배!	<i>geonbae!</i>	Cheers!	the toast word
짠!	<i>jjan!</i>	Clink! / Cheers!	casual, fun version
소주 한 병 주세요	<i>soju han byeong juseyo</i>	One bottle of soju, please	소주 = soju
소주 <i>soju</i> soju 한 <i>han</i> one 병 <i>byeong</i> bottle 주세요 <i>juseyo</i> please give			
맥주 주세요	<i>maekju juseyo</i>	A beer, please	맥주 = beer
맥주 <i>maekju</i> beer 주세요 <i>juseyo</i> please give			
소맥 말아요?	<i>somaek marayo?</i>	Shall we mix a somaek?	소맥 = soju + beer mix
소맥 <i>somaek</i> soju + beer 말아요 <i>marayo</i> shall we mix?			
제가 따라 드릴게요	<i>jega ttara deurilgeyo</i>	Let me pour for you	two hands for elders
제가 <i>jega</i> I 따라 <i>ttara</i> pour 드릴게요 <i>deurilgeyo</i> will (do for you)			
저는 천천히 마실게요	<i>jeoneun cheoncheonhi masilgeyo</i>	I'll pace myself	graceful way to slow down
저는 <i>jeoneun</i> as for me 천천히 <i>cheoncheonhi</i> slowly 마실게요 <i>masilgeyo</i> (I'll) drink			
오늘은 여기까지요	<i>oneureun yeogikkajiyo</i>	That's it for me tonight	polite cut-off
오늘은 <i>oneureun</i> today 여기까지 <i>yeogikkaji</i> up to here 요 <i>yo</i> (polite)			

CULTURAL NOTE – THE POUR RULES

Hold the bottle with **two hands** (or one hand supporting your forearm) when pouring for someone older. When **you** drink in front of an elder, turn your head slightly away. And don't pour your own glass — keep an eye on others' glasses and fill theirs; someone will fill yours. It's a quiet system of looking after each other.

TIP – YOU CAN ABSOLUTELY NOT DRINK MUCH

You don't have to keep up. "**저는 천천히 마실게요**" (I'll pace myself) and switching to water are completely respected. A clear head makes you a better, safer companion — and far more attractive than the guy who overdid it.

03 Cold-Approach Culture — 헌팅 헌팅

헌팅 (heonting, from "hunting") is the Korean word for approaching strangers to flirt. At a heonting-pocha the staff will literally introduce tables to each other. Elsewhere, keep it light, polite, and quick to read the room — a graceful exit is part of doing it well.

KOREAN	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	NOTE
혹시 합석해도 될까요?	<i>hoksi hapseokhaedo</i> <i>doelkkayo?</i>	Mind if we join your table?	classic heonting line
혹시 <i>hoksi</i> by any chance 합석해도 <i>hapseokhaedo</i> even if (we) join the table 될까요 <i>doelkkayo</i> would it be okay?			
저희랑 같이 마실래요?	<i>jeohuirang gachi masillaeyo?</i>	Want to drink with us?	group-to-group, low pressure
저희랑 <i>jeohuirang</i> with us 같이 <i>gachi</i> together 마실래요 <i>masillaeyo</i> want to drink?			
한 잔 사도 돼요?	<i>han jan sado dwaeyo?</i>	Can I buy you a drink?	ask, don't just send it
한 <i>han</i> one 잔 <i>jan</i> glass 사도 <i>sado</i> even if (I) buy 돼요 <i>dwaeyo</i> is it okay?			
실례지만, 너무 멋있어서요	<i>sillyejiman, neomu</i> <i>meosisseoseoyo</i>	Sorry to bother you — you just look great	honest, charming opener
실례지만 <i>sillyejiman</i> excuse me, but 너무 <i>neomu</i> so 멋있어서요 <i>meosisseoseoyo</i> (you) look great			
방해했다면 죄송해요	<i>banghaehaetdameyon</i> <i>joesonghaeyo</i>	Sorry if I interrupted	your graceful exit line
방해했다면 <i>banghaehaetdameyon</i> if (I) interrupted 죄송해요 <i>joesonghaeyo</i> (I'm) sorry			
즐거운 밤 보내세요!	<i>jeulgeoun bam bonaeseyo!</i>	Have a great night!	leave warm even on a no
즐거운 <i>jeulgeoun</i> enjoyable 밤 <i>bam</i> night 보내세요 <i>bonaeseyo</i> spend / have			

Lines for a loud room 시끄러운 클럽

KOREAN	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	NOTE
여기 너무 시끄럽죠?	<i>yeogi neomu</i> <i>sikkeureopjyo?</i>	It's so loud in here, right?	shared-moment opener

KOREAN	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	NOTE
여기 <i>yeogi</i> here 너무 <i>neomu</i> so 시끄럽죠 <i>sikkeureopjyo</i>		it's loud, right?	
춤 잘 추시네요!	<i>chum jal chusineyo!</i>	You dance great!	genuine, easy compliment
춤 <i>chum</i> dance 잘 <i>jal</i> well 추시네요 <i>chusineyo</i> (you) do!			
밖에서 얘기할까요?	<i>bakkeseo yaegihalkkayo?</i>	Wanna talk outside?	only if she's keen — quieter
밖에서 <i>bakkeseo</i> outside 얘기할까요 <i>yaegihalkkayo</i> shall we talk?			
물 한 잔 갖다줄까요?	<i>mul han jan gatdajulkkayo?</i>	Want me to grab you some water?	caring, stands out
물 <i>mul</i> water 한 <i>han</i> one 잔 <i>jan</i> glass 갖다줄까요 <i>gatdajulkkayo</i> shall (I) bring (you)?			

Do & Don't 매너

DO ✓	DON'T ✗
Open polite, smile, keep it short	Lead with a heavy line or touching
Read the answer in 10 seconds and respect it	Linger after a clear brush-off
Approach groups as a group, friendly	Corner someone alone or block her path
Take "no" with a warm "have a good night"	Argue, sulk, or "just one more"
Watch out for anyone too drunk	Pursue someone who's intoxicated
Use a few Korean words — it charms	Assume everyone wants to practice English

WARNING — GRACEFUL IS THE WHOLE GAME

The difference between charming and creepy is how you take a no. A smile and "즐거운 밤 보내세요" leaves everyone feeling fine and protects your reputation in a small scene. Never pursue anyone who's drunk; if someone seems too far gone, help them find their friends or a safe ride home.

04 One-Page Cheat Sheet 한 장 요약

The whole night in five beats. Glance at this in the cab. **Open** → **Connect** → **Flirt** → **Close** → **Respect**.

① Open 말 걸기

저기요, 혹시... *jeogiyo, hoksi...* Excuse me, by any chance...

저기요 *jeogiyo* excuse me 혹시 *hoksi* by any chance

합석해도 될까요? *hapseokhaedo doelkkayo?* Mind if we join you?

합석해도 *hapseokhaedo* even if (we) join 될까요 *doelkkayo* would it be okay?

여기 너무 시끄럽죠? *yeogi neomu sikkeureopjyo?* Loud in here, right?

여기 *yeogi* here 너무 *neomu* so 시끄럽죠 *sikkeureopjyo* it's loud, right?

😓 Disarm 긴장 풀기

한국어 아직 배우는 중이에요 ㅎㅎ *hangugeo ajik baeuneun jung-ieyo* My Korean's still a work in progress~

한국어 *hangugeo* Korean 아직 *ajik* still 배우는 중이에요 *baeuneun jung-ieyo* (I'm) learning ㅎㅎ *heuheu* (hehe)

한국어 한 단어만 가르쳐 주세요! *hangugeo han daneo-man gareuchyeo juseyo!* Teach me just one Korean word!

한국어 *hangugeo* Korean 한 단어만 *han daneo-man* just one word 가르쳐 *gareuchyeo* teach 주세요 *juseyo* please

소주 한잔하면 제 한국어 늘어요 ㅋㅋ *soju hanjan-hamyeon je hangugeo neureoyo* My Korean gets better after a soju, lol

소주 *soju* soju 한잔하면 *hanjan-hamyeon* if (I) have a drink 제 *je* my 한국어 *hangugeo* Korean 늘어요 *neureoyo* improves ㅋㅋ *keukeu* (lol)

② Connect 친해지기

무슨 일 하세요? *museun il haseyo?* What do you do?

무슨 *museun* what (kind of) 일 *il* work 하세요 *haseyo* (do you) do?

나이가 어떻게 되세요? *naiga eotteoke doeseyo?* How old are you?

나이가 *naiga* age 어떻게 *eotteoke* how 되세요 *doeseyo* (is it)?

대화가 잘 통해요 *daehwaga jal tonghaeyo* We really click

대화가 *daehwaga* conversation 잘 *jal* well 통해요 *tonghaeyo* flows

③ Flirt 밀당

웃는 게 예뻐요 *unneun ge yeppeoyo* Your smile is lovely

웃는 게 *unneun ge* (your) smile 예뻐요 *yeppeoyo* is pretty

우리 썸 타는 거예요? *uri sseom taneun geoyeyo?* Are we a thing?

우리 *uri* we 썸 타는 거 *sseom taneun geo* a flirty thing 예요 *yeyo* is it?

말 편하게 해도 돼요? *mal pyeonhage haedo dwaeyo?* Can we speak casually?

말 *mal* speech 편하게 *pyeonhage* comfortably 해도 *haedo* even if (we) do 돼요 *dwaeyo* is it okay?

④ Close 마무리

우리 카톡 할래요? *uri katok hallaeyo?* Exchange Kakao?

우리 *uri* we 카톡 *katok* KakaoTalk 할래요 *hallaeyo* shall we do?

답에 따로 불러요? *dame ttaro bollaeyo?* Hang out, just us, sometime?

답에 *dame* next time 따로 *ttaro* separately (just us) 불러요 *bollaeyo* want to meet?

집까지 데려다줄까요? *jipkkaji deryeodajulkkayo?* Can I walk you home?

집까지 *jipkkaji* to (your) home 데려다줄까요 *deryeodajulkkayo* shall (I) walk (you)?

⑤ Respect 존중

괜찮아요?

gwaenchanayo?

Are you okay with this?

무리하지 마요

murihaji mayo

Don't push yourself

무리하지 *murihaji* overdo it 마요 *mayo* don't

즐거운 밤 보내세요!

jeulgeoun bam bonaeseyo!

Have a great night!

즐거운 *jeulgeoun* enjoyable 밤 *bam* night 보내세요 *bonaeseyo* spend / have

TIP – THE GOLDEN RULE OF THE NIGHT

Effort, respect, and reading the mood beat aggression every time. A foreigner trying polite Korean, taking a no with a smile, and looking out for people is the most attractive guy in the room.

Korean for Social Life · Lesson 3 — Nightlife & Cultural Playbook · Venues, drinking manners, 헌팅, and a one-glance cheat sheet.