EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Comfort Itinerary Version (TMLA3)

INSPIRING LANDSCAPES

TOURDURAT
16
DAYS

Tour Type: Tailormade

tour Code: TMLA3

Tour Essentials

Accommodation:	1 night Comfortable Hotel 2 nights Hotel
Included Meals:	15 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners
Transport:	
Countries:	Laos, Cambodia, Thailand

Tailormade Trails of Indochina

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Your tour itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced tour leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Depart the UK

Included Meals: None

DAY 2 Arrive in Thailand

On arrival in Bangkok you will be transferred to your hotel, the rest of the day is free to explore or relax.

Overnight: **Comfortable Hotel** **Swimming Pool Available**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3 Bangkok highlights

Today you visit the Grand Palace and Temple of the Emerald Buddha, over 100 stupas and temples cover this huge area and the King still resides in the adjoining Palace. You continue to Wat Pho and visit the huge 16th century Reclining Buddha, 46m long, 15m high and finished in gold leaf; part of the temple compound is a Thai Traditional Massage School, the first temple teaching massage, you will have a short visit before a walk through the local market taking you the Chao Phrayar River, where you have a long-tail boat trip. This is a relaxing way to see everyday life along the riverbanks. Late this afternoon, transfer to the airport for your flight to Chiang Rai

Overnight: **Hotel**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4 Slow boat to Pakbeng

Departing Chiang Rai early this morning, you transfer to the Laos border, where you board the slow boat headed for Luang Prabang. This two day journey travels passed steamy forest, rugged cliffs and white sandy riverbanks. It is a great way to witness rural life of the local fishermen, children playing and women washing. Late this afternoon you arrive in the small riverside town of Pakbeng.

Overnight: **Hotel**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5 Slow Boat, Arrive in Luang Prabang

Today you have a tour of Luang Prabang and city's shrines. Your visit begins with a trip to the Royal Palace Museum, before heading to the magnificent Wat Xiengthong representative of classic Laotian architecture because of its sweeping low roofs. Our final stop of the day is a climb Mt Phousi, which offers a spectacular sunset and a panoramic view over the town and the Mekong River.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6 Markets, tribes and waterfalls

Roam around the exotic local market and visit Khmu, Hmong and Lao Loum villages, representing the main ethnic groups of Laos. You will also visit the beautiful Khuang Si Waterfalls where you can swim in the refreshing pools or walk along the jungle trails.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 7 Fly to Pakse

Fly to Pakse and visit the pre-Angkorian ruins of Wat Phu. There's plenty of time to explore these intriguing Khmer ruins, which are perched at the base of Mount Phu Kao. Take a long-tail boat to Si Phan Done Island, part of the 4,000 Islands, to relax or explore the island.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 8 Khone Island and Liphi Waterfall

Today, you'll explore the French colonial past of Khone Island, before visiting Liphi Waterfall, which forms a natural border between Lao and Cambodia, and the famous waterfall of Khone Phapeng - the largest waterfall in South East Asia. Back on the mainland you take to a boat again and go in search of freshwater dolphins, before continuing your journey by road to Xe Pian National Park.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 9 Bolaven Plateau

This morning, you head east towards the Bolaven Plateau. The area is famous for its many waterfalls, including Tad Fan; Tad Fan waterfall is spectacular with twin waterfalls plummeting into a deep gorge. You'll visit many minority villages and explore the many waterfalls of the Bolaven Plateau before returning to Pakse.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 10 Siem Reap

Fly to Siem Reap and explore the ancient temples of Angkor Wat. Visit the Roluos group of temples dating from the ninth and 10th century, including Preah Ko, Bakong and Lolei Temples.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 11 Angkor Wat

Enter Angkor Thom via the Southern Gate and explore the ancient city, then proceed to visit the ruins at Bayon, Baphoun, Phimeanakas, the Royal Palace, the Elephant Terraces and the Leper King Terrace. In the afternoon, a visit to the magnificent Angkor Wat with its extraordinary architecture will provide an opportunity to experience a spectacular sunset over the monuments.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 12 Ta Prohm and silk farm

After breakfast, visit the graceful 11th century Temple of Shiva – Banteay Srei – and the Banteay Samre Temple. On the way back, be impressed by the Ta Prohm Temple which is mystically enveloped by the jungle. In the afternoon, you will take a tour to the 'Wisdom from the Forest' project 35 kms north of Siem Reap. Here, the Institute for Khmer Traditional Textiles (IKTT) focuses on the restoration of the natural environment for producing materials to make traditional textiles, and it has a vegetable garden that has been lovingly cultivated to feed 30-40 families working on its 22 hectares. Here you will see all the trees that are needed to produce the natural dyes for the silk, as well as the Mulberry trees that are vital in the production of silk; you can see the silk worms munching on the Mulberry leaves, and forming the all important cocoons. As you wander around the site you will discover the entire silk process from boiling the cocoons, to pulling out the silk thread, to dying the silk and finally weaving it into beautiful designs.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 13 To Koh Samet

Fly from Siem Reap to Bangkok, where you transfer by road to Koh Samet.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 14 Koh Samet

Lying just six km off the coast of the mainland, Koh Samet remains a picturesque island with many attractive coves, bays and some excellent beaches. It has a fun yet relaxed vibe, the perfect place to relax for your final few days in Thailand.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 15 Free time on Koh Samet

Relax on this paradise island, book a snorkelling excursion locally or stroll around the local shops in the small town.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 16 Fly UK

Fly to the UK.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 15 breakfasts, 0 lunches,0 dinners included in the price of this tour. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide.Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Laos

Lunch £: 1.20

Dinner £: 6.00

Cambodia

Lunch £: 6.00

Dinner £: 9.00

Thailand

Lunch £: 2.50

Dinner £: 4.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Laos

Bottle of Beer £: 0.75

Water £: 0.75

Cambodia

Bottle of Beer £: 1.30

Water £: 0.60

Thailand

Bottle of Beer £: 1.50

Water £: 0.50

Foreign Exchange

Laos

ATM Availability: ATMs are available in most major towns and cities including Vientiane, Luang Prabang, Vang Vieng and Savannekhet.

Credit Card Acceptance: There is very limited credit card use.

Travellers Cheques: Travellers cheques are exchangeable only in the main towns.

Local Currency: Kip.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: US$ are the easiest to exchange in Laos.

Where to Exchange: All major currencies and travellers cheques are exchangeable in the main towns.

Cambodia

ATM Availability: There are ATMs in most towns and cities.

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are accepted in some large shops and restaurants in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap.

Travellers Cheques: They can be hard to change outside of Siem Reap and Phnom Penh; we recommend them for emergencies only.

Local Currency: Riel.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: In Cambodia, US$ is the most commonly used currency (small denomination notes are easier to use).

Where to Exchange: Large towns.

Thailand

ATM Availability: ATMs are available in Bangkok but are limited on the islands.

Credit Card Acceptance: Major stores and restaurants.

Travellers Cheques: Can be exchanged at banks and exchange offices throughout the tour although rates may not be as favourable.

Local Currency: Thai Baht

Recommended Currency for Exchange: We recommend that you bring your money in GBP or US$.

Where to Exchange: Most major towns and on the islands - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a ‘flight inclusive’ package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the ‘Land Only’ arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific ‘Joining Instructions’ prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the ‘Land Only’ arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of joining any of our tours that you must have valid travel insurance. It must indicate that you have cover for (at least) medical expenses and emergency repatriation in the event of illness or injury. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling in England and Scotland. We also strongly recommend your policy includes curtailment, personal effects and cancellation protection as all deposits paid are non-refundable. You will also need to ensure your travel policy covers you for all activities you intend to do whilst on tour.

We are delighted to include FREE travel insurance **for all qualifying customers** who book an Explore trip from 01 January 2015.

For more information about Travel insurance and to check whether you are eligible to receive free cover, please visit www.explore.co.uk/insurance. Explore Worldwide Ltd are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited. who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The registration number can be checked by visiting the the FCA's website www.fca.gov.uk or by contacting them on 0800 111 6768.

Vaccinations & Protection

Laos

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and hepatitis A. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Although not compulsory, travellers may wish to immunise themselves against Japanese encephalitis. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/ and from your local healthcare provider.

Cambodia

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, infectious hepatitis, tetanus, typhoid, diphtheria and polio. Consult your GP regarding tablets advised for malaria. Though not compulsory, travellers may wish to immunise themselves against japanese encephalitis. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at http://www.explore.co.uk/ Travelhealth/ and from your local healthcare provider.

Thailand

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and infectious hepatitis. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Although not compulsory, travellers may also wish to immunise themselves against Japanese encephalitis. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/ and from your local healthcare provider.

Preparing for your Tour

Climate

Laos

The area of Laos and Thailand is tropical 'cool' from November to February, (15 to 27 Degrees Centigrade); 'hot' from March to May (up to 38 Degrees); 'wet' from June to October (rainy, hot and muggy). Bangkok and lowland areas are sticky all year round, but the northern highlands (Luang Prabang) are more temperate with a drier heat. The so-called 'cool' season can get very cold in the uplands at night and in the morning, bring a fleece.

Cambodia

Cambodia is a hot and tropical country, being hottest in April and coolest in January (still high 20s). Although rainfall is at its maximum in October, Phnom Penh and Siem Reap receive very little rain compared to the coastal areas, and when it does rain it tends to be in the form of sporadic mid afternoon downpours. There is normally very little rain between December and March.

Thailand

Generally hot with high humidity. There is some rainfall from April to September with most days being hot (around 33 Degrees) and a light breeze on the islands. If it does rain, it will be more of a heavy tropical downpour that lasts a few hours. Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at http://www.explore.co.uk/weather.

Luggage allowance on tour:

Unfortunately it does occasionally happen that luggage does not always reach its destination on the same flight as its owner, or possibly it may be damaged in transit. If you are unlucky enough for this to occur, it is important that you file a PIR (Property Irregularity Report) with the airline before leaving the airport. This is essential when you come to make a claim either against the airline or from your travel insurance company

General Information

Country details

Laos

Population: 6,800,000

Size of Country: 236,800 sq km

Major Language: Lao

Religion: Buddhist

Time Difference to GMT: +7

Cambodia

Population: 14.805,358

Size of Country: 181,035 sq km

Major Language: Khmer

Religion: Buddhism

Time Difference to GMT: +7

Thailand

Population: 67,000,000

Size of Country: 514,000 sq km

Major Language: Thai, English

Religion: Buddhist

Time Difference to GMT: +7

Electric Supply & Plugs

Laos

2 Pin Flat

Cambodia

2 Pin Round

Thailand

2 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailormade holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, elephant, or any number of unusual forms of transport . Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Our commitment to the environment

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures and traditional, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people), Dekamer (a turtle rescue centre in Turkey) and Kids Saving the Rainforest (a wildlife rescue centre in Costa Rica supported through the LATA foundation). We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation and Friends of Conservation.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

- The Travel Foundation

  Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk
- Tourism Concern

  Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group www.tourismconcern.org.uk
- For further information on responsible travel go to http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/

Know before you go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety andÂ security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. ForÂ UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link atÂ http://www.explore.co.uk/essential-travel-information/travel-resources/travel-safety

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's LicenceÂ granted by the Civil Aviation Authority.Â Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is ‘Available’ or ‘Guaranteed’ we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2014 and 31st December 2015.

Tour Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 3 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 3. 4/ itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 4.

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