

SPICE ROADS

CYCLING



MYSTICAL BHUTAN

Tour Code
BTN-BMB

15 DAYS
14 NIGHTS

| | | |
|--|---------------------------|--|
| | Destinations | Bhutan / India |
| | Tour Meets Tour Ends | Paro, Bhutan Guwahati, India |
| | Fly in to Fly out of | Paro International Airport (PBH) Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport (GAU) |
| | Group Size Minimum Age | 1-16 riders 18 (on scheduled departures) |

ACTIVITY PROFILE



| | |
|---|--|
| 12 Cycling days | 755 _{km} Total cycling distance |
| 63 _{km} Avg distance / day | 1073 _m Avg climbing / day |

PRICING



| | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Price | US\$ 7,900 |
| Bike Hire (Mountain Bike) | US\$ 350 |
| Bike Hire (E-Bike) | US\$ 630 |
| Single Supplement | US\$ 495 |

WHAT'S INCLUDED

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

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- ✗ International flights
- ✗ Domestic flights
- ✗ Visa fees
- ✗ Alcohol
- ✗ Tips

DEPARTURES



23 July - 06 August 2023
03 September - 17 September 2023
08 October - 22 October 2023
12 May - 26 May 2024
21 July - 04 August 2024
01 September - 15 September 2024
06 October - 20 October 2024

TRIP PROFILE

This bike tour is true classic with Himalayan mountain passes, sweeping descents, magnificent views, clean air, and abundant culture and history in one of the most secluded countries in the world. The total distance is around 789 km in eleven full and two half days of riding. The riding varies between some easier shorter days and some challenging days due to the altitude and gradients involved.

Cycling at over 3,400 m above sea level takes a little bit of getting used to for most people, and we will need a few days to acclimatize. Participants should be in relatively good overall physical shape with at least a moderate degree of cycling experience.

The accommodations are generally 3-star hotels with traditional amenities. We have attempted to keep the tour as authentic as possible and tried to use local small accommodation wherever possible. Regardless of the location, every day you can be assured to get a comfortable room and a good night's sleep.

Outstanding scenery, abundant wildlife and flora, and a deeply religious and benevolent people makes for a truly wonderful bike trip that will live in your memory forever.

Suitability: You can expect some tough days in the saddle. We will also be cycling at altitudes between 2,000-3,000 m, which also increases the difficulty. Being physically fit will of course be a huge asset, but, as the tour is fully supported, the van is always close at hand if needed.

Biking Conditions: This tour is primarily on paved roads with very little traffic. The road conditions will vary and some sections will be bumpy. The tour climbs up and over many mountainous passes and ends on the Assam plain. There are quite a few challenging climbs, some more than 20 km, as well as some fast, sweeping descents. Any portion can be skipped by utilizing our support vehicle.



Day 1 Arrive in Paro

After being picked up at the airport, we check into the hotel. In the afternoon, we visit Paro Museum, which features local art, textiles, artifacts, and sculptures. We'll also visit one of the major Dzongs located in Paro. In the evening, we'll have a welcome dinner prepared in traditional Bhutanese style.



Gangtey Palace



Lunch, Dinner

Day 2 Tiger's Nest Monastery Hike

We'll have a hearty breakfast to prepare ourselves for a trip highlight and Bhutan must-do: a hike to the Tiger's Nest Monastery. After a short transfer to Takstang, we'll begin our climb of roughly

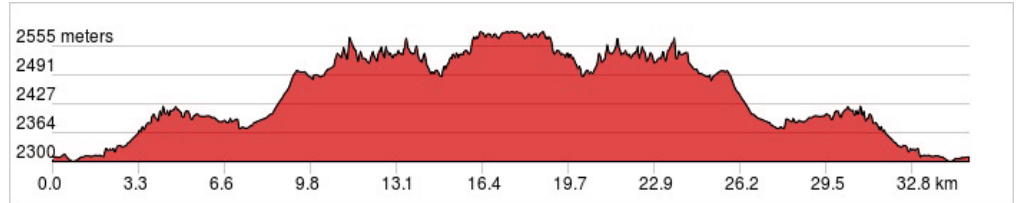
900 m in 4 kilometres. The rewards will be worth it, as we bask in the view and enjoy an unprecedented look at one of the most secluded sites in Tibetan Buddhism. Then it's back to Thimpu to satiate the appetite we've been working up, followed by some more sightseeing at some museums and institutes showcasing Bhutan's fascinating local arts and traditions. In the late afternoon, we'll fit our bikes and enjoy a short and scenic off-road ride to get the legs working, and get used to the altitude! We'll ride back to the hotel to enjoy dinner and rest up for the upcoming challenging day of cycling!



Jhumolhari Hotel



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 10-16km

Day 3 Thimphu - Punakha

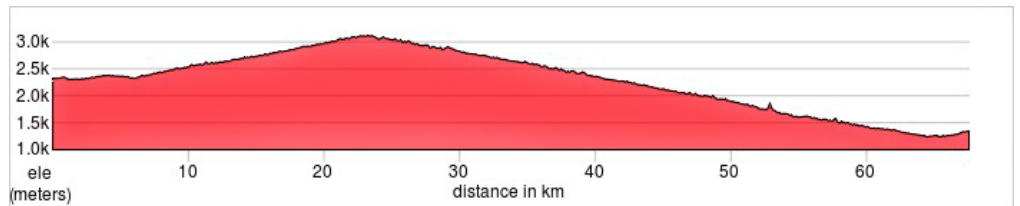
Today will be the first major hill challenge. We have a 5-km warm up before we start climbing for the next 18 km to the pass at Dochula, which is known for its spiritual energy and 108 Chortens that are atop the pass. Lunch at Dochula Café is the perfect place to take in the expansive views of the deep valleys and eastern Himalayas. After lunch, as we descend down the pass, we move from oak, maple, and blue pine forests into rhododendron, hemlock, and fir vegetation and along with many monasteries that come into view to make this a downhill ride to remember.



Meri Pinsum Resort



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 67km



+845m



-1750m

Day 4 Punakha - Wangdue

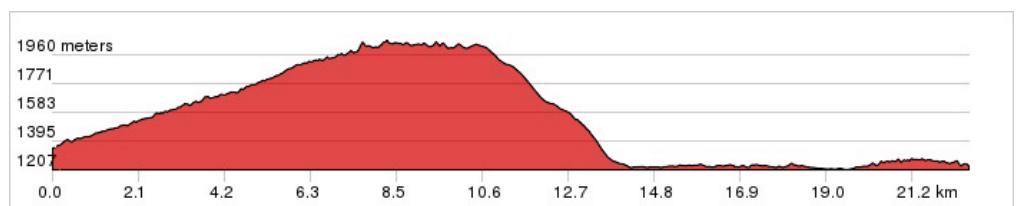
The ride today is more leisurely as we take time to explore the beautiful and lush valley that surrounds Punakha. We will visit Punakha Dzong, one of the most impressive Dzongs in Bhutan, which was built in 1638 and is all the more remarkable as it was constructed without the use of drawings or a single nail! The other major visit today will be to Chhimi Lhakhang. Built in 1499, it is also known as the temple of the "Divine Madman" (Lama Drukpa Kunley) and of the disciple of one of the five great tertons (treasure discoverer), Pema Lingpa. This temple is also noted for its blessing of women who wish to bear children. In the afternoon, we ride the short way to Wangdue.



Dragons Nest Resort



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 23km



+474m

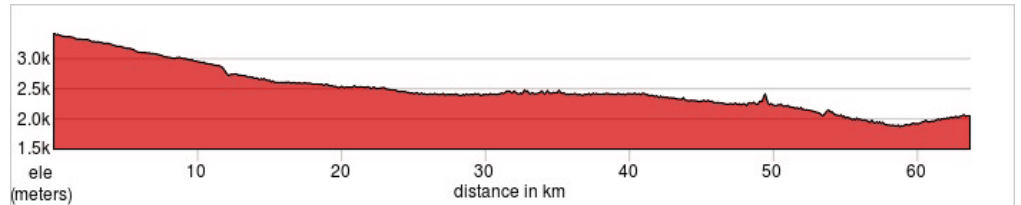


-379m

Day 5 Wangdue - Trongsa

We start with a transfer to avoid a 52-km climb. Starting at the summit of Pelela pass at 3,420 m, we will ride 68 km to Trongsa, home to Bhutan's largest dzong, built in 1644, which is situated high above the Mangde Chu with one side of sheer drops. The only road connecting eastern and western Bhutan passed through the courtyard of the dzong, and the massive doors could be shut, dividing the country in two. We'll visit the dzong in the late afternoon.

 Yangkhil Resort  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

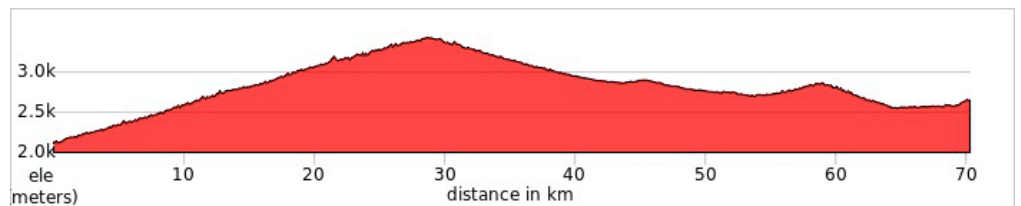


 Ride 68km  +1121m  -1240m

Day 6 Trongsa - Jakar

It is an interesting ride today, because, as we head over one pass, Yontong La (28 km), you can still see the old trade route that runs parallel with the pass before heading downhill for 24 km through fir, then pine and bamboo forests before reaching Zungney. For the final leg of the ride, we have a gradual climb to Kiki La before descending down to Jakar, also known as Bumthang.

 Swiss Guest House  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

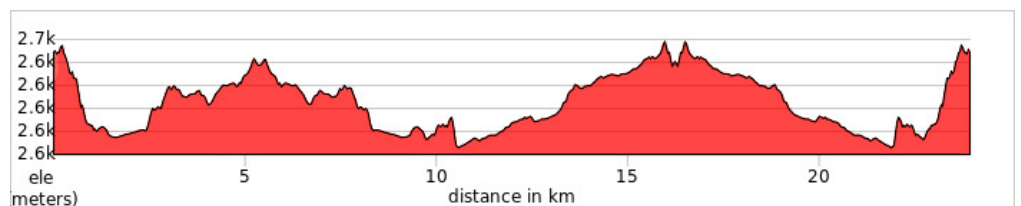


 Ride 70km  +1670m  -1200m

Day 7 Jakar Loop

The morning is free to sleep in or have a wander around the small town that is the Bumthang Valley's trading hub. In the afternoon, we have a leisurely ride and a chance to visit some of the many dzongs and Goembas that are scattered around the valley.

 Swiss Guest House  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



 Ride 30km  +344m  -345m

Day 8 Jakar - Tang Valley

We cycle on the main road for 12 km before heading off to ride up the remote Tang valley. Our first break will be at the burning lake where we learn its legend before riding on to a nunnery where we stop for a visit. We continue on up on a mixture of paved and dirt roads to a former palace that is now a museum and guesthouse. We overnight in Ugyen Cholling and visit the private museum to learn about feudal Bhutan.



 Ogyen Choling  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

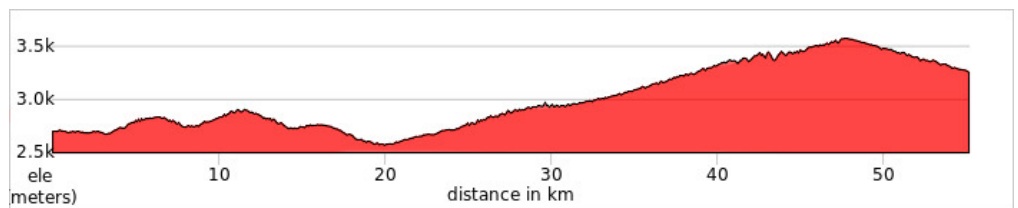


 Ride 32km  +886m  -838m

Day 9 Tang Valley - Shirtung La - Ura

Heading back to the main road, our first climb of the day takes us to Shirtung La, and, at the top of the pass, we'll hopefully have a clear view of Gangkhar Puensum, which, at 7,570 m, is the world's highest unclimbed peak. Since 1994, climbing mountains in Bhutan higher than 6,000 m was prohibited out of respect for local spiritual beliefs, and, since 2003, mountaineering has been forbidden completely. We have the option to ride down on single track trails to Ura village, or we can continue on the paved road.

 Hotel Araya Zamlha  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

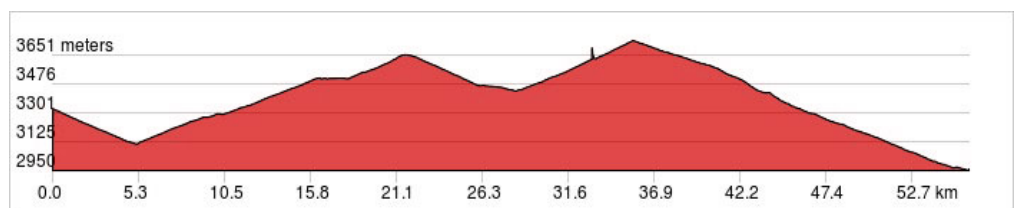


 Ride 55km  +1677m  -1117m

Day 10 Ura - Thrumshing La - Sengor Campsite

From Ura, we make our way over the highest pass in Bhutan at 3,798 m, the Thurmshing La. We reach the summit of the pass after riding 22 km and are then rewarded with a glorious 20 km downhill to our campsite at Sengor.

 Tented Camp  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



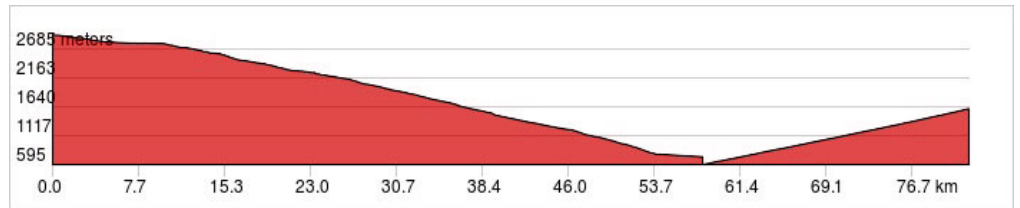
 Ride 55km  +885m  -1120m

Day 11 Sengor - Mongar

Our downhill continues with a 60 km descent to the Kuru Chu River. We start at 3051 m, descend all the way to 579 m, before climbing back up to 1590 m. We slowly make our way up a series

of switchbacks to the remote village of Mongar, one of the country's oldest educational hubs.

 Wangchuk Hotel  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

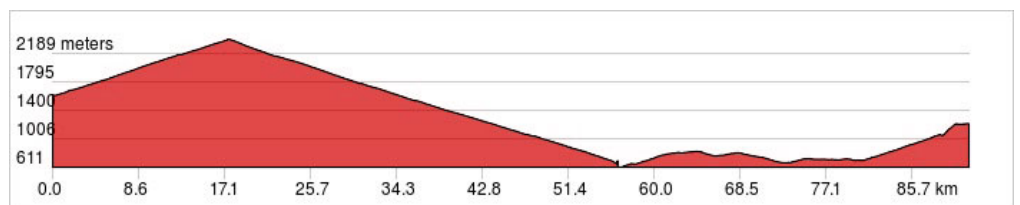


 Ride 88km  +950m  -2270m

Day 12 Mongar - Kori La - Trashigang

It is a day of ups and downs as we have a 20 km climb up to the Kori La at 2,390 m. Again, we are rewarded for our efforts as we have a 42 km descent down to the Drangme Chu River. A relatively flat, for Bhutan anyway, cycle along the river takes us to the bridge that crosses the Drangme, and then it's one final uphill climb to our hotel on the outskirts of Trashigang, the easternmost point of our trip across Bhutan.

 Druk Dhoetjung Resort  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

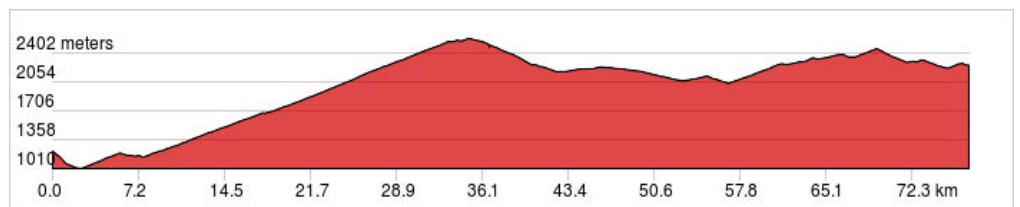


 Ride 90km  +1260m  -1700m

Day 13 Trashigang - Yongphu La - Wamrong Campsite

A tough start to our day with 25 km on switchbacks up to the Yongphu La at 2,544 m. On the way, we pass the town of Kanglung, home to Sherubtse College, the first accredited college in Bhutan, founded in 1966 by Jesuits. We have our final sweeping panoramic views before we continue on undulating terrain above scattered houses and fields to our campsite outside the town of Wamrong.

 Tented Camp  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



 Ride 82km  +2331m  -1278m

Day 14 Wamrong - Samdrup Jongkhar

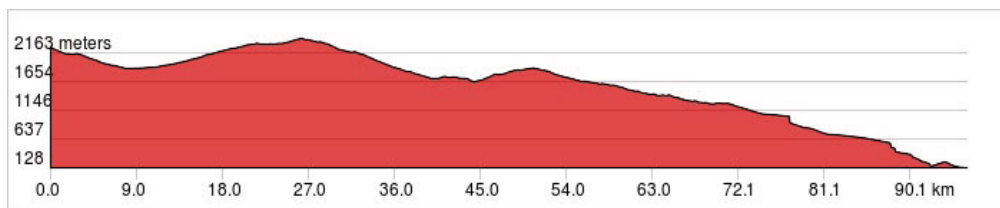
We ride to our final pass at 2,388 m and catch our first glimpse of the Assam plain. We next experience another amazing descent of 3080 m, all the way down to the border town of Samdrup Jongkhar. We'll follow many rivers and feel the change in temperature as we descend almost back to sea level, ending our ride at an elevation of 130 m! In the evening, we'll celebrate our accomplishment of crossing Bhutan from west to east!



Menjong Hotel



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 95km



+430m



-2800m

Day 15 Drive to Guwahati Airport

Time to pack the bikes away as we cross the border to India. We drive approximately 4 hours, depending on the border control to Guwahati airport and fly onward.



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. The bikes are well-known makes of hybrid or mountain bikes (depending on the tour) with lightweight alloy frames, 24- to 27-speed gearing, v-brakes, and Shimano components and front suspension. If you bring your own bike, please make sure it is a mountain bike, preferably with front suspension, and that it is 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

Contrary to just about the rest of the world, Bhutan does not issue visas before you arrive through their embassies or consulates. The only way to get a visa is on arrival to the country, however, you must submit an application form through a tour operator for approval before arriving.

SpiceRoads will submit your application for approval. This takes a minimum of 1 week. Please contact us for more information.

Health

We recommend that you visit a travel medical doctor and ask about the following vaccinations: typhoid, polio, tetanus and hepatitis A. As there are some high altitude passes you may consider bringing Diamox – but please consult a physician first.

Weather

An umbrella, or light rain gear, should never be too far when traveling in Bhutan. During any month of the year it could, and will, rain. There are two optimal times of the year to travel in Bhutan. The months of March/April offers a period of warmer temperatures and bright skies. During August/-October is even more popular because of the cooler temperature and cloudless and crisp skies. Bhutan has a fairly mild climate year-round.

Accommodation

The hotels listed are our first choice and where we hope you will stay, however, during festivals or other major events there is a chance we will have to substitute another hotel.

Food

Meals are included as per the itinerary where B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner. Meals are a mixture of Bhutanese and western cuisine, with the local food being mainly rice with vegetables with chili being used as a vegetable, not a flavoring – so beware! Local cheese is also popular and also quite tasty. Lunch will tend to vary between a packed lunch and some hot meals when local restaurants are available. 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 while riding. Soft drinks and other beverages during meals are not included. Beer is freely available everywhere, 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\$20 a day, for incidentals.

Money

The Bhutanese currency is the ngultrum and is pegged to the Indian rupee. As the rupee and ngultrum are traded at par, rupees are generally accepted in Bhutan and may be occasionally given as change. Bhutan is a cash economy. Don't count on using your Visa and Mastercard, but there is an America Express office in the capital, and Amex is accepted in a few rare instances. Your best option is to change dollars or euros into ngultrums at the airport as the exchange rate is the same as in the banks in town. You can also change your money at the hotels in Thimphu, but the rate is not as good. You'll mainly need money for handicraft souvenirs and drinks as everything else is included in the tour.

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

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