

Seoul's weekend flea markets turn city streets into treasure hunt

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Dhaka: In a city known for cutting-edge trends and technology, weekends in Seoul reveal a very different side—one where bargain hunters trade shopping malls for crowded streets packed with secondhand finds, vintage fashion, and unexpected collectibles.

Across neighborhoods like Sinseol-dong and Dongmyo, thousands of people gather every weekend to explore one of the city's largest informal street markets. Stretching for miles, the sprawling marketplace spills out from the Seoul Folk Flea Market into surrounding streets, where vendors lay out everything from clothes and tools to rare memorabilia and quirky antiques.

The market has become a magnet for both locals and tourists, offering a mix of new and used goods at deeply discounted prices. From vintage watches and decades-old cigarette packs to kitchenware and fashion

pieces, the variety is vast—and often unpredictable.

Originally developed as an organized flea market in 2008, the area has since evolved into a lively, semi-regulated street bazaar. While authorities attempt to manage unlicensed vendors, the popularity of the weekend market has made strict control difficult.

Beyond bargain hunting, the scene has also attracted creatives and designers searching for inspiration. In recent years, the area has even influenced fashion trends, with younger visitors embracing vintage styles once associated with older generations.

Regular visitors say the appeal lies in the thrill of discovery. Some come weekly, forming communities and even reselling unique finds online for profit. Others simply enjoy the atmosphere, where lively sales pitches, music, and spontaneous interactions add to the experience.

Despite occasional chaos—crowded alleys, haggling disputes, and fierce competition for rare items—the market remains a cultural staple. For many, it offers more than just shopping; it is a social ritual and a glimpse into Seoul's evolving urban identity, where past and present collide on the sidewalks every weekend.

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