



NEIL JONAS/SHUTTERSTOCK

In Seoul, the many skin-care options are worth poring over

BY DIANA MISSEY
Special to The Washington Post

Checking in for a facial at the flagship store of the South Korean beauty brand Sulwhasoo, I am surprised to see that the intake form asks if I'm claustrophobic. I mentally note that I've never seen that particular question from a spa before, check "no" and then move on to more expected pre-facial questions, such as what kind of skin-care routine I use at home.

I'm not easily intimidated, but I was nervous walking into Sulwhasoo's spa precisely because I knew it would ask about my at-home skin care. Full disclosure: I wash my face with soap I buy at the grocery store and apply the same SPF15 moisturizer I use elsewhere on my body. I've even worse with makeup. I don't buy that at the supermarket, but I have, several times, applied eyeliner to my lips and lip liner to my eyes. I am able to poke myself in the eye using both. I suspect correction on p. 11.

MADE SMALLER BY NATURE'S EXPANSE

A trip deep into Olympic National Park provides perspective

BY REED WILSON
Special to The Washington Post

As I sit gazing at a million stars against a pitch-black sky at the edge of a thousand-year-old forest, listening to the pounding waves of the North Pacific, a remarkable feeling of insignificance washes over me. Huddled under a heavy blanket against a howling wind on this cold April night, I experience a feeling of powerlessness that is strangely comforting.

The same thought occurred to me a few days earlier, during an early-morning stroll through the chilly mist that hangs over a mountain resort in the foothills of Olympic National Park in Washington. As blue jays flitted between giant cedars, I took a seat on a rock, watching four deer graze unburdened between cabins. One of the animals is ambled to the edge of a narrow service road that separated us, stopping no more than 10 feet from me. As it sits, it was no more perturbed by my presence than by the sudden appearance of a robin alighting on a nearby rock. PENELOPE LA CONTINUED ON P. 12

Dark side of the sun: The U.S. gets a rare total-eclipse crossing

BY KATE SILVER
Special to The Washington Post

Michelle Nichols speaks with such passion and poetry about the moon passing in front of the sun that she can inspire someone with even the smallest sliver of astronomical knowledge (such as this travel writer) to begin planning a trip to see the total solar eclipse on Aug. 21.

"It looks like a hole in the sky. In the middle of the day, the sky goes dark and you can see stars and planets," says Nichols, who is director of public observing at the Adler Planetarium in Chicago. "I've seen one total solar eclipse, which was mind-blowing."

The August eclipse is especially exciting for people in the United States because this country will be the only place where something called the "path of totality" can be seen. That's where the moon will completely cover the sun, casting the land in darkness. That path includes correction on p. 12.

The Sol Duc Falls in Washington's Olympic National Park.

FLORIDA The Sunshine State's 35 craft distilleries stretch from the Panhandle to Key West. F4

There goes the sun! Get ready for the eclipse.

ECLIPSE FROM P. 4

•Camping spots are still available (the date, \$150-\$1,500) in Madras, Ore., for Solarfest (orgsolarfest.com), a music and camping celebration that's operating in partnership with NASA for premier eclipse viewing.

•Open spaces and parkland in Wyoming are expected to draw hundreds of thousands of visitors. In Casper, where elevation is 5,000 feet, viewing parties will go on across town, from the fairgrounds and area churches to a distillery — Backwater Distilling, which is planning distillery tours, live music, food and cocktails (eclipse-casper.com/festiva). In Jackson Hole, the nonprofit organization Wyoming Stargazing is hosting pre-eclipse moon and parties that include a chairlift ride, presentations from astronomy experts, mingling with retired astronaut Scott Altman, refreshments and stargazing through telescopes (tickets \$175; wyomingstargazing.org/2017-solar-eclipse).

•On the day of the eclipse, Spring Creek Ranch is hosting a party in partnership with Backwater Distilling, which will include brunch, cocktails, eclipse glasses, and talks and interpretations by experts (\$175 per person, springcreekranch.com/activities/eclipse-glasses-condos are still available at the property starting at \$1,500 a night).

•In Westport, Mo., a farm festival is the place to be. Green Dirt Farm and Chef Howard Hanna of the Rieger restaurant in Kansas City will co-host an all-day, adults-only festival, cleverly named "Black Sheep in the Shade — a Total Eclipse of the Farm," which will include food (roasted pig and lamb), live music and "freakshow-style" performances. (\$85, greendirtfarm.com/event/eclipse).

•Rooms are still available at the Sheraton Kansas City Hotel at Crown Center, where guests can also view the sky from the event space on the 42nd floor (rates start at \$221 per night, sheratonkansascityhotel.com). Columbia, Mo., will be celebrating the darkness with the "Show Me Totally" party including food and music festivals, a run, golf tournament, bicycle ride, a concert and viewing parties at multiple locations (comcolong.com).

•In Carbondale, Ill., a festival art and craft fair, eclipse comic



Skin care is at heart of Seoul

SKIN FROM P. 11

supplement my supermarket soap with an occasional spa facial.

Mine is the anti-beds of South Korean skin care, which is generally taken very seriously.

It is estimated that the country has nearly 2,000 skin care brands, collectively called "K-Beauty." I know this because it's impossible to flip through any fashion or tabloid magazine — my guilty pleasure during pedicures — without seeing a story with a celebrity raving about some K-Beauty product. I didn't pay these stories much attention until I noticed that my own skin looked unhealthy: it was dull and uneven in tone. Having come through some serious illnesses over the past decade, at age 41 I am finally interested in and also have the energy to think about making my skin healthy.

My curiosity is piqued further when I notice that many of the celebrities include small mucus as an ingredient.

None of the Seoul spa appointments lined up for treatments at Sulwhasoo and Kwangdong Traditional Korean Medicine Hospital and a shopping date with Joan Kim, a Korean American YouTuber beauty and fashion vlogger.

The deal I make with myself is that I will try anything that isn't permanent or surgery, even if it involves small excretions. I will be a blank slate.

It's Kim who draws the initial broad brushstrokes on my skin. She grew up in Southern California and has lived in Seoul since 2014. Her skin is a great advertisement for the benefits of K-Beauty. I emailed her before I arrived with general K-Beauty questions and eventually asked if she'd meet with me while I was in Seoul. Kim doesn't normally do personal skin-care shopping, but figured she could turn our time together into something for her YouTube channel, as of the time I'm writing this, nothing has been posted.

Kim walks with authority into a boutique run by Inneefree, a mid-level skin-care brand founded in 2000 that now has about 200 stores throughout the country. I however get distracted by the shop's exterior — one of the most lush living walls I've ever seen. It's a tapestry of vibrant green vines.

The entire interior of the first floor, about 1,500 square feet, is a happily crowded mix of products and shoppers. There are several dozen of the latter, men and women ranging in age from 20s to 60s.

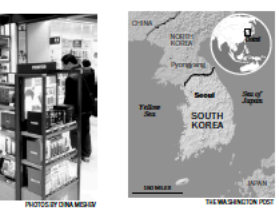
None of the products bears any resemblance to my supermarket soap and moisturizer.

There are product lines made with extracts from 1,800-753-POST mountain, Hallasan, on the island of Jeju in the Korea Strait.

Everything Joan identifies as one of her favorites goes into my basket and, because I've always been bothered by the large pores on my nose, I buy about half of the products in the Jeju volcanic



Olive Young — its main floor at top and its men's department below, is meant to be South Korea's answer to Sephora, but the brands are less expensive than those available in the United States. Also, they often utilize snails as ingredients.



if you go
WHERE TO STAY
Four Seasons Hotel
 97 Saemunan-ro, Jung-gu, Seoul
 011-82-2-4388-5000
 fourseasons.com/seoul

While I spend most of my time shopping in stores that sell their own brands, Kim and I finally wander into Olive Young, Seoul's version of Sephora. It's as busy as Walmart on Black Friday, which exhilarates me. I feel like I'm a part of this skin-care thing. Here, I find the face mask I've been looking for my entire life — silky, non-greasy, SPF50 and affordable — and sheet masks with the face of an otter printed on them. (The idea behind these is that you look like an otter when you're wearing one.) There are also sheet masks with tiger faces, panda bear faces and Shark. Since skin care has never before made me laugh out loud, I am compelled to buy several of each.

For skin-care devotees in South Korea, it's often not enough to merely take care of your skin at home, no matter how fun the sheet masks are. Kim gets a weekly professional facial. These don't usually happen in fancy spas like Sulwhasoo — facials there are on par with facials at a spa in the United States, so it would get pretty expensive pretty fast — but at no frills "medical hospitals" which offer other services for all sorts of health-related issues.

At Kwangdong Traditional Korean Medicine Hospital, services include everything from MRIs to neurological exams, acupuncture, massages and facials. Kwangdong has a website in five languages and offers cell-telephone acupuncture in addition to more usual procedures. My appointment is for a traditional detox treatment that will clear and energize the skin on my back and legs while generally helping me relax.

I'm met by an iPad-wielding, English-speaking medical assistant who stays with me for the next 90 minutes, explaining what the doctor is doing to me: first cupping, then acupuncture and finally pouring warm sludge over my legs, which are covered in a thin plastic to allow the warmth and essences through while keeping the sludge itself off my skin. The treatment relaxes me. Sometime during the sludge part, I doze off.

And then it's Sulwhasoo time. The place is more a shrine to skin care than a store. Products are displayed on pedestals and there is no excess inventory anywhere in sight. Never before have I been nervous about getting a facial, but it turns out my nerves are for naught. Without judgment of my skin-care regimen and with care, an aesthetician leads me into a room where I disrobe and lie down on a table and cover myself with warm blankets.

From the beginning, the facial media better than any other I've ever had. (I later learn almost all of Sulwhasoo's products contain

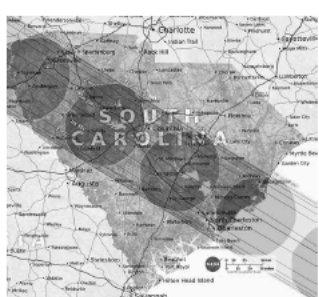
ginseng.) Other than that, and some facial-massage techniques used by the aesthetician, there's no difference between it and facials at home. But then comes the step that is undoubtedly why they ask about claustrophobia: a rubber mask. I love the feeling of the warm, weighted paste on my face — imagine a hug from a Play-Doh snake — but I can see how it might freak someone out.

Even if it did freak me out, after I see how healthy and radiant my skin looks at the end of the facial, I'd make myself get over it.

A month after returning home from South Korea, comments about my new "glow" make me stick to using my new products. My favorite so far? The small mucus sheet masks.

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A map shows the path of totality for an upcoming total solar eclipse, similar to the one shown above, that will cross the United States on Aug. 21. In the gray areas, the umbral shadow created by the moon obscuring the sun will bring a period of darkness. Many communities are hosting parties and events to celebrate.

Operators standing by. Call for home delivery.

1-800-753-POST

City Distilleries (Ind.)