

SPICE ROADS

CYCLING



YUNNAN DISCOVERY

Tour Code
CHN-CYD

12 DAYS
11 NIGHTS

	Destinations	China
	Tour Meets Tour Ends	Shangri-La Kunming
	Fly in to Fly out of	Diqing Shangri-La Airport (DIG) Kunming Changshu International Airport (KMG)
	Group Size Minimum Age	2-16 riders 18 (on scheduled departures)

ACTIVITY PROFILE



7
Cycling days

462_{km}
Total cycling distance

68_{km}
Avg distance / day

1235_m
Avg climbing / day

PRICING



Price
Bike Hire (Mountain Bike)
Single Supplement

US\$ 2,600
US\$ 185
US\$ 425

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ SpiceRoads jersey
- ✓ Water bottle
- ✓ Support vehicle
- ✓ Guide(s)
- ✓ Meals (as indicated)
- ✓ Airport pick up
- ✓ Accommodation
- ✓ Snacks and drinks

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- ✗ International flights
- ✗ Domestic flights
- ✗ Airport drop off
- ✗ Visa fees
- ✗ Alcohol
- ✗ Tips

DEPARTURES



19 May - 30 May 2024
08 September - 19 September 2024
20 October - 31 October 2024
20 April - 01 May 2025
18 May - 29 May 2025
07 September - 18 September 2025
19 October - 30 October 2025

TRIP PROFILE

The total distance is 477 km over 7 days of riding. The first few days of the tour are spent acclimating to the altitude and environment. The riding is a real mixture as some days are short but with hill climbs, and others are longer, flat and fast, but they are all filled with jaw-dropping scenery. Keep in mind that this trip begins in Shangri-La, over 3,300 metres above sea level, and spends over a week above 2,500 metres.

There's never a dull-moment on this high-altitude journey through a surprising diversity of landscapes and cultures. Most of the days are packed with cultural experiences and scenic delights. Make sure that you bring your camera, as you are sure to want to record your experiences. The friendly locals, lack of tourists, stunning geography, and mouth-watering food will make it hard to say goodbye!

Suitability: Yunnan is a high-altitude mountainous region, so you can expect a physically challenging experience on this cycling tour. There are many climbs, but they are all on paved roads so a smooth steady climb is possible. Being physically fit will, of course, be a huge asset, but as the tour is fully supported, a van can provide transfers if a cyclist desires it.

Biking Conditions: This bike tour is mainly on smooth, paved roads, but there are also some small off-road sections, but nothing technical. There are some tough climbs in high altitudes with fast descents. It gets fairly cold up among the clouds, so make sure you bring some warm cycling clothes. Riders should have a moderate level of cycling experience and be in good physical condition because of the altitudes involved during the tour.



Day 1 Arrive in Shangri-La

We meet in Shangri-La, the capital of Dechen Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. You will be met at the airport by a SpiceRoads local tour guide for a group transfer and brought to the hotel for check-in. In the afternoon we begin exploring China with a visit to the spectacular Ganden Sumtseling Monastery, built at the instruction of the fifth Dalai Lama in the 17th century. Currently, there are over 800 monks still living and practicing here. This picturesque site located on the top of a hill, is very much similar in style to the Potala Palace in Lhasa. Later this evening, we will have a Tibetan-style welcome dinner. Today, Shangri-La is principally a Tibetan township but has a Han Chinese population as well as a smattering of Bai, Hui, and Naxi minorities. Historically, the town was a trading centre between Tibet, Burma, and India, where mule caravans once made journeys to conduct commerce among the regions.



Compass Inn



Dinner

Day 2 Shangri-La Loop

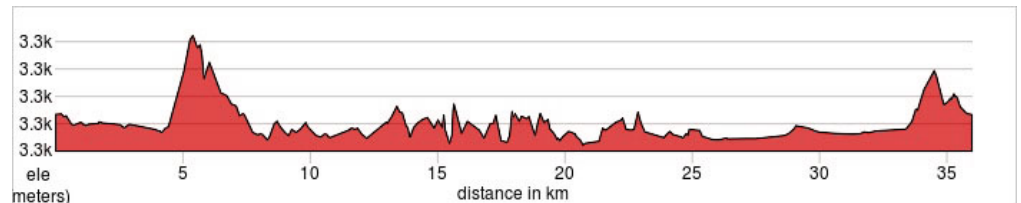
As Shangri-La is at 3,300 m, we take it easy so you can acclimate to the altitude. We do bike fitting and a warm-up ride around Napa Lake, a wetland that attracts many migrant birds to spend the winter. This flat ride around the lake helps you acclimatize to the thin air and is a beautiful start to your bike tour! We return to the hotel for lunch, and the rest of the afternoon is free for exploring this Tibetan town.



Compass Inn



Breakfast, Lunch



Ride 25km



+315m



-315m

Day 3 Shangri-La - Bai Shui Tai

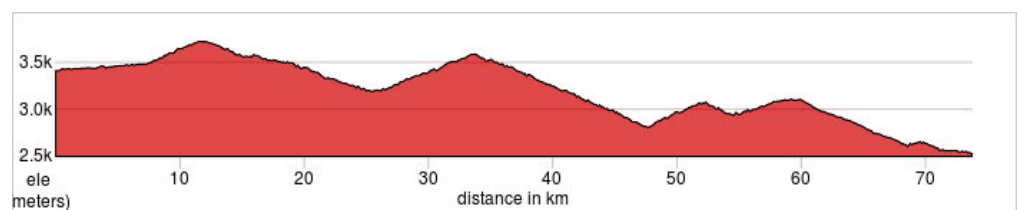
We bid farewell to Shangri-La and transfer a short distance out of town to start cycling. It is a flat ride to start, passing Tibetan villages and white pagodas before we start the day's first big climb. This is a tough day as we will be riding high, but the spectacular scenery will make the hard work worth it. There are some difficult climbs and extraordinarily long descents to drive your adrenaline rush. We wind our way up and down through valleys and across mountainsides completely covered with wild camellias, rhododendrons, azaleas, and osmanthus trees. We arrive in the late afternoon to Bai Shui Tai. If after checking in, you may feel up to a walk up to the spiritual origin of the Naxi people: the Karst Terraces "Bai Shui Tai" sits above the town. It is about 45 minutes round trip.



Baodan Hotel



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 75km



+1356m



-2234m

Day 4 Bai Shui Tai - Tiger Leaping Gorge

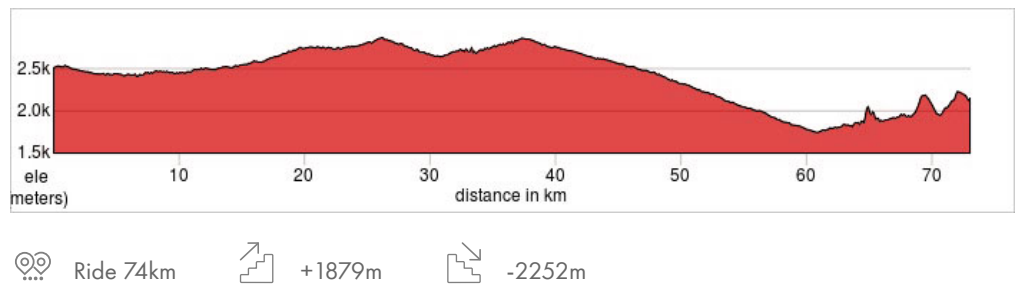
After breakfast, we start the day with a few short climbs and rolling sections before a bigger push up and over a small pass where we see Haba Mountain (5,396 m) towering above a beautiful valley. It's a 6 km descent winding down towards the Naxi village of Haba where we have lunch in a local guesthouse. After lunch, we get back on our bikes for a 7 km climb to a pass at 3,250 m followed by another downhill for 25 km to the Yangtse River Valley. When we reach Yonke village, we turn to Tiger Leaping Gorge and cycle through one of the deepest and most dramatic gorges in the world, rising nearly 4,000 m from the river to snow-capped peaks.



Tibet Guesthouse



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 5 Tiger Leaping Gorge Rest Day

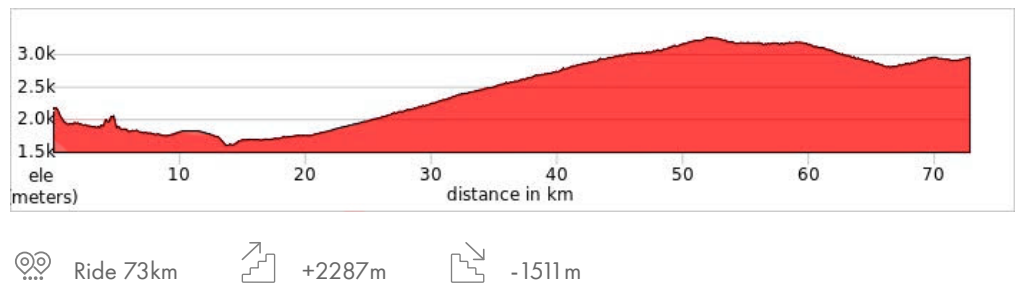
Enjoy the magnificent scenery of the famous Tiger Leaping Gorge of the Yangtze River.. You are free to use the bikes for a 30 km round trip cycle through the gorge of the Yangtze River. Or you might want to hike down to the river side and watch gigantic rapids running over the infamous tiger leaping rock. Or go on a hike on upper trails of the gorge to see snowcapped peaks above the third deepest gorge in the world.

Tibet Guesthouse Breakfast

Day 6 Tiger Leaping Gorge - Lijiang

We have an easy 12 km cycle back through the gorge again towards the Yangtze ferry. Here we will cross the river and then start a 30 km steady climb. We then conquer the Dragon Snow Mountain pass at 3,100 metres, having ascended close to 1,500 metres! We then enjoy some undulating hills with some long downhill all the way to the Lijiang area. We travel through the Dragon Snow Mountain Park which is known as a natural glacier museum. We will stop at Blue Moon Valley, which is actually an extremely blue river meandering through a lush valley of Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, and be transferred for the last 30 km to Lijiang, an ancient Naxi town, in the late afternoon. The Naxi people are a small but fascinating ethnic minority known for their matriarchal society, their pictographic language, and their distinctive music.

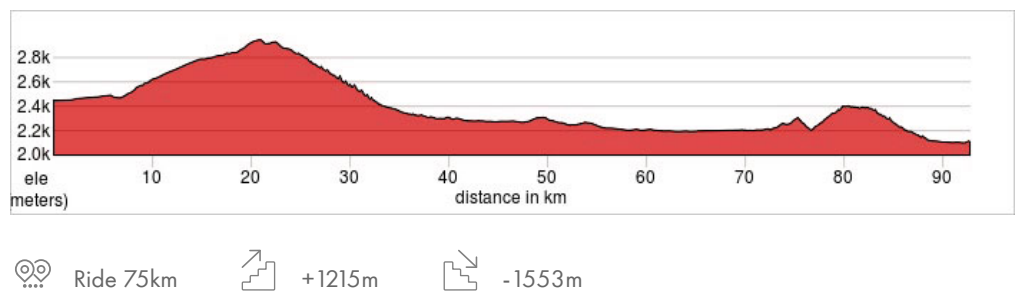
Palace Hotel Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 7 Lijiang - Shaxi

We transfer out of the city and start another memorable day that takes us into the heart of rural Yunnan. We ride over a pass, descend into a valley, and ride along the 'Old Tibet 214 highway' past tranquil scenes of mud brick villages, bamboo groves, rivers, and paddy fields. Right before Shaxi, we do two short but steeper climbs. A downhill (check that your brakes are working) through rural scenery that brings us to Shaxi. You really sense a feeling of timelessness, as the way of life here has remained unchanged for centuries. We stay at a wonderfully local courtyard hotel.

Shaxi Dianting Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 8 Shaxi Village Rest Day

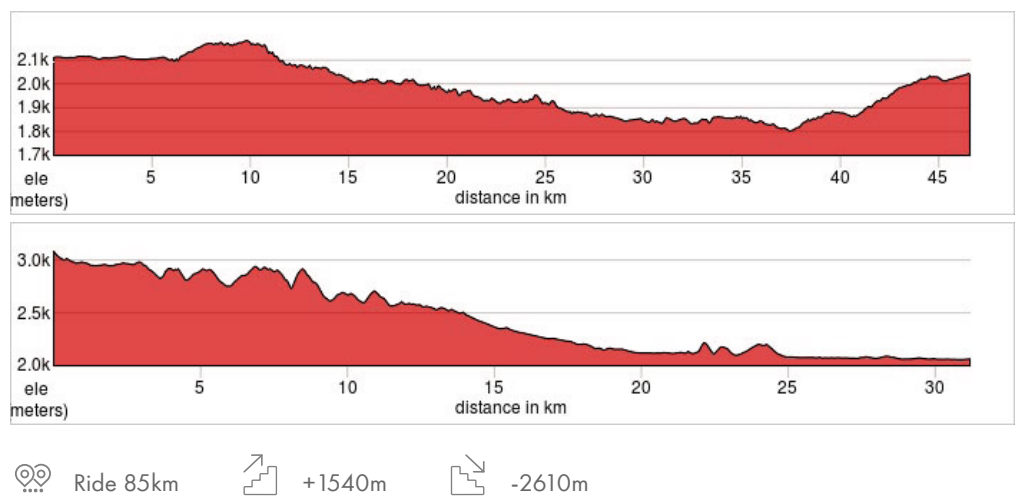
Shaxi started as a trading point of tea and horses during the Tang Dynasty (618 – 907). The town's prosperity was at its heights during the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368 – 1912). This is probably the most intact horse caravan town on the ancient tea route leading from Yunnan into Burma and Tibet. The Sideng market square of Shaxi was added to the World Monuments Watch List of Most Endangered Sites in 2001. Today is a rest day in this interesting little town, nestled in a valley, so it is a perfect place to explore the surrounding villages and countryside.

Shaxi Dianting Breakfast

Day 9 Shaxi - Xia Shan Kou

We start with another beautiful day of riding on the once very busy tea horse caravan route. The road was used by horse caravans transporting tea and salt between villages, and they went as far as to Tibet and India. We follow the Heihui River and pass through some interesting villages. It's flat, easy riding for 47 km to Liantie Town, our lunch place. After lunch, we transfer to the mountain pass at 3,022 m. There is an exhilarating 22 km downhill on the other side. We ride for 10 km and end the day in Xia Shan Kou where we can soothe our sore muscles in the famous hot springs.

Er Yuan Hot Springs Hotel Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

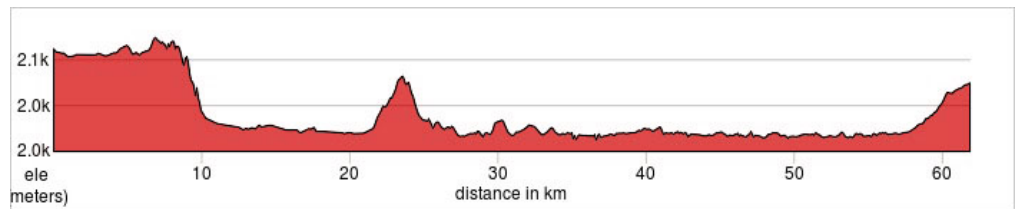


Day 10 Xia Shan Kou - Dali

This morning is our last riding day as we head to the historic town of Dali (1,900 m). Cycling along a flat paved road between the towering Cangshan Mountain range and Er Hai Lake, we should arrive in Old Dali in time for a late lunch. This fascinating town is home to the Bai people, one of the nation's largest minorities and once the centre of the powerful 8th-century Nanzhao Kingdom. Dali is an extraordinary town to explore with its gated city walls, bustling old streets, and lakeside setting. In the 16th century, Dali was an important gateway for cultural exchange and trading with Southeast Asian countries. Today, it is a melting pot of different ethnic groups, reflected aptly in its amazing architecture, cobbled streets, and colorful markets.

 Dali Old City Hotel

 Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 55km



+327m



-363m

Day 11 Dali to Kunming

We take a 4 to 5 hour bus ride back to Kunming and overnight there. The rest of the day is free for exploring the city before we meet again for a farewell meal together.



U-Choice Hotel



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12 Departure

The day is free until your departure.



Breakfast

Disclaimer: The adventure cycling tours we operate often go beyond the beaten track, and the countries where we ride are not always predictable. Due to these reasons, it is occasionally necessary to reroute or update itineraries. Our guarantee is that we will not change a trip unless for safety or to improve it. Our listed hotels are always accurate at the time of writing, but should we have to change any hotel, it will always be for a similar or better one.

NUTS & BOLTS

Bikes

Because some people can't imagine going on a trip without their own beloved bicycle, we do not provide them as part of this tour. However, you can hire bikes locally for the price listed in the tour pricing section.

If you bring your own bike, please make sure it is a mountain bike, preferably with front suspension, in good mechanical order.

Bike Repairs

Basic spares and tools are carried by the guide and on the support vehicle, though we cannot guarantee having spares for every conceivable problem. Carrying a basic tool kit, a spare tube and a pump while riding is recommended.

Safety

Wearing a helmet is required on all our biking adventures and is non negotiable. If you do not wear a helmet you will not be allowed to cycle. Your tour leader is trained in first aid and emergency rescue, but to a large degree you must be responsible for your own safety while riding. It is therefore compulsory that you take out travel insurance that will cover you for a mountain biking tour.

Guides

You will be led by a local English-speaking guide and if the group is 9 people or more we will add another guide to the tour. All our guides are well informed in the history, culture and religions of the area where you are biking and are skilled at passing that knowledge on to you. Your guide is also medically trained and an experienced cyclist, able to handle most minor repairs en route.

THE NITTY GRITTY

Passports and Visas

All nationalities are required to possess a valid passport. An entry visa is required to enter the PRC. Most travelers will seek a type L visa, stemming from the Chinese word: luxing (travel). This letter is stamped directly onto the visa. Visas are easily obtainable from most Chinese embassies or consulates abroad and issued within 3 to 5 days from application. Express visas are available for an additional fee. If you are applying for a visa by mail, it can take 3 to 4 weeks for approval. Most nationalities qualify for a 30 day visa which is activated on your first day in China, and must be used within 3 months of its issuance. There are also 60 and 90 day visas available. The 90 day visas were once difficult to get but are now more easily obtainable. A Chinese visa covers virtually the entire country with the exception of some restricted areas and Tibet.

Health

Recommended vaccinations include: Adult diphtheria and tetanus, Hepatitis A and B, Measles, mumps and rubella, Typhoid, Varicella, Influenza, Japanese B encephalitis, Pneumonia, Rabies, and Tuberculosis. If you are arriving from a country infected with Yellow Fever, a certificate is required within six days. Please speak to your doctor for the most up to date information.

Weather

China is a big country with a massive land and the climates is extremely diverse that varies from region to region. The climate of China at the north is mostly subtropical during summer and very cold in winter. Only a few months have an intense raining and often cause flooding at the central and southern part of China. The overall temperature can range from 6°C to 31°C which in some parts of China is freezing as low as -4°C and some region with high temperature that can rise up to 35°C. Therefore it is hard to summarize the climate in general but it is possible to divide into different regions where we tour.

Chengdu, Sichuan This area has a subtropical monsoon climate. It is fairly warm in the winter, dry in the spring, hot in the summer, and rainy in the autumn. The average temperature in January is 5-8 degrees Celsius (41-46 degree Fahrenheit). The average temperature in July is 25-29 degrees Celsius (77-84 degrees Fahrenheit). There are 250 to 300 cloudy and rainy days a year in the plain. The rainy season extends from May through September, and the dry season extends from October through April.

Kham Tibet

The Western Sichuan plateau areas are quite cool and have an average annual temperature of less than 8 degrees Celsius. The climate can be summarized as a late spring, a short summer, a short autumn and a cold winter. The average temperature is 5 degrees below zero in January, 5 to 10 degrees in April, 10 to 15 degrees in June and 5 degrees in October. Spring is from May to June when normally the snow will melt up on the mountain tops. July and August are the rainy season, with the average temperature range from 20 °C (65 °F) and 28 °C (83 °F) during daytime. Autumn comes in early September and winter can come by November.

Yunnan

Weather in Yunnan is considered the warmest part of China compared to other regions where we cycle from Kunming to Shangri-La in this region. An average daily high temperature is only 24°C. The climate is almost moderate but there is still some months with high humidity. Hot season temperature's range is only 22°C to 25°C from March to September, making May and June the hottest. Cold season occurs for the whole year with temperature ranging from only 3°C to highest at only 17°C making January and December the freezing month. Rainy season starts in May and ends in October with an intense raining for June, July and August.

Food

Meals are included as per the itinerary where B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner. Most meals are some variety of traditional Chinese dishes. The staple of any meal in China is either rice or noodles, and most meals will include these. Chinese cuisine is world famous and we make sure our meals allow you to sample as much variety as possible including local specialties. Any special dietary requirements can also be catered for as well. Please let us know at the time of booking.

Drink

Keeping you completely hydrated is a job we take very seriously. Cold water, some energy-restoring local fruit and soft drinks are included in the tour price. Beer is freely available everywhere in China, but is NOT included in the price.

Solo Travelers

SpiceRoads does not require you to pay a surcharge for travelling alone. We will arrange for you to share accommodation with another traveller of the same gender and if we can not match you up we will provide a single room at no extra charge. If you prefer not to share a single supplement is payable to guarantee your own room. The cost of the single supplement is listed above.

Extra Expenses

We recommend that you tuck away a few extra dollars, perhaps US\$10, for incidentals.

Money

Renminbi can be exchanged for foreign currency or travelers checks at border crossings, international airports, branches of the Bank of China, tourist hotels and some large department stores. The official rate is given almost everywhere and the exchange charge is standardized, so there is little need to shop around for the best deal. ATMs are common in all sizable towns and cities and you can use Visa, Master Card, Cirrus, Maestro, Plus and American Express (AmEx) to withdraw cash but there is a maximum daily withdrawal amount.

GENERAL BOOKING INFO

If this is the tour for you here's what you need to do to confirm your place:

FLEXIBLE BOOKING CONDITIONS

Booking a SpiceRoads cycling adventure is easy and we try to do everything possible to make sure you have full flexibility and peace of mind. We do not require a deposit to hold your place on a tour and once full payment has been made your money is protected in our client account and you have the flexibility to cancel or change your booking if needed.

CONFIRMING YOUR BOOKING

Just complete our online booking form or send your booking details offline (email or post), and we will confirm your participation. No deposit is needed to confirm your place on a SpiceRoads tour.

You are advised to read our [Booking Conditions](#) in full before you make your payment and should you require further clarifications of any of the conditions below, please [email us](#) or call our office.

TRIP STATUS

There is a minimum number of participants (usually 2) required to enable the trip to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to Depart'. Once a trip is guaranteed to depart you are free to book your flights and make other travel arrangements. If the trip status is 'Limited' will mean we have only a small number of spaces available for booking. If you are unsure about the trip status, please [email us](#) or call our office.

BOOKING ONLINE

From the tour page, click the 'Book Now' link. All departures for this tour will appear, just select the date you'd like to travel. For the next steps, you'll need to know the names of the people travelling. If you wish you can also provide extra details such as passport numbers, height (for bike hire), or you can add that later by logging into [Manage My Trip](#) (we'll set up an account for you automatically if you don't already have one). Our system will contact you from time to time to fill in the missing information, as it will be required before departure. However, if the trip that you are booking offers a child discount, you will have to fill out the date of birth of each rider (so we can calculate the appropriate discount).

If you are having any problems [please send us an email](#), or give us a call (+66 026 3295) and one of our travel specialists will assist you with your booking.

BOOKING OFFLINE

Just call us or send an email indicating which trip you want to join and we will happily send you a list of questions and process your booking for you.

DEPOSITS AND PAYMENTS

We do not require a deposit or full payment to book a place for you on a tour.

The balance of the tour's cost (final invoice) will need to be paid 60 days before the departure date with fees for any bicycle rental(s), single supplement(s) and extra hotel nights.

In the case where a booking is made when there are less than 60 days until the tour departure date, the tour's cost should be paid in full within 72 hours of receiving an invoice from SpiceRoads. Payment can be made by credit card using our online payment gateway or by bank transfer. When making payment online you will need to confirm that you have read these booking conditions during the "checkout" process, which equates to agreeing to the terms of services and stipulations as indicated in this document.

In all cases, tour fees need to be paid "in full" before participation in a tour. No person(s) will be allowed to join a tour without fully settling their invoice and receiving a confirmation number from SpiceRoads.

The exception can be made for last-minute miscellaneous fees that can be paid locally (visas, additional local hotel bookings, etc.) can be settled on the day of arrival.

FULL FLEXIBILITY FOR TOUR CANCELATIONS

If the tour is cancelled or postponed by SpiceRoads because we didn't make the trip numbers and the tour can't run, we will make a full cash refund (by bank transfer or on your credit card).

If the tour is cancelled for any other reason, including due to Covid related travel restrictions, we will give you a full credit (with no deductions for admin or any other small-print item) to use on any SpiceRoads tour with no time limit. (Exceptions being flights, special permits and other non-refundable items and these will be advised when booking the trip).

Before paying for your tour, you can cancel your booking with no charge and up until 40 days before departure, you can change your booking to another travel date or move your booking onto another SpiceRoads tour with no charges.

If you need to cancel after you have made full payment, please see our [cancellation policy](#).

Loyalty Riders Club

For those who have been on several long tours with us, we reward customer loyalty by offering repeat customers a special discount off the tour price (excludes single supplement and bike rental). If this is your fourth scheduled tour or more you will receive a 5% discount. If this is your eighth scheduled tour or more we will extend a 10% discount. The discount will be reflected in your online booking, but please contact us if any questions. Loyalty discounts cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Note: Only tours of 7 days or more will be applicable for a loyalty discount.

International Flights

International flights, to and from the start and finish points are not included in the tour price. Once your tour is Guaranteed to Depart you can book your flight. Please contact us for advice before arranging flights for the best arrival and departure times. We would only cancel a trip for an extreme circumstance, but in that case, where we cancel your trip, we cannot be liable for losses incurred relating to any flight booking you have made. Please claim any losses from your [travel insurance](#) that you acquired when you booked your holiday.

Newsletter

Our adventure travel [e-newsletter](#) is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from SpiceRoads, be sure to subscribe.

The information in this document is given in good faith, and covers the average range of conditions likely to be found on this trip. Please note that the itinerary is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances, however, we will always do our best to adhere to this original itinerary

CONTACT US

45 (Sub Soi Pannee) Soi Pridi Banomyong 26
Sukhumvit Soi 71 Klongtan Nua, Wattana
Bangkok, Thailand 10110
Tel: +66 (0) 2 026 3295
Email: info@spiceroads.com
Website: www.spiceroads.com

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 twitter.com/spiceroads
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