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BEIJING TO HO CHI MINH CITY (28 DAYS) FAR EAST EXPLORER



COUNTRIES VISITED: CHINA, LAOS, VIETNAM

HIGHLIGHTS

- Support the Giant Panda Research Centre in Chengdu
- Explore the ancient Buddist temples in Luang Prabang
- Visit the buddhist monasteries, temples and stupas in just about every city in Laos (long Oasis trip)
- Venture to one of the bustling night markets in Vientiane
- Enjoy a journey on a longtail boat up the Mekong River through Phu Hin Bun National Park
- Wander the streets of the historical city of Hue and visit the Citadel
- Relax and enjoy the laid-back feel and unspoilt beaches around Hoi An
- Ho Chi Minh City - Vietnam's fast and frenetic capital

INCLUDES

- Accommodation - simple hostels/hotels
- Chengdu Giant Panda Breeding & Research Centre
- Longtail boat trip in Phu Hin Bun National Park
- Great Sacred Stupa (Pha That Luang), Vientiane - Entrance fee
- Walled citadel, Hue - Entrance fee

- War Remnants Museum, Ho Chi Minh City - Entrance fee
- Meals - approx. 20%
- All local transport
- Services of Oasis Tour Leader

EXCLUDES

- Visas
- Optional Excursions as listed in the Pre-Departure Information
- Flights
- Airport Taxes & Transfers
- Travel insurance (compulsory, get a quote here)
- Meals - approx. 80%
- Drinks
- Tips

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

ARRIVAL & ACCOMMODATION

Trip Joining Point: Beijing hostel (tbc)

Start Time Day 1: 08.00
The trip starts in Beijing on Day 1, and we plan to leave the city on a mid-afternoon train to Chengdu. Final details will be provided in a separate pre-departure update sent a few weeks before the tirp starts.

PRE-TRIP ACCOMMODATION:
You can pre-book accommodation and airport transfers through us. We will require your flight number, arrival time, and arrival date so please ensure this information is forwarded to us as soon as you have booked your flight. Please book this service as soon as you have booked your flight and no later than 6 weeks prior to departure, after which a late booking fee may apply. If you have booked through a travel agent, please contact them to request pre-trip accommodation and airport transfers. Single, double, twin, and triple rooms will be provided subject to availability, where requested.
If you are arriving early in the morning and you would like to check in immediately, you may have to reserve your room for the previous night to ensure direct check in, otherwise you may have to wait until normal check in times (usually 1pm to 2pm).

AIRPORT TRANSFERS:
Airport Transfer Costs: On request

COMMUNICATION:

The Internet is available all over China, but not all of the Internet is available. **China blocks thousands of websites** (more than 8,000 websites to date) using a filtering system known as the, "The Great Firewall". The reason for China's aggressive take on the Internet is to protect its citizens from outside influence and "harmful information".
Please be aware that sites like Google's, social media like Facebook, You Tube along with messaging Apps, such as WhatsApp, Outlook and Gmail are censored and blocked, needing technology like VPNs for access.

PRE-DEPARTURE MEETING

We normally leave Beijing in the afternoon of Day 1. There will be a pre-departure meeting in the starting hotel on the previous evening (in effect Day 0), usually around 6:00pm. We will provide exact details in the final pre-departure update we send you a few weeks before the trip starts, along with your tour leader's contact details. There will also be a notice in reception advising the exact time.

During this meeting your crew will explain how the day to day running of the trip works. Your Tour Leader will collect any **Local Payment** money as well as a photocopy of your **passport information page**, It is important that you attend this meeting - please let the UK office or your tour leader know if you are unable to do so.

POST TRIP ACCOMMODATION AND AIRPORT TRANSFERS

Post-trip accommodation can be arranged with your Tour Leader during the trip or directly with the hotel on arrival. The return airport transfer can be arranged through your hotel / hostel and is not included, it is at your own expense. We regret these services cannot be arranged via the Oasis office before departure.

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Day 1 in your departure city, is an arrivals day. For your convenience we would advise that you arrive at the latest, on the afternoon of this day. You may wish to allow some extra time to explore your arrival city.

We recommend allowing an extra day post trip before booking a return flight, just in case of any unexpected delays.

There are many online flight search engines such as **www.skyscanner.net** or **www.ebookers.co.uk** **,** flights can also be booked direct with airline websites or through travel agencies. Please inform us of your flight details through your online account, as airport transfers can be arranged for various trips.

One way ticket: If you intend to travel on a one way ticket to meet up with one of our trips, without possessing an onward flight ticket - we recommend that you have a copy of your payment confirmation/receipt (that you will be sent at time of your balance payment) available at immigration to assist easy entry.

PASSPORTS

Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months AFTER your trip finishes. This is a general requirement for all of the countries we travel to on our trips.

If you have dual nationality you can only use one passport for the entire trip. It is your responsibility to ensure you have all the relevant visas you require.

Please bring 2 photocopies of your passport details to give to your tour leader.

As a guideline, you will need at least 1 blank page per country in your passport after you have obtained the relevant visas before your trip commences (Tajikistan and Indonesia both require 2 blank pages).

VISAS

The information below is to be used only as a guide and may change without prior notice. It is advisable to contact the relevant embassy in plenty of time before the trip departs to check the current visa requirements. It is **your responsibility** to ensure you have all the relevant visas you require**.**

Most of the countries we travel through in South East Asia require a visa. All, with the exception of China, can be obtained en-route, for most nationalities. If you need a China visa, you will need to obtain it before travelling, and a Letter of Invitation (LOI) is required, which we include in the trip price.

Visas must be paid for in USD cash ONLY.

Country	British	Aust	NZ	S.African	USA	Canadian
China	Free	Free	Free	£20	$185	Free
Laos	£20	£20	£20	£20	£20	£20

Vietnam	Free	£60	£60	£60	£60	£60
Cambodia	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25
Thailand	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free
Malaysia	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free
Indonesia	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free
Singapore	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free

For more information on other nationalities & visas checkout **www.projectvisa.com**

Cambodia

Passport Holders from UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada, South Africa and most EU countries will require a visa for Cambodia. You can obtain this visa at the border on arrival. Approximate cost $35 USD.

You will need to bring 1 recent colour passport photos with a white background along with you to apply for the visa.

Passport Holders from other countries, will need to check the current visa requirements with the relevant consulate, and whether you need to obtain the visa in advance.

China

China has recently been removing the requirement for visas for stays of under 30 days for many nationalities. This change may not be permanent for all nationalities. Other nationalities (eg. South Africa) have temporary reductions in visa prices. If you do need a visa there may also be additional fees charged by the Chinese visa processing centre that are not included above. These can vary from centre to centre. So, please check current requirements and prices for your local option.

To apply for your visa for China you will be required to obtain a Letter of Invitation (LOI). Once you have received the LOI you will be able to apply for the visa at the relevant consulate. Oasis Overland will provide you with the LOI included in your trip price.

Details for the LOI process and visa application will be emailed to you a few months before your trip

departs.

Laos

Passport Holders from UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada, South Africa and most EU countries will require a visa for Laos. You can obtain this visa at the border on arrival. Approximate cost $35 USD. You will need to bring 1 recent colour passport photos with a white background along with you to apply for the visa.

Passport Holders from other countries, will need to check the current visa requirements with the relevant consulate, and whether you need to obtain the visa in advance.

Vietnam

Passport Holders from Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, South Africa and Canada will require a visa to enter Vietnam. The visa will need to be arranged whilst on the trip in Laos. Your tour leader will provide details and help with the process. Approximate cost $75 USD.

British and some EU countries will not require a visa for a stay of up to 15 days.

Passport Holders from other countries, will need to check the current visa requirements with the relevant consulate, and whether you need to obtain the visa in advance.

VACCINATIONS AND HEALTH

It is possible that you may require some vaccinations for your trip, depending on the areas that you are visiting. As we are not medically trained, we are unable to give detailed advice on vaccination requirements, so please use the information below as a guide only. We have worked closely with **Nomad Travel Clinics** for many years and they offer Oasis travellers a **10% discount** on vaccinations, anti- malarial drugs, first aid items, clothing and equipment, just enter discount code OASIS1000 at **www.nomadtravel.co.uk**. Alternatively you can check out the **fit for travel website** for more travel health information or consult a reputable travel clinic or your GP for information and advice. We suggest that you allow at least 8 weeks to get all your vaccinations.

Covid-19

While we do not make being vaccinated against Covid-19 compulsory on our trips, we strongly recommend it. Being fully vaccinated (including any available boosters) will both protect your health, the health of other travellers and crew (through reduced risk of transmission), save the additional time and cost required to obtain pre-entry PCR tests and avoid potential disruption to the itinerary. Should a country require negative PCR tests before entry for unvaccinated travellers then obtaining these will be at your cost should you need them. If a country will not admit unvaccinated travellers at all, then any travellers in the group affected would need to overfly that country at their own cost.

Remember to bring copies of your proof of vaccination with you.

Yellow Fever - Being vaccinated against Yellow Fever and having a valid certificate and a photocopy is deemed compulsory in many countries we visit, especially at certain borders and are needed if you are entering from an infected country. You can view a list of countries requiring a certificate through the World Health organisation **http://www.who.int/ith/ITH_country_list.pdf**

Rabies - Vaccinations are regularly recommended for some of the countries that we travel through - especially if time and money are not a deterrent.

Malaria - In some of the areas we visit there is a risk of contracting Malaria. You must be aware that whatever malaria prophylactics you are taking, they only offer partial protection. They must be coupled with your own physical efforts against being bitten - which is the best prevention. Malaria-carrying mosquitoes come out at sunset so from this time you should wear long sleeves and trousers. Exposed skin, especially ankles, should have insect repellent containing 'Deet' applied to them. Your crew will advise on where the worst affected areas are on the trip. There are a number of prophylactic malaria treatments on the market & requirements change. It is also wise to take a sample of whichever prophylactic you choose, a few weeks before you leave. This way you may determine early on if you have any adverse reactions so you can change the regimen if necessary. Please consult a reputable travel clinic or GP for advice. For more information visit **www.nomadtravel.co.uk or www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk**

Altitude sickness - This is caused by thin air (due to lack of oxygen) and can affect anyone arriving at high altitude (above 3000mtrs). The symptoms are headaches, dizziness, shortage of breath and possibly nausea. To avoid this or alleviate the symptoms make a point to acclimatize by arriving into a high altitude destination a few days early and make sure you do not over exert yourself, rest for a few hours, avoid drinking alcohol, smoking, large meals and drink plenty of water.

As we are travelling mostly by land (as opposed to flying into a high altitude location) we should acclimatise gradually, and so avoid 'soroche', mountain sickness.

Dengue - Unlike the malaria mosquito, which bites at night, the dengue carrying mosquito bites during the day. Some areas we travel to do have occasional outbreaks & it is therefore advised that you take care not to be bitten during the day as well as at night. There is no vaccine available.

Health - To join our trips you should be in good general health. Your medical insurance company must be told if you have any pre-existing medical condition / allergy or if you are on any regular medication, otherwise you may not be covered under your policies for these. Our crew will need to know of any medication or conditions you may have. For general health advice log onto **www.nathnac.org/travel/**

TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is a compulsory requirement that you have adequate travel insurance before you join any Oasis trip and at the very least are insured for all necessary medical and repatriation costs incurred.

You will be asked to provide the following details if you have not already done so: travel insurance company name, insurance policy number & insurance emergency telephone number. You will also be required to give a copy of your policy with this information to your Tour Leader on arrival with confirmation that the policy duration is sufficient to cover you for the entire duration of your trip. It is also wise to leave a copy of your insurance policy with a friend or relative for safe keeping.

We believe that your safety and holiday enjoyment are very important. It is a mistake to think that "it will never happen to me". It is also very important that you are covered for all the activities that you may wish to undertake while on our trip. It is extremely important that you check the full extent of your cover related to 24 hour Medical Emergency Assistance. In the event of you needing medical treatment you want to know that you have the best cover available to you. Your policy should include adequate Medical Emergency and Repatriation cover as well as Cancellation, Baggage and Personal Liability cover. You need to be aware of EXACTLY what activities your policy covers you for. Please note that skiing is not usually covered in most insurance policies. Please note also that many of the areas we visit are not as developed as the UK and we have no control over the availability or standard of medical and repatriation services and facilities in the areas we visit and these do not form any part of our contract with you.

You should also note that passenger liability insurance covering vehicles, particularly in Third World countries, may be unavailable or inadequate; it is therefore important that your insurance cover makes sufficient provision for you and your dependents in the event of an accident.

We are happy to refer our UK based travellers to the travel insurance specialists Campbell Irvine who have a policy suitable for overlanding which covers most of the adventure and sporting activities on our trips.

Please be aware that most travel insurance policies will not cover you if you are visiting areas against government travel advice. If your trip will go through areas like this (for example, some of our Trans Africa routes through West Africa) then you may need to look at an alternative policy for these sections, for example Battleface or SafetyWing.

For further information, check out the **Travel Insurance** section of our website.

IMPORTANT INSURANCE INFORMATION FOR THOSE VISITING ZANZIBAR:
The Zanzibar Government have announced the introduction of a travel insurance policy which will be obligatory for all foreign visitors to the islands, regardless of whether travellers have their own travel insurance in place.

1. The insurance policy is sold by Zanzibar Insurance Corporation.

2. The cost is US$44 per person.
3. The insurance requirement comes into force on 1st October 2024.
4. The policy must be purchased online at visitzanzibar.go.tz and purchases can be made from 1st September 2024.
5. Payment can be made online by debit or credit card.
6. On completion of the purchase, visitors will receive a QR code. The policy documents will be sent to your registered email address.
7. The policy document and QR code must be presented on in Zanzibar. Entry will be refused without this documentation.

To ensure you have a smooth entry, please ensure the above policy is purchased in advance of your arrival.

MONEY, BUDGETS AND LP

Local Payment (LP)

LP is part of your overall trip payment and is the most cost effective and practical way to get hard currency to Asia to pay for a variety of your day-to-day local costs which cannot be pre-paid from the UK. It is a guaranteed amount, set before your trip departs, and unlike 'group kitty' systems we will not ask you to contribute more once the trip is underway.

Please note: Your LP is payable to your Tour Leader on the morning of departure in US$ Dollars CASH ONLY. Make sure that all your notes are in good condition. Old, torn or marked notes are often refused by the banks and we will therefore be unable to accept them either. Please do not bring all of your Local Payment in US$100 notes and also make sure that they are post 2013 and do not have a serial number starting with CB**.**

How to bring your currency?

It is best to bring your money in a combination of cash US dollars and debit/credit cards. Euros, British Pounds and other currencies can be exchanged, but tend to attract a less favourable rate than US dollars. ATMs are present in most towns and cities we visit and are generally reliable, though there will be times when it is not possible to get any money out for a few days at a time when in more remote areas. Besides memorising your PIN, it is also important to be aware of your daily withdrawal limit and bank withdrawal costs.

Make sure that all your notes are in good condition. Old, torn or marked notes are often refused by the banks and shops. Please ensure your notes are dated post 2013 and do not have a serial number starting with CB. Scottish pounds are also not accepted.

Spending Money

From past trips and traveller feedback £180 to £250 per week should cover costs such as meals out (on average 20% are supplied), soft and alcoholic drinks and beers, email and communications, small souvenirs and other general spending. Personal spending habits and budgets differ greatly from person to person. Budget on optional activities and visa costs separately (see visa section above and optional excursions page) and allow extra for your Local Payment contribution.

Changing money

Change your money only at banks, hotels, airports or forex bureaus. It is illegal to change money on the street, as these people will normally be opportunistic thieves or undercover police.Your Tour Leader will advise you where and when you can change money and with what means. It is also a good idea to have a small CASH emergency fund, to allow for the unexpected.

Credit and Debit Cards

If using credit or debit cards Visa is best; Mastercard and American Express have limited access through parts of Asia. Please note that usually you will be given local currency and NOT US$ or £GB. We recommend that you inform your bank that you will be using your card abroad to avoid it being blocked.

Pre-Paid Travel Currency Cards

These cards are similar to normal Credit and Debit cards but they can be pre loaded with cash before you travel with a set amount allowing you to withdraw this cash using the card at normal ATMs. It is a more secure way to access cash on your trip, but again do not rely on these as your sole means of funds on a trip - (please refer to the ATM section). Several banks and companies now offer these cards, but be sure to look into the rates for withdrawing cash when making your decision. Pre-paid cards that use Visa are preferable to Mastercard, which can be difficult to use.

Tipping

Is often expected and relied upon. It is more than a reward for services well done, but, as wages are extremely low, it is an accepted means of supplementing an income. If you would like to leave a tip for any activity/individual, you could organize this as a group and give a tip at the end. A recommended amount for restaurants is usually 10% of your total bill and similar for activities. Some countries also add an extra Government tax on restaurant bills.

Because it can be difficult to know what to tip, and because it has such importance in some areas both economically and culturally, there may be times and activities for which your Tour Leader will make it clear what level of tipping is 'customary/expected'. They may also be quite enthusiastic or assertive in encouraging you to take account of these suggestions. This is motivated by the knowledge of how important tipping can be, and the offence or confusion that can be caused when local people are tipped poorly. In the end, tipping remains at the discretion of the individual, but our

crew will continue to advise on normal or average rates, and we would ask you to carefully consider the economic or personal impact of being seen as 'under tipping'. We know that many who travel with us are on a tight budget, but ask you to consider that those we work with locally may also face financial hardship, and also work very hard to try to give you unrivalled service/ experiences.

In the past we have been asked by travellers about tipping your Oasis Crew. If you choose to do this, it would be budgeted separately from the above. Our guys work very hard at making your trip a great travel experience. Working overseas can often be challenging and they are pretty much on call for you 24 hours a day, so it's appreciated as a thank you for hard work and good service, but of course not mandatory. Our suggestion is to budget around US$1 a day.

CLIMATE

The climate in South East Asia is tropical, with high temperatures and generally quite humid year-round with rainfall is common, especially in the afternoon. The rainy season lasts roughly from May to October, but even during this time of year the rains usually take the form of short, heavy showers.

WHAT TO TAKE

The less you take the less you have to pack, wash and lug home; you can always pick up extras along the way. Most people make the mistake of bringing too much gear. Clothes washing or laundry facilities will be available at least once a week. The climate in South East Asia is tropical, so pack for hot and humid conditions, with frequent, short heavy showers.

Make sure that you bring your gear in a traditional soft sided 70 - 90L rucksack or holdall - suitcases are not suitable. **Remember baggage is limited to 20kg per person plus one day bag.**

Equipment	**Toiletries - Most available to buy on trip**
• **Sleeping Bag liner** • **Small day-pack or small bag to carry daily items** • **Soft rucksack or holdall (NOT rigid suitcase)** • **Water bottle - for personal use - we recommend Water-to-Go (see below Responsible Travel)**	• Soap, shampoo, toothbrush/paste, antibacterial hand wash, lip balm & moisturiser • Sun block 35 + after sun, hat & sun glasses • Tampons (can buy in most places) • Contraception
Clothes	**Personal Effects**

• **One pair of trainers or boots** • **Sandals/flip flops/jandals/thongs** • **Underwear/socks** • **T shirts/shirts** • **Shorts/swimwear** • **Jeans/trousers/jog pants/leggings** • **Skirt or dress** • **Sweat shirt/jumper** • **Waterproof jacket/poncho**	• Camera with protective case, spare batteries, film/memory card • Torch & spare batteries (head torch is best) • Travel adaptor plug/charger (for cameras & mobile phone batteries) • Money belt • Personal stereo • Towel &/or sarong

What to wear - Keeping your arms, shoulders and legs covered will go a long way to prevent causing offence and hassle to yourself, especially when visiting religious sites. Avoid wearing tight or revealing clothing, but generally on some beaches you can wear what you like. Attitudes in most places we visit are fairly liberal, especially in larger towns and cities, and the locals are used to seeing Western tourists, but we do ask you respect their cultures and show some sensitivity where appropriate.

Recommended Medical Kit List	
• **Antiseptic ointment/Antihistamine cream & tablets** • **Nurofen or equivalent pain-killer** • **Eye-drops/bath** • **Anti-diarrhoea treatment** • **A couple of bandages (elasticated & triangular)** • **Medication for personal allergies/asthma etc** • **Insect repellent containing Deet**	• **Re-hydration sachets/vitamin tablets** • **Assorted plasters** • **1 Course of malaria treatment** • **Some suitable antibiotics as recommended by your doctor for infected cuts or to treat severe dysentery** • **Malaria Tablets - see Vaccinations & Health section**

It is your responsibility to carry your kit on included excursions and optional activities as some local operators may not have medical kits to hand.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

Cameras (incl. Digital & Video Cameras) - An easy to use 'point and press' will get you some good photos. For memorable shots, it may be worthwhile investing in an SLR camera, but be sure to get some practice in before the trip! Most towns and cities have internet cafes where you can download onto CD/internet sites - but don't rely on it.

Photography - Be aware of your surroundings when taking photographs and filming. Some locations will be sensitive or have local laws banning photography. For example it is usually forbidden to use cameras at borders or around government buildings, military installations, bridges and airports or to take photos of local officials. If you do take photos or film where it is not permitted you may find yourself being questioned by irate officials who may decide to confiscate your camera or instruct you

to delete all the images/footage on your device. If in doubt ask for permission, or if there is no-one to ask use some common sense.

Drones - As the use of drones becomes more common, countries throughout the world are gradually updating their laws and restrictions on usage. The specific regulations will vary from one country to another, so do check the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice for the latest information. As with cameras, use your common sense if you do use a drone and avoid operation in sensitive areas. If you plan to bring a drone on your trip with us please contact us first to ensure there will be a suitable place to store it while on your trip.

Electrical charging & power supply - It may be difficult to find a power source for charging at times, so a spare battery is a must. Log onto**www.whatplug.net**for information regarding the different electrical plugs and voltage used in each country.

CONTACTING HOME

The internet and WiFi are readily available in almost every town and city you will visit; most hotels and hostels will have free WiFi as will many bars and cafes. Do bear in mind that the connections can be unreliable and will not always be as fast as you are used to at home. If a lot of people try to use the internet at the same time the speed will be slower still, especially if trying to make Skype calls or upload photos/videos. During periods of the trip where we are camping, internet will be less common.

Some travellers choose to take an unlocked mobile phone with them and buy local SIM cards in each country, allowing them to use mobile data. If you particularly want or need regular internet access this may be a good option. Telephone calls can be expensive usually £1 to £5 for a three minute call.

Online Diaries - A great variety of free "travel blogs" are now available online, they are a good way of keeping relatives and friend up to date with what you are doing and a good place to upload photos, collecting messages as well as keeping a record for yourself.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Before you go

- Remove unnecessary packaging before you go - waste disposal facilities are often stretched or non existent in the places we visit. To avoid unnecessary pollution of local water supplies take environmentally friendly toiletries with you.
- Why not invest in a wind-up or solar-powered torch or media player before you travel or at least rechargeable batteries.
- Learn some of the local language and read up on the local history/culture before you go. You'll get so much more out of your trip.

- Why not pack some pens/pencils exercise books in your rucksack and they can be donated to a local school or project while you're away. You can also purchase these items cheaply, locally which will help local businesses.
- Take a sturdy water bottle with you from home that you can re-use throughout your trip. We carry large quantities of purified water with us on our Expedition vehicles and it is much better for the environment if you drink this, rather than purchase bottled water along the way. (It also saves you money).
- Water-to-Go: Oasis Overland have partnered with Water-to-Go to help reduce the number of plastic water bottles consumed during a trip. Water-to-Go is a filtration system that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants including viruses, bacteria, chemicals and heavy metals from any non-salt water source. Click here and enter the code OASIS15 to purchase your **Water-to-Go** products at 15% discount. Water-to-Go will then donate a further 15% to Oasis Overland Charity projects.

While you're travelling

From experience gained in running trips, we have developed our own practical and manageable environmental policy which all of our crew practice on the trips we operate, and they will share this information with you at the start of your trip. We welcome your input on this, plus any new ideas you may have, to improve our existing procedures. As a guide here's a few tips to bear in mind.

- Don't waste water. It is a scarce resource in many of the places our trips visit. On all our Ultimate and Overland Expeditions we carry large quantities of purified water with us. We encourage you to refill your own water bottles from this supply, rather than purchase bottled water along the way- much more environmentally friendly and saves you money.
- Never buy endangered species or endangered habitat products. Apart from the fact of it being illegal it also encourages the trade to continue.
- Look after and preserve the areas we visit. Be careful about stepping on coral reefs or trekking on undesignated tracks.
- Buy locally made crafts and products helping to support the local economy.
- Don't feel when bargaining that you have to get the cheapest price possible just for the sake of it. Pay what the item is worth to you & don't worry about what someone else has paid.
- Try the local food and drinks - this will help to support local farmers and food sellers. Sitting in a local cafe is also a great way to meet local people.
- Dispose of litter appropriately on your trip. This includes cigarette butts. Not only does litter look unsightly it can be lethal to wildlife.
- Where any toilet facilities exist, however unsavoury they might seem to you, they should be used. Where they do not, always bury your waste and make sure it is never near (at least 30m) a water source.

- When game viewing do not encourage your guides to get too close to the wildlife so that their natural behaviour is impeded.
- Respect local customs, traditions and beliefs of the people in the different regions that you travel through.
- Do not take photos of people, ritual events or special places unless you have asked first. Dress appropriately according to local codes and show respect around religious festivals.
- Recycling is almost non-existent in many of the areas and countries we visit - we do the best we can with limited resources & space on our vehicles.
- For books dedicated to travelling more responsibly & ethically see: **www.tourismconcern.org.uk**

Community Projects - Oasis are active in raising awareness and providing support to a number of projects and local schools where we believe we can make a positive difference. More information on the **projects we support**.

SECURITY

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) offer country-specific advice, regarding not only security but also entry regulations, local laws and customs and health. We strongly recommend all travellers visit the FCO website, or the equivalent in their home country, to familiarise themselves with local conditions and issues in the countries they plan to visit before committing to a trip with us. You can view their website here.

If you have any questions at all about the safety or security of your trip, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will be happy to discuss your trip in more detail.

In cities - All major cities have their share of petty crime (just like our cities) and sensible precautions need to be taken. Wearing expensive looking jewellery or watches and carrying cameras will draw unnecessary attention to you. Leave valuables such as passports and excess money in your hotel safe (we recommend carrying a copy of your passport details page at all times). You may find a simple money belt is more discreet than a bag. Always be aware of your surroundings and when approached by people you do not know, use your common sense. At night in cities it's best to use a taxi, rather than walking around the streets, single women in particular need to be careful and we would suggest that it is safer to be in a group.

Oasis does not take responsibility for clients' personal items and we advise you to not take items of value that are not essential for the journey.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is a compulsory requirement that you have adequate travel insurance before you join any Oasis Trip, and at the very least are insured for all necessary medical & repatriation costs incurred if you

need them.

You will be asked to provide the following details on the Traveller Information Form that you send in to us after making your booking. If you have not already done so: travel insurance name, insurance policy number & insurance emergency telephone number. You will also be required to give a copy of your policy with this information to your Tour Leader on arrival with confirmation that the policy duration is sufficient to cover you for the entire duration of your trip. It is also wise to leave a copy of your insurance policy with a friend or relative for safe keeping.

We believe that your safety and holiday enjoyment are very important. It is a mistake to think that "it will never happen to me". It is also very important that you are covered for all the activities that you may wish to undertake while on our trip. It is extremely important that you check the full extent of your cover related to 24 hour Medical Emergency Assistance. In the event of you needing medical treatment you want to know that you have the best cover available to you. Your policy should include adequate Medical Emergency and Repatriation cover as well as Cancellation, Baggage and Personal Liability cover. You need to be aware of EXACTLY what activities your policy covers you for. Please note that skiing is not usually covered in most insurance policies.

We offer tailor made Overland Adventure Travel Insurance that covers most of the adventure and sporting activities on our trips.

For further information on the insurance we offer, the activities covered and costs, check out the **Travel Insurance** section of our website. UK residents can purchase the insurance we recommend directly through Campbell Irvine.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Before you go

- Remove unnecessary packaging before you go - waste disposal facilities are often stretched or non existent in the places we visit. To avoid unnecessary pollution of local water supplies take environmentally friendly toiletries with you.
- Why not invest in a wind-up or solar-powered torch or media player before you travel or at least rechargeable batteries.
- Learn some of the local language and read up on the local history/culture before you go. You'll get so much more out of your trip.
- Why not pack some pens/pencils exercise books in your rucksack and they can be donated to a local school or project while you're away. You can also purchase these items cheaply, locally which will help local businesses.
- Take a sturdy water bottle with you from home that you can re-use throughout your trip. We carry large quantities of purified water with us on our Expedition vehicles and it is much better for the environment if you drink this, rather than purchase bottled water along the way. (It also saves you money).

- **Water-to-Go**: Oasis Overland have partnered with Water-to-Go to help reduce the number of plastic water bottles consumed during a trip. Water-to-Go is a filtration system that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants including viruses, bacteria, chemicals and heavy metals from any non-salt water source. **Click here** and enter the code OASIS25 to purchase your Water-to-Go products at 25% discount.

While you're travelling

From experience gained in running trips, we have developed our own practical and manageable environmental policy which all of our crew practice on the trips we operate, and they will share this information with you at the start of your trip. We welcome your input on this, plus any new ideas you may have, to improve our existing procedures. As a guide here's a few tips to bear in mind.

- Don't waste water. It is a scarce resource in many of the places our trips visit. On all our Ultimate and Overland Expeditions we carry large quantities of purified water with us. We encourage you to refill your own water bottles from this supply, rather than purchase bottled water along the way- much more environmentally friendly and saves you money!
- Never buy endangered species or endangered habitat products. Apart from the fact of it being illegal it also encourages the trade to continue.
- Look after and preserve the areas we visit. Be careful about stepping on coral reefs or trekking on undesignated tracks.
- Buy locally made crafts and products helping to support the local economy.
- Don't feel when bargaining that you have to get the cheapest price possible just for the sake of it. Pay what the item is worth to you & don't worry about what someone else has paid.
- Try the local food and drinks - this will help to support local farmers and food sellers. Sitting in a local cafe is also a great way to meet local people.
- Dispose of litter appropriately on your trip. This includes cigarette butts. Not only does litter look unsightly it can be lethal to wildlife.
- Where any toilet facilities exist, however unsavoury they might seem to you, they should be used. Where they do not, always bury your waste and make sure it is never near, (at least 30m) a water source.
- When game viewing do not encourage your guides to get too close to the wildlife so that their natural behaviour is impeded.
- Respect local customs, traditions and beliefs of the people in the different regions that you travel through.
- Do not take photos of people, ritual events or special places unless you have asked first. Dress appropriately according to local codes and show respect around religious festivals.
- Recycling is almost non-existent in many of the areas and countries we visit - we do the best we can with limited resources & space on our vehicles.
- For books dedicated to travelling more responsibly & ethically see: **www.tourismconcern.org.uk**

POST TRIP ACCOMMODATION AND AIRPORT TRANSFERS

Post-trip accommodation can be arranged with your tour leader during the trip or directly with the hotel on arrival. The return airport transfer can be arranged through your hotel / hostel and is not included, it is at your own expense. We regret these services cannot be arranged via the Oasis office before departure.

WHAT TO EXPECT

LIFE ON THE ROAD

Oasis Tour Leader

We have one Tour Leader on this tour whose duties are extensive and quite demanding. From organising accommodation, meals, travel arrangements, pre-booking some excursions and guides, to finding the best deals, socializing and making sure all runs as smoothly as possible. Your Tour Leader will have extensive travel experience, and a great deal of knowledge about the areas we visit, but they are not tour guides as such. In most areas we visit there are trained local guides, who offer their services; they have spent many years, and have vast experience at particular sites.

Accommodation

We use a mixture of local hotels/guesthouses and hostels along the way, as well as some lodges, mostly using shared rooms; couples and friends travelling together will be accommodated where possible, but this cannot always be guaranteed. On some occasions it may be possible to ‘upgrade’ to private rooms and your Tour Leader can assist with this. Because of the nature of the countries we are visiting, the hotels and hostels we use can suffer from the common problems that affect all levels of accommodation in South East Asia: power cuts can occur, hot water can be temperamental and internet access may be very slow, if it is present at all.

Transport

We use a mixture of public buses, trains, private charter buses and boats/ferries on this trip.

Meals

Around 20% of meals are included on the trip, mostly breakfasts. One of the great attractions of South East Asia is its cuisine! Each country offers its own unique and diverse cuisine, and Western options are generally available too, and we find that most travellers enjoy having the opportunity to go out and try the local food. All budgets are catered for, from cheap meals offered on the street by hawkers through to luxurious international restaurants.

Vegetarians / Vegans / Coeliacs / Gluten & Lactose intolerance

Our Tour Leaders will always do their best to cater for any dietary requirement or intolerance whenever possible. However we don't cater for fussy eaters. It must be remembered that the variety of dishes available may not be the same as available to meat eaters. If there is anything in particular you require in your diet or because of an allergy or would miss from home, it would be best to bring these with you, due to the high cost and scarcity of these specialised and often imported foods.

Remember when eating out in local restaurants & hotels that vegetarianism or food allergies / intolerances, are still not widely known about or understood by many local people. i.e Vegetarians or Vegans will often be offered fish or chicken in error. Most large towns and cities, or areas used to tourists, will often have more choice but please be aware that it will probably not be as varied as you are used to when eating out at home.

A lot of meals in South East Asia are cooked using nut oil. If you are allergic to nuts, it is a good idea to bring with you some small cards with information about your allergy written in the local language. These can be easily sourced and purchased online.

TRIP ITINERARY

Beijing to Luang Namtha

We depart Beijing this afternoon, combining the group that has already been travelling through China with any other travellers who have joined in Beijing. We will take one of China's famous fast trains as it takes us to **Chengdu**, Sichuan province's capital city and where the main highlight is the **Giant Panda Breeding and Research Centre**. Those who haven't been already will have a chance to visit.

From Chengdu we board another train to **Kunming**, the capital of Yunnan Province. Known as the 'Spring City', and sat nearly 2000m above sea-level, Kunming enjoys a milder climate than we have so far been used to in China, and walking its tree-lined boulevards makes for a pleasant change of pace, although we are still in China so don't expect it to be slow or boring! You can check out the **Tang Dynasty-era Pagodas** or the **Yuatong Temple**, some 1200 years old and contrasting with the rapid pace of modern China that is changing the city.

Passing through Mengla, we then continue to the border with **Laos** and bid farewell to China as our journey moves on to our next destination and more of a backpacker vibe to our travels.

Luang Namtha to Vang Vieng

We start to explore **Laos** now, known in antiquity as **'The Land of a Million Elephants'**, a country of verdant tropical landscapes dotted with thick, forested hills and sleepy towns and cities. Its rich history and varied culture make it a fantastic country to explore. Our first stop is Luang Namtha, with surrounding jungle and hills offering hikes, rafting and overnight village stays.

After a couple of nights in Luang Namtha we head to the former royal capital of Luang Prabang. In **Luang Prabang**, our base for the next four nights, we rejoin the Mekong River, and have the opportunity to explore its many temples, experience a wide range of colourful and varied cuisine and fully embrace South East Asia's bustling backpacker scene. But for all its tourist appeal, the city has still retained its authenticity, partly due to its status as a UNESCO World Heritage site, but also because of the reverence paid to the city stemming from its role as a royal and religious centre through the region's history. Here it is possible to hire a bicycle and explore the streets by yourself, visit the **Pak Ou Caves** take a cooking course, or just take a seat in one of the many bars or cafes and watch as Buddhist Monks, local traders and bewildered backpackers struggling with the heat and all other life unfolds in front of you. This is also where we will obtain our visas for Vietnam, which by now will be fast approaching.

Next stop, the riverside town of **Vang Vieng**, known for it's stunning natural scenery and outdoor activities you can spend the day, exploring many caves throughout the area, like Phu Kham or Tham Chang cave and enjoy swimming in the lagoons located within, there are opportunities for mountain biking, trekking, kayaking, rock climbing, inner tubing and much more.

Vang Vieng to Savannaket

Leaving Vang Vieng we continue south to **Vientiane**, an unusually chilled-out capital city by South East Asian standards! There are many sights of interest, most notably the majestic **Pha That Luang.** Vientiane's slow pace and subtle French character, a gentle reminder of its colonial past, make it well worth stopping for a couple of nights. This is also where we will obtain our visas for Vietnam, which by now will be fast approaching.

We leave the city behind us and return to the wilds of Laos as we reach **Phu Hin Bun National Park** where we take a longtail boat up the river into some spectacular caves and stay in a rustic bush lodge overlooking the river. We continue to follow the river south to **Savannaket**, a decent-sized town with a sense of faded colonial splendour as crumbling French buildings slowly give way to modern Laos. We have one last chance to enjoy a 'Beer Lao' before an early start the next morning to head east into Vietnam.

Savannaket to Nha Trang

Hue, one of Vietnam's cultural and religious centres is set on the banks of the **Song Huong (Perfume River)** and close to the coast. The **Citadel**(Kinh Thanh) and the opulent tombs of the Nguyen Emperors are UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and for those interested in more recent history there is an optional day trip to the **Demilitarized Zone (DMZ)** from the Vietnam War.

After our time in Hue we head south to **Hoi An**, known for its Old Town, criss-crossed by canals and multicultural history as a key trading port throughout Vietnam's history. There are nearby white sandy beaches and also local cooking courses are available, but the city is perhaps best-known for its many tailors, so this is the place to get a bargain as you plan ahead to the cosmopolitan and modern cities

that await us later in our trip! For those less sartorially-minded, there are plenty of water-based activities and adventure activities in the surrounding area, as well as good diving on offer.

We continue to beach hop along the popular backpacker route to the coastal resort city, Nha Trang known for its beaches, diving sites and offshore islands.

Nha Trang to Ho Chi Minh City

Feeling fully relaxed and recharged, we reach Vietnam's frenetic economic centre of **Ho Chi Minh City** (HCMC), also known as **Saigon**. This city pulsates 24/7, as countless motorbikes swarm through its crowded streets and there is plenty to keep us occupied for a couple of days. We will visit the **War Remnants Museum** and you will have time to see **Reunification Palace**, or take a day trip to the nearby **Cu Chi Tunnels**, where the Vietcong dug out an underground network of supply lines during the war. Also, not far from HCMC you can visit the **Cao Dai Temple**, a unique religious sect that fuses many different elements with colourful and memorable services that visitors are welcome to observe. There are also day trips available to the **Mekong Delta**, to see where this mighty river finally ends its long journey into the sea.

OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS

Optional Excursions are paid for on the day and organised during your trip, so you can decide whilst travelling which activity you may want to do. Prices listed are only a guide and may be dependant on fluctuating exchange rates and minimum numbers. Please see below for more details.

ANGOLA

Title	From Price

LAOS

Title	From Price
Bicycle Hire (various places)	US$3
Khammouane Cave Excursion, Phu Hin Boun National Park	US$20
Cooking Course Luang Prabang	US$40
Kayaking/hiking excursions Luang Nam Tha	US$18
Pak Ou Cave Entrance Fee Luang Prabang	US$4
Temple Entrance Fees Vientiane	US$10

VIETNAM

Title	From Price
Royal Tombs and Perfume River Cruise Hue	US$15

Title	From Price
Cu Chi Tunnels and Cao Dai Temple Day Excursion HCMC	US$50
DMZ Tour Hue	US$10
Jet Ski Hie Hoi An, from	US$60
Mekong Delta Day Excursion	US$60
Reunification Palace Entry Fee HCMC	US$2

CHINA

Title	From Price
Entry to Various Museums, from	US$5

We feel that having optional excursions gives a greater degree of flexibility and independence to our group members; independence to decide how much your spending budget can afford; flexibility to decide when and what time of day or with whom to visit a particular site, rather than for example, with the whole group at a pre-ordained time.

You pay for the optional excursions to the local operator, ensuring the money stays with that operator in the local community and this ensures as well, that you are paying the true price for any optional excursions you want to do. This also applies to accommodation costs before and after the trip. Please note that the prices of optional excursions quoted are approximate as local prices can and do change. Please see the relevant trip page for the Optional excursions you can do on that trip and a list of prices.

Notes downloaded on: *11-11-2026*