9 celebrities that have visited North Korea

For us at Young Pioneer Tours, there’s nothing quite as natural as a visit to North Korea. For most of the world, however, travel to the DPRK is still seen as a bit ‘out there’. This is particularly true of celebrities, and not too many famous folk have made the trip into North Korea.

That’s not to say, however, that none have been. Here are seven famous people (or groups of people) that have made the trip – one or two of whom might surprise you.

9) Michael Palin

The former Python, who’s now much more famous for his travel exploits than his comedic ones, visited North Korea to film a travel documentary. Said documentary was as interesting as you might expect, and surprisingly favourable in its treatment of the DPRK. A few of our guides were lucky enough to spot the man himself during his time in Korea!

8) Donald Trump
This one might be perceived as a bit of a cheat, but the US president did, technically, set foot on North Korean soil when he crossed the line dividing North and South at the DMZ. And this despite the travel ban! Who knew that Trump had such little regard for the rules and regulations of his own country?

7) Reverend Moon
Sun Myung Moon, of Moonies fame, was not only born in North Korea but also did some time in the pen there. In the 1950s he became a staunch anti-communist – something that did not prevent him from building hotels in the DPRK and maintaining a friendship with President Kim Il Sung.

6) Mohammed Ali
The Greatest visited as part of a peace delegation in 1995. Ali was sadly well in the clutches of Parkinson’s at the time of his visit, but this didn’t stop his flamboyant and magnetic personality from shining through.

5) Reverend Billy Graham
Darling of the American Right, anti-communist evangelical and advisor to many a US president, Graham became a friend of Kim Il Sung and a fairly frequent visitor to Pyongyang. Truth really is stranger than fiction.

4) King Sihanouk of Cambodia
Perhaps not quite as well known to Western audiences as some of the other folk on
here, but the controversial former king of Cambodia was such a frequent visitor to
Pyongyang that he even maintained his own private villa there.

3) Damon Albarn

Mr Albarn of Blur fame visited North Korea in 2015, and the trip inspired him so
much that he wrote songs about his time there. The song “Pyongyang” even name-
drops the Yanggakdo Hotel.
2) Dennis Rodman

You might be surprised to see Mr Rodman reach a mere number 2, but we think number one deserve their spot. Rodman famously first came for his “big bang in Pyongyang”, helped by the legendary Joe Terwilleger. The basketballer regularly returns to North Korea and maintains a friendship with Marshal Kim Jong Un.

1) Laibach
Laibach concert in Pyongyang
Back in 2015, Morten Traavik helped orchestrate North Korea’s first-ever rock concert when the legendary Slovenian band Laibach came to perform. Young Pioneer Tours helped organise travel arrangements for fans attending the event and the concert was not only epic, but Laibach’s performance cements their visit as the #1 celebrity trip to North Korea.

_Hobnob with the celebs on one of our many trips to North Korea!

About Post Author