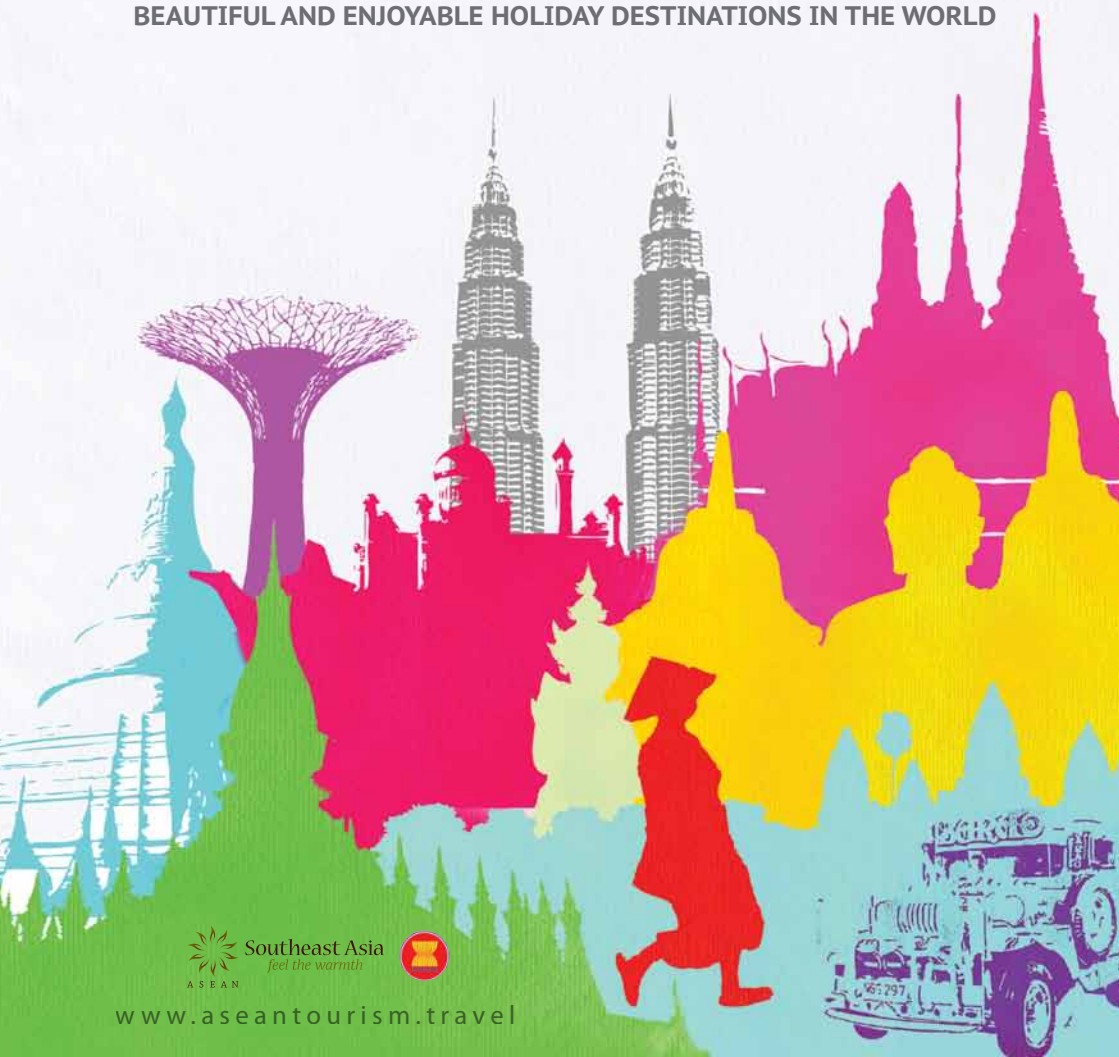


# The ASEAN Travel Primer

YOUR GUIDE TO THE MOST DIVERSE,  
BEAUTIFUL AND ENJOYABLE HOLIDAY DESTINATIONS IN THE WORLD



Southeast Asia  
*feel the warmth*



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# ●● MAP OF ASEAN



THE PHILIPPINES

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# INTRODUCTION ●●

## Have a great holiday in Southeast Asia

Welcome to the ASEAN Travel Primer, your at-a-glance handy guide to the diverse and welcoming holiday destinations of Southeast Asia.

Diversity and unity are two themes running through this booklet. All ten destinations are united in their commitment to welcome the world to their doors. Each country offers a tantalizing array of things to do, sights to see and insights to marvel at. Beaches, mountains, forests, temples, mega-cities, entertainment, shopping and the most varied and compelling dining experiences in the world are just a step away when you have the ASEAN Travel Primer in your hand.

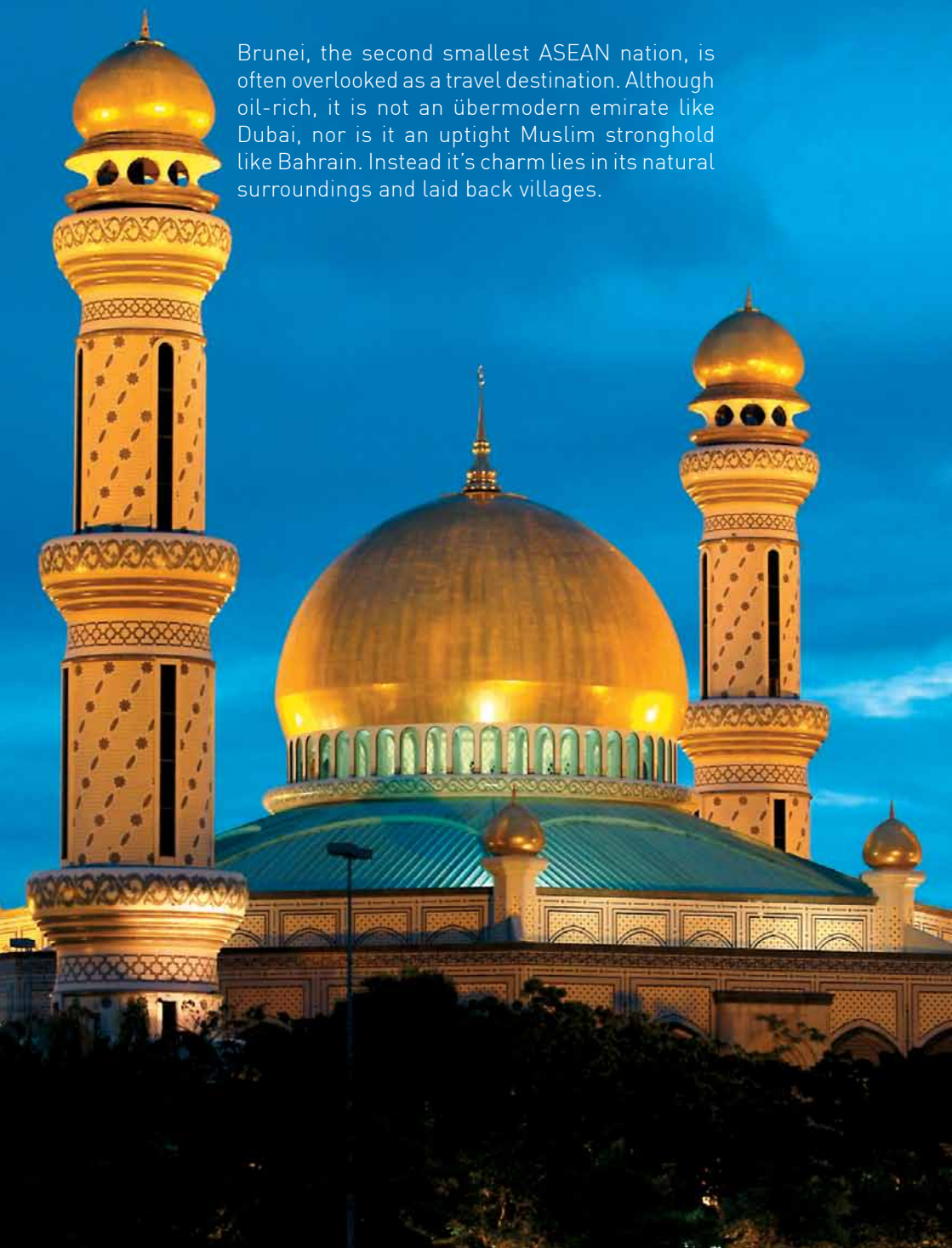
For each destination we recommend practical travel information such as where to go, getting around, climate, eating and shopping tips. Follow our recommendations and the diversity of your travel experience, the ready smiles of the welcome and variety of the destinations will make your next trip to ASEAN – Southeast Asia – the most happily memorable holiday of a life time.

With the cool ASEAN Travel Primer in your pocket, it's easy to feel the warmth of Southeast Asia. To find out more about traveling in all 10 ASEAN nations, visit **[www.aseantourism.travel](http://www.aseantourism.travel)**.



# ●●BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Brunei, the second smallest ASEAN nation, is often overlooked as a travel destination. Although oil-rich, it is not an übermodern emirate like Dubai, nor is it an uptight Muslim stronghold like Bahrain. Instead it's charm lies in its natural surroundings and laid back villages.





## WHERE TO?

While in **Bandar Seri Begawan** (BSB) visit Brunei's most iconic landmark, **The Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque**. This magnificent gold domed Mosque was built by the 28th Sultan in 1958 ● Also visit **The Royal Regalia**, established in 1992 to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of His Majesty's accession to the throne and exhibits two elaborately decorated royal carriages used during the Coronation and Silver Jubilee of His Majesty ● Grab a water taxi and cross the river in BSB to visit the wooden stilt-houses of **Kampung Ayer**, one of the world's largest floating cities, and be sure to visit the **Kampung Ayer Cultural and Tourism Gallery** ● The best high tea in BSB is definitely to be had within the marbled halls of The Empire Hotel and Country Club, a lavish oasis built on the verdant green seafront ● Take a relaxing longboat ride deep into the virgin rainforests of **Ulu Temburong National Park**, and spend the night in a jungle resort – where you'll enjoy the musical sounds of the rainforest – and then make your way to **Bangar** for a look at the traditional ethnic villages ● **Tutong**, one of 4 districts in Brunei, is famous for its variety of tropical fruits, it's sandy beaches, and its 6 varieties of pitcher plants (locals use these insect-catching sacs to cook a variety of dishes, and they produce various herbal, natural and alternative health and beauty products as well) ● **Pantai Seri Kenangan Tutong**, just a few kilometres from Tutong town, boasts one of the best beaches in the country

## GETTING AROUND

Brunei has no railway system, so ground transport around the country is limited to bus, rental car, water taxi, or taxi ● Hiring a car in Brunei is cost-effective (petrol is cheap) and the main roads are in good condition ● Boats to and from Bandar Seri Begawan to various nearby towns in Borneo operate from the **Muara Ferry Terminal** (about 25 km northeast of the city) ● The Brunei-Muara public bus network covers most sights in and around the capital of Bandar Seri Begawan, including the international ferry terminal at Muara

## CLIMATE

Like the rest of Borneo, temperatures consistently fall between 24°C and 31°C, with high humidity year round.

**September – January** : the wettest months  
**February – April** : the driest months  
**May – August** : the hottest months



## EAT LOCALLY

Pick from any of the multitude of fine dining or sumptuous street food options, and enjoy dishes of European, Asian, and Indian origin, as well as international and fusion cuisines ● Various rice dishes such as **Nasi Katok** (a mixture of rice, fried chicken and a sauce called sambal – the signature dish of Bandar Seri Begawan), **Nasi Lemak** (fragrant coconut rice), **Nasi Ayam** (chicken rice), satay, and soto (noodle soup), are all available from vendors all over the country as alternative fast foods, especially for those who are on the move ● **Kueh Melayu** is a sweet pancake treat, filled with peanuts, raisins and sugar ● Various traditional desserts, and must-try treats, include **Kueh Sapit**, **Kek Batek**, **Penyaram**, **Cendol**, **Ardam**, **Kueh Jala**, **Kueh Lenggang**, **Madu Kesirat**, and **Pulut Panggang** ● **Ambuyat** is a sticky ball of flavourless sago starch, similar to tapioca, served with a variety of dips ● **Smoothers** are Brunei's answer to ice cream milkshakes



## SHOP

**Dina Arif Gallery** in Bandar Seri Begawan exhibits and sells paintings by local artists ● Silversmiths and coppersmiths across the country sell a wide range of metallic souvenirs including gongs of all sizes ● **Jong Sarat**, a hand-woven cloth (*kain tenunan*) made from gold and silver threads, can be found at the **Arts and Handicrafts Centre** in Kota Batu, as well as various traditional handicraft shops and centers such as **Sumbangsih Mulia**, as well as at the airport departure hall ● **S. Aisya Brunei** handbag collections – handmade from *kain tenunan* (woven cloth), producing a vintage regal chic design that will complement elegant evening and formal attire – are available at the **Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mall** in Bandar Seri Begawan

# ●●CAMBODIA

Recent years have seen Cambodia become a tourism hot spot, but remember that there's more to the country than just making the pilgrimage to Angkor Wat.







## WHERE TO?

After seeing **Angkor Wat**, as well as the colossal stone-faces at **Bayon**, check out the even older **Bakong Temple**, which predates the main attraction by almost 400 years ● From **Siem Reap** make a detour to see the floating stilt-village of Kampong Phluk at **Tonle Sap Lake** (Southeast Asia's largest freshwater lake) ● The Hariharalaya Healing Center – 20km from Siem Reap – is a yoga and meditation retreat nestled in the Cambodian countryside featuring incredible vegan food ● In **Phnom Penh** visit the 17<sup>th</sup> century Emerald Buddha at the Royal Palace, and admire the equally breathtaking Silver Pagoda (which was originally constructed of wood) ● The infamous **Killing Fields** are memorialized at Choeung Ek – about 15km from Phnom Penh – where visitors can view around 8,000 skulls, arranged by sex and age, laid out behind a glass panel ● **Battambang**, in the Northwest, is an amazingly preserved French colonial era town ● Explore the **Cham villages** and the sweeping vistas of the surrounding countryside near Kampot ● In **Siهانoukville** clear waters and beautiful stretches of white sand can be found at Otres Beach, and the privately owned Sokha Beach (day passes available) ● Head south to **Koh Rong** for the turquoise waters of Southwestern Beach, Long Set Beach, and Lazy Beach

## GETTING AROUND

Cambodia has two rail lines with the **Phnom Penh Royal Railway Station** as its major hub ● Coach service between most major destinations is made possible by an ever improving network of buses, while minibuses serve most provincial routes ● **Longtail rocket boats** and other river craft service the Mekong and its many tributaries, shuttling both tourists and locals between major destinations ● Inexpensive car and motorcycle rental provide tourists with greater flexibility, and almost all car rental in Cambodia includes a driver

## CLIMATE

Cambodia's climate is dominated by monsoons and temperature extremes range from 21 to 35 °C

**May - October** : rainy season (heaviest in September and October)

**November - March** : dry season (driest months are January and February)



## EAT LOCALLY

**Amok** (baked fish wrapped in banana leaf with coconut, lemon grass and chilli) is regarded as the national dish of Cambodia ● **Prahok Jien** consists of a pungent fermented fish paste that is fried and then mixed with meat (usually beef or pork), chilli, and served with dips, vegetables and rice ● **Nom Ban Chok**, often called simply Khmer noodles, was originally a regional specialty from the Kampot province ● **Samlor Machu** Siem Reap is a traditional sour soup (samlor), flavoured with bamboo shoots and tiny freshwater shrimp ● **Sugar-palm, wine**, sold in bamboo containers off the back of bicycles, is popular with locals (and some brave tourists), while **Angkor** is the popular national beer



## SHOP

Phnom Penh's **St 178** is home to a budding **gallery scene**, featuring the work of local artists ● The best **silks** come from Kompong Cham and Takeo Provinces, but the silk farms in Siem Reap also produce lots of quality material ● **Woodcarving** is a Cambodian specialty, and ● Betel-nut boxes are readily available, as are hand-carved jewelry boxes inlaid with mother of pearl, lacquer or metalwork

An aerial photograph of a tropical island with lush green vegetation and a rocky coastline. A white speedboat is moving across the deep blue water, leaving a wide, white, curved wake that forms a large 'C' shape around a smaller, rocky island. The water is crystal clear, revealing the sandy bottom and coral reefs. The sky is a deep, vibrant blue.

# ●●INDONESIA

Indonesia is an extremely large archipelago nation, so even hitting just a handful of island locales is more than some visitors can say they've done.



## WHERE TO?

**Jakarta** is the capital city, and the center of government, and it acts as the main entrance to the country  
 ● **Bali** is one-stop tourist destination for lovers of seaside and mountain vistas, arts and culture, and even religious tours  
 ● **Sumatra** boasts the world's largest crater lake at **Danau Toba**, but the 6 km wide crater lake and mountain summit views at **Gunung Rinjani** in Lombok are equally impressive  
 ● To see orangutan conservation at its finest, visit the **Tanjung Puting National Park** in Kalimantan, Borneo  
 ● If the crowds at Bali's **Kuta Beach** become too much, the nearby Gili Islands offer the same beach paradise, with a more laid back atmosphere  
 ● Seek out the **Tana Toraja** tribe of **South Sulawesi** to see their unique burial grounds in which crypts are carved into sheer rock faces. Tourists can also attend the funeral festivities (as long as they don't wear black or red)

## GETTING AROUND

Visitors can arrive in, and depart from, Jakarta by planes, trains, or buses. Commercial flights go through the **Soekarno - Hatta International Airport**  
 ● International ferries connect ports in Indonesia with ports in Malaysia and Singapore, while domestically the **Pelni** company has giant ferries visiting practically every inhabited island across Indonesia  
 ● Ground transportation across Indonesia is comprised of bus, taxi, train, and ojek (motor cycles, where the price of rides to and from your destinations vary depending on the length of the journey and your haggling expertise)  
 ● In Jakarta, the **Transjakarta** buses, commonly called 'busway', connect commuters and residents from one end of the city to the other  
 ● In Java the **andong** (or **delman**), is a large horse-drawn wagon that seats 6, while in West Sumatra, the **bendi** is a similar horse-drawn vehicle that seats 2 people

## CLIMATE

Being close to the equator makes for an evenly hot climate year-round.

**October - April** : the wet season (sudden tropical downpours and nonstop rain for days)

**May - September** : the dry season (drought in some areas)



## EAT LOCALLY

**Gado Gado Jakarta** is a Betawi original, consisting of boiled vegetables served with a peanut sauce dressing  
 ● **Nasi Kuning Yogyakarta** consists of Jasmine rice cooked in coconut milk and turmeric  
 ● **Rendang Padang** – considered 'The World Most Delectable Food' by CNNGo – consists of caramelized beef curry, and originates from West Sumatra  
 ● **Serabi Bandung** is a rice soufflé pancake, served with a coconut milk and brown sugar sauce  
 ● **Lumpia Semarang** is a Javanese spring roll, made with shrimp and young bamboo shoots.  
 ● **Bir Pletok Jakarta** is a unique and traditional non-alcoholic beverage from Jakarta, made with aromatic herbs  
 ● **Bintang** is the country's predominant beer brand



## SHOP

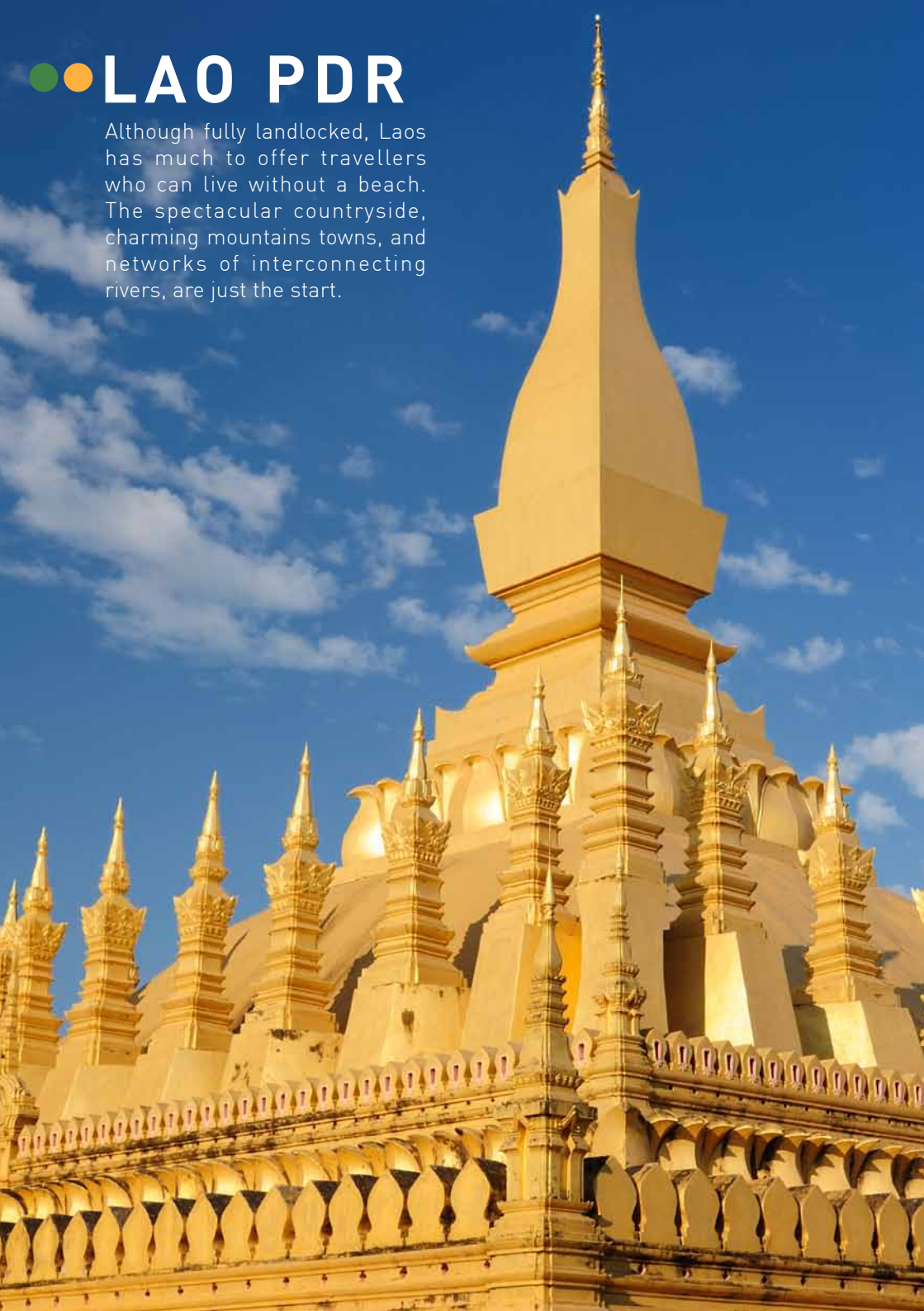
**Topeng** (carved theatrical masks) can be found throughout the archipelago, the most readily identifiable of which are the ones from Java and Bali  
 ● **Iklat** cloths, woven from intricately patterned and painstakingly tie-dyed material, are produced in many regions, most notably in Nusa Tenggara  
 ● Tanjung Tunjung in South Sumatra is renowned for its ceremonial **Songket** sarongs which can take up to a month to make  
 ● **Wayang** is a traditional Indonesian entertainment that utilizes puppets, operated by "dalang" (puppetmasters). **Wayang Kulit** (shadow puppets made of cow skin) and **Wayang Golek** (wooden puppets originating from West Java) make great souvenirs





# ●● LAO PDR

Although fully landlocked, Laos has much to offer travellers who can live without a beach. The spectacular countryside, charming mountains towns, and networks of interconnecting rivers, are just the start.







## WHERE TO?

Although capital city **Vientiane** is a little sleepy, there's lots to see including the amazing outdoor Buddha Park

- A significant part of **Luang Prabang's** old town appeal lies in the many French provincial style houses that remain intact
- When in Luang Prabang, visit the **Tham Ting Caves** – also known as the **Buddha Caves** – a trip that includes a 25 km scenic river journey
- Travel 7.5 kms down the **Nam Hin Boun River** via the **Tham Kong Lo Cave**, hidden deep in the **Phou Hin Boun** wilderness of central Laos
- The spectacular limestone karst cliff formations in **Vang Vieng** are perfect for rock-climbing enthusiasts, but the area also offers rafting down the **Nam Xong River**, as well as trekking and mountain biking
- In **Ban Khiat Ngong**, take an elephant trek through the forest to visit the enigmatic **Phou Asa Temple**
- Tranquil **Champasak** is the base for visiting the pre-Angkorian **Vat Phou Champasak Complex** which consist of Angkor-style temple ruins stepping up the slopes of sacred **Phou Pasak**



## EAT LOCALLY

**Larb** (or laab), is a sour and spicy meat salad made with chicken, beef, duck, fish, pork or mushrooms, and is considered the national dish of Laos

- **Khao Jii**, french bread with coffee for breakfast, is common in Vientiane and Luang Prabang
- **Khai Phean**, a Luang Prabang specialty, consists of dried seasoned river moss
- **Tam Maak Hung** is a spicy green papaya salad, served with fermented crab.
- When it comes to alcoholic beverages, Lao Hai is fermented rice wine, Lao-Lao is rice whiskey, and **Beer Lao** is the national beer brand

## GETTING AROUND

Laos has a small rail network, but currently it only links with Thailand at the **Friendship Bridge** in Nong Khai

- The bus system in Laos is efficient and extensive, with 3 bus stations in Vientiane, and 2 in Luang Prabang
- Even though the once thriving boat service along the Mekong has dwindled, slow boats still travel the river between Huay Xai and Luang Prabang
- Light traffic and good roads makes Laos the best country for long-distance cycling in Southeast Asia
- Taxis are an option in larger cities like Vientiane and Luang Prabang
- **Songthaew** – bench seat converted pick-up trucks – service rural areas, while the **Lot Doi Saan** (wooden buses) handle trips over extremely rough road conditions
- In towns both small and large, the Jumbo seats around 6 passengers comfortably, while the **Saam-laaw** (pedicab) and the **Tuk-tuk** carry smaller groups

## CLIMATE

Along the Mekong temperatures can reach 40°C some months, while lows of 5°C or less have been reached in the country's mountainous uplands.

**September – May** : the dry season (May is usually the hottest month)

**June – September** : the wet season (also known as the "green season")



## SHOP

The **Talat Sao** morning market in Vientiane has small shops selling high quality handmade silk scarves and wall hangings

- In Luang Prabang the car-free **Night Market** sees hill-tribe traders selling fabrics, ceramics, lamps, blankets, handicrafts and silk scarves
- Laotian coffee, often called **Pakxong** (as it usually grown around the town of Pakxong on the Boloven Plateau), makes a delicious take home souvenir



# ●●MALAYSIA

Recently listed by Lonely Planet as a top ten destination for 2014, and with new tourist attractions and 200 events and festivals scheduled for the coming year, Malaysia is a country savvy travellers definitely won't want to miss.





## WHERE TO?

The **Petronas Towers** are a highlight of KL, but don't miss the beautifully designed **Islamic Arts Museum** • Dining and entertainment options in KL range from lively **Chinatown**, to the night market at **Jalan Petaling**, and the glamour of **Asian Heritage Row**, **Changkat Bukit Bintang**, and **Jalan Telawi** • The **Cameron Highlands** are a beautiful area to visit, and include such highlights as **Genting** and **Fraser's Hill** • In **Penang** there's plenty to see and do in colonial **George Town**, as well as **Melaka City** (both UNESCO World Heritage Cities), or head to the picturesque stretch of small coves and beaches at **Batu Ferringhi** • For theme parks visit the **Iskandar Development Region (IDR)** in **Johor**, home to **Legoland** and **Hello Kitty Land** • Popular dive sites include the islands of **Sabah**, **Terengganu**, **Tioman**, and **Pulau Payar**, while the beautiful beaches of **Cherating**, **Desaru** and **Port Dickson** lure sunworshippers • In **Sabah Sarawak** don't miss the spectacular caves, jungles and mystic rock formations • Known as the jewel of Kedah, **Langkawi** is part of an archipelago made up of 99 islands and is also popular destination for honeymooners

## GETTING AROUND

The best way to travel between Peninsular Malaysia and Malaysian Borneo is by air, and there are plenty of low-cost airlines servicing domestic routes • For getting around Kuala Lumpur there are plenty of trains – Komuter, LRT, ERL and ETS – as well as car rental services • Bus companies servicing longer domestic routes include Aeroline and Supernice. In KL the main bus station is **Bandar Tasik Selatan** (accessible by LRT and KTM lines), and **KL Sentral** is the main transportation hub for taxis, buses, coaches and trains • Long distance taxis are a great option for groups, and taxi rates to specific destinations are fixed by the government and posted at taxi stands • **Bicycle rickshaws** (*trishaws*) still exist in cities such as George Town and Melaka City, and are tourist attractions unto themselves • Small towns and villages are serviced by inexpensive public buses, often with tickets purchased from the conductor after boarding • In bigger cities across Malaysian Borneo, taxis, buses and minibuses are available, while in the bush, riverboats and airplanes are the only alternatives

## CLIMATE

Malaysia has a typical tropical climate, and is warm year-round, with temperatures ranging from 21°C to 32°C.

**November - February** : monsoon season on the east coast of the peninsular Malaysia



## EAT LOCALLY

**Nasi Lemak**, a fragrant rice dish cooked in coconut milk and pandan leaf, is considered Malaysia's national dish • **Otak-otak**, a blend of fish, coconut milk, chili paste, galangal, and herbs wrapped in a banana leaf, is a prime example of the cuisine of the southern state of Peninsula Malaysia • **Beef Rendang**, or spicy coconut beef, is considered the signature dish of Malaysia • **Kway Teow**, stir-fried flat noodles with shrimp, chicken, cockles, chives, and soy sauce (sometimes served with duck eggs) is a specialty on the island of Penang • **Teh Tarik** (pulled tea) is a popular hot Indian milk tea beverage whose name derives from the process of "stretching" the drink during its preparation

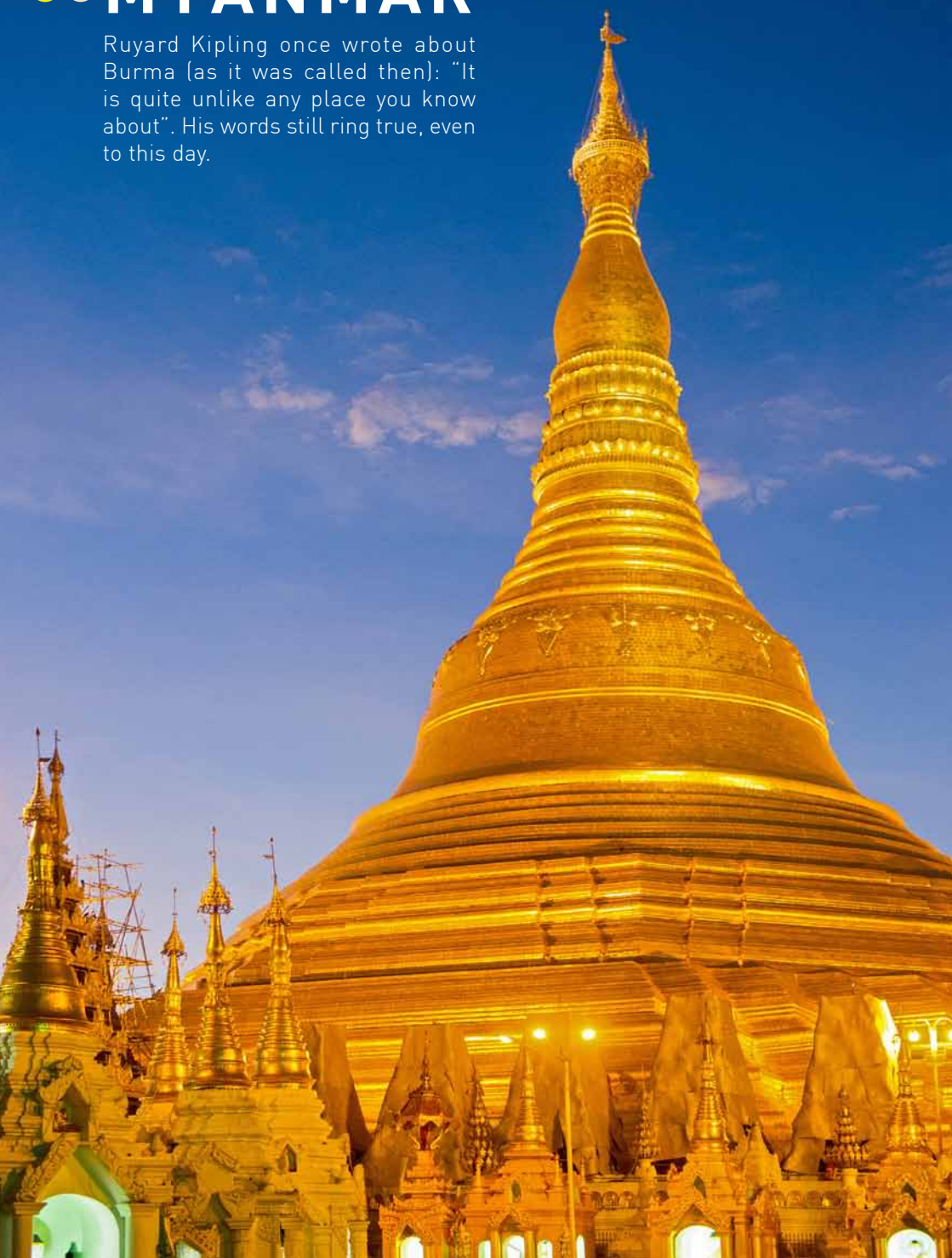


## SHOP

The **Kompleks Budaya Kraf** in KL sells locally produced batiks, pandanus (woven baskets), and ceramics, and many of the craftsmen and artisans are present there for tourists to meet and see in action • The **Royal Selangor Pewter Factory** in KL is the leading manufacturer of traditional tankards, as well as other pewter gifts and accessories • **Pottery** from the states of Sarawak and Perak, recognizable by its size and unique tribal markings, makes a highly prized memento • Malaysia is known for its excellent shopping and the **BB-KLCC precinct** in KL is the place to go for high-end brands, and one-of-a-kind street fashions

# ●●MYANMAR

Ruyard Kipling once wrote about Burma (as it was called then): "It is quite unlike any place you know about". His words still ring true, even to this day.





## WHERE TO?

The jaw-dropping **Shwedagon Pagoda**, in the main commercial city of **Yangon**, is the symbolic icon of Myanmar and really can't be overlooked ● The water-bound temples, shore-bound markets, and floating gardens of **Inle Lake** make it a must-see destination. ● For an evening of culture, visit the **Mintha Theater** in **Mandalay**, and catch an acclaimed traditional folk dance performance ● More than 2,000 Buddhist temples, dating back to between the 11th and 13th centuries, are scattered across the plains of **Bagan**; accessible by car, bike, or try a hot-air balloon overhead tour (only available in the peak season) ● The colossal 'Golden Rock' or **Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda** is one of the country's most important religious pilgrimage sites, and the arduous climb is rewarded by spectacular scenic vistas ● The modest **Yadana Labamuni Hsu-taungpye Paya**, or 'Snake Pagoda', in **Paleik** is home to 3 giant pythons that are bathed and fed regularly ● **Ngapali Beach** is the perfect getaway for sunbathers, snorkelers and swimmers who just want to relax

## GETTING AROUND

Myanmar's network of trains services huge regions of the country, including an express line connecting Mandalay with both Bagan and Yangon ● Private companies operate Myanmar's extensive bus network, which includes everything from luxury express coaches to mini 32-seaters ● Riverboats and government ferries service the almost 5,000 kms of the country's navigable waterways ● In big cities, such as Yangon, Mandalay, and Patheingyi, public buses take regular routes along the main avenues ● Cities and small towns have a variety of local transport including **bicycle rickshaws** (trishaws) vintage taxis, and **Thoun Bein** (3-wheelers similar to Thailand's *tuk-tuks*) ● Bicycles rentals are readily available in popular tourist hotspots ● Small towns rely heavily on horse carts, ox carts, and trishaws as primary modes of local transport

## CLIMATE

Myanmar enjoys a varied climate temperature-wise, with hotspots reaching 35°C or more, and elevated cooler regions experiencing temps of 15°C or less. Annual monsoon rains can make some roads impassable (especially in the delta region).

**May – September** : the rainy season

**December – February** : the dry season

**March – April, and October – November** : shoulder seasons



## EAT LOCALLY

**Mohinga**, Myanmar's unofficial national dish, consists of rice vermicelli in fish broth, served with boiled eggs, fried fish cake (*nga hpe*) and fritters (*akyaw*) ● **Shwe Yin Aye**, the country's national dessert, consists of agar jelly, tapioca and sago, in coconut milk ● **Meeshay**, a Mandalay favourite, combines rice noodles, pork and/or chicken, bean sprouts, and rice flour fritters, and comes garnished with onions, garlic, coriander, and pickled daikon/mustard greens ● **Kew Soi Dok**, popular in Yangon, sees noodles in tamarind sauce tossed with cucumbers, potatoes, dried shrimp, and served with cabbage and garlic chips ● **Htamin Jin**, an example of Shan cuisine, is fresh or fermented rice – kneaded with boiled fish – combined with tomato paste, mashed potatoes and garlic ● **Toddy Juice** (made from fermented palm sugar) is popular in central Myanmar, and **Shwe Lain Maw (Golden Orange)** is a potent orange-infused alcohol from the Shan State. Meanwhile **Myanmar Beer** is the national beer brand



## SHOP

If you can afford it, Myanmar's famous **gemstones** – rubies, diamonds, cat's eyes, emeralds, topaz and pearls – are available from numerous dealers (Yangon has many licensed shops) ● **Myanmar puppets**, elaborately costumed and bejeweled, are growing in popularity as souvenirs ● Amarapura in Mandalay is the home of first class luxurious Myanmar **silks** ● **Textiles**, especially the tapestries from the Chin State, are particularly stunning, and at Inle Lake, fabrics woven from lotus fiber are readily available

# ●●THE PHILIPPINES

Flights here generally touch down in the cities of Manila or Cebu, but the many islands, coves and small towns of the Philippines draw their fair share of travelers as well.



## WHERE TO?

While spending a day or two in historic Manila, don't overlook the more modern **Makati** shopping mecca, which is also home to dozens of great wining and dining spots ● Make a stop at the visually stunning ancient rice terraces of **Banaue**, known locally as "the eighth wonder of the world" ● In **Cordillera** make the trip to **Sagada** to take in the cool mountain climate and to see the famous hanging coffins (a traditional way of burying corpses that is still utilized) ● South of **Cebu City** the dive colony of **Moalboal** lies just across the strait from Negros, and the exciting nightlife of **Dumaguete** ● In **Coron** the attraction for scuba divers is wreck diving, but land lovers can make a trek to the **Maquinit Hot Springs** (5km east of town) ● The long strip of an island known as **Palawan** is home to not only the chilled out beach town of **Puerto Princesa**, but also the distinctive **St Paul Subterranean River National Park** ● The party beaches of **Boracay** never lose their charm (or their tourists) ● Heading much further south, try some white water rafting and cave exploring along the **Cagayan De Oro River** in **Cagayan De Oro**



## EAT LOCALLY

**Adobo**, consisting of pork and/or chicken stewed in vinegar and garlic, is considered the country's national dish ● **Sinigang na Hipon**, another national favourite, is a tamarind-flavoured sour soup dish with shrimp ● **Lechon**, an important dish at many festive occasions, is suckling pig slowly roasted over live coals and simmered with a mixture of vinegar, sugar and herbs ● In Pampanga local specialties include **Tocino** (honey cured pork) and **Sisig** (a famous bar chow made from pork) ● **Laing**, or taro leaves simmered in spiced coconut milk, is a favoured dish in Bicolano cuisine ● **San Miguel** is the most popular commercial beer brand, while **lambanog** (coconut wine) and **tuba** (palm wine) are 2 of the most popular home-brews



## SHOP

An intricate hand-embroidered **barong** (formal shirt/blouse) can be bought at special outlets, as well as many malls, across Manila ● Colourful **mats** made of *tikog*, available in the provinces of Samar and Leyte, can sometimes be cheaper when bought directly from the mat weavers themselves ● The **tubao**, a colourful handkerchief made by the Manobos and other indigenous peoples in Mindanao, can be used as a turban or head covering

## GETTING AROUND

The only provincial train service from **Metro Manila** goes to the southernmost area of **Luzon**, in the **Bicol** region ● Boat travel ranges from luxury catamarans to fastcraft ferries, to economy pumpboats (*bangka*) ● **2Go Travel** operates many routes ● Air travel is a great way to see the length and breadth of the country, and domestic carrier Philippine Airlines services most popular destinations ● In Manila the public transportation system includes three **Light Rail Transit Systems** in some parts of the city, but Manila is also famed for its inexpensive taxis ● **Jeepneys** – halfway between a jeep and a bus – are used as local transport in most towns for local and also for long distance runs, while the **Tricycle** – the Philippine rickshaw – consists of a passenger cab bolted to a motorbike, and is great for short trips

## CLIMATE

The Philippines enjoys a humid, tropical and sub-tropical (in some areas) climate, where January is the coolest month in most places, and April is the hottest.

**September – May** : the dry season (typhoon off-season)  
**June – September** : the wet season.



# ●● SINGAPORE

Although compact in size - it's the smallest of the 10 ASEAN nations - there is still a great deal to see and do in Singapore, and visiting [www.yoursingapore.com](http://www.yoursingapore.com) is a fantastic way to plan your travels.







## WHERE TO?

The **River Safari**, **Singapore Zoo** and **Night Safari** are must see attractions, clustered around Mandai, which offer visitors a one-stop wildlife and nature experience ● Themed attractions, such as **Universal Studios Singapore**, **Marine Life Park**, **Singapore Flyer** and **Sentosa Island** are great all-in-one family hotspots which offer something for everyone ● The 2 world-class integrated resorts of **Marina Bay Sands** and **Resorts World Sentosa**, house an amazing array of shopping, dining, and lifestyle outlets, as well as entertaining theme parks and theatres ● Nature lovers should take a walk through **Singapore Botanic Gardens** right in the heart of the city, or explore the **Gardens by the Bay**, a 101 hectare award-winning horticultural display, housing over 250,000 rare plants and trees ● Explore a part of Singapore where time has stood still by visiting **Pulau Ubin**, a small island situated off the north east coast of the main island ● Visits to **Little India**, **Chinatown**, **Kampong Glam**, **Joo Chiat** and **Katong** are a must for lovers of history, culture and heritage ● **Orchard Road**, the city's main shopping, dining and entertainment belt, makes a glitzy fun-filled excursion by day or by night

## GETTING AROUND

Singapore's transportation system is clean, efficient, reliable, and well-connected, all of which makes getting around the island very easy. The island's buses, taxis and **Mass Rapid Transit (MRT)** can take visitors virtually everywhere ● For a nostalgic travel mode, hop onto a **Trishaw** (pedal rickshaw), which are a rarity these days but can still be spotted around the city ● As a cruise hub in the region, a large number of international cruise lines sail out of Singapore, servicing neighbouring countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Myanmar

## CLIMATE

Singapore has a tropical rainforest climate with no distinctive seasons. Temperatures range from 22 to 35°C. April and May are the hottest months, with the wetter monsoon season from November to January.



## EAT LOCALLY

**Hainanese Chicken Rice** (slow poached chicken with fragrant rice) is often known as Singapore's national dish ● **Chilli Crab** (crabs cooked in a tangy chilli-tomato based sauce with eggs) is a must-try dish when in Singapore and best eaten with 'Mantou' (fried bun) ● **Roti Prata** is an Indian dish, similar to a flatbread, which can be eaten with curry or sugar ● **Satay**, a Malay and Indonesian dish of grilled meat on skewers, served with a peanut dipping sauce, is an island-wide favourite ● The **Singapore Sling** is a cocktail created at the Long Bar, in the Raffles Hotel, and is Singapore's nationally renowned drink ● In addition to ethnic favourites, eating locally in Singapore also means exploring the city's ultra-chic fine dining scene, which includes many Michelin starred restaurants and chefs



## SHOP

Shopping is an obsession in Singapore, and some of the best-known places for retail therapy include **The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands**, boutiques and malls (including ION, Paragon, Ngee Ann City) along **Orchard Road**, or quaint finds at **Haji Lane** ● Quirky, Singapore keepsakes (anything featuring the **Merlion** symbol, or t-shirts sporting funny "**Singlish**" words or phrases), or featured gifts from local museums, all make great souvenirs ● Local food pastes and sauces – such as **Prima Taste** – are great gifts for aspiring chefs on your gift list

# ●●THAILAND

The Kingdom of Thailand offers visitors a range of unique experiences, and even though the more well-known travel spots see the majority of tourists, there's always more to discover all across this fascinating country.





## WHERE TO?

The old town area of **Bangkok** and the old town area of **Chiang Mai** are 2 of the best places to explore a very traditional Thai way of life ● The beaches of **Phuket**, **Pattaya**, **Krabi**, **Ko Samet**, and **Ko Chang**, are among the most popular stopovers for many tourists, but **Ranong**, **Phang-nga**, and **Trang**, offer a more peaceful and relaxing seaside atmosphere ● The best party beaches include **Ko Samui**, **Ko Tao**, and **Ko Phangan** (which is famous for its “full-moon parties”) ● Visit **Chiang Mai**, **Chiang Rai**, **Kanchanaburi**, and **Khao Yai** for national parks and jungle hikes ● A high-altitude artist’s village can be found in the northern mountains of **Pai** ● The ruins of the ancient Thai kingdoms can be found in the towns of **Sukhothai** and **Ayutthaya** ● Visiting **Isaan** (Thailand’s northeastern provinces) offers a glimpse into a unique agricultural and traditional way of life (and terrific spicy food along the way)

## GETTING AROUND

Thailand’s extensive railway system (SRT) links Bangkok to most major tourist destinations in the country. The main train station in Bangkok is **Hua Lamphong** ● In Bangkok the **BTS Skytrain** and **MRT subway system** cover most of the downtown, commercial, and outlying residential areas ● Thailand’s extensive network of buses service both popular and remote destinations. The 3 main bus terminals in Bangkok are: the **Northern Bus Terminal** (near Mochit BTS station); the **Eastern Bus Terminal** (at Ekkamai BTS Station); and the **Southern Bus Terminal** (easily accessible by taxi or bus) ● In Bangkok many buses depart from the busy backpacker zone at **Khao San Rd.**, and provide service to most major tourist destinations across the country. ● Metered taxis, motorbike taxis, *tuk-tuks* (3-wheelers), minivans and buses are great ways to get around Bangkok and other major cities in Thailand ● Common public transportation modes in and between other provinces and rural areas include the *songthaes* (pick-ups or larger trucks installed with covered bench seating)

## CLIMATE

The kingdom enjoys a warm tropical climate. Temperatures in central and southern Thailand can reach over 35°C, while in the mountainous northern regions it is usually much cooler.

**November – February** : cooler months (great time to visit)  
**March – April** : the hottest months  
**May – October** : the wettest months



## EAT LOCALLY

Thai cuisine offers a diverse blend of delicious foods. Thais share meals (eating family style), and rice is the main component of each meal, usually consumed with other supplements such as soups, curries and stir fries ● **Phat Thai**, a mix of spicy stir-fried rice noodles with eggs, peanuts and bean sprouts (prepared with shrimp, chicken, or tofu), is undoubtedly the nation’s favorite dish ● **Tom Yum Kung**, a spicy and sour prawn soup (also made with chicken), is synonymous with Bangkok ● **Massaman Curry**, voted the top dish on CNN’s 2011 poll of the world’s 50 most delicious foods, contains beef or chicken (not pork), coconut milk, cinnamon, and tamarind sauce ● **Khao Soi**, a northern Thai specialty (particularly in Chiang Mai) consists of flat egg noodles served in a curry broth with meat (chicken, pork, or beef), and topped with crispy fried noodles ● Thailand has 3 national beer brands – **Singha**, **Leo**, and **Chang** – as well as several local craft beers, such as **Phuket Beer**. Local whiskies (which more resemble sugarcane molasses-based rum) are also popular, with **Sangsom** and **Mekong** being the leading brands



## SHOP

Bangkok is well-known as a shopping paradise, and the city’s numerous shopping malls – including **Siam Paragon**, **CentralWorld**, **Terminal 21**, and **Emporium** – are often within walking distance of BTS and MRT stations, and carry brand name international and Thai merchandise ● When it comes to bargaining, Bangkok’s **Chatuchak Weekend Market** tops of the list with its huge variety of unique products – making it fun for tourists and residents alike ● **Asiatique** is hip and stylish dining and shopping complex, made all the more enchanting by its nostalgic riverfront ambience ● In Chiang Mai, hand-painted umbrellas made of delicate Sa paper are readily available at the **Bo Sang Umbrella Village**, while a wide selection of local handicrafts and souvenirs can be found at the **Night Bazaar and Walking Streets** ● For chic and trendy shopping in Chiang Mai, head to trendy **Nimmanhaemin Road**





# ●●VIET NAM

Viet Nam is a very large country, with many different geographic regions, and anyone planning a visit here should bear in mind that there's more to see than just Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.





## WHERE TO?

Getting lost in the winding narrow streets of **Hanoi's Old Quarter** is a must for any visitor to Viet Nam's capital city

- Although the glamour and nightlife of **Ho Chi Minh City** is enticing, there's also plenty sobering war monuments serving as reminders of the country's turbulent past
- Fresh mountain air is reason enough for making a trip to **Dalat**, which enjoys year round cool weather, or **Sapa** in the north, home to a variety of local hill tribe populations
- Exploring ancient caves, and kayaking past towering limestone cliffs, makes a trip to **Ha Long Bay** an amazing excursion
- **Nha Trang** and **Mui Ne** beaches offer sun-worshippers a chance to do some sunning, swimming and maybe even a little kite-surfing

## GETTING AROUND

Viet Nam's state-owned railway system, **Vietnam Railways**, runs along the coast between HCMC and Hanoi, and links the capital with **Hai Phong** and northern towns

- Viet Nam has an extensive network of inexpensive buses that reach the far-flung corners of the country, but travelling from Hanoi to HCMC is not advisable as it is just too far (take the train or book a domestic airline flight instead)
- The best way to get around Hanoi and HCMC is by taxi, motorcycle taxi, public bus or the slow moving **Cyclo** (a 3-wheel rickshaw style bicycle cart)

## CLIMATE

The climate of Viet Nam is varied, with high temperatures year-round in southern and central Viet Nam, and a definite cooler season in the north.

**April – June** : usually the quietest months but expect hot, humid weather across the whole country (except for the mountainous areas)

**July – October** : violent and unpredictable typhoons affect much of central and northern Vietnam

**October – March** : the weather is dry and a little bit cooler



## EAT LOCALLY

**Pho Bo**, or beef noodle soup, is typically served in bowls, garnished with spring onion, and is considered the national dish of Viet Nam

- **Banh Mi Kep Thit** is a Vietnamese baguette sandwich, served with a mix of paté, mayonnaise, cold cuts, jalapeños, pickled daikon, carrot, and cucumber
- **Bun Thit Nuong**, or grilled pork with rice vermicelli, is an extremely popular dish, and each region and restaurant has its own unique recipe
- **Ca Phe Da** is a mix of finely ground Vietnamese dark roast coffee (brewed with a drip filter) and sweetened condensed milk, stirred and served hot, or poured over ice
- **Bia Hoi**, is a draught beer – made daily – available on street corners throughout the country
- Among Viet Nam's name brand beers, **Saigon Do** is popular in the south, **Bia Hanoi** is popular in the north, and **Bia 333** is the choice in much of the central region
- **Snake Wine** is an exotic Vietnamese alcohol produced by infusing whole poisonous snakes (and occasionally scorpions) in rice wine or grain alcohol



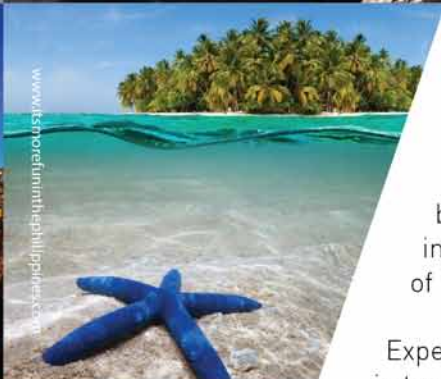
## SHOP

Traditional **wood-carved** items (usually made from cinnamon or camphor wood), and **lacquerware** items decorated with mother-of-pearl inlay, make great parting gifts

- In Ho Chi Minh City, **Lotus** and **Dogma** are 2 stores that are goldmines for vintage propaganda posters from the 60s and 70s
- On historical **Hang Bac Street** in Hanoi, silver goods for sale are still produced using secret methods that have been passed down through generations
- **Hang Gai Street**, also in Hanoi, is a silk shopper's paradise, with shimmering scarves and stoles, finely tailored men's and women's clothes, heavily embroidered and sequined evening gowns, and beautiful handbags

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# ●● TOURIST INFORMATION CONTACTS

## BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Tourism Development Department  
Ministry of Industry and Primary  
Resources Bandar Seri Begawan BB  
3910 Brunei Darussalam  
Tel: +673 238 2822  
Fax: +673 238 2807  
[www.bruneitourism.travel](http://www.bruneitourism.travel)



## CAMBODIA

Ministry of Tourism  
Lot 3A, St. 169, Veal Vong Commune,  
Prampi Makara District, Phnom Penh,  
Kingdom of Cambodia  
[www.tourismcambodia.org](http://www.tourismcambodia.org)



## INDONESIA

Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy  
Jl. Merdeka Barat 17, Jakarta 10110  
Indonesia  
[www.indonesia.travel](http://www.indonesia.travel)



## LAO PDR

Department of Tourism Marketing, Ministry  
of Information, Culture and Tourism  
P.O. Box: 3556, Lane Xang Avenue,  
Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR.  
Tel: +856-21-212248  
[www.tourismlaos.org](http://www.tourismlaos.org)



## MALAYSIA

Tourism Info Line: 1 300 88 5050

Ministry of Tourism  
Malaysia No. 2, Tower 1 Jalan P5/6,  
Precint 5 62200 PUTRAJAYA  
[www.motour.gov.my](http://www.motour.gov.my)  
[www.tourismmalaysia.gov.my](http://www.tourismmalaysia.gov.my)





## MYANMAR

Ministry of Hotels and Tourism  
Building No. 33, Nay Pyi Taw,  
Union Of Myanmar:  
Tel: 95 67 406129, 406061  
[www.tourism-myanmar.org](http://www.tourism-myanmar.org)  
[www.myanmar-tourism.org](http://www.myanmar-tourism.org)



## THE PHILIPPINES

Department of Tourism  
JB Building, 351 Senator Gil Puyat Avenue,  
Makati City, Philippines  
[www.tourism.gov.ph](http://www.tourism.gov.ph)  
[www.itsmorefuninthephilippines.com](http://www.itsmorefuninthephilippines.com)



## SINGAPORE

Tourism Court 1 Orchard Spring Lane  
Singapore 247729  
Tel: 6736-6622  
[www.yoursingapore.com](http://www.yoursingapore.com)

### Tourist Information Hotline

at 1800-736-2000 (toll-free in Singapore),  
or +65-6736-2000 (from overseas).  
Hotline operates Monday to Friday  
(excluding Public Holidays), from 9am to 6pm.



## THAILAND

Ministry of Tourism and Sports  
4 Ratchadamnoen Nok Avenue,  
Watsomanas, Pomprap Sattruphai,  
Bangkok 10100 Thailand  
Tel: (+66) 2283 1500  
Fax: (+66) 2356 0746  
[www.mots.go.th](http://www.mots.go.th)

### Tourism Authority of Thailand

1600 New Petchaburi Road, Makkasan,  
Ratchathewi, Bangkok 10400 Thailand  
TAT Contact Center: Tel: (+66) 2250 5500  
Fax: (+66) 1672  
[www.tourismthailand.org](http://www.tourismthailand.org)



## VIET NAM

Viet Nam National Administration of Tourism  
80 Quan Su Street, Hoan Kiem District, Ha Noi  
Tel: (84-4) 3942 3760  
Fax: (84-4) 3942 4115  
[www.vietnamtourism.com](http://www.vietnamtourism.com)

# ●●FAST FACTS

Helpful facts and figures, from across the 10 ASEAN nations, to help equip travelers arriving in the region.



## BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

**Official Name:** Negara Brunei Darussalam

**Area:** 5,765 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 393,162

**Capital:** Bandar Seri Begawan

**Languages:** Malay, English, Chinese

**Religions:** Islam, Buddhism, Christianity

**Currency:** Brunei Dollar (BND)



## CAMBODIA

**Official Name:** The Kingdom of Cambodia

**Area:** 181,035 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 14 Million

**Capital:** Phnom Penh

**Languages:** Khmer is the official language, however English is widely spoken and understood.

**Religions:** Theravada Buddhism

**Currency:** Riel (KHR)



## INDONESIA

**Official Name:** The Republic of Indonesia

**Area:** 1,904,569 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 237,641,326

**Capital:** Jakarta

**Languages:** Bahasa Indonesia is the official language and Various Ethnic Languages, however English is widely spoken and understood

**Religions:** Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Other

**Currency:** Indonesian Rupiah (IDR)



## LAO PDR

**Official Name:** Lao People's Democratic Republic

**Area:** 236,800 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 6,521,000

**Capital:** Vientiane

**Languages:** Lao, English, French, and Various Ethnic Languages

**Religions:** Buddhism, Other

**Currency:** Kip (LAK)



## MALAYSIA

**Official Name:** Malaysia

**Area:** 329,847 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 27,000,000

**Capital:** Kuala Lumpur

**Languages:** Bahasa Melayu, English, Chinese Dialects, Other Regional Dialects

**Religions:** Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Taoism, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Others

**Currency:** Ringgit Malaysia (MYR)



## MYANMAR

**Official Name:** The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

**Area:** 676,577 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** Over 60 Millions

**Capital:** Nay Pyi Taw (Administrative City)

**Languages:** Burmese, however English is widely spoken and understood

**Religions:** Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Some Animism

**Currency:** Kyat (MMK)



## THE PHILIPPINES

**Official Name:** Republic of the Philippines

**Area:** 300,000 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 98,580,949

**Capital:** Manila

**Languages:** Filipino (Based on Tagalog), English, 8 Major Dialects and Other Regional Dialects.

**Religions:** Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Buddhism

**Currency:** Philippine Peso (PHP)



## SINGAPORE

**Official Name:** Republic of Singapore

**Area:** 715.1 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 5,312,400

**Capital:** Singapore

**Languages:** English, Mandarin, Malay, Tamil,

**Religions:** Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Taoism

**Currency:** Singapore Dollar (SGD)



## THAILAND

**Official Name:** Kingdom of Thailand

**Area:** 513,115 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 67.4 million

**Capital:** Bangkok

**Languages:** Thai

**Religions:** Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Others

**Currency:** Thai Baht (THB)



## VIET NAM

**Official Name:** Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

**Area:** 331,211.6 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 88,772,900 (2012)

**Capital:** Hanoi

**Languages:** Vietnamese

**Religion:** Diverse Mix of Major

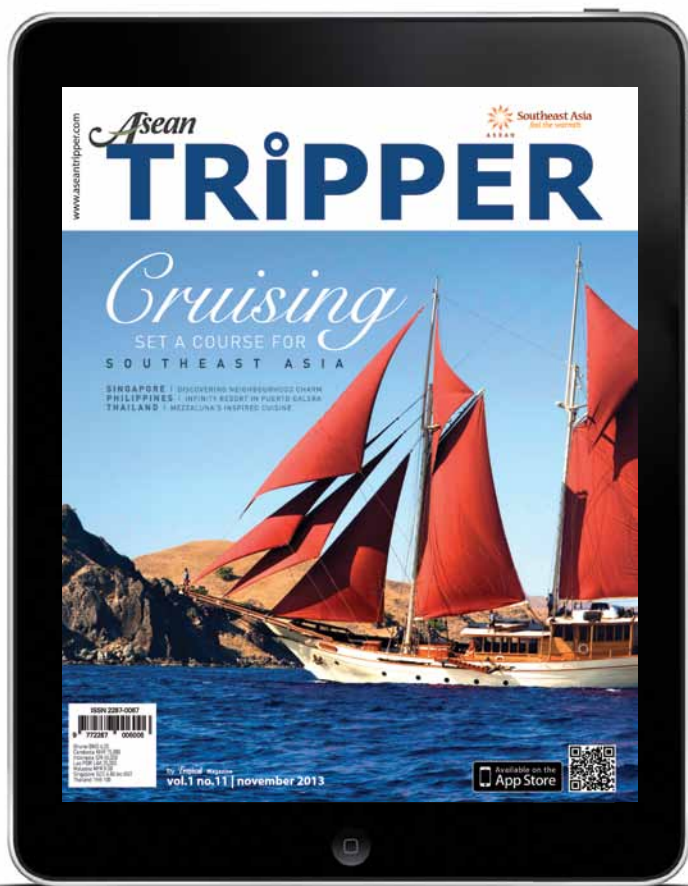
**Religions:** Buddhism, Catholicism, Caodanism, Hoa Hao, Protestantism, Islam

**Currency:** Dong (VND)



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