Last Updated: August 26, 2014

Thailand and Laos Adventure - ATBH

14 days: Bangkok to Hanoi

What's Included

Bangkok klong trip. Wat Po entrance and guide. Doi Suthep entrance (Chiang Mai). Pak Ou caves entrance (Luang Prabang). Traditional Arts & Ethnology Museum guided tour. Kuang Si waterfalls trek (half-day). Laotian homestay experience. Water puppets performance (Hanoi). Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum entrance (when open). 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 - December 31st, 2014

Itinerary

Day 1 Bangkok

Today is arrival day so there are no activities planned. You are free to relax, explore the city & adjust to the frantic pace and humid heat of Bangkok.
Please arrive at our start point hotel before 6pm for an important group meeting where you will meet you Chief Experience Officer (CEO) and the other group members. Please look for a sign on the hotel's notice board for the time and location of your group meeting.

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

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 2 Bangkok (1B)

Enjoy a one-hour long tail boat tour of Bangkok's famous klongs, or canals. Our boat trip finishes at the Royal Temple of Wat Po. Our included guide will introduce you to Thai Buddhist culture and show you the famous reclining Buddha. When your guided tour ends there will still be time for some afternoon shopping, a visit to Grand Palace or a stroll through the backpacker area. We will meet back at the hotel within easy walking distance to the train station where we board our overnight train to Chiang Mai.

Tonight's accommodation is an overnight sleeper train. Beds 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 will be accessible during the journey. 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. Food and drinks are served on the train but you can always bring your own food from the shops and restaurants in 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 Bangkok.

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

Day 3 Chiang Mai

We arrive in the early morning and have free time to explore for the rest of the day. To fill your free time you can chose from a large range of optional activities or stroll the city independently. Surrounded by rolling hills, Chiang Mai is the cultural center of Thailand. Enclosed by a moat and crumbling walls, the old city features great cafes, shops and over 300 temples. Many visitors come here to attend cooking courses, massage classes or yoga lessons. It is also a mecca of handicraft production, with a long history of silverwork, woodcarving, pottery-making and weaving. A trip out to the countryside is available for those interested in cruising down a stream on a bamboo raft. The fun does not end when the sun goes down, as the night bazaaar opens. The bazaar is a series of covered markets, shops and stalls that offer the best selection of handicrafts in Thailand.

Late afternoon we set off to visit the temple complex, Doi Suthep. Here we can delve deeper into Thai Buddhist culture and we may be fortunate enough to witness the chanting of the monks.

We overnight in Chiang Mai. Our hotel is well located within walking distance to Chiang Mai Night Bazaar and other city destinations. All rooms are double or twin share with air conditioning and en suite bathroom. Free wifi is available.

Approx travel time:
Private transport Chang Mai to Doi Suthep temple: 45 mins each way.

Day 4 Chiang Khong

A 5 hour bus drive takes us to Chiang Khong where our guesthouse affords spectacular views of the Mekong River. Enroute we can visit Wat Rong Khun - the dazzling White Temple. Wander the local food market or sit back and enjoy the slow pace of life as we spend our last evening in Thailand peering across the Mekong into Laos.

We spend one night in Chiang Khong, a small border town which is a part of the trade route between Laos and Thailand. Free wifi is available in the lobby at no charge. All rooms are double or twin share with air conditioning and en suite bathroom.

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

Day 5 Mekong River

We cross the river border today to Laos by small local boats to Ban Houay Xai and Lao Immigration. Once we have completed the immigration process we take a songthaew (local bus) to our traditional slow boat. As we travel down the Mekong River you slowly adjust to the relaxed pace of life in Laos. A predominantly mountainous country, we have unsurpassable views of the riverside villages, the tropical jungle and the mountains.

Our private boat is reasonably comfortable and spacious. A toilet is available on board. Fruits, tea and coffee, are provided free of charge for you to enjoy and other drinks, such as water and soft drinks are all available for purchase on the boat. It can be quite cold from November to February so make sure you have some warm gear packed.

We overnight in Pak Beng village, a stopover for local traders heading to Luang Prabang. As for tourists, the town offers an interesting vibe and good introduction to Laos. Our guesthouse is located some 200 meters from the pier. All rooms are double or twin share with Fan and en suite bathrooms.

Approx travel time:
Songthaew hotel to border: 10 min
Songthaew to boat: 10 min
Chiang Kong to Pak Beng: 8-10 hours depending on river conditions

Day 6-8 Luang Prabang (3B, 1D)

On day 6, we approach Luang Prabang in the late afternoon. Before arriving, we will make a stop outside of town at the Pak Ou caves. This dramatic cave houses thousands of Buddha statues and images and is considered an important spiritual sight by many

Lao people. After our visit, we re-board the boat and continue to Luang Prabang, arriving around 5pm. Located at the confluence of the Nam Khan and Mekong Rivers, Luang Prabang is without a doubt the most charming city in Laos and one of the loveliest towns in the whole of South East Asia.

The center of the UNESCO world heritage listed town is quite small and is accessible either on foot or by bicycle. You can visit the most impressive of Luang Prabang's 32 temples including Vat Vixoun, Vat Sene, and Vat Xiengthong. Why not pack a picnic to eat on Phousi Hill and watch the sun set over the horizon or rise at dawn to watch the monks walk through the city collecting offerings of food from the locals. Take an afternoon to browse the many textile galleries and relax and enjoy a local coffee in on of the town's cafes.

We take a tour of the Ethnology Museum- a great chance to learn more about the dress and customs of the local people. We also make a half-day trip out to the stunning Kuang Si waterfalls. Don't forget your swimsuit. During our stay, we will enjoy a traditional Lao meal experience in a local home partaking in a traditional Buddhist ceremony and enjoying some Laos delicacies.

We overnight three nights in Luang Prabang. Our hotel is centrally located within walking distance to Luang Prabang Night Market. All rooms are double or twin share with air conditioning and en suite bathroom. Free wifi is available.

Approx travel time:
Pak Beng to Luang Prabang: 8-10 hours depending on river conditions

Days 9-10 Homestay/Vang Vieng (2B,1D)

Embark on a scenic drive through winding mountains to a village to experience a local homestay. Enjoy traditional Laotian food while getting to know your host family. Here, your local guide will explain the life of the people in this village.

Typically, the group is divided into 2 or more homes in close proximity to each other. Mattresses are placed across the floor in the central living area for sleeping. Each mattress will also include a blanket, pillow and a mosquito net. Bathroom facilities are shared.

The evening meal is eaten together in one of the houses. The food will be very simple and an excellent opportunity to experience typical Lao cuisine. A vegetarian option will be available.

On Day 10 we drive to the picturesque town of Vang Vieng. Surrounded by limestone karsts, Vang Vieng is ideal for exploring the countryside by bicycle.

Our hotel in Vang Vieng all rooms are double or twin share with air conditioning and en suite bathroom. Free wifi is available.

Approx travel time: Private transport Luang Prabang to Homestay/Vang Vieng: 7 hours on a winding mountain road.

Day 11 Vientiane (1B)

A drive out of the mountains takes us to one of Asia's sleepiest capital cities. Enjoy the highlights of Vientiane including Wat Sisaket, one of the city's oldest and most fascinating temples and Phat That Luang, Lao's national symbol and one of her most sacred sites. For those who like to shop, don't miss the Morning Market, which, incidentally, is open all day!

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. Free wifi is available.

Approx travel time:
Private transport Vang Vieng to Vientiane: 3 hours

Day 12-13 Ha Noi (2B)

A short flight on day 12 takes us away from quiet Laos and into the bustling city of Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam. A leisurely walk through the Old Quarter perhaps followed by a traditional Vietnamese meal are the perfect way to start your visit to this diverse country. On day 13 we visit the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, his Presidential Palace and House on Stilts. The Mausoleum houses the embalmed body of Ho Chi Minh, the founding father of unified Vietnam. Please note: the mausoleum and museum are closed for refurbishment from October-November each year.

During the afternoon, your time is free to explore this beautiful city. Visit the Tran Quoc Pagoda, the Temple of Literature, the Museum of Ethnology or just take a walk through Hanoi's Old Quarter – a virtual maze of fascinating streets, each one traditionally devoted to a different product or industry. Late afternoon or early evening, we attend a performance of Vietnam's famous water puppets before sampling one of Hanoi's amazing eating venues. Ask your CEO to tell you more about the local Northern delicacies.

We spend two nights in Hanoi. Our hotel is located in the Old Quarter. All rooms are double or twin share with air conditioning and en suite bathroom. Free wifi and a public computer are available at the lobby.

Approx travel time:
Flight Vientiane to Ha Noi: 1.5 hours.
Transfer from airport to hotel: 45 mins
There is an opportunity to exchange money or use an ATM at the airport

Please note: As this is a combination trip, some of your tour members many depart in Hanoi and you may be joined by some new traveling companions on Day 13.

Day 14 Departure Day (1B)

You can depart at any time today.

We look forward to receiving your evaluation regarding this tour itinerary and your CEOs 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 in line and fill in this simple form. Thank you so much in advance.

Some of your group will most likely continue traveling south through Vietnam with G Adventures. If you are interested in ongoing travel in Vietnam and Cambodia have a look at the following trips on our website:

Classic Vietnam Hanoi to Saigon
http://www.gadventures.com/trips/classic-vietnam-hanoi-to-saigon/AVCH/2012/

or

Essential Vietnam and Cambodia
http://www.gadventures.com/trips/essential-vietnam-cambodia/AVEV/2012/

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Highlights

Explore Bangkok's canals, discover Buddhist temples, float down the mighty Mekong, get wet in the spray of waterfalls

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

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.

In some major cities in Vietnam, many hotel rooms do not have windows.

There may be a weight restriction for the internal flight on this tour. Each passenger is allowed to carry one checked bag with a maximum weight of 15 kg (33lbs). Additional bags or excess weight charges may apply. These charges are the responsibility of the passengers.

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 15, avg 12

Meals Included

10 breakfasts, 2 dinners.

Meals

Eating is a big part of traveling. G Adventures understands the importance of breakfast to start your day, we strive to include a basic breakfast wherever possible. A typical breakfast may include toast, coffee and tea, however, they may also be Asian style, consisting of noodles or congee (rice porridge), or bread and eggs; this may vary depending on the city we're visiting. Vegetarians will be able to find a range of different foods, although in some areas the choice maybe limited. Should breakfast not be included, your CEO can suggest some local options.

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

Meal Budget

Allow USD265-350 for meals not included.

Transport

Train, local bus, air-con bus, boat, songthaew, cyclo, plane.

Local Flights

All local flights are included in the cost of your tour unless otherwise noted. It is important that we have your passport information at the time of booking in order to process these tickets. Internal flight tickets are issued locally and will be given to you prior to the flight departure.

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

Hotels (11 nights), village homestay (1 night), sleeper train (1 night).

My Own Room Exceptions

Night 2, Sleeper Train; Night 9 Homestay.

Joining Hotel

Hotel Centra Central Station Bangkok
23/34-35 Traimit Road
Taladnoy, Bangkok
10100
Thailand
Phone: +66 (0) 2 344 1699

Joining Instructions

When arriving at Suvarnabhumi Airport (pronounced 'su wan na poom') in Bangkok proceed to the Arrivals Hall where you can change money into Thai Baht. (You may be approached by nicely dressed, official looking touts offering an expensive limousine service to your hotel; ignore these offers.)

You have three transport options; public bus, the Airport Train & MRT or public taxi. All transportation is located on the ‘ground’ floor.

Public Bus
The Airport Bus operates 4 bus routes to downtown for a cost of 150 Baht for the entire route. Bus AE2 goes to Banglamphu and Bus AE4 goes to Hua Lamphong train station. Our hotels are located in both the Bang Lamphu and Hua Lamphong areas.

Taxi
The airport is located 30km’s away from downtown Bangkok. Approach the taxi counters, advise them where you are going and they will write this information down for you along with the taxis registration details. Taxis should always use the meter and you are required to pay a 50 Baht airport surcharge on top of the metered fee plus any tollway fees (approx 75 Baht depending on the route taken). Total journey will cost between 350 THB – 500 THB, depending on traffic and toll fees.
The expressway is substantially faster, so tell the taxi driver to use the expressway, you can say either ""kuen ton-way"" (from 'tollway') or ""kuen taang duan"" in Thai (but most understand Tollway/express way in English).

Airport Train
If you are staying at the Centra Central Station Bangkok, you can take the Airport Train. Board the express airport train at a cost of 150 THB to the City Air Terminal; Makkasan. Here you will need to disembark and change to the MRT (subway) Blue line, boarding at Phetchaburi Station. From Pethaburi Station travel to the last stop, Hua Lamphong, and follow the signs for Exit 1. Once out, walk 2-3 minutes. The hotel is located across the road.

Arrival Transfers If you have paid for an arrival transfer when you booked your trip then please proceed to the Airport Information Counter near entrance 3 and look for the driver who should be holding a G Adventures sign.

Please note, the hotel lobby is located on the top floor of the building. When arriving at the Hotel Centra Central Station Bangkok, take the elevators up to the top floor, check in and then proceed to your room.

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 please meet your driver near the information counter at Entrance Door number 3 of the airport, in the arrival hall. If for any reason you can not locate you driver please call the emergency transfer phone number at +66 (0) 800 562777.

If you have still 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.

If your call is specifically concerning Bangkok Airport Transfer complications please call our local G Adventures Transfer provider directly at:+66 81 847 3034 (081 847 3034 from within Thailand) or +66 86 339 5881 (086 339 5881 from within Thailand)

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)
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. Hat, gloves, fleece, windproof/waterproof jacket
Waterproof clothes for wet season May-Oct. Umbrella or waterproof jacket
Cover for backpack or plastic bags to keep clothes dry
Clothes for temples – long pants or sarongs
Camera and film
Reading/writing material
Binoculars
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 Thailand, Laos and Vietnam 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 your travel agent as rules do change. It is important that you check for yourself. For most travellers there will often be an Embassy and Consulate in your home country.

THAILAND - Most nationalities do not need a visa for Thailand for stays of 30 days or less but if you do, they are available on arrival at Bangkok Airport. Please ensure you obtain a multiple entry Visa to avoid complications. Please note that as of December 2008, 30 day Thai visas are no longer available at land borders. Only 15 day tourist visas are issued when you enter Thailand overland. If you are staying more than 15 days you should consider getting your visa prior to your trip.
*Please note that certain nationalities (including: Bhutan, China, Cyprus, Czech, Estonia, Hungary, India, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Maldives, Oman, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Taiwan and Ukraine) may not be able to obtain visa at a land border.

LAOS - Your CEO will assist with the arrangements for your Laos visa at the start of your trip. Please have 3 passport pictures and approx. $50 USD ready.

VIETNAM - Visas for Vietnam need to be arranged ahead of time as the processing time varies. Vietnam visas are NOT available at the land border or Airport. Please ensure your 'valid from date' on your Vietnam visa is for day 12 of the trip or earlier.

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

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

Detailed Trip Notes

Border crossings during the ATBH:
Huay Xai, Laos - Thailand to Laos

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 Thai Baht, Laos Kip and Vietnamese Dong. 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 China, Thailand and 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

Optional Activities : USD150 for optional activities not included in the trip.

Please note the following should be used as a guideline :

Grand Palace (Bangkok) - USD11
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

Bicycle tour (Chiang Mai) - USD30 for Half Day
Thai Cookery Course (Chiang Mai) - USD30 for Half Day
Kan Toke Traditional Dinner (Chiang Mai) - USD30
Bamboo rafting (Chiang Mai) - USD15 plus transport
Royal Theater (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)- USD20-25
Visit one of the many temples (Vientiane) - Most entry fees USD1
Buddha Park (Vientiane) - USD1 plus transport
National Cultural Museum (Vientiane)- USD2
Kayak Rental for 1 person (Halong Bay)- USD12
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 USD3

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 leaders 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:

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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:

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

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)

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 or 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.