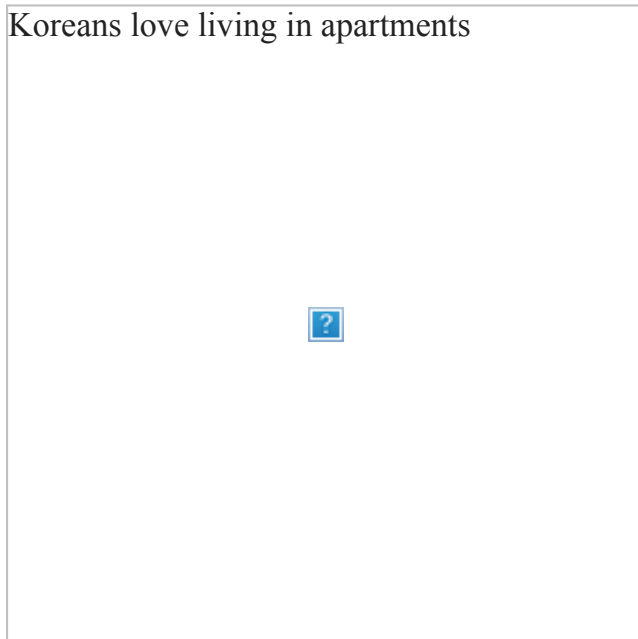


Why do Koreans prefer apartments over private houses

Korea is the land of ‘concrete jungle’. About 60-70% of the total population resides in big, blocky, rectangular buildings. These blocky structures “resembles a coast-to- coast game of dominoes” according to an article in the Washington post. The same article mentions that an average Korean moves every five years, a steady vertical migration.



So why do Koreans love living in apartments? Why haven’t they joined the other developed nations in their passion for houses? What are some advantages of living in an apartment?

Convenience

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apartments are more convenient

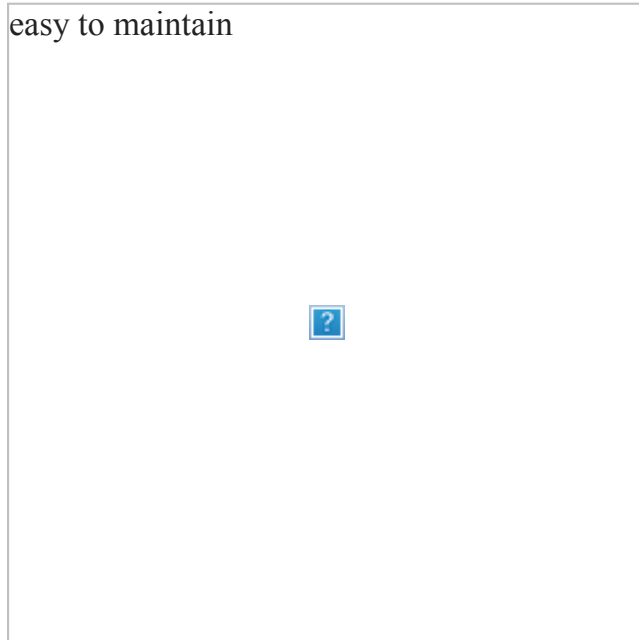


First and foremost, living in an apartment is much more comfortable than living in a house. Korean apartments with their boxy design are not much too look at but they offer a whole bunch of options that you won't find in a house.

There are usually marts and convenience stores within the apartment complex. You can shop for basic groceries easily. Typically, there are schools, hair salons, bakery, restaurants etc. in and around apartment complexes.

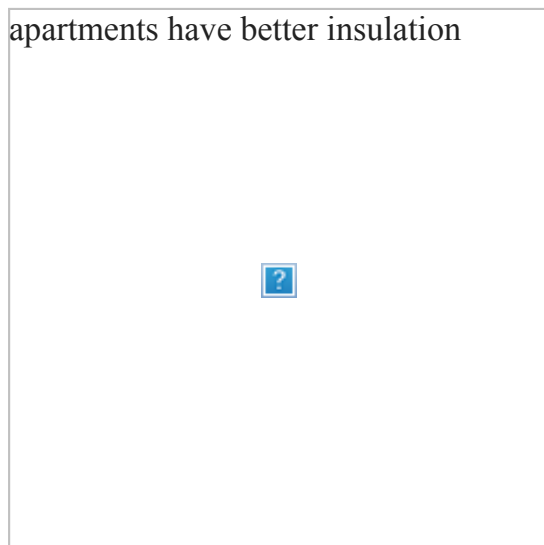
Apartment complexes also offer uninterrupted supply of water, gas etc. Most apartments also come with a security guard.

Easy To Maintain



On average, apartments are easier to maintain. Outside maintenance is provided by the building management. Unlike a house where the owner is supposed to maintain the whole structure, in an apartment, families are responsible for their own small spaces. The interiors are comfortable, with modern facilities. The apartment management also provide services such as plumber etc. which help to reduce the hassle of maintaining your home.

Better Insulation

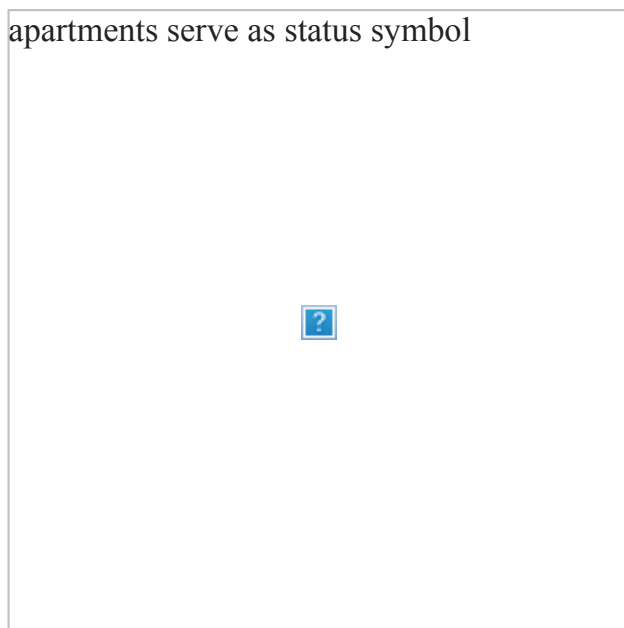


Korean winter is usually frigid and very drafty. Most Korean houses, especially the older ones, have problems with proper insulation due to the draft. Although, apartment complexes have some issues with draft as well, it's not as bad as a house.

Also, the construction materials used in most of the houses does not provide good insulation.

Apartment units are usually 15 to 30 stories tall. The compact design may not look aesthetic but provides very good insulation. The blocky design helps trap the heat, as separate units on various floors use the heat in winter. It creates a nice, warm pocket and the apartment units in the middle floors can get especially toasty in winter.

Status Symbol



Believe it or not, for South Koreans apartments have become a symbol of success. In Korean society, moving into bigger apartment units serve as milestones. Usually after college Koreans get their first apartment. They generally move into a bigger apartment after getting married.

Apartments in Korea vary according to the location and amount deposit money. For example: a 2 bedroom apartment in a middle class neighborhood in a big city like Seoul or Busan may cost you around 1.5 million KRW a month. The building might be in a rough condition and may not include many amenities. However, out in the countryside you can rent a modern 2-3 bedroom apartment for the same price.

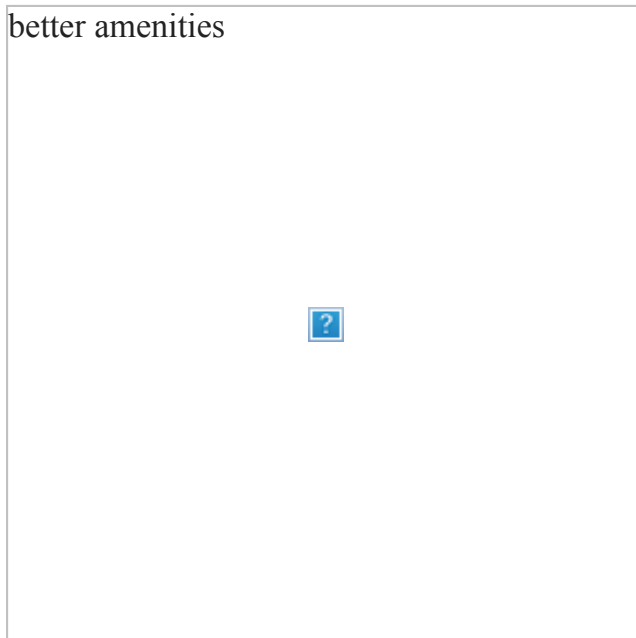
Basically, in a big city if you want a newer apartment with state-of-the-art appliances and amenities, you have to pay a premium. The neighborhood and the apartment you live in, define your status in Korean society.

Comparatively Cheaper

An independent house provides greater degree of freedom. It gives you the ability to design the house as you wish. But it comes with a hefty price tag. Single family houses in Korea can be very expensive. This is probably another important factor why so many South Koreans prefer apartments.

Apartments while being pricey are still comparatively cheaper than buying a house. Renting an apartment can actually be much cheaper in many cases since you just pay the deposit money are not responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the place.

Better Amenities



Most Korean apartments especially the newer ones come with very good security systems. Only residents or approved visitors can enter. This kind of security deters criminals making the residential area safer.

Most modern facilities also have playgrounds for kids and fitness center swimming pool etc for residents. Most are strategically located near schools, academies, parks, hospitals and shopping centers. This makes the unit more desirable and convenient to live in.

Westerners may find it hard to understand why Koreans love the apartment complexes. I guess in the end, an apartment to Koreans is what the single-family house with white picket fence and private lawn is to a westerner. It's home, sweet home!

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