SPICE ROADS
CYCLING



TRAILS

HIDDEN TRAILS OF NORTHERN LAOS

Tour Code
LAO-LMB

9 DAYS
8 NIGHTS

Destinations	Laos
Tour Meets	Luang Prabang
Tour Ends	Luang Prabang
Fly in to	Luang Prabang International Airport (LPQ)
Fly out of	Luang Prabang International Airport (LPQ)
Group Size	2-16 riders
Minimum Age	18 (on scheduled departures)

ACTIVITY PROFILE

6 Cycling days	**327** km Total cycling distance
55 km Avg distance / day	**975** m Avg climbing / day

PRICING

Price	US$ 2,350
Bike Hire (E-Bike)	US$ 250
Bike Hire (Mountain Bike)	US$ 175
Single Supplement	US$ 285

**E-bikes are in limited supply, please enquire to reserve one.*

DEPARTURES

29 Nov - 07 Dec 2026
10 Jan - 18 Jan 2027
21 Feb - 01 Mar 2027
24 Oct - 01 Nov 2027
28 Nov - 06 Dec 2027

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ SpiceRoads jersey
- ✓ Water bottle
- ✓ Support vehicle
- ✓ Guide(s)
- ✓ Meals (as indicated)
- ✓ Airport pick up
- ✓ Accommodation
- ✓ Snacks and drinks
- ✓ Entrance fees
- ✓ Ferry/boat fares

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

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

TRIP PROFILE

We cover 327 kilometres over six riding stages across the rugged river valleys and karst highlands of Northern Laos. The terrain is predominantly off-road, linking unpaved doubletrack, dirt village trails, and quiet paved backroads with punchy climbs and technical descents.

After an opening ride around Luang Prabang, the route heads north into the interior with demanding climbs and rough ridgeline descents into the Nam Ou basin. A mid-tour riverboat transfer breaks up the physical effort before tackling our biggest mountain stage: a 70-kilometre unpaved traverse from Muang Khua to Nong Khiaw. The final days combine rolling valley riding and historic wartime cave visits with a technical 45-kilometre unpaved stage to Lathan, concluding with a scenic boat cruise down the Mekong back into Luang Prabang.

The trip is fully supported, and your guide's expert knowledge of the area and terrain means that you always know what is coming up in terms of distance and difficulty. This makes a tremendous difference, as does the constant supply of water and refreshments along the way.

Suitability: This tour is designed for fit, experienced mountain bikers comfortable on demanding, unpaved terrain. Daily stages feature sustained backcountry climbs, rough doubletrack, loose dirt descents, and narrow singletrack that require solid bike-handling skills and good endurance. Because several trail sections pass through remote mountain valleys with no road access, our support vehicle cannot follow riders continuously on trail. Riders must be self-sufficient between checkpoint rendezvous points and capable of handling consecutive technical riding days.

Biking Conditions: Riders can expect roughly 70% of the route to cover unpaved terrain — dirt doubletrack, gravel, and rough village trails, alongside select technical singletrack. The remaining 30% consists of weathered, bumpy provincial asphalt. The off-road riding is varied and engaging, though loose rock, ruts, and steep descents require attentive bike handling. Paved road traffic is light, but expect to share lanes with scooters and trucks near settlements. Dry conditions bring trail dust (a buff is recommended), while rain makes dirt sections slick. Because valley heat and humidity can be intense, riders should carry a hydration pack for extended stretches between vehicle rendezvous points.

Accommodations: The tour begins and ends at a comfortable boutique hotel in Luang Prabang. Out on the trail through the northern provinces, we stay in a mix of locally run provincial guesthouses and riverside bungalows. These are simple, clean lodgings equipped with private beds, air conditioning, and en-suite bathrooms. While comfortable and scenic, please be aware that properties in remote mountain towns reflect rural infrastructure and may show signs of wear and tear, with occasional variability in water pressure or Wi-Fi connectivity. Room sizes may vary, and beds can be firmer than you are used to. Staff in remote stops rarely speak English, though your tour leader handles all check-ins and logistics throughout. For larger groups, we may need to use more than one accommodation and, in case of limited availability, switch to an alternative property from the one listed in the itinerary.



Day 1: Meet in Luang Prabang

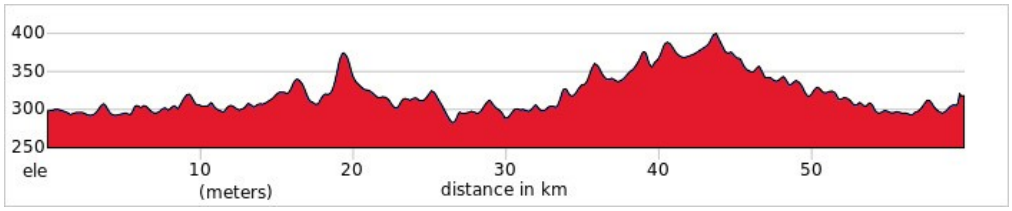
Welcome to Luang Prabang, Laos' famed UNESCO World Heritage town! We pick you up from the airport and transfer you to our tour hotel. In the evening, we convene for a trip meeting and welcome dinner. If you arrive early, make sure to do some exploring. Situated on a peninsula between the Nam Khan and Mekong Rivers, Luang Prabang is filled with glittering Buddhist temples, French colonial architecture, and an all-round captivating Old World charm.

Parasol Blanc Dinner

Day 2: Luang Prabang Loop → Pak Xeng

Following a bike fitting, we make our way out of Luang Prabang and cross the Mekong River by ferry. The route quickly leaves paved roads behind for rolling, unpaved agricultural tracks connecting the rural farming communities west of the river. Expect punchy climbs and loose gravel descents to test your handling, before looping back towards the Mekong. In the afternoon, we load the bikes and transfer around two and a half hours north to Pak Xeng, a quiet river outpost that serves as the gateway to the northern ranges.

Local Guesthouse Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

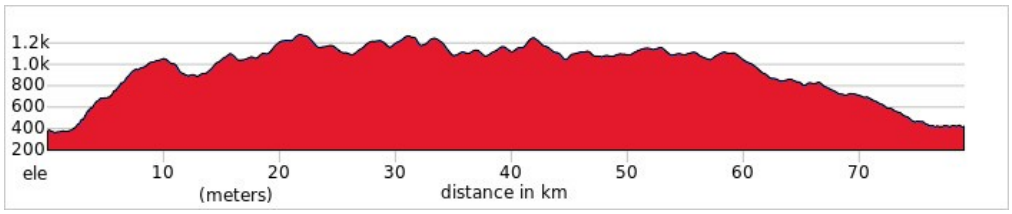


Ride 60km +511m -490m

Day 3: Pak Xeng → Vieng Kham

Departing Pak Xeng, the route tracks the river before grinding into the highlands via a steady 20-kilometre climb. Once at around 1,000 metres elevation, the profile turns into a sawtooth of punchy rollers through Khmu farming communities working hillside plots of upland sticky rice, maize, and bananas. The day finishes with an 18-kilometre descent along a rough provincial road, dropping straight off the ridgeline into the valley town of Vieng Kham for the night.

Local Guesthouse Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

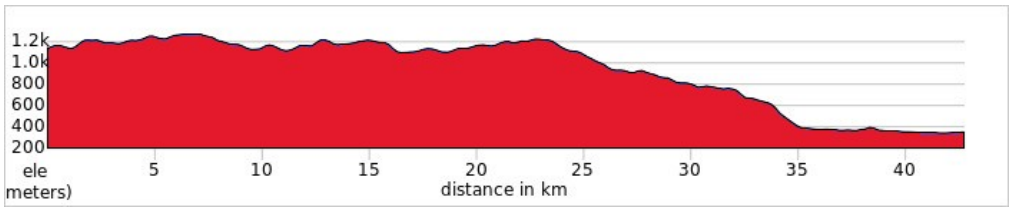


Ride 79km +2091m -2051m

Day 4: Vieng Kham → Muang Ngoy

A 1-hour morning transfer brings us to a high ridgeline trailhead where we begin today's stage. Riding unpaved tracks through lush upland forest and bamboo groves, we pass through remote Khmu and Tai Lue farming settlements framed by panoramic mountain views. The morning's punchy rollers eventually give way to the day's centrepiece: a dramatic 13-kilometre descent plunging nearly 900 vertical metres over rough switchbacks. As the jungle canopy opens up, sheer limestone karst cliffs tower overhead, leading us directly into the quiet, riverside village of Muang Ngoy on the Nam Ou.

Lattanavongsa Guesthouse Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 43km +606m -1402m

Day 5: River Cruise to Muang Khua (No Cycling)

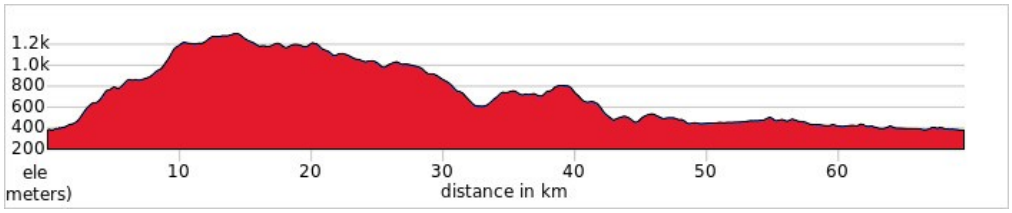
Trade bikes for the river on a scenic six-hour journey heading up the Nam Ou. Travelling by covered longtail boat, the route winds through limestone karst gorges and dense forest toward Muang Khua. Along the way, we break up the journey with a stop at Sop Chem, renowned for traditional weaving. Because the river is interrupted by a hydroelectric dam, we disembark for a short vehicle transfer around the barrage to board a second boat on the reservoir. After a picnic lunch and visiting another village to stretch our legs, we pull into the small, sleepy town of Muang Khua by late afternoon.

Chaleunsouk Guesthouse Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6: Muang Khua → Nong Khiaw

Rolling out of Muang Khua, the ride opens with a demanding 14-kilometre unpaved climb, gaining nearly 950 metres through dense jungle to a high ridgeline. An 18-kilometre descent follows, leading onto rolling dirt roads and singletrack between remote valley settlements. We finish the ride at Ban Lue, taking part in a traditional Baci ceremony where villagers tie white cotton threads around our wrists wishing good health and safe passage. From Ban Lue, a 1-hour vehicle transfer takes us to the riverside town of Nong Khiaw, set beneath towering limestone cliffs.

Nong Kiau Riverside Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

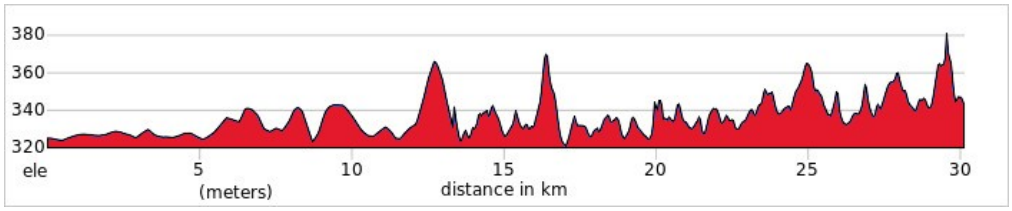


Ride 70km +1635m -1641m

Day 7: Nong Khiaw → Nam Nga

The morning offers time to relax along the river or take an optional excursion to Pha Tok Cave, a limestone cavern used as a shelter during the Second Indochina War. Afterward, a boat transfer down the Nam Ou delivers us to the trailhead at Pak Chim. We set off on a gentle 30-kilometre ride over mixed pavement and dirt, tracing the riverbank before turning inland past quiet farming communities. We finish cycling directly at our overnight stop in the village of Nam Nga.

Nam Nga Bungalows Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

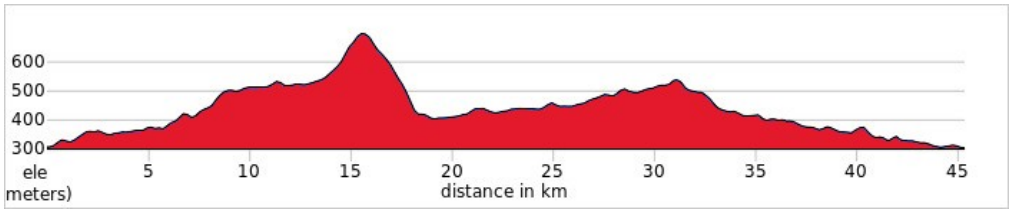


Ride 30km +347m -328m

Day 8: Nam Nga → Lathan → Luang Prabang

A 2-hour morning transfer brings us to the trailhead at Pak Chek for our final ride. Rolling out on unpaved doubletrack, the trail climbs steadily through upland forest to a high crest at kilometre 16 before plunging down on a fast descent. The remaining 25 kilometres roll through open farmland and valley villages before we hit the banks of the Mekong at Lathan. From here, we load bikes onto a longtail boat for a cruise downriver back into Luang Prabang, celebrating the journey over a farewell dinner.

Parasol Blanc Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 45km +657m -659m

Day 9: Luang Prabang Departure

We end our tour in Laos with a free day to explore Luang Prabang or, depending on your onward travel arrangements, head to the airport to catch your flight. In the morning you can partake in the quintessential Luang Prabang experience of alms giving. At the break of dawn, hundreds of orange robed Buddhist monks from the various monasteries around town walk through the streets to receive their daily alms from the pious locals. Visitors to the city are welcome to participate in this ritual (please discuss with your guide prior to the last day if you are interested - additional charges will apply to be paid locally). There's plenty more to see and do in and around the city, so if you didn't have a chance to explore before the tour, we suggest extending your stay by at least another night. Please let us know If you require assistance with airport transfers and post-tour hotel bookings.

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 in good mechanical order. A good hardtail mountain bike (with 100–120 mm front suspension) or a short-travel full-suspension cross-country / trail bike (100–120 mm) are both suitable setups

We also have E-Bikes available for hire, but they are limited in number & size - please send an email to us to check on availability.

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

The visa application process for Laos depends on the entry point where you will cross the Laos border.

Please see the visa options for our Laos tours below:

"Hidden Trails of Northern Laos": You can apply for an **e-visa in advance**, or obtain a visa on arrival at the Luang Prabang airport.

When applying for a visa on arrival, be sure to have cash in the amount of USD $50 per person or equivalent in THB, LAK, or EUR, in clean, pristine bills.

"Southern Laos by Bicycle" and "Remote Vietnam and Laos": Visas on arrival are obtained at the Laos border on Day 2 of the tour. E-visas are not available for this crossing.

When applying for a visa on arrival, be sure to have cash in the amount of USD $50 per person or equivalent in THB, LAK, or EUR, in clean, pristine bills.

"Cycling Chiang Mai to Luang Prabang": Visas on arrival are obtained at the Laos border on Day 6 of the tour. You can also apply for an **e-visa in advance**.

When applying for a visa on arrival, be sure to have cash in the amount of USD $50 per person or equivalent in THB, LAK, or EUR, in clean, pristine bills.

"Biking Hanoi to Luang Prabang" and "Remote Vietnam and Laos": Visas on arrival and e-visas are not accepted for these border crossings (Pang Hok-Sop Hun and Nam Soy).

We would like to summarize your options to obtain your visa in advance:

1 - The most straightforward way is to get the visa from a Laos embassy or consulate near you. Please contact them directly. Please do this as soon as possible, as processing time can vary.

2 - We know that Laos embassies/consulates may not be within a reasonable distance of where you live. If that is the case, you may consider using a reliable Travel Visa agency such as CIBT who will take care of the process for you. Please do this as soon as possible, as processing time can vary.

3 - We can help to obtain your visa at the Laos embassy in Hanoi. This would require you to be in Hanoi before the beginning of the tour, and it cannot fall on weekend or national holiday. You need to submit the visa before 09:00 AM and will receive it in your passport in the afternoon of the same day. You need to prepare a passport-sized photo and your passport. The cost for this service is 45 USD/per person including the visa fee and transportation to the embassy. This needs to be paid in cash and in USD.

Further visa information:

The full list of entry points indicating where e-visas and/or visas on arrival are and are not accepted. **https://immigration.gov.la/checkpoints/**

The list of countries with visa exemptions for Laos (please see the column on the right-hand side, "Ordinary Passport", for the visa exemption period): **https://immigration.gov.la/visa-exemption/**

Digital Immigration Registration:

The Laos government is piloting a Digital Immigration Registration arrival card system starting 1 September, 2025 at the following points of arrival:

Luang Prabang International Airport
Vientiane (Wattay) International Airport
Pakse International Airport
First Lao-Thai Friendship Bridge (Vientiane–Nong Khai)
Nationwide roll-out is expected 1 January 2026

Arrival:

1. Please submit Arrival registration within 3 days prior to arrival (you cannot submit before this time period). This will provide you with a QR code which should be saved on your phone or printed.
2. Show the QR code at immigration. Paper cards are not required at these pilot checkpoints.

Departure:

1. Please submit Departure registration within 3 days before departure and save or print QR code.
2. Show the QR code at immigration

Please note that the digital arrival card system does NOT replace the Laos visa or e-visa process detailed above. If you do not qualify for visa-free entry to Laos, you must still have a visa to enter the country.

Health

We recommend that you visit a travel medical doctor and ask about the following vaccinations: typhoid, polio, tetanus and hepatitis A. A certificate for Yellow Fever is required when arriving from an infected area within six days.

Weather

Laos has a tropical climate with fairly high humidity. There are three seasons: from March to June it is hot and dry, with temperatures between 27C and 40C (80-104F), with night temperatures in the 20C/75F). The rainy season is from June to October. The cooler season, is from November to February, with average temperatures between 20C and 30C (70- 86F). It can get a little cold at night at higher elevations year round so bring a light fleece for the evenings.

Food

Meals are included as per the itinerary where B = breakfast, L = lunch, D =dinner. Most meals are local Laos food and feature noodles, curries and soups. Lao cuisine is very similar to Thai food and we make sure you sample as much variety as possible. 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$10, for incidentals. It is customary to tip local tour guides and drivers, however, the amount you give should be dependent on the level of service you receive. As a general guide we suggest US$3-4 per person per day is appropriate.

Money

The official national currency in Laos is the kip, however, Thai baht and US dollars are also used, especially in larger cities and towns. In smaller towns and villages, kip is usually preferred. There are now a few ATMs in Laos, but they are not widespread and are operational only sporadically. The best overall exchange rates are those offered at the BCEL (Banque pour le Commerce Extérieur Lao). Licensed moneychangers rates are similar to banks Spend all your kip before you leave as no one will exchange it for you once you leave the country!

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.

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