

## Siam Treasures

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**Country(ies):** Thailand

**Tour type:** Tailor-made

**Transport:** A/C minibus, sleeper train, local ferry & flight

**Group size:** Min: 2 | Max: 0

**Days:** 18 Days

**Start location:** Bangkok, Thailand

**End location:** Bangkok, Thailand

**Departs On:** Any day

**Meals:** Breakfasts - 12, Lunches - 6, Dinners - 5

**Highlights:** Jungle trekking, elephant ride, bamboo rafting in Chiang Mai; river canoeing, jungle wand tree houses in Khao Sok National Park; idyllic Ko Samui beaches

**Places Visited:** Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Surat Thani, Khao Sok NP & Ko Samui



# Itinerary

## Day 1: Arrive into Bangkok, transfer to hotel

Upon arrival our staff will meet you at the airport and transfer you to your hotel in Bangkok for the start of your trip.

**OVERNIGHT:** Bangkok hotel

**MEALS:** None

**EXTRAS:** Single room supplement (THSGST) || Extra day in Bangkok - pre-tour

## Day 2: Bangkok, city tour

Our tour begins with a fun way to discover Bangkok's unmistakable 'Kwam-Pen-Thai' (Thai-ness) as we use various modes of public transport such as tuk tuks, BTS Skytrain, public long-tailed boats etc. The tour takes in the Grand Palace and old Rattanakosin Island, and our guides make every tour a little bit different so a true Bangkok is uncovered. Late in the afternoon we have time for tasty snack before boarding the train to Chiang Mai.

**OVERNIGHT:** On board sleeper train

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 3: Arrive in Chiang Mai, free day

We arrive into Chiang Mai this morning where the rest of the day is free to explore the city. Nestled amongst some of the highest mountains in Thailand, Chiang Mai retains a relaxed feel to it. Head to the impressive local zoo or visit one of the nearby Buddhist temples before dining out in one of the city's many restaurants.

**OVERNIGHT:** Chiang Mai hotel

**MEALS:** None

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 4: Start jungle trek adventure

Leaving Chiang Mai this morning we travel to the colourful market at Mae Malai before carrying on to the lush Pang Lan Waterfalls. After lunch we begin our trek into the Huay Nam Dang National Park and walk on to the traditional Karen village of Baan Mae Jok where we stop for the night in order to learn more about the culture of the local hill-tribes.

**OVERNIGHT:** Village huts

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 5: Jungle trekking

Awakening to cool mountain breezes we enjoy breakfast this morning before we trek on through the tropical jungle to the village of Baan Pa Khao Lam. We continue through the forest before arriving later today at the rafting camp.

**OVERNIGHT:** Village huts

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 6: Bamboo rafting, return to Chiang Mai

On our final day in the jungle we experience bamboo rafting along the Mae Tang river. Cruising along the tropical riverbanks in our bamboo rafts we make stops at small tribal settlements before finally arriving into Shan village where we transfer back to Chiang Mai.

**OVERNIGHT:** Chiang Mai hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 7: Chiang Mai, free day, overnight train to Bangkok

Today is kept free to relax after the trek. You could take in a local Thai cooking course, explore the markets and alleyways of Chiang Mai on foot or relieve any tired muscles with a relaxing local massage. Transfer to the train station for the overnight train to Bangkok.

**OVERNIGHT:** On board sleeper train

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 8: Arrive in Bangkok. free day

We arrive back into the Thai capital this morning and transfer to the hotel. The rest of the day is free to explore Bangkok at your leisure. Visit the lively area around Patpong, drop in on a snake farm or browse round Bangkok's many modern shopping centres.

**OVERNIGHT:** Bangkok hotel

**MEALS:** None

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 9: Bangkok, canal tour, overnight train to Surat Thani

Today we discover historical Bangkok as we enjoy a boat tour of the city's old canals, stopping off at lively river markets to observe the rituals of daily life that have hardly changed in hundreds of years. We then visit the former royal palace at Vimanmek - home to the world's largest golden teakwood mansion. This evening we transfer to the train station for the overnight train to Surat Thani.

**OVERNIGHT:** On board sleeper train

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 10: Arrive in Surat Thani, transfer to Khao Sok National Park

Arriving into Surat Thani this morning we then make the short journey into Khao Sok National Park. This verdant and tropical rainforest will be our home for the next 3 nights as we discover the flora and fauna unique to this part of the world. In the afternoon we take to the river for 2 hours of canoeing (or tubing!) and also visit a local temple famous for the monkeys that are kept here. Later you'll experience the night-time jungle up close by sleeping in tree houses.

**OVERNIGHT:** Khao Sok tree-house

**MEALS:** Lunch, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 11: Khao Sok activities

We start today with a 4-hour guided trek through the beautiful Khao Sok national park whose rich flora and fauna is famous throughout Thailand. After lunch head to a local elephant camp where you can get up close to these amazing animals. Head back to your tree house via Mai Yai waterfall and spend the evening relaxing after a long day and enjoying eating some local specialities.

**OVERNIGHT:** Khao Sok tree-house

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 12: Khao Sok activities

Leaving our tree house accommodation this morning we travel to Cheow Lan Lake and our raft houses, surrounded by the spectacular limestone cliffs and forested scenery. After lunch we trek through the nearby jungle to a beautiful local lagoon where you have the chance to explore a stunning cave, famous for its stalactite and stalagmite formations. Then, return to the Raft house for dinner and to relax under the stars.

**OVERNIGHT:** Khao Sok raft-house

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 13: Drive and ferry from Khao Sok to Ko Samui

Today we swap the rainforest for the beautiful tropical island of Ko Samui on the South China Sea. Departing Khao Sok we travel back to Surat Thani from where we catch the ferry to the island and transfer to the hotel.

**OVERNIGHT:** Ko Samui hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Days 14-16: Ko Samui, free time

The next 3 days are yours to explore the sun-drenched island of Ko Samui at your own leisure. With many incredible dive sites dotted around the island this is a great place to arrange any diving or snorkelling options or just relax on one of the islands many golden and idyllic beaches.

**OVERNIGHT:** Ko Samui hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 17: Ko Samui, fly to Bangkok

Saying farewell to our tropical island paradise we transfer to the airport for the short flight back to Bangkok. Upon arrival we transfer to the hotel.

**OVERNIGHT:** Bangkok hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 18: Bangkok, free time, transfer to airport

Your day is free for some last chance shopping and exploring around Bangkok before we transfer you to the airport for departure flight.

**OVERNIGHT:** N/A

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Extra day in Bangkok - post-tour

### Included

- All accommodation as stated in the itinerary
- All transport and transfers
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- Services of a local tour guide during sightseeing and activities
- Admission fees, with instruction where necessary
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary

### Excluded

- International flights (available on request)
- Visa fees
- Travel insurance (compulsory, available on request)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips for tour leader, rafting guide and park guide
- Any other items not mentioned above

# Options

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Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting.

However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements.

Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

## Single room supplement (THSGST)

**Min numbers:** 2 Adults

**Price:** \$465.00

This option books a single room in all the accommodation throughout the tour. If you are a single traveller and would be happy to share a room, let us know and we will see if we can pair you up with another single traveller of the same sex. If a room share is not available when you book then we will add the single room supplement to your booking and it will be payable with your balance payment unless we have arranged a room share for you by then. If a room share is arranged after you have paid the supplement then we will refund it to you. Room shares are arranged in order of booking.

**Note:** The price shown is a low season price. Slightly higher prices may apply during high and peak seasons - the exact price for your dates will be shown on the online booking form and is always available on request.

## Extra day in Bangkok - pre-tour

**Min numbers:** 2 Adults

**Price:** \$125.00

This option adds an extra day to the start of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport arrival transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

**Note:** Single room and peak season supplements apply.

## Extra day in Bangkok - post-tour

**Min numbers:** 2 Adults

**Price:** \$125.00

This option adds an extra day to the end of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport departure transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

**Note:** Single room and peak season supplements apply.

# Tour Notes

## 1. Accommodation

We use good quality hotels rated at the Thai 3-star level on this tour, together with village huts, treehouses and rafhhouses.

Hotel rooms all have air-conditioning and en-suite bathrooms.

All couples will be given a private double room. If you are a single traveller who would like to share, let us know and we will see if we can pair you up. If we don't have anyone to pair you up with when you book, we'll add the single supplement option on, but remove it or refund you when we can pair you up later. Check with us for guaranteed no single supplement offers on some tours and departures.

### **Village huts:**

Accommodation whilst trekking is in traditional bamboo huts, and a thin mattress, sheet and blanket is provided. Please note that for the trekking you may wish to bring a light sleeping bag or extra blanket with you. These may be hired in Chiang Mai if required.

### **Khao Sok Tree houses:**

There are 7 individual tree houses and 1 tree house with 3 individual rooms. They are up quite high in the forest canopy complete with sturdy stairs and handrails. One of the tree houses is at a lower level for those with a fear of heights. Facilities are basic but comfortable with private toilet and cold water shower, double bed and mosquito net. Our backdrop is a limestone mountain with interesting caves to explore. About 100 metres away is the dining and relaxing area located in a classic Thai house.

### **Khao Sok Raft houses:**

On the Raja Phraba lake, there are 7 individual raft houses and 1 raft house with 3 rooms. Each of the individual raft houses has a double bed and the 3 roomed raft house has double and single beds that can be configured into different combinations as required. All rooms have mosquito nets. There are shared toilet facilities nearby. The dining and relaxing area located in a separate raft house.

## 2. Transport

Our trips feature a mix of different transport options. We want you to feel like you're really experiencing the country you're travelling through, but at the same time we want you to finish journeys refreshed enough to enjoy the next stage of the tour. With this in mind we use public transport where we think it offers a good local experience – this may include 2<sup>nd</sup> class overnight sleeper trains, local buses and local ferries. We also use private transportation including jeeps, song- thaews or pickup trucks, and mini buses for sightseeing tours where required.

### **Sleeper trains:**

The sleeper trains in Thailand are of a good standard and are popular with tourists. Each carriage has its own steward who ensures the train is kept clean and tidy, and from whom meals and drinks can be ordered to your seat. There is also a separate restaurant car. Each carriage will sleep approximately 40 people. On either side of the carriage there are 2 seats facing each other, with a window and small table. In the evening, the steward will convert these seats into beds for you, with a pillow, sheets and a blanket as well as a curtain for privacy.



### **3. Transfers**

The tour includes a 24-hour arrival and departure airport-hotel transfer service in Bangkok airport and all other transfers.

### **4. International Flights**

We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people with varying travel plans, we don't include your international flights in the main tour price. We are however very happy to suggest flights to go with the tour. Please contact us with your preferred dates and departure airport and we'll give you a selection of airlines, times and fares to choose from.

Your airport arrival & departure transfers are included on the first and last days of the tour.

Most of our Thailand tours start and finish in Bangkok, and include an arrival and departure airport transfer from/to Bangkok international airport (BKK). However, some tours also finish on one of Thailand's islands. Transfers back to Bangkok or to one of the nearby island airports can be arranged on request.

### **5. Culture and Customs**

#### **Dress code**

The Thai people consider dressing appropriately to be important and respectful, so please follow their example. This means covering up your swimwear while not on the beach or by the pool, and while shorts and T-shirts are fine, please try not to look scruffy. Remember to take your shoes off before entering local houses or any religious buildings.

#### **Temple etiquette**

When entering temples you should wear clothes that cover your knees and shoulders. Women may be asked to wear long skirts, not trousers, and shorts are not appropriate for either sex. You may wear a shawl to cover up and these are sometimes available to hire before entry. Again please take your shoes off before entering.

#### **Buddhist Culture**

Thailand is a Buddhist country and Buddhism permeates nearly all aspects of society and culture, resulting in a country with different customs to much of the West. Rudeness and disrespect are frowned upon and you will be judged on your behaviour. Some tips for behaviour to avoid causing offence are; do not touch other people with your feet, point your feet at Buddhist statues or shrines (be careful of this when you sit), and don't touch the head of someone you don't know well. Public displays of affection are frowned upon, so save these until you are in private. You'll find being polite using a few Thai words will really pay dividends (thank you is Kawp Khun Kaa if you are female, and Kawp Khun Kraap if you are male. Your tour guide will provide more information and advice while you are on the tour; please don't hesitate to ask them any questions or for advice.

#### **The Royal Family**

The Thai people have huge respect for their Royal Family and this is enshrined in many laws as well. You should bear this in mind when speaking to Thai people and in simple things like remembering that Thai paper money has the King's face on and should therefore be treated carefully.

#### **Drugs and Alcohol**

Drugs are illegal in Thailand and heavy penalties including very large fines and jail time can be imposed. Don't think that because you are a tourist you are exempt or will be treated differently. Drinking is legal and you should not worry about having a few beers or cocktails while on tour. However remember to be respectful to your surroundings, fellow group members and the local population.

## 6. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

We are committed to being a small group operator, as we feel this gives everyone in the group the best chance to get to know their fellow travellers and to hear and make the most of their guide. There's no point in us providing great guides if you've got to peer over 30-40 shoulders to see them! So, we won't ever put you in a 50-seater coach with 49 other people and just one guide. Instead, we set our Thailand group departures to have a maximum of 18 travellers.

At Encounters Travel we aim to only use local Thai guides and reps. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing. Please check our website for more details and profiles of some of our most famous guides.

## 7. Chiang Mai Jungle Adventure

### **Jungle trek:**

In general the trekking on this tour will not be too hard for anybody who is reasonably physically fit. We walk for around 1 ½ hours on the first day, mainly downhill, and for around 5-6 hours on the second day with some climbing and descending and plenty of breaks. The precise itinerary of the trekking may have to be changed from time to time to take into account the weather and local conditions, but the same concept is well maintained.

While trekking we sleep in villagers' huts. As the huts consist of a single all-purpose room, in which the villagers live and sleep, you will sleep on the covered balcony or a bamboo bed inside the hut. A thin mattress, sheet and a blanket will be provided but for additional comfort you may wish to bring a sleeping bag as in mountain areas it can be quite cool at night, especially in December/January.

Additional equipment such as a rucksack, water canteen, life-jacket is available from our office in Chiang Mai. Sleeping bags may also be hired from here.

As you are required to carry your own kit, unnecessary items should be avoided and left in secure storage in your hotel in Chiang Mai (a private porter can also be provided upon request for an additional charge).

Simple meals will be prepared by the porter by a stream, in a hill-tribe village or at some other suitable spot, during the day, and in one of the village huts in the evening & for breakfast.

Your guide has long experience of the country through which you will travel and is very familiar with the tribes' people and their customs. His advice on these subjects should be followed.

### **Elephant rides:**

Elephant-back safaris are available in this region but not included in this tour. We no longer include elephant safaris on any of our Thailand tours due to animal welfare and safety concerns.

### **Rafting:**

The rafts are of the basic bamboo-pole variety and can carry approximately from 4 to 8 people. The rafting can take from 4 to 6 hours depending on the season, and the water level & current. Along some parts of the river there are a lot of snags (dead trees, big rocks, broken wood, etc.), which can sometimes be dangerous. A life jacket (provided) is essential as it will not only keep you afloat, if by chance you should fall off the raft, but also help to prevent injury if hitting any of these snags. During the rainy season (or the dry season following heavy rainfall) the current will be quite strong and the guide will decide if the rafting should proceed or not. His advice on this matter should be strictly followed.

## 8. Entrance Fees

The tour price includes entrance fees to all the tourist sites mentioned in the itinerary. You will need to cover the cost of entrance to any other extra sites that you may wish to visit.

## 9. Tipping

Tipping is not part of Thai culture but has become customary but not compulsory in the tourist and service industry. Tipping is always optional, and any amounts paid should reflect excellent service. You may therefore wish to tip your guide and driver at the end of the tour. You should not feel obliged to tip any particular amount, and should consider your personal budget. We are often asked to provide a guide however, and can suggest that approx. GBP 5 / USD 8 per person per day would be appropriate.

## 10. Health and Vaccinations

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including emergency evacuation and repatriation.

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting and where you are travelling from. We recommend you contact your GP/medical practitioner or a travel clinic for current information on vaccinations needed for your destination. You should ensure that you are up to date with vaccines and boosters recommended for your normal life at home, including for example, vaccines required for occupational risk of exposure, lifestyle risks and underlying medical conditions. In addition, additional courses or boosters normally recommended for the countries in this region are:

**Thailand:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

**Vietnam:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

**Cambodia:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

**Laos:** Additional vaccinations: Diptheria, Poliomyelitis, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

The above information can change at short notice. For up to date health information & vaccination requirements we recommend that you contact your medical practitioner or a travel clinic.

**Malaria:** Vaccinations are not available against Malaria, which is a disease transmitted by mosquitoes that can be very serious and sometimes fatal. You should avoid mosquito bites by covering up bare skin with clothing such as long sleeves and long trousers and applying insect repellents to exposed skin. When necessary, sleep under a mosquito net. Mosquitoes are most active during and after sunset. You should consult with your GP/medical practitioner/travel clinic about the most appropriate malaria prophylactic medication to take for the regions you are visiting.

**Yellow Fever:** This disease is spread by infected mosquitoes that bite during the day. A Yellow Fever Certificate of vaccination may be required as a condition of entry depending on which country you are arriving from, or that you have travelled or transitted through recently (including connecting flights with stopovers of over 12 hours). You can view a [World Health Organisation map](#) of areas where the virus is present in monkeys and therefore a potential risk to humans. Please ensure you have this certificate with you and to hand if necessary.

Please inform us of any pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or asthma and any prescription medicine you may be taking. We also need to know about any food allergies or physical disabilities that you may have.

## 11. Passports and Visas - Thailand

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities.

Most foreign nationals (including UK, EU, USA, CA, AU, NZ, SA) are granted a visa exemption on arrival for stays in the country of up to 30 days. If you are looking to spend longer in Thailand then you will need to leave the country and re-enter to extend your stay. We strongly recommend arranging your visa in advance if you would like to stay longer than 30 days in Thailand.

## 12. Time

The time in Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos is GMT plus 7 hours. Daylight saving adjustments are not observed.

## 13. Voltage

Sockets are two round or flat pronged and 220 volts (Type A, B, C). Universal adaptors are available in most airport shops if you don't have one already. Standard European adapters will work fine, though sometimes they may feel a little loose in the sockets. All hotel rooms have electrical sockets where you can re-charge cameras, phones etc. Hair dryers are normally available on request from the hotel reception if not in your room already. If you have US appliances (110 volts) you will need a voltage converter as well as a plug adapter.

## 14. Money

The currency in Thailand is the Thai Baht (THB). You do not need to arrange to bring any Thai Baht with you to Thailand, as change facilities are readily available in the airport, hotels and banks. We recommend that you consider bringing both credit cards and some cash in a hard currency (e.g. GB Pounds, Euros, US Dollars).

ATMs are readily available in the arrivals hall of Bangkok airport and in most major towns. Many local shops in larger towns and resorts will accept VISA/Mastercard or Amex, but may charge fees of up to 10% - check before you pay. Travellers cheques are not recommended as they can not be changed in many places now, and can incur high fees.

For security we recommend that you use the safety deposit box in your hotel room or at the hotel reception if available. You should also be careful of pickpockets in crowded places, especially places like Khao San Road in Bangkok.

While in Thailand you will need sufficient funds to cover meals not included in the itinerary, drinks, snacks, souvenirs and personal expenses such as laundry. Check the Included/Excluded notes below the tour itinerary for more guidance. These should generally all be paid for in Thai Baht.

It is difficult to recommend a level of personal spending money which will suit everyone as this can differ greatly, but as a guideline, we would suggest allowing USD 15-25 per person per day as a minimum. Allow more if you plan on doing lots of shopping, or buying many alcoholic drinks.

## 15. What to take

**Luggage:** Suitcases, rucksacks or fabric holdalls are all fine to bring with you to Thailand, though if your itinerary

has many stops and different travel included within it, we recommend packing light and not bring any large cases. You should also bring a small daypack/bag to take out during the day. Your main luggage will normally be left in the hotel during your sightseeing trips – you will not need to carry it far, and there are nearly always hotel porters to assist.

**Luggage limits:** There is no luggage limit for this tour. However, most airlines restrict you to between 20kg and 25kg for your hold luggage and between 5kg and 10kg for hand luggage. Please check with your airline before travelling to the airport.

**Climate and Clothing:** There are three reasonably well-defined seasons in Thailand, but unlike in Europe, where seasons are temperature based, Thailand is tropical and generally speaking warm all year round. Rains from the monsoon are the marker of seasons and the rainy season is from June to October. Pre-monsoon is from March to May, when the weather becomes progressively hotter. Post monsoon is from November to February when the weather is cooler. The range of temperature is more marked in the north where pre-monsoon can be very hot, though the heat is much drier than in the south. Winter in the north can feel cool, particularly in the mountains. Take light clothes with something warmer for the winter nights if you are travelling to the north. Some light raingear would be useful in the wet season.

**Other items:** We recommend you also bring:

- Cool footwear (sandals are ideal). If you are interested in exploring the reefs, a pair of reef shoes is recommended to avoid injuries. If you are trekking, then bring comfortable and sturdy walking shoes or light walking boots.
- Swimming costumes – rash-guards/t-shirts are recommended for snorkelling to avoid sunburn.
- Sunscreens, after sun lotions and personal hygiene products – Please adhere to 100ml restrictions for anything you wish to carry on hand-luggage on flights.
- Prescription medications (if required) – please bring supporting documents.
- Power adapter for phones, laptops etc
- Sunglasses and hats
- Basic first aid kit and toiletries
- Money belt
- Small torch
- Dive certification card and log book if you intend to participate in SCUBA diving.
- Sleeping bag if your tour includes any hill-tribe or village trekking

## 16. Dates & Prices

We run regular small-group departures on this tour starting on Sundays throughout the year. All departures are guaranteed to run with a minimum of 2 people. Departure dates and prices are listed on our website and on a separate dates & prices sheet available on request.

## 17. Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please [contact us](#) if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

## 18. Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event). [More information...](#)

You may arrange your own insurance, or you can take advantage of a comprehensive policy that we can arrange for you through Endsleigh Insurance which has been designed to be suitable for our tours. The policy is available to travellers of all nationalities and you do not need to live in the UK to take out the policy. For full details of cover provided, prices and to apply for one of our policies, please complete [travel insurance application form](#).

Note: Any country that borders the Mediterranean is considered as 'Europe' for the purposes of travel insurance (including Turkey, Israel, Egypt and Morocco). If you are doing a tour that visits one country in 'Europe' and one that is 'Worldwide' (for example, an Egypt and Jordan tour), then you need a 'Worldwide' policy. When completing the form you should enter your travel dates including any extra days involved in overnight flights or connecting travel between your home and the tour. Our policies are not able to cover any extra time or activities other than your tour and options booked with us and your travel to & from home.

Note - to comply with insurance sales regulations, our travel insurance policies are only available to customers booking directly with us. If you have booked through a travel agent you will need to arrange your own insurance.

If you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally, or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

*IMPORTANT: We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.*

## 19. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and an ABTA Member (Y4447) and you can be confident when booking with us that your money is safe and protected.

Financial failure insurance is also provided through Affirma to protect all customers for the land portion of your tour. Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

## 20. Responsible Tourism

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.

The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect

you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudge: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

## 21. Follow Us Online

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.

[www.facebook.com/encounterstravel](http://www.facebook.com/encounterstravel)

[www.twitter.com/encounterstrav](http://www.twitter.com/encounterstrav)! (yes, without the 'e')

## 22. Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current [official government travel advice](#) for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's ['Travel Aware' campaign](#) which provides further useful and invaluable information.



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**Note:** Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.

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