

Code SEBL **Bangkok via Laos to Singapore**

## Tour Dossier Introduction

**Dossier Last Updated:** 15-04-2015

**Tour Code:** SEBL

**Duration:** 27 nights / 28 days

**Joining City:** Bangkok

**Departure City:** Singapore

**Nearest Joining International Airport:** Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Intl Airport (BKK), Bangkok Don Mueang Intl Airport (DMK)

**Nearest Departing International Airport:** Singapore Changi Airport (SIN)

Please check this document just before departing in case of last minute changes to your tour.

## Tour Documents

 PDF Document  Web Page

 Laos Dossier

 Malaysia Dossier

 Singapore Dossier

 Thailand Dossier

## What's Included

- > Full day Hill tribes tour
- > Guided tour of Chiang Dao Caves
- > Visit the Opium Museum
- > Golden Triangle & Golden Buddha
- > Vang Vieng bicycle tour
- > Entry and Guided Tour of the Grand Palace
- > Penang Heritage Walk
- > Full Day Excursion in the Cameron Highlands
- > Rickshaw City Tour of Melaka
  
- > 24 nights in hotels, 2 nights on overnight buses, 1 nights on overnight trains
- > 5 breakfasts
- > Travel by Overnight Bus, Private Vehicle, Boat, Public Bus, Overnight Train
- > Tucan Travel tour leader, English-speaking local guide(s) on included excursions

## What's not Included

- > International flights and departure taxes
- > Tips on included excursions, visas, travel insurance, personal items and single rooms.

- Airport transfers and pre and post tour accommodation
- Spending money – budget for meals, snacks, drinks, limited souvenirs, laundry, tips and any extras
- Optional excursions - Please see our optional excursions guide on the dossier page for a comprehensive list of optional activities and excursions available on this tour.

## Detailed Itinerary

### Day 1 to 1 - Arrive Bangkok

The first day of your tour is simply an arrival day with no pre-organised activities. In order to allow time to relax and see some of the sights you may wish to add pre tour accommodation. On arrival please ask at the reception for information on when the pre departure meeting will be held.

Thailand's capital, Bangkok, a crazy and chaotic city! Known in Thai as Krung Thep Maha Nakhon pronounced or Krung Thep "city of angels" for short, Bangkok was a small trading post at the mouth of the Chao Phraya River during the Ayutthaya Kingdom. Bangkok is now the gateway to South East Asia for most travellers and international backpackers come and go and the streets are always buzzing and full of life.

No visit to Bangkok is complete without a visit to Khao San Road, the famous strip filled with markets, stalls and neon lights. From people watching to shopping, and nightlife to food and drink, this is the place to be on a night out in Bangkok. If you're feeling adventurous you might wish to try a fried insect or two!

On a more cultural note, Bangkok also boasts hundreds of Wats (temples), with Wat Arun being the main one visited by most travellers. The Grand Palace is also a popular attraction, and for something different you can cruise along the Chao Phraya River and through the canals. Bangkok once had an elaborate network of canals and was given the nickname, 'Venice of the East', and although some of them have been filled in and converted to streets, many still exist today. Travelling through these canals you will see how the locals live along the riverside - you almost forget you are in a large, bustling city.

**Optional Excursions:** Thai Massage per hour from – THB 200 • Wat Phra Kaew – from THB 500 • Thai cookery course – from THB 1200 • Bangkok tour from THB 750

### Day 2 to 2 - Bangkok & Overnight bus to Chiang Mai

We have a final day in Bangkok before we board our overnight bus to Chiang Mai.

### Day 3 to 4 - Chiang Mai

Chiang Mai, the 'Rose of the North', is the largest and most culturally significant city in northern Thailand. Your first day here is free to get involved in a range of optional excursions on offer. You can take a Thai cooking course, enjoy a relaxing massage, take in a night-time Thai kick-boxing bout (Muay Thai) or haggle the night away at Chiang Mai's famous evening street bazaar.

The next day we have a full day tour that includes a trek through different hill tribes, and a ride down-river on a bamboo raft. We will be picked up at the hotel in the morning then taken by a local guide in a private Songthaew, which is a converted pick-up truck that has seating at the back - the standard mode of transport for many in Thailand - to our first stop, which will be the beautiful caves of Chiang Dao, with their amazing limestone stalactites and stalagmites, and beautiful white marble Buddhist statues from Burma.

We stop near the caves for lunch and in the afternoon we continue by Songthaew and on foot through light jungle to experience the traditional lifestyle of the local villages. The terrain here is mountainous and offers magnificent views. We trek to the Ping River, where our bamboo rafts await us. We will navigate down the river, perhaps seeing village women washing their clothes in the river as children play at the edge, before heading back to Chiang Mai in the late afternoon.

PLEASE NOTE: The route for the hilltribe trek is weather dependant so the above description may differ.

**Included Excursions:** Hilltribe Trek • Guided Tour of Chiang Mai • Bamboo Raft Ride

**Optional Excursions:** Thai cookery course – THB 800 per person (depending on class size) • Doi Suthep temple by Songthaew (type of Thai vehicle) THB 300 • Bicycle tour – from THB 800 per day

### Day 5 to 5 - Golden Triangle

The next day we discover the Golden Triangle, the infamous centre of Asia's illicit opium production, where Laos, Thailand and Burma meet at a single point close to the Chinese border. Visit the old Opium Museum, the giant Golden Buddha sitting on a boat by the riverside and the stone elephants there to protect him.

Lunch will be taken at Wat Rong Khun, or White Temple, outside Chiang Rai. Many tour leaders have claimed that Rong Khun is the most fascinating

temple they have visited and during your visit you'll be amazed at the decorations, which are in total contrast to the holy elements experienced in most Buddhist temples.

**Included Excursions:** Golden Triangle & Opium Museum • White Temple

### Day 6 to 6 - Pakbeng

We continue in private, air-conditioned minivans to the border with Laos, where we cross the customs 'hut' before boarding a longboat on the mighty Mekong River to travel downstream to Pakbeng. Pakbeng is a small village, where the pace of life really slows down and you can relax and enjoy a nice cold award-winning Beer Laos.

### Day 7 to 8 - Luang Prabang

We continue our journey by slowboat along the Mekong River to Luang Prabang. Many say this is the most memorable town in all of Laos. Renowned for a fascinating history and some of the friendliest people in South East Asia, Luang Prabang refers to the holy Pra Bang, Laos' most sacred image of the Buddha given to Fa Ngoum.

We have two days to enjoy this sleepy town, which is located 300 metres above sea level on the upper Mekong. As you explore you will see that Luang Prabang is dominated by Phousi - the marvellous hill-top temple that sits in the middle of the town. You'll notice a combination of Lao, French and Lao-French colonial influence as you admire the city's buildings and architectural highlights - all of which you can see discovering the town on foot.

There are many temples to visit in Luang Prabang - over 30 in fact, which is a large number for this small town. Along the way you may encounter some young monks eager to practice their English skills as well.

**Optional Excursions:** Royal Theatre dance performances – US\$20 • Royal Palace – LAK 30,000 • Wat Xieng Thong – LAK 20,000 • Wat Phou Phoa donation expected • Kuang Si Falls – LAK 20,000 (not including transport)

### Day 9 to 10 - Vang Vieng

As we make our way south from Luang Prabang we travel through stunning scenery to Vang Vieng. This peaceful town is situated in a plateau with stunning surroundings of limestone caves and waterfalls, and the area is inhabited by the Hmong and Yao tribes. The limestone caves are renowned in ancient mythology and have featured in the prose of many artists throughout time. Vang Vieng is an excellent place to try the local cuisine and there are markets to indulge in. Feeling energised we will take a bicycle tour off the beaten track through some of Laos' most incredible scenery and view a wonderful sunset across lush paddy fields before arriving for a swim at the Blue Lagoon.

**Included Excursions:** Bike tour

**Optional Excursions:** Bamboo rafting/kayaking including visit to caves – US\$20 • Caves – most entry fees are US\$2

### Day 11 to 12 - Vientiane

The capital of Laos is extremely quiet - so quiet that, before 1970, there was only one set of traffic lights in the entire city (a far cry from Bangkok!). We have time to admire this tranquil city with its many murals and markets. Many buildings you will see when you wander the streets are of religious significance. You may wish to hire a bicycle and explore the local streets and markets which are excellent here.

From Vientiane we take a private van to the border with Thailand where, after the formalities, we board an overnight sleeper train which takes us back to Bangkok.

**Optional Excursions:** Temples – most entry fees are US\$2 • Wat Pra Kaeo (Grand Palace and museum) – LAK 5000 • National Museum – LAK 20,000 • Buddha Park – LAK 8,000 entrance (plus transport starting from LAK 80,000)

### Day 13 to 15 - Bangkok

We are back in Bangkok in the early morning where we have some more time in this great city. It's a chance to indulge in even more shopping and nightlife, or perhaps take it easy and visit some of the popular Wats in the area. A great market to visit, if not for the best bargain, but for its sheer size, is the 35 acre Chatuchak Weekend Market which has reached a landmark status as a must-visit place in Bangkok. Get there easily by skytrain to Mo Chit station.

**Included Excursions:** Grand Palace

### Day 16 to 17 - Ao Nang

The gateway to the Southern Gulf of Thailand, Ao Nang is the perfect getaway. Here you can relax on quiet deserted beaches, go snorkelling or learn how

to dive. There are options for trekking or if you simply want to take in the surrounds you can go island hopping and visit many pristine beaches and natural caves.

Hire a local longtail boat and visit hidden coves and tropical beaches around neighbouring islands. If you're after something a bit more energetic, hire a speedboat to , the small uninhabited islands, which offers fantastic snorkelling and vivid turquoise waters.

### Day 18 to 18 - Langkawi

Made up of 99 islands, Lankawi is a paradise nestled in north Malaysia. Here we can relax on the beach, enjoy the beautiful waters and bury our feet in the sand. Until 1986, the islands were thought to be cursed until they were developed into a poplar destination for tourists.

### Day 19 to 20 - Penang

We make for Penang. We will stay in Georgetown, which is the island's capital. Georgetown possesses a unique charm, blending old and new cultures. Peddlers exhibit their goods surrounded by modern buildings. Old buildings stand side-by-side with new businesses. Take a rickshaw tour and introduce yourself to this lively town or perhaps visit the 65-storey Kompleks Tun Abdul Razak (KOMTAR), a prominent Penang landmark, which houses Government departments, commercial offices, department stores, shops and restaurants.

**Included Excursions:** Penang Heritage Walk

**Optional Excursions:** Hill and Temple (Kek Lok Si) – MYR 80 includes guide and train tickets

### Day 21 to 22 - Cameron Highlands

Named after William Cameron, a British colonial government surveyor who discovered the plateau during in 1885, the Cameron Highlands is a highland region around 1500 metres above sea level. There are many things to do and see here, including: a butterfly farm, strawberry farms, rose gardens, a Chinese temple and vegetable farms. You also have a jungle trek amongst the cool, refreshing forest air. The region's fertile mountain slopes make it one of the best places in the country to grow tea, and there are many tea plantations. The Cameron Highlands is also a major supplier of vegetables to Malaysia and Singapore.

**Included Excursions:** Full day jungle trek

**Optional Excursions:** Kuala Kangsar town tour – US\$30

### Day 23 to 24 - Kuala Lumpur

We arrive in Malaysia's lively capital, Kuala Lumpur. A major tourist hub, 'KL' (as it is usually referred) is modern, slightly congested, and it offers all the creature comforts of your average major city. High rises abound, shopping is excellent (and one of the city's major attractions) and its bustling day-to-day goings-on provide an insight into Malay business culture. There are many things to do here - both cultural and indulgent. During your time here, why not check out Berjaya Times Square in the Bukit Bintang area, the biggest mall in Asia - where the 8th floor houses a mini theme park consisting of several roller coasters and white-knuckle rides. You could also visit the tallest twin tower building in the world, the Petronas Towers. There are also many colonial buildings to visit if you feel the need to step back in time and take a break from the modern high rises.

### Day 25 to 26 - Melaka

Melaka is one of Malaysia's most popular destinations and was an important trading port several hundred years ago. The historical city centre has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Portuguese settled here in the 16th century and their influence can be seen in much of the architecture around the city. There are many attractions in Melaka, from temples to churches, and mosques to museums. The destination is famous for its traditional Chinese Nyonya cuisine, which you can sample from one of the traditional Peranakan shop houses.

**Included Excursions:** Rickshaw city tour

**Optional Excursions:** River cruise from – MYR 20

### Day 27 to 27 - Singapore

Singapore may be small in size, but its larger-than-life attitude and modernisation will ensure your visit here is truly unforgettable. A major international hub, the city will house travellers and business people from all over the world at any given time. You would be forgiven for thinking you should be donned in a suit clutching a briefcase as you lose yourself between the ultra-modern high rise buildings. Like any major city, the shopping is excellent here (although not always cheap). There are many historical and cultural sights to see if you are after an insight into the tradition of this fascinating country. Visit Little India and Chinatown for a glimpse into the old way of life of the city. You may want to don your best travelling garb and try a traditional Singapore Sling at the Long Bar in the famous Raffles Hotel. Steeped in history, this spectacular colonial style hotel is beautiful to see as you make your way to the bar which is more relaxed than you may think as it is a must to throw your peanut shells on the floor! Singapore restaurants are not the cheapest you will come across in South East Asia but if you hit some of the market food stalls or the hawker centres you are sure to delight in an amazing

selection of fresh, scrumptious food.

**Optional Excursions:** Zoological Gardens – US\$22 • Singapore History Museum – US\$10 • Singapore Botanic Gardens and National Orchid Garden – free

### Day 28 to 28 - Depart Singapore

Your adventure of a lifetime comes to an end today. If you have a late flight or have lengthened your stay by adding post tour accommodation you will have more time to explore the sights.

### Day by Day Itinerary

| Day    | Activity                               | Country  | Meals | Single Room |
|--------|--|----------|-------|-------------|
| Day 1  | Bangkok                                | Thailand |       | ✓           |
| Day 2  | Overnight bus to Chiang Mai            |          |       |             |
| Day 3  | Chiang Mai                             |          |       | ✓           |
| Day 4  | Chiang Mai                             |          |       | ✓           |
| Day 5  | Golden Triangle                        |          |       | ✓           |
| Day 6  | Pakbeng                                | Laos     |       | ✓           |
| Day 7  | Luang Prabang                          |          |       | ✓           |
| Day 8  | Luang Prabang                          |          | B     | ✓           |
| Day 9  | Vang Vieng                             |          | B     | ✓           |
| Day 10 | Vang Vieng                             |          |       | ✓           |
| Day 11 | Vientiane                              |          |       | ✓           |
| Day 12 | Vientiane & Overnight train to Bangkok |          | B     |             |
| Day 13 | Bangkok                                | Thailand |       | ✓           |
| Day 14 | Bangkok                                |          |       |             |
| Day 15 | Overnight bus to Surat Thani/Krabi     |          |       |             |
| Day 16 | Ao Nang                                |          |       | ✓           |
| Day 17 | Ao Nang                                |          |       | ✓           |
| Day 18 | Langkawi                               | Malaysia |       | ✓           |
| Day 19 | Penang                                 |          |       | ✓           |
| Day 20 | Penang                                 |          | B     | ✓           |
| Day 21 | Cameron Highlands                      |          | B     | ✓           |
| Day 22 | Cameron Highlands                      |          |       | ✓           |
| Day 23 | Kuala Lumpur                           |          |       | ✓           |
| Day 24 | Kuala Lumpur                           |          |       | ✓           |
| Day 25 | Melaka                                 |          |       | ✓           |

|        |           |           |   |
|--------|-----------|-----------|---|
| Day 26 | Melaka    |           | ✓ |
| Day 27 | Singapore | Singapore | ✓ |
| Day 28 | Singapore |           |   |

(B - Breakfast, L - Lunch, D - Dinner included)

For tours that include the option of a single supplement, a ? will indicate in which destinations single rooms are available. The detailed and day by day itineraries above are provided in good faith and it is our intention to adhere to the published route. Changes may be made before or during your tour for operational or safety reasons or to incorporate improvements. Impromptu changes may also occur whilst you are travelling as a result of one-off circumstances such as an excursion being closed on a particular day, weather conditions or transport. Delays are rare but occur occasionally and for this reason and the reasons above this itinerary should be considered as a guide only. Published transport times are approximations and may vary depending on local conditions.

## Travel Style

This is an Adventure Tour, we see a destination from the locals' perspective using a variety of transport and staying in small locally owned accommodation. There is a maximum of 16 travellers with an average group size of 8-12. All our Adventure Tours are priced per person on a shared room basis meaning there is no compulsory extra payment for those travelling on their own. Please read the Adventure Tour travel style dossier to ensure you understand the style of travel you are undertaking: <http://www.tucantravel.com/travel-styles/dossier/adventure-tours>

### I'd like my own room

If you are a solo traveller, a single room is available on most occasions at an extra cost. Price information can be found on the price page of each tour. This must be booked in advance.

## Joining hotel details

**For the Adventurous Angkor, Cambodia or Wat and South East Asian Peninsula tours beginning on 17th January 2015, your joining hotel is as follows:**

New Siam II Hotel  
50 Trok Rong Mhai  
Pra-artid Rd.  
Phranakorn  
Bangkok 10200  
Thailand

Tel: (+66) 2 282 - 2795

Fax: (+66) 2 629 - 0101

**For all other tours, your joining hotel will be:**

Erawan House  
17 / 1-2 Chanasongkhram  
Phra-artid Rd.  
Phranakorn,  
Bangkok 10200  
Thailand

Tel: (+66) 2 629 - 2121

Fax: (+66) 2 629 - 5831

There are safe deposit boxes for your use (you will get an itemised receipt). Please leave all of your important documents, money and travellers cheques here when you go out but remember to carry some form of ID and a photocopy of your passport with you.

It is advisable not to wear chains or expensive looking watches or jewellery while in major cities. You should also keep your camera concealed when not in use and carry daypacks on your front for extra safety.

## Arriving in Bangkok

When arriving at Bangkok International Airport we recommend that you obtain some Thai baht as soon as you arrive. There is an international ATM inside

the airport, as well as money exchange offices offering a good rate. The rate will always vary slightly depending on where you go, it may be worth changing a small amount of money at the airport for your transport, and then finding a bank or money exchange within the town centre. There are many ATM's and money exchanges close by to the hotel should you want to change them after checking into the hotel.

## Airport Transfers

Airport transfers are not included in the tour price and must be booked separately in advance through Tucan Travel. If you have booked an airport/hotel transfer with us, please look out for someone with a sign which has your name, Tucan Travel, or both after exiting the customs hall.

If you arriving in to Don Mueang International Airport (DMK) and have an arrival transfer booked, please turn right after exiting customs and walk to the end of the corridor. Your driver will be waiting outside Coffee Corner holding a Tucan Travel sign with your name on it.

If you have booked an arrival transfer with us and you are going to be delayed by more than two hours, you must advise us of the delay at least six hours before arrival. If we are advised in time, we will make every effort to reschedule your transfer and your driver will be asked to wait for two hours after your new expected arrival time. However, if we are not made aware of any change, the driver will only wait for two hours after the original scheduled arrival time and after this point it will be up to you to arrange transport to your hotel at your own expense. Please contact us on the emergency contact details below if you are likely to be delayed.

## Making your own way

If you would prefer to make your own way to and from your hotel, a public taxi is the easiest. At the airport, exit the customs area and turn right. Ignore all touts in the airport terminal offering taxi services and proceed down to Level 1, following the blue signs for "Public Taxis". Outside the arrival building on the first floor (one floor down from arrivals) you will see the "Public Taxi" desks.

Tell the dispatcher your destination as the **Erawan House Hotel, Soi Chanasongran, Thanon Prah Artit, Banglampu**. He or she will give you a slip of white paper. Hold onto it, do not give it to the driver, because it has instructions on what to do in the unlikely event of any problem. The dispatcher will give another part of the form to the driver.

When you get into the taxi, make sure the meter is on and showing 35 baht and ignore any 'helpful' advice from the driver to strike a cash deal off the metre. On arrival at the hotel, you will pay the fare on the meter, plus an airport surcharge of 50 baht that is not shown on the meter. In addition there may be optional expressway tolls of 75 baht which you should pay directly to the driver at the two toll stations. Typical costs would normally be around 400-500 baht in total (including metered fare, surcharge and tolls).

## Pre-Departure Meeting

When you arrive on day one of your trip, you should find some local information at the hotel lobby. Your tour leader will be staying in the hotel and should have put up a welcome note to let you know what room they are in. A pre-departure meeting is usually held in the afternoon or early evening of day one. You will need to bring the following important items to the meeting with your tour leader:

- Your passport, including any necessary visas and at least one photocopy to give to your tour leader
- Vaccination certificates if relevant to any destinations on your tour
- Travel insurance policy and a photocopy to give to your tour leader
- Your travel voucher
- Your local payment in US\$ cash (Budget Expeditions only)

## Missing the tour departure

If you miss the start of your tour, please ask at the reception of the hotel for a message from your tour leader which will give you instructions on how to catch up with the group. Any associated costs will be at your own expense (although, depending on the reason, you may be able to claim these from your travel insurance so ensure you keep all receipts).

If you know in advance that you are unlikely to arrive on time, please contact Tucan Travel immediately so we can inform the tour leader. Tucan Travel cannot be held responsible should your airline/boat/coach be delayed and we are unable to refund any unused portion of your tour.

## Time Keeping

Punctuality is very important and throughout the tour your tour leader will give you the time to meet in reception. Tour leaders will often post notes at reception with meeting times, so remember to always look out for these.

Although rare, delays can occur and we therefore advise you not to arrange your onward travel too close to the end of the tour. We take no responsibility for any missed flights or additional expenses if the group arrives late into the departure city at the end of the tour.

## Emergency Contact Details

In the unlikely event of an emergency, please contact our Asia Destinations Manager on +44 (0)203 129 3763

Emergency contact details are a service for emergency calls only. We respectfully request that you consider the urgency of your enquiry. Non-urgent enquiries should be made during office hours. Visit [contact us](#) page for office hours.

## Keeping in Touch

Your tour leader will point out internet cafes in all major cities and towns and Wi-Fi may be available in some hotels. Mobile phones may not work locally depending on your network. If you have an unlocked phone you may be able to purchase a local SIM card. Hotel details, apart from the joining hotel, are not given in advance and are subject to change, so if someone needs to contact you urgently during your tour the best method is to contact our office who can pass a message on to the tour leader.

## Money

For personal spending money we recommend bringing US dollars, Pounds Sterling or Euros to exchange for or use alongside local currency. Travellers cheques are not accepted everywhere and can be expensive to exchange, but offer a more secure way of transporting funds. While bank cards provide a very good way to access funds overall, it is not recommended to rely on them as your sole source of funds as cash machines do not always work and may not be available in remote locations. Carry a mix of cards and cash with you, including notes in small denominations.

ATMs are fairly commonplace and pay out in local currency, except in Cambodia where US dollars is the main form of currency. If the ATM doesn't work after the first two attempts, find another machine as it may retain your card the third time. Always make sure no one else sees your PIN number when using ATMs.

Your spending money should cover some meals, optional excursions, souvenirs, drinks, laundry, border and airport taxes and any visas obtained locally. We provide guideline prices for optional excursions in the itinerary to help you budget, but ultimately the amount you will need to budget for your trip very much depends on your individual requirements. We recommend bringing extra money to cover emergencies or unexpected situations.

## Tipping

Tipping is a part of the life in Asia, but you should not feel obliged or pressured to tip if you have not received good service. A gratuity of 10% of the total bill is recommended in restaurants. Gratuities are usually expected for local guides on included and optional excursions. Tips are also appreciated by Tucan Travel tour leaders at the end of your tour and we recommend an average of \$2-\$4 per person per day for the duration of your tour. This is only if you feel that their service was up to standard and is completely at your own discretion.

## Packing List

The best advice when packing is to travel light and leave space for souvenirs in your bag.

## Luggage

It is important to bring luggage you can carry and lift comfortably, potentially up several flights of stairs in hotels where elevators are not available and between bus/train stations and hotels. There may be times when you have to get your luggage through crowded streets which may be cobbled or store your luggage in lockers. Luggage too large for lockers will have to be left insecurely or carried for the duration of the day.

We recommend a frameless backpack or a sports type shoulder bag which fits comfortably on your shoulders, as they are less bulky and easier to handle than rigid suitcases or framed backpacks. Suitcases are not suitable for our tours and are not recommended. Tucan Travel takes no responsibility for damage to your luggage while on tour.

In addition to your main bag, you will need a small daypack for your everyday excursions. Try to keep this bag as light as possible and make sure that all main sections of your bags can be padlocked. This daypack should have enough room to carry food and snacks for long hikes and treks and space to carry belongings for overnight excursions.

## Sleeping Sheet

Sleeping bags are not required on this tour, but a sleeping bag liner/sleep sheet is optional if you wish to bring one along. Some passengers like to use them on long bus journeys and overnight trains.

## Clothing and Footwear

We recommend packing lightweight and durable clothes. Nights can be cold at higher altitude, so it is a good idea to bring at least one pair of warm trousers plus several thinner sweaters / fleeces which you can layer. Please avoid military or camouflage-patterned clothing as it can cause problems and in some countries may be illegal. In some sacred and religious areas you will be required to cover your shoulders and knees as a sign of respect (this often applies to men as well as women). A sarong or light scarf can be very useful in these scenarios.

Good, comfortable walking shoes are essential. These do not need to be expensive boots, but they should have good ankle support and grip, be worn in and ideally waterproof.

Essential items:

- A lightweight water/windproof jacket with hood
- Easy to pack wide-brimmed hat or cap
- Towel - you will need a towel for most overnight excursions
- Swimwear
- Sandals or thongs/jandals/flip flops

Suggested items:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money belt  | <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic bags for waterproofing   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunglasses  | <input type="checkbox"/> Inflatable pillow  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small calculator  | <input type="checkbox"/> Swiss army type penknife   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small collapsible umbrella  | <input type="checkbox"/> Binoculars   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Universal washbasin plug  | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel plug adaptor with a USB port  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Head torch or flashlight  | <input type="checkbox"/> Small sewing kit   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel alarm clock  | <input type="checkbox"/> Insect repellent (DEET 35% min) and bite cream   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lip balm, sun block with high UV factor   | <input type="checkbox"/> Antibacterial hand clensing gel  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wet wipes   | <input type="checkbox"/> Ear plugs and sleep mask   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cheap plastic watch   | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel sickness tablets  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plenty of spare memory cards for your camera  | <input type="checkbox"/> Spare pair of spectacles or contact lenses and solution  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spare rechargeable batteries for camera   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hard drive or USB stick to back up your photos   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing materials, address book and diary   | <input type="checkbox"/> Pocket size phrasebook   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel games, cards and a couple of paperbacks  | <input type="checkbox"/> Pegless washing line & travel laundry detergent (bio-degradable preferable)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet paper (best to carry a roll with you at all times and/or tissues)  | <input type="checkbox"/> As gifts for local children - pens, coloured pencils, small notepads. To discourage a begging mentality we recommend that you try to give these gifts at schools or childcare centres rather than on the street. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small medical kit with diarrhoea remedy, rehydration salts, antiseptic cream, sterile dressings, plasters, bandages, pain-killers, safety pins etc. |   |

## Laundry

There are usually laundromats or laundry services in or near most of our hotels. Hotel services can be pretty costly however your tour leader will be able to recommend cheaper options. If you wash clothes yourself take care not to be too obvious where you hang them as most hotels do not like guests washing and drying their clothes in the hotel rooms.

## Electricity Supply

The power supply in Asia differs not only from country to country but sometimes from region to region within a country.

- Vietnam, Thailand & Laos require a European plug with two circular metal pins
- Singapore and Malaysia requires a three square pin power sockets as in the UK.
- Japan requires a plug with two flat parallel prongs similar to those used in North and Central America. However, the Japanese plug has two identical flat prongs.
- China use a Japanese-style plug with two parallel flat blades; Australian-style plug with two flat angled blades and one vertical grounding blade; British-style plug with two flat blades and one flat grounding blade; South African/Indian-style plug with two circular metal pins above a large circular
- Cambodia uses a European plug with two circular metal pins or Japanese-style plug with two parallel flat blades.
- Nepal uses 2 or 3 round prongs as found in the US. You will also need a voltage converter.
- India use South African/Indian-style plug with two circular metal pins above a large circular grounding pin.
- Central Asia, Indonesia, Russia and Mongolia use a European plug with two circular metal pins.

We recommend bringing a universal plug adaptor with you.

## Health, Fitness & Safety

### Vaccinations

It is important to consult your doctor or travel clinic in good time before your tour departs to determine what vaccinations you require. You may need several vaccinations and/or malaria tablets and you should be aware that some inoculations require more than one visit and can take several weeks to administer. Always carry your International Certificate of Vaccination with your passport.

Malaria can be found in some parts of Asia. The risk is greater in rainforests or other areas at sea level. If required make sure you pack sufficient prophylactics for the duration of your tour and the incubation period after. You should take a good insect repellent (with DEET) and apply liberally and regularly. Flying-insect spray or mosquito coils (containing a pyrethroid insecticide) can help clear rooms of mosquitoes and may be worth bringing.

### Pack a Medical Kit

A medical kit is handy for minor wounds and ailments. In areas with limited or dubious medical facilities, an emergency medical kit containing sterile syringes is also advisable. By law our staff are not allowed to administer first aid or give drugs to travellers, so please be prepared with your own supplies.

If you are taking medication, please ensure you bring an adequate supply and a letter from your doctor to avoid potential issues at border crossings.

### Fitness & Suitability

This is a public transport-based tour so it is essential that you be able to carry your bags over distances between bus and train stations and hotels, generally for up to 20 minutes. Disruptions happen and while your tour leader will make every effort to ensure your trip runs smoothly, patience, a sense of humour and willingness to get involved and help your tour leader are essential ingredients for a successful and happy group.

If you have any pre-existing medical conditions please let us know at the time you book or as early before departure as possible. Depending on the severity of the condition, you may be asked to produce a medical certificate from your doctor approving your participation in this tour. While this would only happen in very exceptional circumstances, if we consider you incapable completing this tour or you have concealed an existing medical condition which is affecting your ability to participate in the tour of Tucan Travel reserve the right to turn you away without reimbursement.

### Safety & Security

Asia is generally safe, even more so in a group. Reasonable precaution is advised; do not bring valuable jewellery or watches (even fakes can catch the eye of a thief), do not walk by yourself at night, heed your tour leader's advice and always keep an eye and a hand on your camera and bags in public places. Tucan Travel cannot accept responsibility for any valuables left in safe deposits in hotels or on public transport.

## Travel Guides

If you would like to discover more about your destination, including history, geography, climate and language, please have a read of our country travel guides available here: <http://www.tucantravel.com/destination-travel-guides/asia-travel-guides>.

## Documents

### Passport

Your passport should be valid for at least 6 months after you have finished your tour with sufficient blank pages for visas and immigration stamps. Photocopy your passport, leaving one copy at home and taking one with you on tour. If you lose your passport while on tour, you will be responsible for any expenses incurred such as extra accommodation and transport while replacing your passport and will not be entitled to a refund of any unused portion of your tour.

### Tour Documents

Before you depart you will be issued with a voucher for your tour and separate vouchers for any extra services such as airport transfers and pre/post tour accommodation. Please print these out and bring them with you. This dossier is updated regularly, so we recommend checking our website for the latest version just prior to the start of your tour.

### Final Balance

The balance for your tour is due no later than 60 days prior to the start of your tour and no tour vouchers will be issued until this is received. In addition please send the following details at least 60 days before you depart:

- Passport number, date of issue, date of expiry, nationality and place of issue
- Your full name and date of birth
- Flight arrival details in your starting city
- Special requirements, e.g. special dietary requirements or allergies

Please let us know if you are travelling with another person on the tour but have made separate bookings and we will endeavour to make suitable rooming arrangements.

## Visas

All countries have visa requirements that are subject to change at short notice. A general guideline for visa requirements is available here:

<http://www.tucantravel.com/before-you-go/visa-guide>, but you must check with your local embassy or consulate for the very latest visa requirement information based on your nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have all necessary visas for your tour. If you would like help applying for visas, we have recommended visa agencies on our visa page that we work with regularly.

Important things to check when applying for visas:

- Does the validity of the visa cover the duration of your time spent in the country?
- Do you require a single or multiple entry visa(s) for your tour?
- Are you required to show additional documentation when you arrive in a country? (Examples include proof of onward travel and travel itinerary)

Some visas are only valid for entry within three months of the date of issue which means on some of our longer tours the visa would expire before you are scheduled to enter the country. In these cases you must obtain the relevant visa during your tour. If it is necessary for you to obtain any visas en-route, please contact Tucan Travel or your travel consultant and inform your tour leader at the start of the tour. If you do not have the appropriate visas, Tucan Travel will not reimburse any expenses incurred in acquiring visas or any unused portion of the tour.

It is best to apply for visas in your home country if possible. If applying for visas by post, please allow plenty of time before departure and send your application by registered mail. Postal applications tend to be given a lower priority than in person applications and can take longer to process.

**Special Note:** If you have dual nationality it is advised not to obtain different visas in different passports. Although this may sometimes be cheaper, you may encounter problems at border crossings if your exit stamps from one country are not the same as your visa for the next.

## Travel Insurance Policy

Travel insurance is compulsory for all tours. You must be adequately insured for medical, hospital, baggage and personal expenses, any necessary extra travel (rejoining tour or repatriation) as well as curtailment and cancellation.

We strongly recommend that all clients carry a copy of their full policy document with them at all times, together with any certificate showing the policy number and emergency contact details. Your tour leader will also ask for a photocopy of your insurance document, so please take this to the pre-departure meeting at the start of your tour. You will not be able to commence your tour unless you can provide proof of insurance to your tour leader.

## Document Checklist

- Tour Voucher & Vouchers for extra services
- Passport (with photocopies of information pages and visas)
- Tour Dossier
- Cash & credit/debit cards (best to take a mixture and more than one card in case one does not work)
- Travel Insurance Certificate and photocopy for tour leader
- Travel consultant's phone number and email address
- Proof of onward travel, ie airline ticket

## Optional Excursions

Optional excursions are not operated by Tucan Travel and while every effort is made prices may not be up-to-date and are intended as a general guide to help you budget for your trip. Prices for vehicle-based excursions such as game drives are approximate based on the optimum number of participants and the actual price may vary depending on group size.

Sufficient safety equipment such as helmets and life jackets are sometimes not available and Tucan Travel is unable to provide this equipment. If you intend to participate in an optional excursion you may like to consider bringing your own safety gear.

Excursions are run by a local operator or third party with both Tucan Travel and the Tour Leader acting as a booking agent only. Optional activities are not part of the tour and Tucan Travel's booking conditions do not apply to them. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the correct travel insurance for the excursions you intend to take part in and Tucan Travel is not liable for any injuries incurred.

## Responsible Travel

We work hard to ensure our tours are sustainably and ethically run. You can read our responsible travel policy and advice on how you can travel responsibly here: <http://www.tucantravel.com/about-us/responsible-travel>.

## Meet Up

Our free Meet Up app, available on Facebook, on iTunes and Google Play is an opportunity to chat with others passengers before you depart or keep in touch when you arrive back from tour. Information on the app is available here: <http://www.tucantravel.com/before-you-go/meet-up>

## Add-ons & Extras

On many of our Group Tours, we spend one night in our arrival and departure cities. If you want to explore these cities more we can book pre and post tour accommodation, city tours and airport transfers for you. Price information can be found on the price page of each tour. We also have **Add-ons** - short packages that can be booked alongside a tour or on their own and have been carefully designed to ensure you don't miss out on popular highlights.

## Illegal Drugs

The possession or use of illegal drugs will not be tolerated on our tours. When overseas you are subject to local laws and the penalties for breaking these laws can be harsh. In order to safeguard the interests of the group as a whole, our tour leaders have been instructed to insist that any person found with illegal drugs leave the tour immediately – without refund. The tour leader's decision on this matter is final. If you need to carry certain drugs with your purposes of medication, please inform your tour leader and ensure that you carry a copy of your prescription or letter from your doctor.