

UNESCO Indochina

Country(ies): Vietnam & Cambodia

Tour type: Tailor-made

Transport: A/C minibus, sleeper train & flights

Group size: Min: 1 | Max: 0

Days: 13 Days

Start location: Luang Prabang, Laos

End location: Siem Reap, Cambodia

Departs On: Any day

Meals: Breakfasts - 12, Lunches - 5, Dinners - 2

Highlights: Discover the World Heritage town of Luang Prabang, spend a night on a junk in Halong Bay, explore the World Heritage Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park, stroll the streets of ancient Hoi An, wonder at the long lost city of Angkor

Places Visited: Luang Prabang, Hanoi, Halong Bay, Dong Hoi, Hue, Hoi An & Siem Reap



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Luang Prabang

Meet and greet at airport and transfer to your hotel. The rest of the day is free for you to start exploring the local area.

OVERNIGHT: Luang Prabang hotel

MEALS: None

EXTRAS: Single Room Supplement (LATMUI) || Extra day in Luang Prabang - pre-tour

Day 2: Luang Prabang city tour, Pak Ou caves, & night markets

After breakfast, you will first visit Royal Palace Museum, which was built in 1904 during the French colonial era for King Sisavang Vong and his family. We then embark on a leisure cruise upstream on the Mekong River, which also gives us a breathtaking view of the tranquil countryside, before reaching the mysterious Pak Ou Caves, two linked caves crammed with thousands of gold lacquered Buddha statues of various shapes and sizes left by pilgrims. Along the way, we stop at the village of Ban Xanghai, where they make the local rice wine.

On arrival back in the city, we will visit magnificent Wat Xiengthong a superb piece of Lao temple architecture, which presents a sweeping two-tiered roof and ornate mosaics including a beautiful 'tree of life' glass montage on the rear temple wall. Afterwards, we will visit the Traditional Art and Ethnology Center (closed on Monday) to learn about Laos' many ethnic cultures. From there, we will transfer to visit Wat Prabath to admire the sunset; this is the really peaceful place to catch the last beauty of the day. The tour ends after a visit to the famous Night Market, where you can find a lovely collection of handmade textiles made by local and hilltribe people surrounding Luang Prabang.

OVERNIGHT: Luang Prabang hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 3: Luang Prabang alms giving, Kuang Si waterfalls, fly to Hanoi

Wake up as the sun rises, we will prepare to join the most sacred tradition of Laos, the daily morning alms giving, which dates to the 14th century. More than 200 Buddhist monks depart from various temple to gather their daily meal from the faithful residents sitting quietly on the streets.

From there, we will visit the temporary morning market near the former Royal Palace. Just set on the ground, the local people come here to barter their day's catch from rice, to vegetable, to fish, or chicken. This is the best chance to experience the flavor of local life.

After breakfast at the hotel, we ascend the 329 steps to the top of Phousi Hill for a panoramic view of the city and the Mekong River. We then visit Wat Visoun, dating back to 1513 during the reign of King Wisunarat (Visoun), this is Luang Prabang's oldest temple and was once home to the Prabang Buddhas.

We then transfer directly to the beautiful Kuang Si waterfalls which is the biggest in the Luang Prabang area with three tiers leading to a 50-metre drop into spectacular azure pools before flowing downstream. The pools also make great swimming holes and are very popular with both tourists and locals

We will also take a short visit to the Bear Rescue Center, which houses a couple of dozen animals rescued from the hands of poachers and traffickers.

Before returning to Luang Prabang, we stop to visit the Kuang Si Falls Butterfly Park (closed from 15 Apr – 30 Jun; 01-14 Sep, & 01 Jan every year), whose mission is to create a research centre studying and publishing about Laos butterflies, host plants and preservation.

Laos is also known for its traditional crafts, we will take a short visit to the Ock Pop Tock Living Craft Center, set serenely close to the Mekong, this beautiful, traditionally styled workshop, where weavers, spinners and batik makers produce top-quality fabrics, offers free tours every half-hour. You'll then be transferred to the airport for your flight to Hanoi, where upon arrival you'll be met and transferred to your hotel.

OVERNIGHT: Hanoi hotel

MEALS: Breakfast
EXTRAS: None

Day 4: Hanoi, Halong Bay

This morning we drive to the coastal town of Halong where we transfer you to your private traditional wooden junk where you'll enjoy lunch onboard as you cruise into the bay. The scenery is just amazing as you pass close to the towering limestone karsts jutting up into the sky. En route we'll visit a fish farm and pick up a kayak to paddle through the waters. Alternatively you can just relax onboard the junk and take in the scenery. At the end of the day you can enjoy a drink on deck whilst watching the sun set over the bay. Dinner will follow, freshly prepared seafood served under the stars, then it's off to your cabin for the night.

OVERNIGHT: Junk boat
MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
EXTRAS: None

Day 5: Halong Bay, overnight train to Dong Hoi

After an early breakfast we take a tour of the Cave of Surprises, which is the biggest cave in Halong Bay and is filled with many rock formations lit up by colourful lights. From here, we return to dry land and make our way back to Hanoi for the overnight train to Dong Hoi.

OVERNIGHT: On board sleeper train
MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch
EXTRAS: None

Day 6: Dong Hoi, Phong Nha Cave

We arrive into Dong Hoi station and transfer to Chay Lap village, a 45 minute drive and just on the edge of the Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park. Upon arrival at the village, you will then be warmly welcomed by a local family and invited to their house. You'll stay the night in a traditional, yet very comfortable house built built from local materials.

Your day will be filled with activities including a Dragon Boat tour into the Phong Nha Cave. This enormous cave is one of the best in the world and holds for records: the longest underground river, the highest & longest cave, broadest and most beautiful fine sand beaches inside the caves, and the most spectacular stalagmites and stalactites.

After returning to the village you can explore the local life of the villagers, and participate in social activities such as fishing in the pond, planting and gardening, or even playing football with the local children. In the evening you will be served dinner using fresh locally grown food.

OVERNIGHT: Homestay
MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
EXTRAS: None

Day 7: Hue, half day citadel tour

This morning we'll transfer you to Hue.

Hue was the capital of Vietnam during the Nguyen Dynasty 1802-1945 and this imperial city was modelled on the Forbidden City in Beijing. There are many temples and palaces within the walls and although much was damaged during the Tet Offensive in 1968, there are plenty of impressive structures still standing.

Your tour starts with the ancient walled Citadel, which contained the former Imperial Palace. We enjoy wandering through the enclosure during the afternoon before we take a cruise along the Perfume River.

OVERNIGHT: Hue hotel
MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch
EXTRAS: None

Day 8: Hue, drive to Hoi An

Your morning is free in Hue before we drive south to the riverside town of Hoi An. The drive follows the coastline along the South China Sea as the road winds its way up Hai Van Pass ("Pass of the Clouds").

From the 16th to 18th centuries, Hoi An was a thriving international commercial port for Chinese, Dutch, French, Japanese, Portuguese and Arab merchants. Today, Hoi An is a quaint riverside town, renowned for its silk and popular with tourists for its eclectic architecture, tailors shops and numerous cafes. Some of the buildings in the narrow streets have remained unchanged for more than a century and much of the town is now heritage-listed.

OVERNIGHT: Hoi An hotel
MEALS: Breakfast
EXTRAS: None

Day 9: Hoi An, half day tour

We start the day early with a walking tour of this former trading port famous for its restored architecture, home-made silk, expert tailors and delicious noodles and seafood. Our first stop is Chua Ong Pagoda, dating back to 1653, built in honour of the Chinese general Quan Cong, worshipped by many as a symbol of loyalty and justice. Next stop is the Phuc Kien Assembly Hall, where we will see the Jinshang Temple, dedicated to the goddess of the sea and the protector of sailors. A short walk takes us to Tam Ky House, which is a classic example of a 200 year old ancestral house. Finally we cross the well photographed 17th century Japanese covered bridge, which doubles as a temple and is a famous landmark of Hoi An.

OVERNIGHT: Hoi An hotel
MEALS: Breakfast
EXTRAS: None

Day 10: Hoi An free day

Spend the day at leisure on the beach or having clothes made by one of the expert, inexpensive tailors Hoi An is famous for.

OVERNIGHT: Hoi An hotel
MEALS: Breakfast
EXTRAS: None

Day 11: Hoi An, fly to Siem Reap

Today we transfer you to nearby Danang for your flight to Siem Reap in Cambodia. Upon arrival we'll transfer you to your hotel where the rest of the day is free for you to relax.

OVERNIGHT: Siem Reap hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 12: Full day tour of Angkor

We start your tour of Angkor at the South Gate of Angkor Thom where statues of the gods of good and evil line the entrance. Next we head to the Bayon, known for the numerous smiling faces that line the towers. These bas reliefs tell a story of daily life and the great battles that were fought between the Khmers and ancient Thais. The next stop is Phimeanakas, which is shaped roughly like a pyramid and has two ponds in the rear. A climb to the top of the temple will be rewarded with a fabulous view over the Angkor complex.

We move on to the Terrace of the Elephants, a rows of trunks that form the wall and was used as a platform from which King Jayavarman surveyed his army. Close by we visit the Terrace of Leper Kings, which includes a statue depicting Yana, the Hindu god of death. Then it's a short drive to the iconic temple, Ta Prohm. This small, crumbling temple, made famous in the Tomb Raider film, is pierced by giant tree roots giving it an almost magical feel.

We head back to Siem Reap for lunch and to get out of the midday sun. Later in the afternoon we explore the mighty Angkor Wat, the world's largest religious monument. This massive, three-tiered pyramid rises 65m from the ground and is topped by five lotus towers.

We end the day watching the sun set over the jungle from the top of Pre Rup Temple, before returning to Siem Reap for the evening.

OVERNIGHT: Siem Reap hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch

EXTRAS: None

Day 13: Transfer to the airport for departure

Free time until we transfer you to the airport for your flight home.

OVERNIGHT: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: Extra day in Siem Reap - post-tour

Included

- All accommodation with breakfast daily (Check in 2pm, Check out 12pm)
- Internal economy flight between Luang Prabang & Hanoi and Danang & Siem Reap
- Tours and transfers as mentioned by private a/c vehicle (unless stated)
- Pre-registration letter for visa on arrival
- English speaking guide on land tours
- Sightseeing fees and permits during guided time
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary

Excluded

- International Flights in to Laos and out of Cambodia
- Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia visa fees
- International airport departure tax
- Early/late check in/out service at hotels
- Travel Insurance (compulsory)

- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks, tips and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Any other items not mentioned above

Options

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.

Extra day in Siem Reap - post-tour

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$35.00

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

On this tour we use a mix of good quality hotels rated at the 4 and 5-star level along with some more interesting accommodations such as a traditional Junk Boat on Halong Bay, an overnight sleeper train and an interesting home stay. Accommodation is based on twin, triple or double en-suite rooms. Please visit the accommodation tab of this tour for examples of the properties normally used on this tour. If you have any specific accommodation requests please let us know and we'll be happy to provide you with a customised quotation.

2. Transfers

The tour includes a 24-hour arrival and departure airport-hotel transfer service and all other transfers. Arrival transfers will be provided from Luang Prabang Airport (Laos) and departures to Siem Reap Airport (Cambodia).

3. 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.

Our Vietnam tours start and finish in either Hanoi airport (HAN) or Ho Chi Minh airport (SGN).

If you are booking a tour that combines Vietnam and Cambodia we may not include the connecting flight between the two countries in the tour price (see the inclusions/exclusions or extension option sections for details). This flight can often be built into your main international flight ticket, or we may be able to book this flight for you separately if you prefer - please contact us and we will advise you on available airlines, times and prices.

4. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

As we don't offer guaranteed group departures on this tour we can run the itinerary for however many people you happen to be travelling with, starting from 1 upwards. The prices given for this tour are based on a minimum of 2 passengers travelling, so if you have a different number of passengers in your group please contact us for a customised quotation.

In Indochina we provide fully trained, local English-speaking guides for all of the sightseeing tours. At Encounters Travel we only use local 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.

5. 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.

6. Tipping

Tipping is not part of culture in South East Asia in the same way that it is standard practice in other parts of the world. However it has become more 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. USD 5-10 per person per day would be appropriate for your guide(s).

7. 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.

8. Passports and Visas - Laos

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.

15-day visas are available for most foreign nationals and cost US\$30. These are available on arrival into Vientiane International airport or when crossing into Laos from Thailand, either at the friendship bridge land border or even when crossing over from northern Thailand into Huay Xai. Longer 30 day tourist visas and business visas can be arranged prior to departure either in your home country or by using an agency in one of the neighbouring countries although this will incur a fee. When leaving the country by air there is a US\$10 departure tax payable at the airport.

As visa regulations often change we recommend that you check this information with your nearest consulate. Obtaining the correct visa is the responsibility of the traveller.

9. Passports and Visas - Vietnam

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.

British citizens (plus Japan, South Korea, Denmark, Russian, Sweden, Norway, Finland, , France, Germany, Italy, Spain) are currently subject to a visa exemption scheme, so no visa is required for stays in Vietnam of up to 15 days. Other nationalities and those staying longer in Vietnam will need to obtain a visa in advance. As this isn't always convenient we offer the option of obtaining a visa on arrival approval letter which means that you can then purchase your visa on arrival in Vietnam. However if you try to board the flight without this letter or a visa you'll be refused board. Visa approval letter fees are normally USD 10 p/p for single entry, or USD 15 p/p for multiple entry visas. The visa stamp fee on arrival at the immigration desk is then USD 25 p/p for single entry, or USD 50 p/p for multiple entry. These fees are given as a guide and may vary over time and subject to nationality. Please contact us if you have any queries.

10. Passports and Visas - Cambodia

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.

Many nationalities (including British, EU, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand amongst many others) can obtain a 30-day tourist visa on arrival in Phnom Penh or Siem Reap Airport (and some land borders). At the time of publishing the visa fee is \$30.00. You'll need to make sure you have a passport sized photograph for the visa. If you are arriving via Phnom Penh or Siem Reap Airports then you can obtain an e-visa prior to arrival at - www.evisa.gov.kh/ (these are not accepted at land borders).

As visa regulations often change we recommend that you check this information with your nearest consulate. Obtaining the correct visa is the responsibility of the traveller.

11. Time

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

12. 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.

13. Money - Laos

The currency Laos is the 'Kip' (LAK).

Common notes:

100 kip

500 kip

1,000 kip

2,000 kip

5,000 kip

It's worth noting that US\$ are widely accepted throughout Laos and are often actually preferred for higher value purchases. Travellers arriving from Thailand will also find that the Thai baht is another currency welcomed in Laos. However, when paying in these currencies change will most likely be given in kip which should be kept for more day-to-day purchases and transactions. You can change money at any bank (08.30 & 16.00 Mon-Fri) although a variable commission will be charged. In general, it's a good idea to try and find the lower rates which are usually available through exchange kiosks or hotels. In the capital city Vientiane you can exchange UK£ pound, Euros, AUS\$ and other currencies but in the smaller towns around the rest of the country, US\$ and Thai baht are preferred.

Traveller's cheques are widely accepted in major cities and do benefit from a slightly better rate but this can be offset by the commission charged to change them.

ATM's have now made it into Laos and these are available in Vientiane, Luang Prabang and Viang Vieng. For some reason, Mastercard is sometimes preferred to Visa but a lot of debit cards such as Cirrus and Maestro are now accepted. You can also use credit cards to pay for hotels and some restaurants but credit and debit cards are far from being accepted everywhere so having an alternate way of accessing funds is vital.

14. Money - Vietnam

The Vietnamese currency is the 'Dong' (VND). Most people prefer to be paid in Dong rather than US dollars. It can sometimes be difficult to change large notes at smaller villages so try to keep a stash of smaller notes with you.

You can also change all major currencies with any private moneychangers, at the local markets, shops or hotels, or at a bank. Banks usually open from 8.00am to 3.00pm, except Saturday afternoons and Sundays. Although all major currencies are usually accepted, the US\$ is by far the most widely accepted and preferred currency, with large notes (\$50 and \$100 bills) getting a better exchange rate. Travellers' cheques in major currencies are accepted at all banks, though a commission will be charged.

At banks throughout Vietnam you can draw cash, in both dong and dollars on all major credit cards. Approx. 3% commission will be charged for this service. Many souvenir shops, restaurants and hotels will accept payment with credit cards. There is, however, a 3-4% surcharge.

There are ATMs in Major cities like Ho Chi Minh, Hanoi and Hué, which accept major credit cards. We recommend that you consider bringing both credit cards, some cash in a hard currency (e.g. GB Pounds, Euros, US Dollars), and some travellers' cheques.

15. Money - Cambodia

The Cambodia currency is the 'Riel' (KHR). US\$ are widely accepted in the country and more or less work as a second currency. Because of its location so close to Thailand, you will find that Thai baht is also accepted in most places. Bear in mind that if paying in US\$ or Thai baht, your change will be given back in riels.

It's also possible to change Thai baht or US\$ with local private moneychangers, at some shops and markets or as usual, any banks that you may come across. These banks will also change most other currencies such as Sterling, Euros etc. The banks tend to open from 7.30am to 2.30pm.

If you have travellers cheques in major currencies then the banks will accept these although it is likely that a commission will be charged.

In Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, banks and even some travel agents will allow you to draw cash against most major credit cards but you can expect a surcharge of around 3-4%. These days, more and more shops, restaurants and hotels in the major tourist destinations will accept payment with credit cards. Until recently, Cambodia had no ATM's whatsoever but this is changing fast and it's now possible to withdraw money from ATM's located in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. Most credit cards and some debit cards are accepted but its best not to rely on this as a way of accessing your funds while in the country.

16. What to take

Luggage: Suitcases, rucksacks or fabric holdalls are all fine to bring with you to Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, 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 this region, but unlike in Europe, where seasons are temperature based, Indochina is tropical and generally speaking warm all year round. Take light clothes with something warmer for the winter nights. 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

17. Dates & Prices

This tour is designed as a sample tailor-made tour itinerary. As such we do not offer set group departure dates that you can join. Rather, the tour is available for you to do privately starting on any date of the year. Guideline seasonal prices are given below, based on 2 people travelling. If you would like to adjust the tour itinerary, or there will be more or less people travelling, please contact us and we will customise a price for you.

For many people planning a trip to this region, the weather will be a determining factor in choosing when to travel. In general there isn't really a 'bad' time to visit this region as you'll normally experience a mix of sunshine and rainy days at most times of the year. Generally the summer months of May through to September/October are rainy in much of these two countries. The months between mid-November and April are generally considered the best months to visit these countries where you'll normally expect hot days with little rainfall (although you should still expect occasional rainfall at this time).

18. 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.

19. 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.

20. 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.

21. 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).

22. 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

www.twitter.com/encounterstravl (yes, without the 'e')

23. 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.

24. Transfers

Our South East Asia tours all include a 24-hour arrival and departure airport-hotel transfer service, and all other transfers throughout the tour. If you are already in the country then we will provide you with your first hotel details, contact numbers for our local representatives, and details of your first meeting time.

gov.uk/travelaware

Printed on: Sunday 22nd of September 2019

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.
