Code BXLT **Laos & Tribal Thailand**

## Tour Dossier Introduction

**Dossier Last Updated:** 27-06-2014
**Tour Code:** BXLT
**Duration:** 13 nights / 14 days
**Joining City:** Hanoi
**Departure City:** Bangkok
**Nearest Joining International Airport:** Hanoi Noi Bai International Airport (HAN)
**Nearest Departing International Airport:** Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Intl Airport (BKK)

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

## Tour Documents

PDF Document Web Page

- Laos Dossier
- Thailand Dossier
- Vietnam Dossier

## What's Included

- 12 nights in hotels, hostels & guesthouses, 1 nights on overnight buses
- 7 breakfasts
- Travel by 1 flight(s), Public Bus, Boat, Car, Overnight Bus
- Tucan Travel Tour Leader

## What's not Included

- Local payment
- International flights and departure taxes
- Domestic flight taxes if applicable
- 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 2 - Arrive Hanoi

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.

Hanoi is the capital of the Socialist Republic and is dominated by colonial buildings and tree-lined boulevards. The city boasts a convoluted yet elegant

history which is characterised by its 'chameleon of names' - the city has changed names many times throughout history. In terms of recent history, the French withdrew their forces in 1954 and ever since foreign investment and property has developed substantially.

In Hanoi, exploring on your own is relatively easy on foot or by bike. Many travellers believe the true appeal and essence of Hanoi is discovered wandering the streets, tasting local market food, observing the local way of life, and taking in the architecture and surroundings.

Interested in visiting Ha Long Bay? From Hanoi you can arrange a boat tour out to the dramatic limestone karsts of the UNESCO World Heritage site. Day boat tours start from US$25-35 depending on the style of boat and the season. Overnight junk boat tours start from US$85-100 (you will need to arrive into Hanoi early to do this). All entrance fees and meals on the boat are provided along with a guide. Drinks are additional.

**Optional Excursions:** Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum – free • Ho Chi Minh's house and presidential palace – VND 20,000 • Ho Chi Minh's Museum – VND 20,000 • Temple of Literature – VND20,000 • All tombs and citadels – VND 20,000 • Ngoc Son Temple – VND 5,000 • Fine Arts Museum – VND 20,000 • Military Histor

## Day 3 to 4 - Vientiane

We have the day in Hanoi before we board our flight to 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 some other South East Asian cities!). 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.

Laos' currency is the Lao Kip (LAK).

**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 5 to 6 - Vang Vieng

As we make our way north from Vientiane 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.

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

## Day 7 to 8 - Luang Prabang

Many say this is the most memorable town in all of Laos. Renowned for a fascinating history, some of the friendliest people and possibly the best nightlight 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 wild town, which is located 300 metres above sea level on the upper Mekong. There are plenty of optional activities to enjoy here and clubs and bars to frequent. 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 Pra Phou donation expected • Kuang Si Falls – LAK 20,000 (not including transport)

## Day 9 to 10 - Pakbeng & Huay Xai

From Luang Prabang, we begin a two-leg journey that will take us towards northern Thailand entirely by boat along the mighty Mekong River. We stop overnight midway at the small riverside village of Pakbeng, where the pace of life really slows down and you can relax and enjoy a nice, cold, award-winning Beer Laos. The next day we are back on the river and continue our boat adventure to Houei Sai where the Mekong River is the only divide between Thailand and Laos. We stay in Houei Sai overnight and enjoy our last experience of Laos hospitality before crossing the river the next morning into northern Thailand and the infamous Golden Triangle.

## Day 11 to 12 - Chiang Mai

Our journey today culminates in Chiang Mai but the destination is only a part of the experience. After crossing the Mekong River by longboat and clearing Thai customs at the roadside “customs hut” we continue in private, air-conditioned minivans to 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. You can visit the old Opium Museum, the giant Golden Buddha sitting on a boat by the riverside and the stone elephants there to protect him.

From the history of the Golden Triangle we make our way west towards Chiang Rai where you can see the incredible Wat Rong Khun, or White Temple, designed unlike any religious entity you have ever seen. While we don't want to spoil the surprise, the outside of the building although spectacular is not the end of the story. Explore both inside and outside to discover the hidden secrets of this modern day wonder.

An amazing day ends with our arrival into Chiang Mai, the 'Rose of the North', where you can enjoy a Thai cooking course, 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 bizarre.

You can take an optional excursion out to the beautiful caves of Chiang Dao, with its amazing limestone stalactites and stalagmites, and beautiful white marble Buddhist statues from Burma. If your tour comes to an end in Bangkok, consider extending your trip with a Chiang Mai Trek Add-on (RTCMT1)

Before we board our overnight bus to Bangkok you will have some final free time to relax and enjoy Chiang Mai.

**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 13 to 13 - Bangkok

Thailand's capital, Bangkok, is 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, neon lights and young backpackers. 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.

Thailand's currency is the Thai Baht (BHT).

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

### Day 14 to 14 - Depart Bangkok

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 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Day 1 | Hanoi | Vietnam | |
| Day 2 | Hanoi | | B |
| Day 3 | Fly to/Arrive Vientiane | Laos | B |
| Day 4 | Vientiane | | B |
| Day 5 | Vang Vieng | | B |
| Day 6 | Vang Vieng | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Day 7 | Luang Prabang | | |
| Day 8 | Luang Prabang | | B |
| Day 9 | Boat to Pakbeng | | B |
| Day 10 | Boat to Huay Xai | | |
| Day 11 | Chiang Mai | Thailand | B |
| Day 12 | Overnight bus to Bangkok | | |
| Day 13 | Bangkok | | |
| Day 14 | Bangkok | | |

(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 a Budget Expedition for those aged between 18 and 35 in Asia. 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 18 travellers with an average group size of 8-12. Please read the Budget Expeditions travel style dossier to ensure you understand the style of travel you are undertaking: **http://www.tucantravel.com/travel-styles/dossier/budget-expeditions**

### Local Payment

The tour price is divided into set amount paid in advance and a compulsory local payment which is due to your tour leader in US$ cash at the group meeting on the first day of your tour. The local payment amount is found on the tour price page and will be printed on your invoice and tour voucher. Our brochures are updated in September/October each year and the local payment you will pay will be that published at the time of your departure.

## Joining your tour

Your joining location is:

Dong Thanh hotel
19 Cua Dong Str
Hoan Kiem Dist
Hanoi
Vietnam

Tel: +84 (0) 4 3923 3938
http://www.dongthanhhotel.com/

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 Hanoi

When arriving at Hanoi International Airport we recommend that you obtain some Vietnamese dong as soon as you arrive. There are international ATMs inside the airport, as well as money exchange offices. 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 city centre.

### 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 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.

**Contact your arrival transfer:**

**Contact:** Mr Hai
**Phone**: +84 (0) 91-258-0903

### Making your own way

If you would prefer to make your own way to and from your hotel, an official taxi to our hotel in Hanoi will cost approximately (US$10-$15). Taxis into town are a fixed rate.

Alternatively, there are shuttle-buses from the airport to Hanoi that stop at the Vietnam Airlines Office on 1 Quang Trung. Tickets are sold in the building in front of which the minibuses park, or you can give the fare directly to the driver. The cost is US$2 or 30,000 dong. The driver will potentially give you trouble if you have additional bags, but if you push, you will get the same US$2 rate. The shuttle service often offers to take you direct to your hotel for an extra US$1 once they reach the office. This is purely voluntary, but experience says the drivers are fairly trustworthy and for the new arrival is a good way to get direct to the door.

## 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
- [ ] East to pack wide-brimmed hat of cap

- [ ] Towel - you will need a towel for most overnight excursions
- [ ] Swimwear
- [ ] Sandals or thongs/jandals/flip flops

Suggested items:

- [ ] Money belt
- [ ] Sunglasses
- [ ] Small calculator
- [ ] Small collapsible umbrella
- [ ] Universal washbasin plug
- [ ] Head torch or flashlight
- [ ] Travel alarm clock
- [ ] Lip balm, sun block with high UV factor
- [ ] Wet wipes
- [ ] Cheap plastic watch
- [ ] Plenty of spare memory cards for your camera
- [ ] Spare rechargeable batteries for camera
- [ ] Writing materials, address book and diary
- [ ] Travel games, cards and a couple of paperbacks
- [ ] Toilet paper (best to carry a roll with you at all times and/or tissues)
- [ ] Small medical kit with diarrhoea remedy, rehydration salts, antiseptic cream, sterile dressings, plasters, bandages, pain-killers, safety pins etc.
- [ ] Plastic bags for waterproofing
- [ ] Inflatable pillow
- [ ] Swiss army type penknife
- [ ] Binoculars
- [ ] Travel plug adaptor with a USB port
- [ ] Small sewing kit
- [ ] Insect repellent (DEET 35% min) and bite cream
- [ ] Antibactarial hand clensing gel
- [ ] Ear plugs and sleep mask
- [ ] Travel sickness tablets
- [ ] Spare pair of spectacles or contact lenses and solution
- [ ] Hard drive or USB stick to back up your photos
- [ ] Pocket size phrasebook
- [ ] Pegless washing line & travel laundry detergent (bio-degradable preferable)
- [ ] 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.

## 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 you for purposes of medication, please inform your tour leader and ensure that you carry a copy of your prescription or letter from your doctor.