Last Updated: September 1, 2014

Laos & Thailand on a Shoestring - AVRL

12 days: Hanoi to Bangkok

What's Included

Orientation walk around Hanoi's Old Quarter. Slow boat up the Mekong. Visit to temples of Luang Prabang. Street food crawl. Internal flight. All transport between destinations and to/from included activities.

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VERY IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

VALIDITY: Valid for all trips departing January 1st, 2014 - January 18th, 2016

Itinerary

Day 1 Hanoi

Welcome to bustling Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam. Today is arrival day so there are no activities planned. Please arrive at our start point hotel before 6pm for an important group meeting. At this meeting you CEO will ask to sight your travel insurance, check that you have a visas for Vietnam and complete some other paper work. Please note that you MUST arrive on tour with your Vietnam visa. Please refer to the visa information section of these trip notes for more information on obtaining your Vietnamese visa.

Spend your day relaxing or exploring the city & adjust to the frantic pace and humid heat of Hanoi. Why not take the chance to visit Tran Quoc Pagoda, the Temple of Literature (Van Mieu) or Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum and Museum. The Mausoleum houses the remains of Ho Chi Minh, the founding father of unified Vietnam (closed October-November). Don't miss taking a walk through Hanoi's Old Quarter – a maze of streets, each one traditionally devoted to a different product or industry, and the nearby Hoan Kiem Lake.

After your meeting, you may choose to head out for an optional dinner to further get to know your CEO and fellow group members.

Enjoy one of two street food crawls with the group and CEO while in Hanoi. Bring your appetites and your wallets, and the CEO will bring you to the best spots and teach you a bit about the local street food.

Our hotel in Hanoi is located in the Old Quarter some 20 minutes walk to the Hoan Kiem Lake (the sacred and historic center of Hanoi). Make sure you grab a map and hotel card before you leave the hotel to ensure you can get back. All hotel rooms are double or twin share with air conditioning and en suite bathroom. Computers and free wifi are available.

Day 2 Vientiane (1B)

Explore a bit of Hanoi in the morning before an afternoon flight to Vientiane, the capital of Laos. There is a wealth of cultural delights to discover - on foot, by bicycle or, for the less energetic, by tuk-tuk. Visit Laos' most important national monument, Phat That Luang, or meander down the dusty riverside tracks to find villages full of friendly children, dogs and chickens. A visit to Vientiane's vibrant, colorful morning market (which incidentally is open all day!) is worthwhile, to find plenty of local treasures. A great way to round off

the day is to enjoy a spectacular sunset over the Mekong.

Our hotel is centrally located within walking distance of all the town's main sights. All hotel rooms are double or twin share with air conditioning, safe deposit box, and en suite bathrooms.

Approx travel time:
Transfer hotel to Hanoi airport: 45 min
Flight Hanoi to Vientiane: 1.25 hrs
Transfer airport to Vientiane hotel: 15 min.

Days 3-4 Vang Vieng (2B)

A picturesque drive north takes us to beautiful Vang Vieng. This quiet town is set along the Nam Song river amidst rice fields and limestone karsts. On Day 4 why not explore some of the caves by bicycle or take an invigorating walk. In the evening, soak in the natural beauty of Vang Vieng as the sun sets over the river.

Our hotel is centrally located. As the town itself is small, it is convenient to explore on foot. All hotel rooms are double or twin share with air conditioning and en suite bathrooms. Free wifi is available.

Approx travel time:
Private bus Vientiane to Vang Vieng: 3-4 hrs

Days 5-6 Luang Prabang (2B)

This morning we travel from Vang Vieng to Luang Prabang. Luang Prabang has a magical feel about it. Nestled in the hills of northern Laos on the confluence of the Mekong and Khan Rivers, it is studded with ornate temples and French colonial architecture. A visit the Royal Palace Museum, which has remained untouched since the royal family departed in 1975, is sure to impress.

Traditional Laotian culture is to give daily alms to monks. Monks are only allowed to eat food which has been donated to them before noon. On one of your mornings here, you may decide to rise with the sun, and watch one of the most important religious ceremonies in Laos. This is simply an unforgettable South East Asian experience.

Our hotel tonight is centrally located and convenient for exploring most of the tourist attractions in town by foot. All hotel rooms are double or twin share with air conditioning and en suite bathroom. Computers and wifi are available.

Approx travel time:
Private bus from Vang Vieng to Luang Prabang: 7 hours
The road crosses mountains on a winding road. The spectacular views make this overland trip well worth it.

Day 7 Mekong River (1B,1D)

We board our boat for the two day journey up the mighty Mekong River making our way to Chiang Khong. The journey is relaxed, as we experience the slow pace of village life and the breathtaking scenery along the river. Our private boat is reasonably comfortable and spacious. A toilet is available on board. Fruit, tea and coffee are provided free of charge for you to enjoy and other drinks, such as water and soft drinks might be available for purchase on the boat. It can also be quite cold from November to February so make sure you have some warm gear packed.

Tonight we will stay in a basic village homestay along the Mekong including dinner. Typically the group is divided into two or more houses (depending on group size) in close proximity to each other. When it comes time to sleep, mattresses are placed across the floor in central living area. Each mattress comes with a blanket, a pillow and a mosquito net. Bathroom facilities are shared. The evening meal is eaten together in one of the houses with the food provided being very simple - giving you the chance to experience typical Laotian cuisine. A vegetarian option is always served and the second option is typically a pork stirfry. Your local guide will take time to explain the local life of the people in this village. You have the option of swimming in the Mekong. Evenings can get cold, so bring a long sleeved top.

Approx Travel Time: 8-10 hours depending on river conditions.

Day 8 Chiang Kong (1B,1L)

This morning we re-board our boat and continue our leisurely cruise up the river before arriving at the Laos/Thai border and crossing to Chiang Khong in the late afternoon.

Our hotel in Chiang Khong is located right on the riverfront of the Mekong river. All hotel rooms are double or twin share with en suite bathroom. Free wifi is available.

Approx travel time:
River to Chiang Khong: 8-10 hours depending on river conditions
Immigration to hotel: 10 min

Day 9 Chiang Mai

Departing Chiang Khong after breakfast, we drive to Chiang Mai where you have the afternoon free to explore this fascinating city, once the capital of the Kingdom of Lan. Surrounded by rolling hills, Chiang Mai offers both pretty scenery and architecture. Enclosed by a moat and crumbling walls, the old city features great cafes, shops and accommodations. An important Buddhist centre since the 14th century, Chiang Mai is home to more than 300 temples. Many visitors come here to attend meditation retreats, massage classes or yoga lessons. It is also a centre of handicraft production, with a long history of silver work, woodcarving, pottery-making and weaving. Not to be missed is the Night Bazaar, a series of covered markets, shops and stalls that offer the best selection of handicrafts in Thailand.

Approx travel time:
Private transport Chiang Kong to Chiang Mai: 5 hours

Day 10 Chiang Mai/Overnight Train

Today, why not try your hand at local cuisine with a Thai cooking class, visit the magnificent temple of Doi Suthep standing watch over the city from the hills above, take a bicycle ride in the countryside or Embrace the Bizarre and get a massage from the training school at the local woman's prison! Tonight we catch our final overnight train to Bangkok

Tonight's accommodation is an overnight sleeper train. Bunks are dormitory style, with bunks on two layers along the side of the train carriage. There are curtains along each bunk for privacy. Your luggage is stored beside you. The train has air-conditioning and clean bedding is provided for each bunk. There are both western style and asian style toilets at the end of each carriage, with wash basins. Food and drinks are available on the train, but you may choose to bring your own snacks from the shop and restaurants around the train station.

Please note: Due to disruptions of Thai trains in the north during the monsoon season, trips running July through October may be upgraded to a flight and extra hotel night in Chiang Mai.

Approx travel time:
Overnight train Chiang Mai to Bangkok: 12-13 hours

Day 11 Bangkok

We'll arrive early in the morning to Bangkok, Thailand's capital city. The day is free to explore the many sights of Bangkok. The Grand Palace, Wat Po, National Museum, and Jim Thompson's House are just a few suggestions. A trip along the Chao Praya river and through the canals (or klongs) gives you a different perspective of daily life in this busy city.

In the evening we'll say good bye and enjoy a Thai meal and perhaps a beer together to celebrate the end of an amazing journey.

We spend this evening in Bangkok. Our hotel is located in China Town, next to the central train station and MRT (Subway), and is only a short USD2 taxi ride from Khao San road and the central shopping area of Siam Square, MBK, Siam Paragon, etc. All rooms are double or twin share with air conditioning and en suite bathroom. The hotel has a small pool and wifi is available at extra cost.

Day 12 Bangkok (1B)

You can depart at any time today. Please note that the hotel check out time is 12pm midday.

We look forward to receiving your evaluation regarding this tour itinerary and your CEO's performance. We value your input into what we could improve to make this trip even better and of course love hearing about what we are already doing well! You will be sent a post tour email on your return with details on how to go on line and fill in this simple form. Thank you so much in advance.

What's Included

Orientation walk around Hanoi's Old Quarter. Slow boat up the Mekong. Visit to temples of Luang Prabang. Street food crawl. Internal flight. All transport between destinations and to/from included activities.

Highlights

Explore vibrant Hanoi, revel in the shadows of limestone karsts, discover the serenity of Luang Prabang, float on the mighty Mekong, experience the beauty of scenic northern Thailand.

Dossier Disclaimer

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Itinerary Disclaimer

While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.

Important Notes

There are some very long travel days on public buses.
As we frequently get on and off sometimes crowded local transport please note backpacks are much more suitable than suitcases for this style of trip. Also note that in some major cities in Vietnam, many hotel rooms do not have windows.

Please note that this tour combines with other G Adventures tours. As such, the staff and some travel companions on your tour may have previously been traveling together with G Adventures, prior to Day 1 of your tour. Likewise, some staff and travel companions may be continuing together on another G Adventures tour, after your trip concludes.

Group Leader Description

All G Adventures group trips are accompanied by one of our Chief Experience Officers (CEO). The aim of the CEO is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to see and do, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We also use local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting - we think it's the best of both worlds.

Group Size Notes

Max 16, avg 10.

Meals Included

8 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 1 dinner.

Meals

Eating is a big part of traveling. Travelling with G Adventures you experience the vast array of wonderful food that is available out in the world. Generally meals are not included in the trip price when there is a choice of eating options, to give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat. It also gives you more budgeting flexibility, though generally food is cheap. Our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though. Your CEO will be able to suggest favourite restaurants during your trip. Included breakfasts will usually be asian style consisting of noodles or congee (rice porridge) or bread and eggs. Vegetarians will be able to find a range of different foods, although in some areas the choice maybe limited. While trekking in remote regions food is included, plentiful and made of fresh

local ingredients. For all trips please refer to the meals included and budget information for included meals and meal budgets.

Meal Budget

Allow USD200-250 for meals not included.

Transport

Train, local bus, air-con bus, walking, slow boat, plane.

Local Flights

Hanoi to Vientiane Day 2.

Solo Travellers

We believe single travellers should not have to pay more to travel so our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers joining group trips are paired in twin or multi-share accommodation with someone of the same sex for the duration of the trip. Some of our Independent trips are designed differently and single travellers on these itineraries must pay the single trip price.

Accommodation

Simple hotels (9 nts), sleeper train (1 nt), local homestay (1 nt).

My Own Room Exceptions

Night 7 Homestay, Night 10 Sleeper Train

About Accommodation

A variety of styles of hotels/guest houses are used on this trip. In many instances they might not be like what you are used to back home as service and efficiency can vary. In some areas we stay in simple local guest houses in stunning locations - rooms are small and simple and there may only be shared toilet facilities and showers.

Joining Hotel

Hong Ngoc 2 Hotel
14 Luong Van Can,
Hanoi, Vietnam
Tel: (844) 3826 7566

The following location will be used as the joining hotel for specific 2013 departures:

April 1st

Starview Hotel
120 Quan Thanh
Hanoi, Vietnam
84 4 37153006

Joining Instructions

When arriving at Noi Bai Intl Airport in Hanoi you have a choice of pre paid taxi or Vietnam Airlines shuttle bus to get you into the city. The airport is 35 km outside of the city and the drive should take between 40-50 minutes depending on traffic. The airport taxis are a safe and convenient way to arrive at your hotel. The cost is 16 USD and is paid directly to your driver upon arrival at the hotel. The other option is to take the Vietnam Airlines shuttle bus which drops everyone at the Vietnam Airlines office downtown, The cost of the tickets is 45000 Dong (approx 3 USD). From the Vietnam Airline office there are taxis that can take you to your hotel with the meter on about 2-4 USD. If you have paid for an arrival transfer when you booked your trip our driver will be waiting for you with a G Adventures Sign with your name on it. Please check carefully once you exit the baggage hall as there seem to be hundreds of people waiting outside in the arrival area.

Arrival Complications

We don't expect any problems, and nor should you, but if for any reason you are unable to commence your trip as scheduled, as soon as possible please contact your starting point hotel, requesting that you speak to or leave a message for your CEO (if you are not on a group tour please refer to the emergency contact details provided in this dossier). If you are unable to get in touch with your CEO, please refer to our emergency contact details. If you have pre-booked an airport transfer and have not made contact with our representative within 30 minutes of clearing customs and immigration, we recommend that you make your own way to the Starting Point hotel, following the Joining Instructions. Please apply to your travel agent on your return for a refund of the transfer cost if this occurs.

Emergency Contact

Should you need to contact us during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call either the G Adventures Local Representative (if one is listed below) or our G Adventures Local Office. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please leave a detailed message and contact information, so they may return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

AIRPORT TRANSFER
If you have purchased an arrival through G Adventures or if an arrival transfer is included in the cost of your tour, please note that:

Your arrival transfer has been arranged based on flight information provided to us. If you are advised of a flight schedule change within 48 hours of your scheduled arrival time, we will do our best to rearrange your arrival transfer however we cannot guarantee this. If your arrival transfer does not arrive within 30 minutes after you have exited the arrivals area please take a taxi to your start point hotel.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS
G Adventures Office Bangkok, Thailand
During Office hours (Weekdays, 9am-5pm Local Time)
From outside Thailand: +66 2 381 5574
From within Thailand: 02 381 5574

After hours emergency number
From outside Thailand: +66 87 049 6074
From within Thailand: 087 049 6074

If you are unable for any reason to contact our local office, please call the numbers listed below, which will connect you directly with our 24 hour Sales team, who will happily assist you.

Toll-free, North America only: 1 888 800 4100
Calls from UK: 0844 272 0000
Calls from Germany: 01805 70 90 30 00
Calls from Australia: 1 300 796 618
Calls from New Zealand: 0800 333 307
Outside North America, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and the UK: +1 416 260 0999

What to Take

What you need to bring depends on the trip you have chosen and the countries or regions you are planning to visit. We suggest that you pack as lightly as possible as your are expected to carry your own luggage. As a rule we try not to have to walk more than 15-20 minutes with your bags which is why we recommend keeping the weight of your bags between 10-15kg/22-30lb. Suitcases are not recommended for G Adventures trips! Most travellers carry a backpack or rolling bag of small to medium size (no XXL ones please!) as they need to fit under the beds when travelling on sleeper trains. You will also need a day pack/bag to carry water, cameras and other electronics like ipods and mobile phones. If your trip involves overnights in homestays, villages or camping then you usually have the opportunity to rent sleeping bags if need be instead of bringing them with you.

Checklist

Passport (with photocopies) (with blanks pages for visas)
Travel insurance (with photocopies)
Airline tickets (with photocopies)
USD cash (small denominations preferred)

Credit or debit card (see personal spending money)
G Adventures vouchers, pre-departure information and dossier
Any entry visas, additional passport photos or vaccination certificates required
Alarm clock
Flashlight
Sun hat, sunblock, sunglasses
Insect repellent
Small towel and swim wear
Toiletries (biodegradable)
Sturdy walking shoes/sport sandals
Money belt
Shorts
Long trousers
Hiking pants/track pants
Shirts/T-shirts
Warm clothes for Nov-Feb. Fleece, hat, gloves, windproof/waterproof jacket
Waterproof clothes for wet season May-Oct. Umbrella or windproof/waterproof jacket
Cover for backpack or plastic bags to keep clothes dry
Clothes for temples – long pants or sarongs (knees and shoulder should be covered)
Sleep sheet for overnight train (bedding is provided)
Camera and film
Reading/writing material
Pocketknife
First-aid kit (should contain lip salve, aspirin, band aids, anti-histamine, imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, re-hydration powder, extra prescription drugs you may be taking)

Laundry

Laundry facilities are offered by some of our hotels for a charge. There will be times when you may want to or have to do your own laundry so we suggest you bring non-polluting/biodegradable soap.

Visas

Please note that visas for Vietnam, Laos and Thailand are the responsibility of the individual traveller. The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. For the most up to date information please check your Governments Foreign Ministry website or with you travel agent as rules do change. It is important that you check for yourself. For most travellers there will probably be an Embassy or Consulate in the country that you live in.

VIETNAM - Visas for Vietnam need to be arranged ahead of time (before your trip) as the processing time varies and Visas are NOT available at any land border or Aiport arrival point. Also ensure your visa 'valid from date' is on or before the first day of your trip.

Some nationalities don't require a Visa for Vietnam for shorter stays - please contact your Foreign Ministry for up to date entry/exit requirements.

LAOS - Visas are issued upon arrival in Laos. You will need two passport size photographs and approx $50. Tourists are generally admitted to Laos for 15 days with a visa on arrival or for 30 days with a visa issued at a Lao embassy.

THAILAND - Only 15 day tourist visas are issued when entering Thailand overland. Note that your passport must be valid for at least six months from your time of entry. As we are travelling into the country overland from Laos, you should apply for a Thai visa prior to the trip if you plan on extending your stay in Thailand. If you are flying into Thailand on more than one occasion you will need to apply for a multiple entry visa. Please ask your travel agent or contact your nearest Thai Embassy the most up to date requirements.

Please be aware that you will require 2 clean pages (minimum) in your passport and at least 6 months validity.

Spending Money

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

Money Exchange

During this tour the local currencies you will use are the Vietnamese Dong, Laos Kip and Thai Baht. As currency exchange rates in South East Asia do fluctuate, we ask that you refer to the following website for the most up to date daily exchange rates: www.xe.com for each of the above mentioned currencies. The best way to carry your money is in debit cards, withdrawing cash in local currencies from ATM machines. ATMs are found throughout South East Asia and will generally accept cards on the Visa and Mastercard networks. It is a great idea to travel with both a Visa and Mastercard if at all possible in case of loss or problems with one card, you will have a back up. Please note, your bank will charge a fee for overseas withdrawals. USD Cash is recommended for times when ATMs are not accessible. You should bring some cash with you for emergency situations (please refer to our trip dossier) but carrying only cash is a high safety risk. ATM card/s and some cash is the ideal mix. Travellers cheques can be tricky, timely and expensive to exchange. While we do not recommend that you bring them as your primary source of funds, it is great to have one or two cheques in case of emergency. Thomas Cook or American Express travellers' cheques in US currency are the easiest to exchange. Cash advances can also be made with some banks but are time consuming and tend to have high fees attached.Credit cards can be used at some upmarket restaurants, and at some larger stores if shopping for big items. If you are bringing US Dollars, please make sure that the notes are new and in good condition. Notes older than 2003, or with any tears or blemishes may not be accepted. Be fussy with your bank when buying cash!

Emergency Fund

Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional USD $250 (or equivalent) as an 'emergency' fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (ex. a natural disaster) require a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence!

Departure Tax

Departure Tax is included in all International and Domestic tickets in Thailand & Vietnam.

Tipping

It is customary in Asia to tip service providers such as waiters, at approximately 10%, depending on the service. Tipping is expected - though not compulsory - and shows an expression of satisfaction with the people who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are several times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers we use. You may do this individually, or your CEO will offer to collect the money and tip as a group. Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from $1.5-$3.5 USD per person per day depending on the quality and length of the service; ask your CEO for specific recommendations based on the circumstances and culture. Also at the end of each trip if you felt your G Adventures CEO did an outstanding job, tipping is appreciated. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however as a guideline $20-25 USD per person, per week can be used.

Optional Activities

Bring along USD150 for optional activities not included in the trip.

Approximate costs (per person) for popular optional activities taken in free time are -

Jim Thompson’s House (Bangkok) - USD3.5
National Museum (Bangkok) - USD1.5
Royal Barge Museum (Bangkok) USD1.5
Grand palace (Bangkok) - USD11
Wat Po (Bangkok) - USD2
Klong(Canal) Tour (Bangkok) - Approx $10-30 dependent on numbers
Thai massage – USD10 per hour
Cooking school (Chiang Mai) - USD30 for Half Day
Bamboo rafting (Chiang Mai) - USD15 plus transport
Doi Suithep (Chiang Mai) - USD2 (plus transport)
Bicycle tour (Chiang Mai) - USD30 for Half Day
Kan Toke Traditional Dinner (Chiang Mai) - USD30
Kuang Sii Waterfalls (Luang Prabang)- USD3 plus transport USD5-10
National Museum/Royal Palace (Luang Prabang)- USD5
Royal Theatre (Luang Prabang) – USD6-12
Cooking Class (Luang Prabang) – USD30 for Half Day
Wat Xieng Thong (Luang Prabang) - USD1

Arts and Ethnology Centre (Luang Prabang)- USD2
Wat PhuSi and other Temples (Luang Prabang)- USD1-2
Half day cottage industry tour (Luang Prabang)- USD5-8
Bike Rental (Vang Vieng)- USD2
Kayaking Trip (Vang Vieng)- USD15-20
Visit one of the many temples (Vientiane) - Most entry fees USD1
Buddha Park (Vientiane) - USD1 plus transport
National Cultural Museum (Vientiane)- USD2
Water Puppet Show (Hanoi) USD3
Ho Chi Minh House on Stilts and Presidential Palace (Hanoi) USD1
Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum (Hanoi)- free (Closed Oct-Nov)
Hoa Lao Prison- aka ‘Hanoi Hilton’ (Hanoi)- USD1
Museum of Ethnology (Hanoi)- USD1 plus transport
Temple of Literature (Hanoi)- USD1
Fine Arts Museum (Hanoi) - USD1
Women's Museum (Hanoi) - USD1
Army Museum (Hanoi)- USD1
Taxi to each museum - approx USD2

All prices are per person (unless stated otherwise), and are subject to change as services are provided by third party operators.

Health

Please note inoculations may be required for the country visited. It is your responsibility to consult with your travel doctor for up to date medical travel information well before departure.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information well before departure. We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit and hand sanitizers / antibacterial wipes as well as any personal medical requirements. Please be aware that sometimes we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities, and for legal reasons our CEO's are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc. In Asia pharmacies tend to stock the same western drugs as you get at home but they are usually produced locally so please bring the full drug name with you when trying to purchase a prescription drug. When selecting your trip please carefully read the brochure and itinerary and assess your ability to cope with our style of travel. Please refer to the Physical and Culture Shock ratings for trip specific information. G Adventures reserves the right to exclude any traveller from all or part of a trip without refund if in the reasonable opinion of our CEO they are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group.

Safety and Security

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage. When travelling on a group trip, please note that your CEO has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. Your CEO will accompany you on all included activities. During your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your CEO will assist you with options available in a given location please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and we offer no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time. Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during night time excursions.

Protests and Demonstrations- Protests and demonstrations, even those that are well intended, have the potential to turn violent with no warning. Counter protests can also turn violent. Action by security forces to disperse demonstrators and protesters may occur at any time. If you are in an area where demonstrators or protesters are gathering, avoid the temptation of staying for a good photo opportunity and leave the area immediately.

Water based activities have an element of danger and excitement built into them. We recommend only participating in water based

activities when accompanied by a guide(s). We make every reasonable effort to ensure the fun and adventurous element of any water based activities (in countries with varying degrees of operating standards) have a balanced approach to safety. It is our policy not to allow our CEOs to make arrangements on your behalf for water based activities that are not accompanied by guide(s).

Swimming, including snorkeling, is always at your own risk.

We take all prudent measures in relation to your safety. For ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling, please visit:

-
www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/

Trip Specific Safety

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

We do not recommend passengers to jump or dive into Kuang Sii Waterfalls in Luang Prabang, this may result in injury.

Medical Form

Our small group adventures bring together people of all ages. It is very important you are aware that, as a minimum, an average level of fitness and mobility' is required to undertake our easiest programs. Travellers must be able to walk without the aid of another person, climb 3-4 flights of stairs, step on and off small boats, and carry their own luggage at a minimum. Travellers with a pre-existing medical condition are required to complete a short medical questionnaire, which must be signed by their physician. This is to ensure that travellers have the necessary fitness and mobility to comfortably complete their chosen trip. While our CEOs work hard to ensure that all our travellers are catered for equally, it is not their responsibility to help individuals who cannot complete the day's activities unaided. Please refer to the physical ratings in this Trip Details document for more information.

The medical questionnaire can be found online at:

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www.gadventures.com/medical-form.

A Couple of Rules

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for our travellers. Our philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make the world the special place it is. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our CEOs have the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

A Word of Warning

As Vietnam embraces capitalism with open arms it is also falling victim to some of the problems of the West. Some parts of city centres are now a favourite hangout for pickpockets. If doing some exploring on your own carry only the necessary minimum with you and use a well-hidden money belt. Valuables, including your passport, should be left in the hotel safe - organize this at reception. There is no need to get paranoid, just be cautious. Please do not buy gems in Bangkok unless you know what you are doing. Even if genuine you should not expect to be able to sell them at home. If you fall victim to a gem scam, we are unable to assist you.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is compulsory in order to participate on any of our trips. When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance has been sighted by your CEO, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy please bear in mind that all clients must have medical coverage and that we require a minimum coverage of USD 200,000 for repatriation and emergency rescue. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. If you have credit card insurance we require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

Planeterra-The G Adventures Foundation

Through our commitment to responsible tourism we have developed the Planeterra Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of people and communities around the world through support of international charities, local organizations and community projects in the places that we visit on our tours. G Adventures matches all individual donations and pays all administration costs, which means that 100% of each donation is doubled and goes directly to support our projects. For more information about Planeterra and the projects we support, or to make a donation, please visit www.planeterra.org

Planeterra Dollar-A-Day Program
Our Dollar-A-Day Program provides travellers with the opportunity to help us give back to the people and places visited on our tours by donating one dollar per day for the duration of their tour. 100% of these proceeds will go directly to support our Planeterra projects.

To participate in this program please indicate at the time of booking that you would like to participate in G Adventures' Dollar-A-Day program, either by clicking the check box online, or by advising your G Adventures specialist or travel agent. (Note: Donation will be charged in the currency of your booking)

Associated Planeterra Project

G Adventures 20/20 Vision Centre. The province of Battambang in Northern Cambodia has 13 districts and 750 villages with a population of 1 million, 12,000 of whom are blind. The main causes of blindness in this area are cataract, uncorrected refractive errors, glaucoma, corneal scars and pterygium (skin like growth over the eye). Of these causes of blindness, 80-90% is preventable or treatable. An estimated additional 1,600 Cambodians become blind each year in Battambang. There is an extreme shortage of health personnel and infrastructure required to combat the identified eye care problems. In order to increase eye care services a Vision Centre funded by G Adventures with donations from corporate partners and travellers, will be established in Moung Russey, about 40kms south of Battambang. Vision Centres are essential for early detection and prevention of blindness. The centers are staffed by ophthalmic nurses or assistants as well as field workers and equipped with essential equipment for examining and treating simple eye conditions.

Local Dress

In Asia the dress standard is more conservative than it is back home. When packing try to pick loose, lightweight, long clothing that will keep you cool in the usually hot and humid climate of Asian summers. In predominately Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim countries we ask that you dress respectfully and avoid very short shorts/skirts and singlets/tanktops when visiting temples, mosques or other holy sites.

Feedback

After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us that we'll give you 5% off the price of your next G Adventures trip if your feedback is completed on-line within 30 days of finishing your trip. Your tour evaluation will be e-mailed to you 24 hours after the conclusion of your trip. If you do not receive the tour evaluation link in the days after your tour has finished, please drop us a line at customerservice@gadventures.com and we will send it on to you.

Newsletter

Our adventure travel e-newsletter is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from G Adventures, subscribe at www.gadventures.com/newsletters/

Stay current on how our company invests in our global community through our foundation – Planeterra. Sign up for Planeterra's monthly news to learn more about how to give back and support the people and places we love to visit.

Travel Forum - The Watering Hole

Be sure to stop by The Watering Hole, our adventure travel forum. If you're interested in meeting others booked on your upcoming trip, check out the Departure Lounge section of our forum and introduce yourself. Otherwise, just drop in at anytime to share some travel tips, ask questions, meet other travellers and quench your thirst for travel. Our forum is located at wateringhole.gadventures.com.