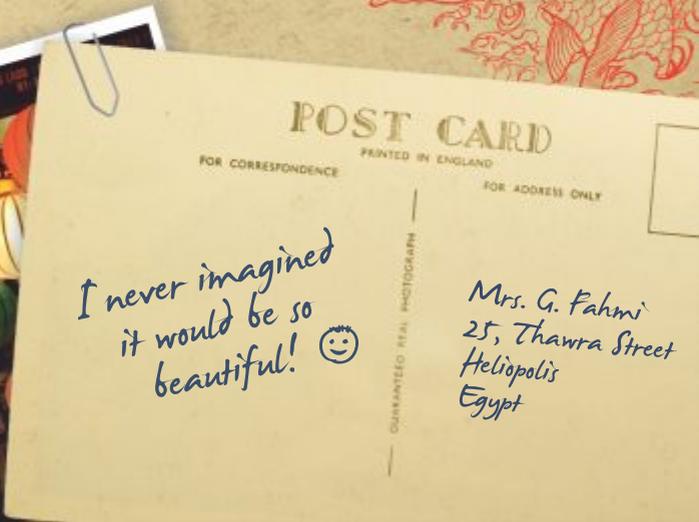


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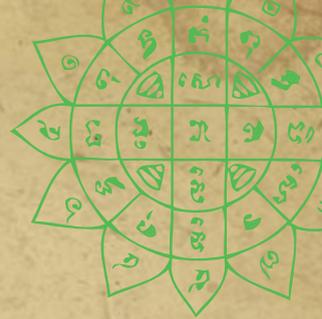
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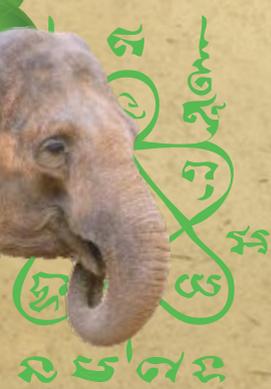
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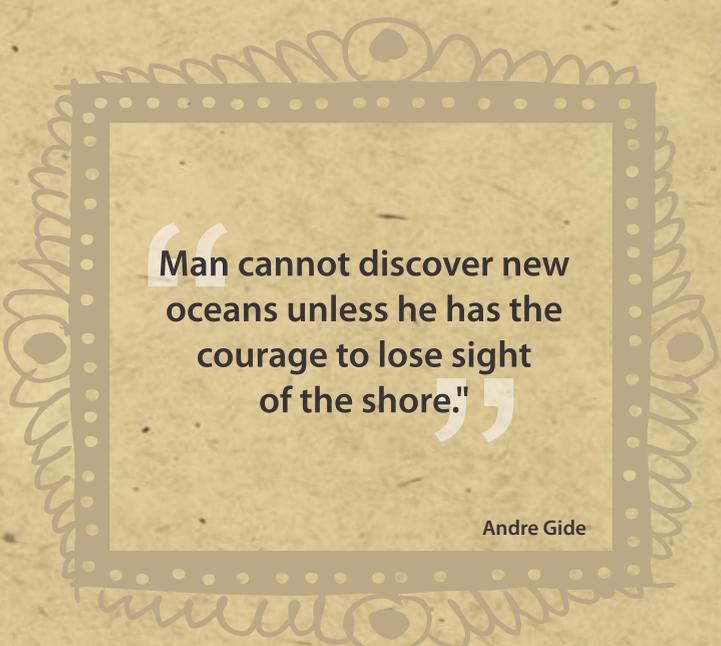
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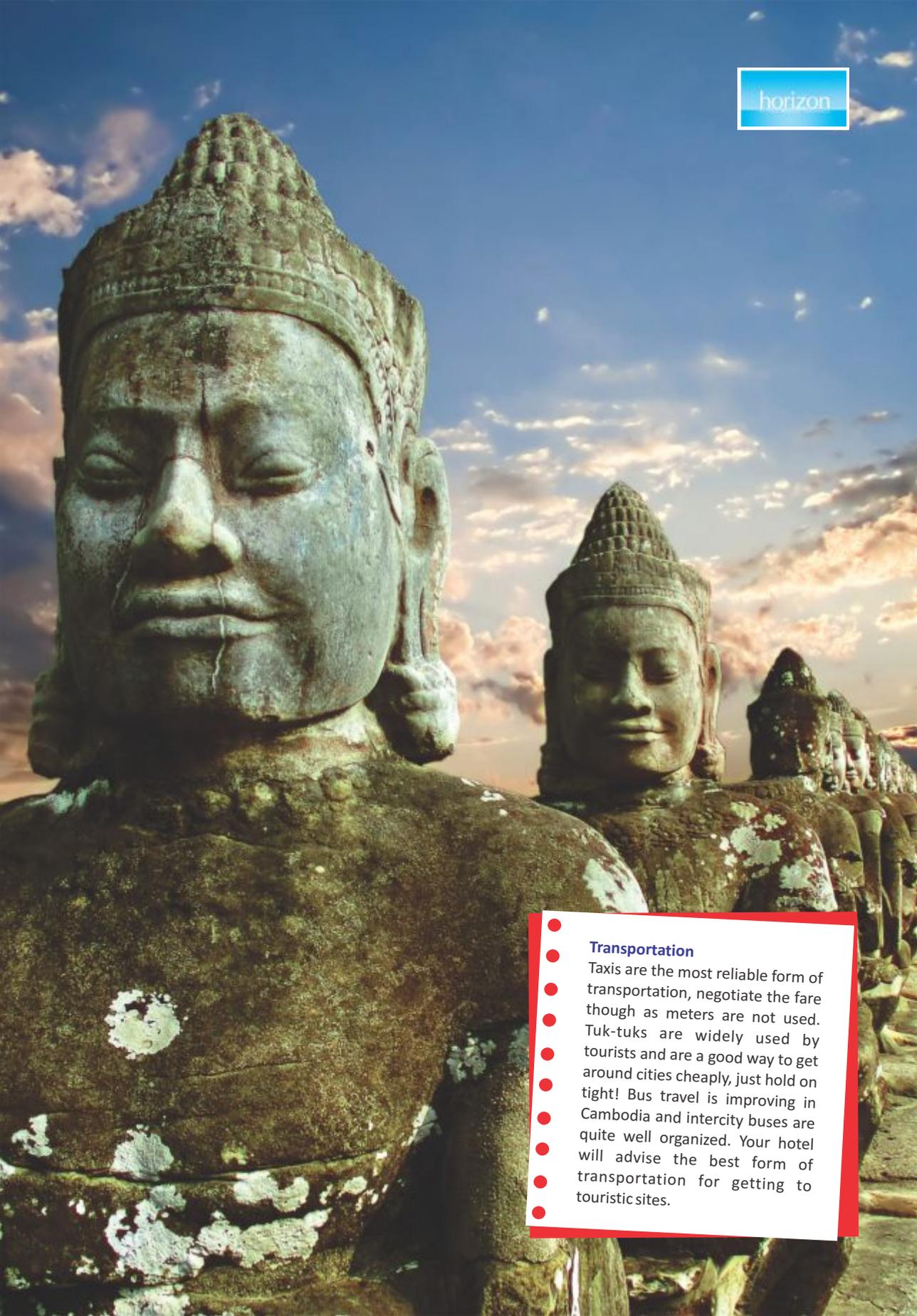
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“Man cannot discover new oceans unless he has the courage to lose sight of the shore.”

Andre Gide





Transportation

Taxis are the most reliable form of transportation, negotiate the fare though as meters are not used. Tuk-tuks are widely used by tourists and are a good way to get around cities cheaply, just hold on tight! Bus travel is improving in Cambodia and intercity buses are quite well organized. Your hotel will advise the best form of transportation for getting to touristic sites.

Cambodia



Discover the heart of Southeast Asia

A country with a history that is both inspiring and somber, from one of the world's most famous temples to the more infamous and sad recent past, Cambodia is a country with an unbreakable spirit. With wild jungle, tropical beaches, national parks and steamy action packed cities to explore, this magical country displays a proud local culture that one cannot help but admire, visiting Cambodia is a once in a lifetime holiday, give it the time it deserves and explore it well.



Life changing experiences...

Phnom Penh One of Asia's undiscovered treasures, this city, located on the banks of the mighty Mekong river has a long history, once the "Pearl of Asia", Phnom Penh is a fascinating mix of extremes and well worth a visit. Wander through the local markets, or visit the stylish boutiques, try a snack from the street stalls or dine at the latest restaurant, either way this city will captivate and keep you entertained.

Siem Reap One of the most popular destinations on the planet, and gateway to the famous Angkor Wat, Siem Reap is a haven for guesthouses, hotels, food, wine and relaxing spas. A destination full of charm, with old French 'shop-houses', shady tree lined streets and a slow flowing river through its center, well worth a stop.

Angkor Wat The world famous ruins of Angkor, located amid forests and farmland near modern-day Siem Reap, are a Unesco World Heritage Site. The temples in the area number over one thousand and the magnificent Angkor Wat is said to be the world's largest single religious monument. This is one of those "once in a lifetime" visits, take your time and take your camera!



Facts for the traveller...

Weather

From early February temperatures keep rising until the hottest month of April. In May and June the monsoon rains arrive. October is a wet month with rain coming in short, sharp downpours.

Best times to go

Ideal months are December and January, when humidity levels are relatively low, there is little rainfall and a cooling breeze whips across the land, note that this is also peak season when the majority of visitors descend on the country.

Currency

Cambodian Riel

Time zone

GMT+7

Shopping hours

Most days of the week: 8am to 8 pm

Tipping

There are no exact rules for tipping in Cambodia, tips are not generally expected but considering the people's relative poverty a tip can go a long way, if you get good service then give an amount at your discretion.

Health & Security

Some asian countries have vaccination requirements, do make sure to check with the relevant Embassies regarding any required health certificates or recommended preventive medicine.

As with many places around the world it is always best to check on local advice regarding security and safety for tourists preferably before planning the trip.

4 Rivers Floating Lodge For something a little different and quite unique this floating lodge is located just below the Cardamom Mountains on the Tatai River, secluded and peaceful, the only way in is by boat. Perfect for a honeymoon or just an escape, this luxurious getaway is the perfect place to unwind at the end of your holiday.

Did you know?

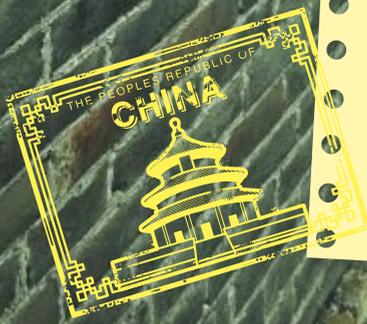
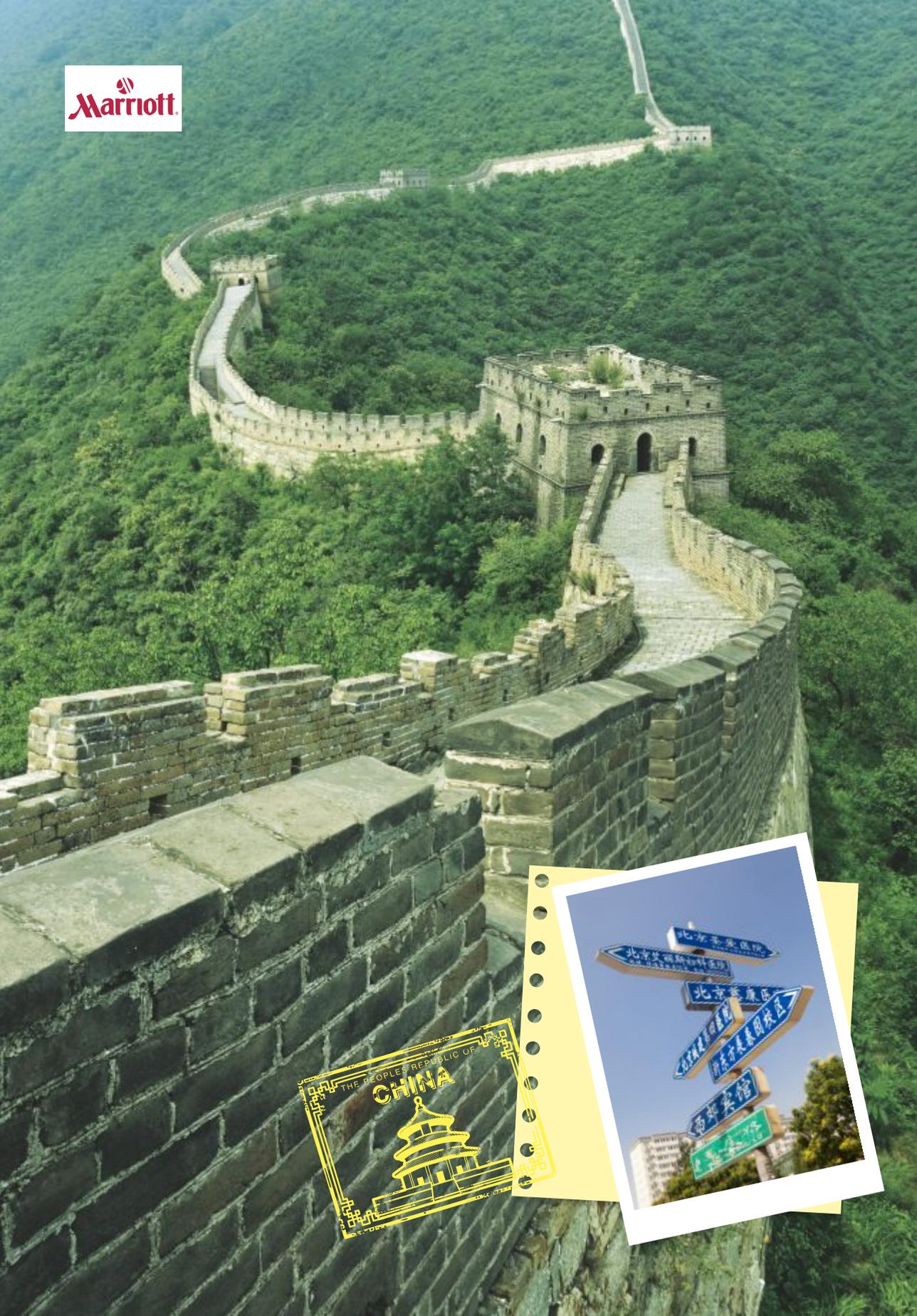
The Cambodian flag is the only flag in the world that features a building.

Cambodia was under French control from 1863 until 1953.

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China



"A journey of a thousand miles must begin with one single step"

Lao Tzu - 6th Century BC - Philosopher

This vast country with its epic past of ancient civilizations can be dizzying, frustrating, fascinating, slow paced, fast paced, dazzling, confusing, beautiful and amazing, a country of contrasts that will keep you captivated from the moment you arrive. From dramatic landscapes and ancient monuments to a fast growing modernity that will leave you breathless, China has an unmistakable energy that has been and will always be the heart of this incredible country. With its endless sights, sounds, customs and oddities it is one of the world's truly great travel experiences.

Beijing

With a population close to 20 million Beijing is the political, cultural, educational and military center of the country. Home to some of China's most famous landmarks and important treasures from the past, Beijing combines the historic with the modern and manages to make it work. From the famed "Peking Duck" to Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden Palace, fascinating "hutongs" and shopping choices that are almost overwhelming Beijing never fails to fascinate and enthrall those who visit.



Life changing experiences...

Bike around Beijing The bike is an integral part of Chinese culture, plenty of bikes available for rent and a great way to explore out of the way sights. If pedalling is not your passion but a little adventure is you can also take a side-car trip around Beijing, quite an exhilarating ride, cheap and heaps of fun, they'll even take you to the Great Wall! ("Beijing Sideways" comes highly recommended www.beijingsideways.com)

The Great Wall Go "Astride the Dragon's Back", one of China's most iconic sights the wall is simply a must see and can be visited on a day trip from Beijing at a number of sections. For a little more in depth visit try a hiking trip, they range from 1 to 12 days, whichever way you choose to experience The Great Wall you won't be disappointed.

The Forbidden City The world's largest surviving palace complex. Enter through the 'Gate of Heavenly Peace', wander through lush gardens, marvel at the palaces and depart through the 'Gate of Divine Might'. The 500 year old palace covers 720,000m², has 23 gates and over 900 rooms, a phenomenal site steeped in history and simply awe inspiring.

Summer Palace Built in 1750, largely destroyed in 1860 and restored to its original state in 1886 the Summer Palace is a masterpiece of Chinese landscape and design. With natural hills and lakes, pavilions, palaces, temples and bridges this fascinating complex is well worth a visit.

Explore the "hutongs" One of Beijing's most unique features, "hutongs" are old city alleys formed by lines of traditional courtyard residences, with thousands surrounding the Forbidden City these fascinating areas reflect the culture of ordinary 'Beijingers'. Hire a bike and explore or take a rickshaw ride and visit this intriguing side of old Beijing.

Tiananmen Square A trip to Beijing would not be complete without a visit to this famous square. Located in the Beijing city centre, you can visit Tiananmen Tower, the Monument to the Peoples Heroes, the Great Hall of the People, the Mao Zedong Memorial and watch the National Flag Raising Ceremony.

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Beijing



Life changing experiences...

Peking Duck A must try whilst visiting Beijing, this famous dish dating back to imperial times has become one of China's most iconic foods, if cooked to perfection it is simply delicious. Try "Da Dong Roast Duck Restaurant" at Nanxincang, north-east of the Forbidden City, known for their crispy, less fatty ducks, or the well known "Qan de ju" with branches throughout Beijing (Houhai, Wangfujing, Andingmen).

Silk Market If you are a shopaholic then this is the place for you, seven levels and over 1,700 vendors, you're bound to find something you'd like to take home. Plenty of "designer" goods available, the quality varies so do a bit of shopping around before you buy, and remember only pay what you want to spend and ... bargain, bargain, bargain!

Wangfujing One of Beijing's most famous shopping streets, plenty of shops and malls, tea houses and restaurants. The night market starts after 9pm, lots of souvenirs and unusual food choices for those brave enough to sample them!



Facts for the traveller...

Beijing Weather

Scorching hot in summer with temperatures reaching 40°C. Bitterly cold winters than can reach -20°C, with icy cold winds. Air pollution can also be quite bad in these two seasons.

Best times to go to Beijing

Visit Beijing in September or October, warm, dry, sunny days with clear skies and pleasantly cool evenings. The second-best time is spring, late March to mid-May, although it can be a little windy.



Did you know?

The most common name in Beijing is "Wang" with over 10% of the city's population sharing this surname.

Beijing is considered the bicycle capital of the world and has many parking areas dedicated only to bikes.

China is the world's largest bike producer and makes over 80 million a year, 65% of which are exported.

Ice cream was invented in China around 2000BC when the Chinese packed a soft milk and rice mixture in the snow.

Ketchup originated in China as a pickled fish sauce called "ke-tsiap".

Silk was developed in China where it was kept a secret for more than two thousand years.



Shanghai

"Wherever you go, go with all your heart" Confucius

Dynamic, fast moving, cosmopolitan and totally exhilarating Shanghai is China's showpiece and one of the world's fastest growing economies. Although the city is a powerful force in commerce, finance, culture, art, fashion and entertainment, the old Shanghai can still be found in the temples, gardens and markets tucked in amongst the ultra modern architecture. From designer cocktails to street stall dumplings Shanghai presents an amazing array of irresistible contrasts.



Life changing experiences...

The Bund A magnet for most of Shanghai's visitors, and popular with morning exercisers, this famous street with its historic riverfront buildings is a symbol of Shanghai's colonial past. Located on the west bank of the Huangpu River the busy promenade offers amazing views, day and night, of Pudong's modern skyline on the other side of the bank.

The French Concession Take the time to wander through the streets and discover the interesting blend of European and Chinese style architecture so unique to Shanghai, there's even trees that were brought over by the French in the early 1900's. More recently this area has become one of the "hippest" areas in town with art galleries, boutiques, cafés, restaurants and nightclubs, it is the place to see and be seen.

Fuxing Park Located right in the middle of the French Concession, the park is styled after a typical Parisian city park, with wide tree lined walks and flower beds. Take a stroll through, you'll find people practicing tai chi, ballroom dancers and even opera singers, entertaining and restful, well worth a visit, stay a little later and the area offers restaurants and nightlife.

Shanghai Museum With 11 state-of-the-art galleries and three special

exhibition halls arranged on four floors, the Shanghai Museum holds over 120,000 historical and artistic treasures. From ancient bronzes to sculptures, ceramics, paintings, calligraphy, jades and much more this fascinating museum is a tribute to China's greatest artistic traditions. Open from 9am to 5pm it's best to get there early to avoid crowds.

Moganshan Road Art District for lovers of modern art "50 Moganshan" is the hottest area in Shanghai and the centre of Chinese modern art. An old warehouse district from the 1930's the area is now a maze of workshops, galleries and studios full of amazing talent and work, many visitors to Moganshan leave with a reasonably-priced piece of art in hand!

Dong Tai Road Market Spread over two blocks the market has many shops and vendors selling antiques, vintage goodies, furniture, Mao memorabilia, lanterns, junk or treasure. Some real, some fake, bargain well and aim for a 90% discount!

Nanjing Dong Lu Shanghai's most famous shopping street with everything from large department stores, silk shops, upscale designer stores, jade shops to famous fast food outlets. Shop throughout the

day and stroll through the street in the evening, open air bars, sculptures, eateries and an utterly amazing neon light show.



Facts for the traveller...

Shanghai Weather

Spring, from mid-March to mid-May, is mild but rainy. Summer, from mid-May to mid-September, is hot and humid, with temperatures in the 40's. Winter, from mid-November to mid-March, is damp and cold, with daytime temperatures usually above freezing.

Best time to go to Shanghai

Autumn, September to October is the most comfortable season, not too hot and not too rainy, but typhoon rains can hit in September.

Did you know?

Shanghai is also known as the 'Paris of the East' and the 'Queen of the Orient'.

Shanghai is the largest city in China with an approximate population of 23 million.

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Hong Kong Weather

Hong Kong has a sub-tropical climate with cool, dry winters and hot, humid summers. May to August is hot and humid with occasional showers and thunderstorms, temperatures are often over 30°C.

Best times to go

The best times to visit are from April to October when temperatures are reasonable and humidity is relatively low and October through November, when the days are generally warm & fresh.



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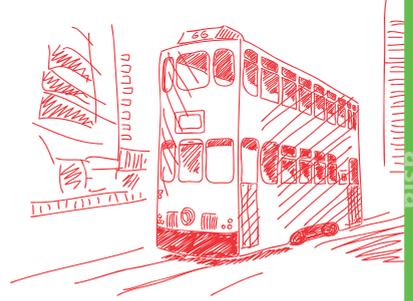
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Hong Kong

"An amazing mix of east meets west"

A destination that should be on everyone's "Bucket List"! With neck-craning skyscrapers that disappear into the clouds the spectacle of Hong Kong's urban development is breathtaking and strangely beautiful with even more mesmerizing views to be seen at night. Come down to street level and you'll experience a vibrant, busy, bustling, fast-paced almost overwhelming city. Look further into the traditional lanes and Chinese haunts and you'll see yet another facet to this incredible place, Hong Kong is simply captivating.



Life changing experiences...

Star Ferry Listed as one of the '50 most spectacular things to do in the world', cross the Victoria Harbour from Kowloon to Hong Kong Island on the Star Ferry. Gaze up at the breathtaking skyline of buildings, hotels and apartment blocks. Catch the "Symphony of Lights" from the Ferry or the waterside promenades, an amazing sound and light show, every night at 8pm, and it's free!

Victoria Peak Riding the famous "Peak Tram" up 400 meters above sea level is an unforgettable experience to begin with, seeing the 360° panoramic views across Hong Kong is breathtaking. Hong Kong's Victoria Peak Tower is an iconic site that is a must see whilst there.

Nathan Road This famous road, known as the "Golden Mile" is the center of Kowloon Peninsula, on the Chinese mainland side of Hong Kong. Busy and bustling from morning till late at night you will be dazzled by the neon signs and glittering lights, great for shopping and soaking up the 'local buzz', Nathan Road will certainly keep you entertained.

Macau Once a Portuguese colony, Macau is the "Las Vegas" of China and yet another fascinating mix of cultures.

With large, gleaming modern hotels and casinos next to Portuguese colonial architecture with traditional Chinese influences around every corner, a trip to Macau is a feast for the senses. Well worth the short journey from Hong Kong via ferry, note that passports are required.

Hong Kong's trams One of the most iconic sights on the Hong Kong Island, these double-decker streetcars have been travelling through Hong Kong's busiest thoroughfares since 1904. Step back in time, take a window seat on the upper deck and explore a little... quaint and fun.

Stanley Bay Hop on a bus and take a day trip to one of Hong Kong's most famous coastal areas. Wander through the stalls in the Stanley Market, plenty of souvenirs on offer along with clothes, paintings, handicrafts, furniture, silks and more. Take a break from shopping, plenty of restaurant choices available, finish your meal and spend a restful hour or so on the beach.

Temple Street Market Ordered chaos and a memorable experience is the best way to describe it, this market, gets busy after sunset and

continues till midnight. Just about everything can be found here, clothing, pens, watches, CD's, gadgets, electronics, toys... you name it! Bargain well and when you've had enough there are excellent stalls offering fresh seafood and various dishes, absolutely delicious.

Lan Kwai Fong Located on the island, just around the corner from the central business area, Lan Kwai Fong is the place to be for bars, parties and restaurants. Take a wander through this trendy area there's over 80 bars, restaurants, clubs and shops on offer, well worth a night out.

Did you know?

Hong Kong is the world's most vertical city with more people working above the 14th floor than anywhere else in the world.

Hong Kong has the most skyscrapers in the world.

Hong Kong in English means 'Fragrant Harbour'.

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China facts

Facts for the traveller...

Transportation

Beijing

Bus travel, although cheap it can be crowded and time consuming, if not a little confusing as well.

The Beijing subway has been extended over recent years, and is an inexpensive, convenient way to get around. The subway runs from 5am to 11pm daily.

Train travel is extensive throughout China, the main railway stations are Beijing Railway Station and West Station, however, there is a general lack of English and it can be very crowded.

Taxis have meters and start at 10 RMB, the meter does not usually click in for quite a distance and will also issue you with a receipt. Best to have your destination written down, taxi drivers speak little or no English.

Shanghai

The subway is the cheapest, fastest and most comfortable way for visitors to get around Shanghai (except during rush hour!) The trains are very clean and signs are in English.

Taxis are plentiful and available 24 hours a day, meter starts at 10 RMB (prices increase after 11pm). Take your hotel address with you and your destination written down to help you get about.

The public bus system is extensive but can be a little challenging to find your way around without English signs.

Ferry travel is convenient, there is a terminal at the southern end of the Bund on the west shore, and the southern end of Riverside Avenue at Dongchang Lu on the east shore. They run every 12 minutes from 7am to 10pm and tickets are sold at kiosks out front.

Hong Kong

The underground MTR is clean, fast, safe and easy, one of the world's most modern subway systems and is the quickest way to get to most destinations. Trains run every 2-4 minutes from 6am to 1am daily on three lines.

Top tip If you plan to move about a lot in Hong Kong get yourself an "Octopus Card", convenient and good value the card is valid on nearly all public transportation, saves time and money.

Taxis are convenient and not very expensive, fares start at around HK\$15. Note there are additional charges when using the harbour tunnels.

The public bus system in Hong Kong is modern and easy to use, destinations are shown on the front of the buses both in English and Chinese and the bus routes cover almost all of Hong Kong. There is self-service ticketing and change is not given.

Ferries are a fast, cheap and excellent way to get around. The famous Star Ferry crosses the harbour between Central and Kowloon, taking just 7 minutes. Ferries operate every 5-10 minutes. Ferries and hovercraft operate between Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories.

Currency

China: Renminbi - RNB (units - yuan)

Hong Kong: HK Dollar

Time zone

GMT +8

Shopping hours

Beijing, Shanghai & Hong Kong

Mon - Sun: 10am to 9.30/10pm

Top tip

If you visit during Chinese New Year many businesses will be closed and public transport will be extremely crowded.

Tipping

Tipping is not a part of the mainland Chinese culture, you may find tipping is practiced in hotels more frequently. Tour guides working for companies may expect tips, private or independent guides work for an agreed fee and tipping is not necessary. Taxi drivers do not expect tips.

Hong Kong is a little different, tipping is a way of life. Taxi drivers will usually round up the bill automatically. Restaurants usually include 10% service charge, if not and you're happy with the service leave loose change, it is at your discretion. Hotel porters can expect HK\$5-10 per bag.



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Did you know?

India has the highest bridge in the world. It is called Bailey Bridge and is located in Ladakh between the Dras and Suru rivers in the Himalayas.

The biggest and the largest employer in the world is Indian Railways which employs over a million people.

India produces more movies than any other country in the world and "Bollywood" has the largest film making industry in the world.

Transportation

Mumbai has trains connecting it to all the major cities of the country. Buses are the most popular means of transport in Mumbai, however they can be very crowded. Taxis are a convenient way of travelling in and around Mumbai and other major cities. In Mumbai, there are two types, regular taxis with manual meters and no air conditioning and "Cool cabs" are gray in color and air conditioned, with electronic meters, they charge 40% more than the standard taxis.

Currency

Indian Rupee

Shopping hours

Mon to Sat: 9.30am - 5pm

Time zone

GMT + 5:30

Tipping

Restaurants: 10%.

Taxi drivers, auto rickshaw drivers and porters are usually not tipped, if service is good leave a small tip.

India



asia

“A land where temple elephants exist amicably with the microchip”

One runs out of words when describing the vast and vibrant country that lies between the Himalayas and the endless golden beaches along its coast. From the country's spectacular historical sites, magnificent royal cities and palaces to the breathtaking landscapes and rich diverse cultures, India is a fascinating and exciting mix of traditions, religions, customs and yes, Bollywood! Visiting any part of India is a life changing experience that takes the traveller on a roller coaster ride of the senses.



Life changing experiences...

Mumbai The fastest moving, most affluent and industrialized city in India. It is part of India's beautiful west coast that runs from Gujarat, through Mumbai to Goa, Karnataka and Kerala. Mumbai is home to people of all Indian creeds and cultures, a fascinating city, and for many people, the gateway to India, not to be missed.

Elephanta Island Caves These splendid caves were carved from the rock face and are one of Mumbai's most famous tourist attractions. The best time to visit is during the week, the weekends are usually packed with tourists. Take a boat from "Apollo Bunder" (next to Gateway of India) and enjoy a guided tour around the island, don't forget your camera.

The Kerala Houseboats Explore the fascinating backwaters of Kerala, cruise along the palm fringed waterways in one of these luxurious houseboats, float past paddy fields, coconut groves, fishing nets and local villages, a unique view of yet another jewel of India.

Goa An eternally popular tourist destination, with golden beaches, lush vegetation, palms, amazing history, temples, churches and monuments all wrapped in a unique cultural heritage. A former Portuguese colony, Goa is a mixture of cultures that offers another view of this fascinating country.

Taj Lake Palace A famous luxury hotel with 83 rooms and suites featuring white marble walls, located literally in the middle of Lake Pichola in Udaipur. The hotel transports its guests by boat, a special and unique hotel, voted one of the most romantic in India.

Tiger Spotting These magnificent animals are an endangered species. India has a number of tiger conservation areas and the highest number of 'Royal Bengal Tigers' in the world. Best areas to spot a tiger are Bandhavgarh, Ranthambhore and Kanha National Parks, best times in April and May.

Agra & the Taj Mahal Agra, capital of India under the Mughals, is home to the Taj Mahal. Built entirely of marble by Emperor Shah Jahan out of love for his wife Mumtaz Mahal this wonder of the world is a magnet for visitors, you cannot travel to India without visiting the Taj Mahal!

Pink Palaces of Jaipur Part of the tourist's "golden triangle" of Delhi, Jaipur and Agra, this city is one of India's major attractions. With its distinctive and unusual Pink Palace, Jaipur is home to a number of temples and forts that draw a large number of visitors throughout the year, totally interesting and quite unique.



Facts for the traveller...

Weather

The coolest weather lasts from around December to February, with fresh mornings and evenings and mostly sunny days, the very hot weather is between March and June. Monsoon rains occur in most regions in summer, anywhere between June and early October.

Best times to go

India can be visited any time of the year, though the hot and humid months of June, July and August are best avoided.

Health & Security

Check with the relevant Embassies regarding any health certificates or recommended preventive medicine for travel in and around India. Protection against Mosquito bites is recommended.

As with many places around the world it is always best to check on local advice regarding security and safety for tourists preferably before planning the trip.



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Transportation

Bus travel in Indonesia can be a little uncomfortable, crowded and in many cases unsafe. Taxis are air conditioned and a more comfortable form of transportation. Make sure the meter is working, check with your hotel for the best local taxi information. Inter island ferries are popular, 1st and 2nd class are usually air conditioned.

Shopping hours

Sunday through Thursday 9am to 9pm.

Tipping Info

Tipping in Indonesia is not compulsory but can be appreciated and is at your discretion. Hotels 5-10%. Restaurants 10% (if not included). Taxis round up the bill. Porters RP 10,000-15,000 for bags. Tour guides (day tour) RP 50,000.

Indonesia



Nature at its best.

This vast nation offers lazy days on pristine white sand beaches, dramatic volcanic landscapes, shades of green you never knew existed, a kaleidoscope of marine life that seems endless, teeming wildlife and an amazing history and culture. With over 17,000 islands spread over 4,000 kilometers from east to west, and the fourth largest population in the world, Indonesia is a charismatic destination that will keep you entertained throughout your entire stay.



Life changing experiences...

Bali A jewel in Indonesia's crown with incredible beaches, spectacular mountain scenery, a rich culture, friendly people and a wonderful choice of beautiful resorts. A true 'picture-postcard' paradise and one of the most romantic places on earth. From its arts and crafts to dramatic dances and colourful ceremonies Bali is a magical island with a lot to offer its visitors, simply heavenly!

Surf & Dive Indonesia covers a vast area, Bunaken in Northern Sulawesi and Wakatobi in Southeast Sulawesi offer some of the world's most popular and famous dive spots. If riding the waves is your passion then Bali is home to some well known surf spots, and pro-surf competitions. Take a trip out to Plerkung beach in Grajagan, East Java, known as "G-Land" where the surf is famous throughout the world.

Jatiluwih If you're a nature lover, or even if you're not, don't miss the Jatiluwih rice terraces, they give a new meaning to the word green and add yet another facet to Indonesia's amazing culture. Located in a rural area near the center of Bali take the time to make the trip, you won't be disappointed.

Tanah Lot A spectacular Hindu Temple built on a piece of rock just off the shore, a popular tourist destination and a must see in Bali. Late afternoons and sunsets



are the best times to view it, although it can be crowded. Plenty of souvenirs on offer as well! If you're a golf enthusiast and would like to combine the two, the nearby Nirwana course, designed by Greg Norman, offers some of the best golfing views in Asia.

Ubud The heart of Bali's culture, this growing town is a centre for fine art, dance and music. Steeped in history and culture this is the place to visit for a little peace and quiet while you watch and learn the fascinating traditions that make this area so remarkable. Plenty to see here, excellent resorts and amazing food choices, lasting impressions are a certainty.

Komodo National Park The park covers three major Islands, Komodo, Rinca and Padar, take a guided trip here and you're sure to catch sight of one of the famous Komodo Dragons. These lizard-like creatures can measure up to 3m in length and easily weigh 165kg, cameras at the ready! Diving is also popular here and many claim it to be one of the best dive areas in the world with an amazing array of marine life, well worth a visit above land and below the seas.



Facts for the traveller...

Weather

Bali has a tropical climate with an average temperature of about 30°C all year. It has only two seasons, dry season from April to October and wet season from October to April.

Best times to go

During the dry season from April and October.

Currency

Indonesian Rupiah (Rp)

Time zone

Due to its large size Indonesia is divided into three time zones:

GMT+7

Western Indonesian Time

GMT+8

Central Indonesian Time (Bali)

GMT+9

Eastern Indonesian Time

Did you know?

Indonesia is home to fish that climb trees to catch insects.

Indonesia is counted amongst the largest producers of nutmeg in the world.

Indonesia is the fourth largest populated country of the world, and has the third largest number of smokers in the world.

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● **Transportation**

- In general public transport in Japan is well organized, clean and very punctual.
- Super express trains ('bullets'), along with regular express trains connect most of the nation's major cities. Subways are also good for getting around the major cities. Bus services are extensive but the lack of English signs can be a problem.
- Taxis are popular but can be very expensive. Note that the driver controls the door and you should not open it yourself, also best to have your destination written in English.
-

Japan

The Land of the Rising Sun

A unique and fascinating country that just about has it all. If it's culture and ancient history you're after then this is the place to be, if your interests lie in the latest in science and technology then this is the place to be ... if it's the latest fashion trends of the world you're looking for then ... yes, this is the place to be! Japan is a land where history, culture and heritage meets the future and lives side by side. Take the time to discover Japan, you will be more than surprised and delighted by what it has to offer.



Life changing experiences...

Tokyo One of the world's most famous cities with its neon lights and modern skyscrapers, Tokyo is Japan's fast moving capital. Steeped in tradition and culture yet futuristically modern at the same time, Tokyo offers the traveller an interesting look at the past and present, it's everything you would expect and more.

Mount Fuji One of Japan's most iconic images, the 3,700m high Mount Fuji towers above cities and the surrounding lush green landscape. If you're interested in climbing the mountain it's open during July and August, take a guided tour and a good set of leg muscles! Alternatively, try a bullet train three day trip to Mt. Fuji, Hakone National Park and Kyoto, well worth combining these interesting spots and experiencing the famous bullet train at the same time.

Sumo Wrestling If you're in Tokyo during one of the big tournaments held in January, May or September don't miss out, well worth a visit, extreme entertainment and a fascinating look into Japan's national sport. If you miss the competitions try and visit one of the many Sumo stables where the wrestlers live and train, your hotel can advise you where to go.



Tsukiji Fish Market Located in the center of Tokyo this is an experience not to be missed, you'll need an early start though, most of the fish and giant tuna auctions that have become so popular with tourists happen between 5 & 6.30am, stick to the "Visitors Passageway" and you'll be in the safe zone for tourists!

Shibuya A must see in Tokyo, yet another of this country's many iconic spots. Take a walk across the famous Shibuya Station intersection, traffic stops completely when the lights turn red and the mass of pedestrians spilling into the street is phenomenal. Find a spot out of the way, if you can, and do a little people watching before you make your way into the many shops, malls, restaurants and nightclubs that make up this entertaining district.

Miraikan (The Future Science Museum) If you're into the latest science and technology then this is the place for you, located on the man-made island of Odaiba, the museum covers future innovations, earth and its environment, research projects, robotics and interactive exhibits that will entertain you and certainly make you think, a few hours well spent.



Facts for the traveller...

Weather

Japan's rainy season usually begins in June and carries on to mid July. July and August can be hot and humid in most parts of Japan but summer is still a popular season with many events. August to October is the peak typhoon season in Japan.

Best times to go

The ideal time to visit is in the Spring (March-May) and Autumn (September-November) the weather is pleasant with many Japanese festivals during these times.

Shopping hours

Mon to Sun: 10am - 8 pm.
Some department stores close on Wednesdays.

Time zone

GMT +9

Currency

Japanese Yen

Tipping

Tipping is not practiced in Japan and can be considered a little insulting, keep in mind that here a "price is a price" no extras required.

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● **Transportation**

● Ferry services between islands are widely used by tourists, most resorts have their own speedboats to transfer visitors.

● Seaplanes are also widely used and very convenient.

● Taxis are the main transport around Malé although walking is all that's needed in most cases.

Tipping

Tipping is not compulsory in the Maldives, however, given the low salaries and the excellent level of service usually offered a tip is appreciated. 10% in restaurants. Resort housekeeping & waiters, \$10-20 per week. Porters \$1-5 per bag and \$5-10 for boat crew per trip (usually shared).



The Maldives

A magical holiday paradise.

This beautiful group of islands is the definition of a tropical paradise. Located near the equator in the Indian Ocean the Maldives enjoy warm tropical weather all year round, ideal for lazing about on the beach and watching perfect sunsets each and every evening. Deep blue seas, bright turquoise reefs, palm trees, white sandy beaches, not to mention warm, friendly people and 99 resort islands to choose from make a trip to the Maldives a lesson in total relaxation.



Life changing experiences...

Malé The capital of the Maldives and the stepping off point for many beautiful island resorts. With the airport situated on the Island of Hulhule, 2kms across the water, arrival in Malé is usually by boat. Malé, historically a trading center, the city is now a crowded, busy, vibrant town with skyscrapers and picturesque palm tree lined streets. Easy to get around, take a break from the beach and experience a slice of busy island life.

Shopping Malé has shopping malls that sell everything from clothing to electronics, many imported from Singapore. Locally made mats and handicrafts are available throughout the islands, wander through the local markets and shops, it's where retail therapy and tropical paradise meet!

Cruise the Maldives With so many islands to explore take a cruise and experience it all in comfort. Many different types of cruises are available, from small and intimate sailing boats to medium and large cruising vessels. A great family holiday with plenty of water activities and an excellent way to discover the islands.

Honeymoon heaven These magical islands provide the perfect honeymoon escapes, stay in a bungalow on the water, spend the day on an uninhabited



Facts for the traveller...

Weather

Tropical weather, warm and humid all year round, with a consistent average temperature of 30°C. Monsoon season runs from May to

island, experience the perfect candlelit dinner and amazing sunsets, it's all there. With so many resorts and islands available the hardest part of this holiday is choosing which one to visit.

Diving Clear, clear water, with visibility up to 50metres, all resorts and safari boats allow even beginners to enjoy diving. The waters around these amazing islands are home to hundreds of species of fish, mantas, sharks, turtles and over 3,000 coral reefs. For something a little special and different try a night dive. Whether an expert or beginner the amazing underwater life here is not to be missed.

Simply swimming This is the place to spend your days lazing about on the white idyllic beaches with warm, bright blue waters lapping at your feet. Plenty of islands, luxury resorts and restaurants to choose from and all geared towards making your holiday a perfect one. Sometimes its the simple things in life that give us the most pleasure!

November with higher rainfall and the dry season is between January and April.

Best times to go

All year round is wonderful! February to April is usually the driest time of year.

Currency

Maldivian Rufiyaa. Hotel and resort bills are usually in US Dollars.

Time zone

GMT+5

Shopping hours

Mon - Thu: 8.30am to 10/11pm
Friday: 1.30pm to 8pm

Did you know?

The Maldives are made up of 1190 Islands, of these 200 are inhabited and 99 are resort islands.

The average level of the Maldives is 1.5 meters above sea level, it is the lowest country in the world and its highest point above sea level is 2.3 meters.

Maldives also holds the record for being the flattest country in the world.

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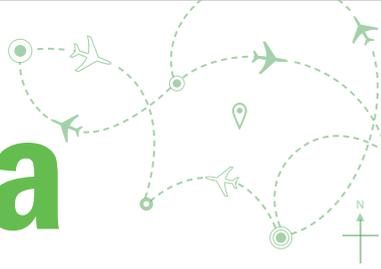
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Malaysia

...Truly Asia!



asia

Malaysia is one of those destinations that has just about everything a holiday seeker needs. From the unique and diversified melting pot of cultures and religions to the most stunning beaches, waters, islands and landscapes you'll find anywhere. Add to this mix delicious food, hundreds of exciting festivals, huge bustling cities with towering skyscrapers, 5 star hotels and resorts that dreams are made of, laid back warm, friendly people and you have the perfect holiday destination that is Malaysia ... truly Asia!



Life changing experiences...

Kuala Lumpur "KL" as it is affectionately known will keep you entertained from the moment you arrive, this state of the art, capital city of Malaysia, is a huge bustling metropolis that will enchant and intoxicate you at the same time, a seductive mix of old and new, take the time to explore and enjoy it.

Petronas Towers Really a must on every visitor's list of things to see in KL, at 452 meters high, with 88 storeys the Sky Bridge view from the top of the towers is truly spectacular. Entrance is free but visitors do need a pass and only a limited number are issued each day. Best to get there early as the lines tend to be long.

Batu Caves Located just outside of KL, Batu is a very popular tourist attraction. Made up of three main caves and a number of smaller ones, they are revered as a Hindu shrine. To reach the caves you will have to climb 272 steps and deal with a number of cheeky macaque monkeys...on your way out you might have to deal with a number of taxi drivers as well! Worth the visit though, the caves and painted sculptures are all very special.

Serious Retail Therapy Bukit Bintang is the heart of KL's shopping mall scene, if

retail is what you're looking for then this is the place to go. The major malls include; the luxurious "Star Hill", the up-market "Lot 10", the popular "BB Plaza" and the "Sungei Wang", "Low Yat" and "IMBI" for electronics. As with many places in Asia do compare prices and double check electronic goods!

The Boh Tea Plantation Set in the Highlands, just north of Brinchang, this tea plantation is a sprawling scenic domain with a tea factory, a teashop and a visitor's centre. See how tea is made from picking to packing, and enjoy sipping on a cup whilst taking in the spectacular sights of the plantation from the pleasant tearoom.

Chinatown A popular tourist spot, Petaling Street is the center of KL's Chinatown. This rich, bustling area is a bargain hunter's paradise with a distinct Chinese flavor. You'll find everything from Chinese herbs to imitation designer handbags, the night market offers hundreds of stalls and a truly vibrant atmosphere, haggle and bargain as much as you can, don't be shy!



Did you know?

One of the Petronas Twin Towers in Kuala Lumpur was built by Japanese and the other by Koreans.

There are 32,000 windows in the towers, it takes 2 months to wash them all.

Malaysia is home to 14,500 species of flowering plants and trees, more than 200 species of mammals, 600 species of birds, 140 species of snakes and 60 species of lizards.



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Life changing experiences...

The Cameron Highlands Four hours from KL this is the largest and most famous hill resort in the country. Named after William Cameron, a British surveyor who 'discovered' and mapped the area in 1885, the Highlands are home to the leading producers of flowers and tea in Malaysia. Well worth visiting not only for its scenery and historical interests but for its weather... cool and pleasant, the average temperature is between 22 and 25°C with a cool 15°C at night. Aim to spend a few days in this popular yet peaceful area, a wonderful place to relax and explore.

Malacca Two hours south of Kuala Lumpur this historical trading port has an interesting past with Portuguese, Dutch and English rule. Visit the famous Gateway, St. Paul's church and the Portuguese Fort de Santiago, all intertwined with local Chinese and Malay culture, yet another unique side to this many faceted country.

Langkawi Malaysia's best known holiday destination is an archipelago of 99 islands on the country's west coast. Long sandy beaches, turquoise waters and coconut palms on the coast and jungle covered hills and scenic paddy fields inland. Plenty to do and see; try diving, snorkelling, the scenic cable car, Seven Wells waterfall, canopy and cave trekking for the adventurous and relax with a little

duty free shopping at the end of each day, an idyllic spot for a holiday.

Penang One of Asia's most famous islands with a colonial mystique, beautiful beaches and some of the best Malaysian food you can find. The capital Georgetown is a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site and a perfect destination for visitors, busy and colourful the city has a maze of streets and lanes just waiting to be explored. Weaving, woodcarving, fortune-telling, Chinese and Indian temples alongside modern skyscrapers, it's all there to be discovered.

The Sepilok Orangutan Sanctuary

Located in Sandakan on the eastern Malaysian island of Borneo this sanctuary is home to over one hundred of these endangered primates and offers a rare chance to see them up close. The facilities provide medical care for orphaned and confiscated orangutans as well as many other species including sun bears, gibbons, rhinos and the occasional elephant. A fascinating and educational insight into Malaysian wildlife and its challenges.

Jungle Trekking The National Parks and Forest Reserves in Malaysia offer the more adventurous visitors endless opportunities to discover the rainforest's exotic and rare tropical flora and fauna. With a camping and trekking trip you will see "Nature at its most natural" as you cross swaying bridges, swim in crystal clear rock pools and canoe up local rivers. Choose from one of the many parks and reserves throughout the country, definitely the trip of a lifetime.





Facts for the traveller...

Weather

Year round the average temperature ranges between 20°C and 30°C. Malaysia's weather is hot, humid and tropical throughout the year with slightly cooler inland mountain areas. Heavy rains during October-November and April-May on the West coast and from November to January on the East coast.

Best times to go

May to September are considered the ideal time to visit Malaysia, note that the monsoon season is November to January. Consider timing a holiday with major festivals and events.

Currency

Malaysia Ringgit (MYR)

Time zone

GMT + 8

Shopping hours

Most shops are open most days between 10 am to 10 pm.

Transportation

Bus travel in Malaysia is an inexpensive way to get between places within the country and also within towns and cities, they are clean and air conditioned, schedules may not be exact but basically you will be able to get a bus on major routes without too many problems.

Taxis are available everywhere, their meters should be working, if not make sure to negotiate the price beforehand, surcharges apply between midnight and 6am.

Train travel, both long distance throughout the Peninsula and inner city commuter style is available and a good way to get around.

Ferry travel is available for island hopping and sea cruises.

Tipping

Tipping is not compulsory in Malaysia, most hotels and restaurants already include taxes of

15% in total, tipping is practiced but is at your discretion. Hotel staff usually receive tips from RM2 to RM5, and leave leftover change for the waiters in restaurants. Tour guides, however, do expect a tip.

Did you know?

The Penang Bridge connects the city to the mainland and is the longest bridge in Asia.

Residents of Penang are referred to as "Penangites".

Penang is known as the "Pearl of the Orient" and renowned for its exquisite cuisine.

The 1999 film "Anna and the King", starring Jodie Foster and Chow Young Fat, was filmed in Langkawi after Thailand refused to allow filming there.

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Tipping

Tipping is not a way of life in Singapore, prohibited at the airport and generally discouraged, service charge is usually included on hotel and restaurant bills. You can leave a 10% tip if it has not been added.

Transportation

Convenient shuttle buses are available between the airport and city. The bus system is clean, organized and well run, a cheap and efficient way of getting around

Singapore, it operates from 6am to midnight. The MRT (Mass Rapid Transport) subway system is a fast, comfortable, clean and cheap way of travel as well. Taxis are air conditioned, metered and are easily available in Singapore from the many taxi stands around the city, rates are reasonable.

Shopping hours

Daily from 9/10 am to 9/10 pm.

Singapore



asia

Not just a stopover!

This multi cultured country offers its visitors a fascinating ethnic mix that combines China, India and Malaysia in a rich modern setting with an ever present historical background. From street vendors to designer shops along Orchard Road, from old world cocktails at the famous colonial style Raffles Hotel to the ultra modern landmarks that rise into the clouds, Singapore is a clean, organized city, full of life, adventure and sights that will keep you entertained and totally enthralled.



Life changing experiences...

Clarke Quay Originally a commercial center on the Singapore River, it's now home to a number of restaurants, bars, shops and just about anything entertaining! Quite lively after dark and well worth a visit for the nightlife.

Orchard Road The shopping and fashion hub of Singapore, full of malls and shops this is the place to go if shopping is your passion. Plenty to see and do, easy to find and all major and local brands are available, cafés and eateries are plentiful and great for a break in between shops!

Chinatown A busy mix of old and new, worth wandering around, there's a Heritage Center for those wishing to learn more about the social history of the area. Smith Street closes to cars after dark and turns into an outdoor eatery. Take your appetite with you, the nearby Maxwell Road Hawker Centre also offers an amazing variety of delicious dishes.

Little India One of the most colourful, vibrant and authentic areas of Singapore. Wander through the alleyways and soak up the sights, sounds and smells of this charming, bustling area. There are street vendors and stalls selling anything from massage

oils to gold, fascinating temples and excellent food choices.

Breakfast with Orangutans The Singapore Zoo is a must see, get there early and have breakfast with these amazing animals (best to book in advance). The zoo runs a successful orangutan breeding program and has a large colony of these intelligent primates, worth getting up early for, spend the rest of the day wandering through this amazing zoo.

Singapore Zoo Night Safari Tour If you can't make an early breakfast with the orangutans then try a night safari. Travel through the zoo's jungle from the safety of your visitor's tram and you'll spot nocturnal animals in their natural habitat, from fierce predators to timid forest dwellers. There's also a walking trail with a guide if you'd like to get a little closer.

Sentosa Island Spend a day on Sentosa Island, take the scenic cable car over, many attractions to see. Pink dolphins at the Dolphin Lagoon, visit the Oceanarium, try a little "go-karting" on the Luge and Skyride... or simply just spend your time on a lovely tropical beach. Plenty of hotels and resorts to choose from if you'd like to stay.



Facts for the traveller...

Weather

Being near the equator Singapore is relatively warm all year round, with average temperatures between 27 and 31°C. May through June are the hottest months, November and December are the wettest seasons.

Currency

Singapore Dollar

Time zone

GMT+8

Best times to go

Singapore can be visited at anytime of the year, autumn months would probably be the most comfortable, keep in mind that relatively high humidity is a way of life here.

Did you know?

Singapore is the largest exporter of ornamental fish, 25% of the world market.

Singapore is counted amongst the 20 smallest countries of the world. However, it is the second most densely populated country in the world, after Monaco, with 6,430 people per m².

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● **Transportation**

● Seoul has an extensive bus service with four different kinds. Yellow, usually short circuits around touristic areas, Green buses service the suburbs and connect with the subway, Blue buses go across town and red buses are intercity buses. Buses only stop at designated bus stops. The Seoul subway system is modern with nine lines, all signs are in Korean and English. Taxis are available anywhere and are generally clean and operate with meters. There are two different kinds of taxis; Deluxe (black with a yellow sign) and Regular (silver), best to have your destination written in Korean for the driver.

● **Best times to go**

● The best time of year to visit is autumn, from September to November and spring, from April to June, this is also cherry blossom season, a very beautiful time of the year. Best to avoid peak summer months between June and August when it's hot and humid with a chance of monsoons.

South Korea

Where ancient traditions are still alive and well...

A country of endless possibilities and an energy that can leave you breathless. Take the time to explore the beautiful temples and pagodas, the picturesque countryside and mountains, lush green rice fields, fishing villages and an almost unlimited choice of hiking opportunities that will take you off the beaten track. There is so much to see and do here, South Korea is a rich, culture filled country with a love of life that is infectious for those who visit.



Life changing experiences...

Seoul The history behind this busy bustling city offers a glimpse of the past. Visit the Gyeongbok Palace, Korea's former seat of power. Spend a morning or afternoon at Chandeokgung Palace, a huge complex full of courts, halls, bridges, pavilions and secret gardens. Bukchon Village is nearby and worth exploring, the traditional Korean wooden homes, "hanok", are at their best here. Quaint cafés, art galleries and restaurants are sprinkled throughout the district so do take the time to wander through.

Namdaemun Market The oldest and largest traditional market in Korea, with an astounding number of shops, stalls, street vendors and nearby department stores. The selection of things to buy seems endless, think of anything and you will probably find it here. Walk the streets and through the alleys, plenty of food stalls and restaurants along the way where you can try a variety of delicious traditional Korean food.

Itaewon Often referred to as "Little America in Seoul" this area is a popular spot for shopping and entertainment in Seoul. Many restaurants, bars, nightclubs and music venues to choose from along with shops that have anything from footwear to furniture!

Namsan Cable Car Catch the cable car to the top of Namsan, the city's most famous peak and enjoy spectacular views along the way, best to pick a clear day for

the journey, watching a sunset from there is worthwhile. Take in the scenery from the restaurant or visit the observatories of the 'N Seoul Tower', with its new digital telescopes.

Cheonggyecheon Stream Hard to imagine hearing the sounds of a bubbling stream in the middle of the city, Cheonggyecheon is just that, restored in 2005, the stream meanders through the heart of the city offering serenity to this bustling metropolis. Take the time to walk through it, the unique bridges, stepping stone crossings and waterfalls are simply delightful.

Bugaksan The peak behind the President's home, Cheongwadae or Blue House offers several hiking trails that take you through the reconstructed 15th century gates along Seoul's ancient fortress walls. Once you've reached the top the views of the city's skyline, from shanty-towns to skyscrapers, make the trek well worthwhile. Avoid the weekend crowds, and note, you will need your passport to get on the trails.

Korean Folk Village An open-air folk museum where you can experience traditional Korean culture, with over 260 traditional buildings on display, including 30,000 household items representing various regions of Korea. See how the peasants, farmers, and civil officials lived during the late Chosun Period, an interesting visit.



Facts for the traveller...

Weather

Temperatures vary greatly between mid-summer and mid-winter, with August being very hot and humid, while December and January are freezing. Winters in the north are colder than in the south. Heavy rainfall always arrives with the summer monsoon season from late June to mid July.

Currency Won

Time zone GMT + 9

Shopping hours

10.30 am to 8/10 pm.

Tipping

Tipping is not required nor expected in Korea. Service charges are already included in the bill. Taxi drivers will appreciate it if you tell them to "keep the change", but this is not expected.



Did you know?

The number 4 is considered very unlucky, avoid giving gifts that are a multiple of 4, also, most buildings in Korea do not have a 4th floor.

South Korea is one of the five most popular automobile makers in the world, led by brands like Hyundai and Kia.

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Transportation

The traffic in Sri Lankan cities is quite chaotic, bus and train services are available but can be very challenging, crowded and a little unreliable. Inner city "Tuk-tuks" are a handy and convenient way to get around, negotiate the fare first. Taxis are also convenient, they're not metered so check the fare before you start.

Tipping Info

Times have been hard in Sri Lanka and tips will be well appreciated, a service charge is often added, if not a 10-15% tip is customary. Porters and housekeeping from 100-200 rupees for each service, \$5-\$15/day for drivers and guides.

Shopping hours

Mon - Fri : 8am to 5pm
Saturdays shops are closed in the afternoons. Markets and small shops have their own hours.

Sri Lanka

The land of serendipity

A picturesque jewel in the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka is a diverse mix of ancient cities, monuments, lush mountains, perfect beaches and incredible wildlife. Faced with past political turmoil and natural disasters the Sri Lankan spirit is alive and well in the pride its people display towards their country. Welcoming, friendly and diverse in culture the Sri Lankans offer visitors the opportunity to try their amazing cuisine, discover their fabulous history and laze on some of the most beautiful beaches available, Sri Lanka is a complete and unique experience.



Life changing experiences...

Colombo A bustling city and port Colombo is the island's colourful capital. From department stores in the business centre to markets in the Pettah Bazaar district, with Buddhist and Hindu temples in between, Colombo offers an interesting mix. Take a walk through the bazaar, full of shops and street stalls selling an unimaginable selection of goods, or a quieter stroll along Galle Face Green at the seafront, explore the city, you won't be disappointed.

Tea Growing Sri Lanka is one of the world's most important tea growing areas and home to the Lipton tea empire. Take a trip to one or more of the six main tea growing areas, Galle, Ratnapura, Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, one of the finest, Dumbulla and Uva, learn about tea production, from green leaf to tea bags, interesting and so picturesque.

Lion Rock at Sigiriya An ancient city, palace and garden complex dated from the 5th Century AD, climb the steps of the 200 meter tall rock, see the ancient mirror wall on your way up. Known as Lion Rock the original visitors to the palace entered through a stairway that took them through a giant carving of a lion's mouth, only its massive paws remain as a testament to its incredible, original size, a fascinating look at ancient history.



Facts for the traveller...

Weather

Sri Lanka has a tropical climate with distinct dry and wet seasons. Colombo and the low lying coastal areas have average temperatures of 27°C. The south-western region experiences monsoon season from May to August and is dry from December to March. The north-eastern area has its monsoon season from October to January and dry season from May to September.

Magnificent beaches With superb beaches in the east, west and south of the country travellers to Sri Lanka are spoilt for choice. Unawatuna beach, just south of Galle, is a 4km long stretch of palm-fringed golden sands and is said by some to rank amongst the top 10 beaches in the world. Swimming, diving, snorkelling and lazy days on the beach, a perfect holiday in a perfect destination.

Stilt fishermen One of Sri Lanka's most iconic scenes and oldest traditions would have to be the "stilt fishermen" of the southern coast. Balanced on thin stilts planted in chest deep water the fisherman take advantage of the tides and patiently wait for their catch, certainly not an easy job but very much a part of their culture, simply fascinating to watch.

Best time to go

December to March is the high season on the west and south coast and hill country. From April to September for the ancient cities and east coast regions. Generally speaking there's always a good time for any given beach in Sri Lanka all year round.

Time zone

GMT+5.30

Currency

Rupee

Language

Sinhala is the official language, Tamil and Sinhala are both national languages, English is commonly spoken in tourist areas.

Did you know?

Sri Lanka is often known as the Pearl of the Indian Ocean.

Sri Lanka is the world's largest tea exporter.

The spice cinnamon originated in Sri Lanka and was discovered by the Egyptians.

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Thailand



A feast for the senses ...

From white sandy beaches and bright turquoise waters to rice fields, misty mountains and cities bursting with life. Thailand is a country that will keep your senses alive for the duration of your stay with its amazing array of activities, sights, tastes and sounds. The travel choices within this incredible country are endless, there's something for everyone, from families and friends to lone travellers and honeymooners. Explore the cities, visit the markets, shop till you drop and sample the amazing Thai cuisine. Spend your days on a beach that dreams are made of, dive, snorkel, trek, climb, ride and even fly, it's all here and just waiting to welcome you.



Life changing experiences...

Bangkok Thailand's famous capital city, exotic, humid, buzzing, dynamic and larger than life, Bangkok is this fascinating mix of a modern fast moving city living hand in hand with ancient traditions. Glittering temples, next to gleaming skyscrapers, colourful street markets near sophisticated shopping malls, yellow-robed monks collecting alms in the morning rush hour traffic, there's a surprise around every corner in this incredible city. For all its growth and modern trends, Bangkok's heart still lies in its spirituality, take your time in this city it will not fail to delight you and keep you wondering what's next.

The Grand Palace A trip to Bangkok would not be complete without visiting this spectacular palace. Undoubtedly the city's most famous landmark, the complex is still considered the spiritual heart of the Thai Kingdom. Built in 1782 the palace was home to the Thai King for 150 years, breathtaking with its beautiful architecture and intricate detail the Grand Palace is a must see.

Best View in Bangkok Visit the Lebua State Tower Hotel, take the elevator up to the Sky Bar on the 63rd floor, hard to find a better view anywhere. A drink at sunset is the way to go, not a cheap

experience but well worth taking the time to simply soak up the magnificent panoramic view.

Damnoen Saduak Floating Market A day excursion out of Bangkok, the floating markets are a lively and colourful experience, boats laden with tropical fruits, flowers, vegetables and fresh produce meet and barter their wares with other traders, best to get there early, and don't forget your camera.

Phuket One of Thailand's most famous and popular destinations. Phuket has an extraordinary amount of sights and activities for visitors, amazing beaches, parks, forests, history, culture and if that's not enough plenty of fabulous food and nightlife. There's something for everyone here at any time of the year.

Phi Phi Sheer cliffs rising from the sea, few sights are as breathtaking as the approach to these beautiful islands. Just a 45 minute boat trip from Phuket these islands are the ultimate tropical getaway, white sandy beaches, incredible scenery, vivid turquoise waters and a laid back approach to life that gives new meaning to the word "holiday". Diving, snorkeling, kayaking or even rock climbing, it's all fun and it's all here.

Koh Samui One of the country's largest islands located in the Gulf of Thailand, Koh Samui's popularity has grown steadily over the years. The island has something for everyone, from crowded beaches full of tourists and peddlers to secluded, isolated spots that you'll find hard to leave. Trendy yet simple, crowded in places and serene in others, it's another great place to spend a holiday.

Pattaya This tropical seaside hot spot is one of Thailand's top destinations, if it's wild nightlife you're looking for then this high rise beach city is the place to be. Dive, snorkel and explore nearby islands by day and hit the city at night!

Did you know?

Thailand is the only Southeast Asian nation that has never been colonized by a European country.

Thailand was known as Siam until 1939 when it officially became the Kingdom of Thailand.

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Life changing experiences...

Chiang Mai Located in the northern Thai hills Chiang Mai is one of the country's most historically important areas. With over 300 temples and endless activities it is the jewel in Thailand's crown. Chiang Mai city combines modern and dynamic with rich historical sites, its temple lined backstreets are a delight for visitors and the surrounding mist covered hills, rivers and lakes are both thrilling and breathtaking. Trekking, fishing, mountain-bike riding and exploring villages are just a few of the popular activities. Try an elephant ride through the jungle, or spend a day with them at one of the many parks and farms, Patara Elephant Farm is among the best, a change of clothes might help if swimming and bathing is involved! Delicious food, cultural riches, fabulous handicrafts, adventure and national treasures are all here, don't miss them.

A little adventure A short trip out of Pattaya try a "Flight of the Gibbon" and explore the forest from a whole new perspective that is safe, fun and fascinating. Kilometers of connecting zip lines, platforms and rope bridges built into the forest canopy takes you through the top of the trees, great fun and a truly exhilarating experience.



Facts for the traveller...

Weather

The weather in Thailand is reasonable most times of the year although it does get quite hot in summer, with the coolest times being November through

February. It basically has three seasons, summer, rainy and winter, although the southern region of Thailand does not have a winter.

Currency

Thai Baht

Best times to go

The best time to visit most of Thailand is between November and February, not so much rain and it is a little cooler.

Shopping hours

Most shops are open most days between 10am and 10pm.

Tipping

Tipping is not expected in Thailand, service taxes are added to the bill, however for exceptional service a small tip can be appropriate and well received by hotel staff, housekeeping, porters and restaurant waiters.

Time zone

GMT+7

Transportation

The Skytrain, an elevated metro rail in Bangkok, is a good way to get around with 23 stations along 2 lines.

Buses are inexpensive and can be a crowded way to get around Bangkok. The air-conditioned bus costs more, but is generally less crowded.

Thailand's railway is excellent and reaches most major cities in the country. Air conditioning is available on the diesel trains for first class passengers.

Taxis are plentiful but the price must be agreed upon in advance, bargain well as there's plenty of

competition. Most taxis are air conditioned and most drivers can speak some English.

The famous tuk-tuk is everywhere, excellent for short trips but not recommended for long distances as it can end up costing more than a regular taxi. Agree upon a price beforehand, if possible.

Ferries are a great way to get around the famous riverside area with its many historical attractions, and to explore the 'klongs' (canals). Express boats, river taxis and tail-boats run up and down the Chao Phraya River throughout the day.



Did you know?

The real name of Bangkok is the longest in the world. Try spelling this!

"KrungThepMahaNakhonAmonRattanakosinMahintharaAyutthayaMahadilokPhopNoppharathRatchathaniBuriromUdomRatchaniwetMahasathanAmonPhimanAwatanSathitSakkathattiyaWitsanuKamprasit"



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Turkey



Where east meets west...

A vast country with not only a rich and important history at its core but a country that offers some of the most amazing landscapes and natural wonders. It also boasts the only city in the world to be built on two continents! From the bustling Grand Bazaar, historical sites, trendy bars and eateries in Istanbul, breathtaking and unique landscapes in Cappadocia, the famous "Turquoise Coast" in the south-west to Roman tombs, archeological wonders and remnants of the world's most significant empires spread throughout the country. Simply put, Turkey is one of those destinations that should be visited at least once in one's lifetime.



Life changing experiences...

Istanbul Located right on the Bosphorus Strait, where east meets west, Istanbul is a fascinating blend of ancient and modern history in the midst of contemporary chic. The city offers Medieval, Byzantine and Ottoman marvels alongside trendy bars, restaurants, exciting new art galleries and museums. Plenty to keep you busy during the day and even more to entertain you at night!

Shop Istanbul From the Grand Bazaar to designer clothes and accessories, this city is a shopaholic's dream. The Bazaar in Beyazit offers a myriad of things from jewellery to leather goods, carpets and more, take the time to wander the many covered alleyways. Istiklal Street, one of Istanbul's most active areas, hosts hundreds of shops, cafés and restaurants. For high fashion with high price tags visit either Nisantasi, a very popular shopping district in the city or Bagdat Caddesi, the "Rodeo Drive" of Istanbul.

Cappadocia This unique and surreal landscape where erosion has formed caves, clefts, folds and "fairy chimneys" in the soft volcanic rock is a must see. Try a hot air balloon ride over the hills and valleys and float over spectacular

scenery. Wander through the underground cities, or stay in an underground hotel, see Byzantine frescoes, ancient churches, whirling dervishes and so much more... this is a real "bucket list" destination.

Bodrum Originally the ancient city of Halicarnassus, one of the seven wonders of the Ancient World, Bodrum is now perhaps more well known as the "Monte Carlo" of the Aegean sea. With a smart marina, plentiful restaurants, bars and nightlife famous throughout the area this city provides a fun and exciting summer holiday.

Cruise with a Gulet Sail the "Turquoise Coast", Turkey's answer to the Riviera, on a traditional "gulet", with room for 8 - 12 people these comfortable boats are equipped with modern amenities and come with a knowledgeable crew. Make it a family trip or get a group of friends together, a great way to relax and explore the coastline at your own pace, plenty to see and do along the way.

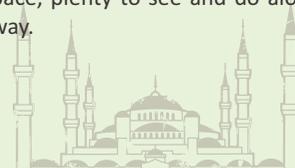


Did you know?

Turkey is one of the few countries in the world that is agriculturally self-sufficient.

It was the Turks who introduced coffee to Europe.

Cherries were first introduced to Europe from Giresun in Northern Turkey.



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Facts for the traveller...

Weather

Turkey is a big country and its climate varies from region to region. Generally summers are very hot, Istanbul can reach temperatures of 40°C, winters can be extremely cold inland and to the east. On the west coast summers are hot and humid and winters are moderately cold. The Marmara, Aegean and Mediterranean coasts have a summer that is typical of other Mediterranean areas, with hot summers and mild to moderate winters.

Currency

New Turkish Lira

Time zone

GMT+2 DST+3

Shopping hours

9am to 6/7pm. During summer most shops stay open until 9 pm.

Tipping

It is customary to tip in Turkey, in restaurants add 10-15%, hotel porters should get 2-3 Lira per bag. Taxis do not expect tips but rounding up the fare to the nearest number is normal practice.

Transportation

Trams, metro and bus travel is available in Istanbul and other major cities,

efficient, cheap and convenient. Inter city bus travel is also easy and relatively cheap in Turkey and possibly the best way to get around the country, clean and very well organised.

Taxis are numerous in all Turkish cities and towns and have black and yellow bands. All taxis have a meter which must be switched on at the start of the journey. For longer journeys, the fare should be agreed beforehand.

Many trains of the Turkish Railways have sleeping cars, couchettes and restaurant cars, some are air-conditioned. Fares are comparatively low, but are more expensive for express trains. Rail coverage of the country is not as comprehensive as bus routes.

Ferries are a popular and excellent way of getting around, inside Istanbul and beyond, plenty to choose from.

Best times to go

April to May and September to October are the best times to visit Turkey to avoid high heat and crowds of the summer season. With the exception of Istanbul, Turkey

has little winter tourism, most resorts along the Aegean, Mediterranean and Black Sea are closed between October and April.



Did you know?

Istanbul has been capital of the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the Latin Empire, and the Ottoman Empire, yet it isn't the capital city of modern Turkey, which is Ankara. Istanbul is however the largest city in Turkey.

Istanbul is the only city in the world built on two continents.

In 1930 the Turkish authorities came up with a simple way of ensuring that the new name of "Istanbul" was recognised and used throughout the world. Any mail that was sent using any other name was simply marked 'return to sender'.

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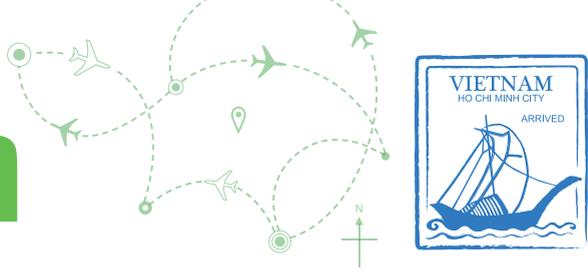
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Vietnam



Intoxicating!

Once you're in this special country you'll be swept along on the wave that makes Vietnam an utterly fascinating place. From soaring mountain landscapes and green rice fields in rural Vietnam to the dizzying speed at which life in Ho Chi Minh city moves, to the capital Hanoi with its arts and French Quarter to Hoi An and its timeless ancient streets... the country will keep you surprised, awe inspired, entertained and really well fed! Take a holiday in Vietnam, you won't be disappointed.



Life changing experiences...

Ho Chi Minh City Perhaps more famously known as "Saigon" this amazing, bustling and vibrant city seems to have an endless energy. Ho Chi Minh offers the visitor a chance to mix ancient architecture with new, local markets teeming with life and old wooden shops sit next to designer malls, modern skyscrapers, fabulous restaurants and sleek bars. The city draws you in to its own world of contradictions and holds you there for the duration of your stay, life changing at its best.

Street Food Vietnam's street food is known as some of the best in the world. The choices are endless from the famous Pho (pronounced 'fir'), an aromatic tasty noodle soup to a delicious savoury stuffed baguette known as Bahn mi, it's all there in street stalls just waiting for hungry visitors!

Hoi An This fascinating and charming city is one of Vietnam's highlights and offers an intriguing look at ancient architecture with Vietnamese, Chinese and Japanese influences. Wander the old city by foot or rent a bike, Hoi An will keep you entertained with historic landmarks, exotic food and interesting open air cafés. The city is also famous for its 300 or more local tailors so if it's the latest trends you want, or an old favourite copied, take your time, shop

around and make room in your luggage!

Take a Cooking Class If food is your passion then try something a little different by joining a cooking class at the Morning Glory Restaurant in Hoi An. With Vietnamese street food being so famous throughout the world, this restaurant runs a popular class with a trip to the local market for ingredients, well organized, well known and deliciously good fun.

Mekong River Cruise Hop on a morning cruise from Ho Chi Minh City along this famous waterway, fabulous landscapes, floating markets, coconut palms and more, so many sights and sounds to experience. With a little extra planning you can take a week long trip on a luxurious boutique river boat from Ho Chi Minh all the way through to Siem Reap in Cambodia, a truly exciting and once in a life time memorable journey.

The French Quarter Hanoi, Vietnam's capital, is home to the famous French Quarter with its boulevards and elegant French colonial style buildings. Visit the stately Opera House or Hanoi's Museum of History, a unique, interesting mix of 'Vietnamese Palace' and 'French Villa'. Make your way to

Trang Tien, the main street of the French Quarter, a bustling shopping area famous for ice cream, bookstores and classic architecture, sit in one of the many cafés and enjoy the scene.

Hanoi Water Puppet Show An ancient tradition that dates back as far as the 11th century, the puppets are made out of wood and the shows are performed in a waist-deep pool. With a traditional Vietnamese orchestra providing the back ground music the puppets act out folk tales and stories passed down over generations, very unique and entertaining, certainly worth a visit.

Did you know?

Vietnam has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the Third World.

In Vietnamese schools, gongs are used instead of bells, to call the children in to class.

The literacy rate in Vietnam is 94%.

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