

SAFETY GUIDELINES

ExoAsia takes its responsibilities to our travelers seriously and takes many steps to reduce the risks which our travelers, guides and tour leaders may face. A few of the key things we do include:

- ✦ We recommend restaurants that have a good reputation for hygiene
- ✦ We recommend health care providers that have a good reputation for their level of care
- ✦ Tour Leaders carry a First Aid Kit on our Small Group Journeys and all have had First Aid training
- ✦ Ask our clients to declare their health and fitness condition and any pre-existing issues prior to commencing a journey with us so we can tailor activities to their appropriate fitness level
- ✦ Structure itineraries to allow regular rest stops for drivers, appropriate levels of driving time in any one day and avoidance of road travel after dark. Sometimes this impacts on the itinerary, but we put safety first.
- ✦ Provide specific road safety awareness training to our staff, local guides and tour leaders in Vietnam and also broader health and safety awareness training
- ✦ Ask hotels to complete regular self-evaluation fire, health and safety questionnaires as well as conducting our own spot checks on fire safety during each year.
- ✦ We select suppliers not just based on best price but with appropriate consideration to their approach to health and safety
- ✦ Ask all our suppliers to sign a 'Supplier Agreement' annually that outlines our expectations in regards to service levels, health and safety.
- ✦ We conduct regular emergency training sessions amongst our teams in Asia as well as conducting surprise 'trial run' scenarios to test our team's response to emergency situations.
- ✦ Provide all tour leaders and local guides with safety check-lists which to be used before using any vehicle or boat with our clients.
- ✦ Ensure all our hotels, boat operators, other suppliers, drivers and guides are correctly licensed and authorized to carry out their business according to local regulations where possible.
- ✦ Our Responsible Travel policy endorses the UN's Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. We specifically oppose exploitation of children or sex tourism and have a zero tolerance policy to these issues among our staff and suppliers
- ✦ Boats - ExoAsia heed local authority advice and operator concerns as local authorities and boat operators are experts on the weather conditions likely to be encountered while on a boat trip. At times they may decide that it is not safe to operate the cruise as scheduled and alternative arrangements will be made. ExoAsia has no control over these situations.

GENERAL SAFETY & SECURITY

The countries visited by ExoAsia are generally safe; however petty street crime can occur. We recommend you wear as little jewelry as possible and keep your spending money close to your body in a secure place when out on the street. We further recommend that you take taxis, where available, rather than cyclos or tuk-tuks at night. We recommend you leave valuables in hotel safety deposit boxes at all times and carry photocopies of your passport, credit card numbers, and airline tickets, and keep a record of your uncashed traveler's cheques. These papers should be kept in a safe place separate from the originals.

As is also the case in your home country, it is unwise to walk deserted, dark streets at night in Asia. Travelers should stick to well lit, busy areas at night to lessen any risk.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Local medical facilities across developing Asia are often unable to provide the full range of medical services that are available in developed countries, making evacuation a requirement in many non-life threatening medical emergencies. The costs of evacuation, as well as international standard care, can be extremely high. In the most serious emergencies, travelers may not be able to authorize payment for an appropriate medical response that is urgently required. This may delay or prevent the provision of critical and possibly life-saving medical attention.

Therefore, it is a condition of travel with ExoAsia that all travelers are adequately covered by comprehensive travel insurance prior to arrival. Insurance should cover personal accident and medical expenses, evacuation and repatriation, baggage loss, and cancellation or curtailment of holiday. Insurance details must be supplied to us at the time of booking, and where they are not provided or where the risk covered does not extend to those stated in the preceding sentence, we reserve the right to cancel bookings and apply charges as per our cancellation policy. Travelers will be asked to present their insurance details upon arrival in Asia as part of a registration process, and in the event that possession of insurance is unable to be confirmed or the risk covered is inadequate, in the interests of our duty of care to the traveler and fellow travelers, ExoAsia reserves the right to prevent participation in the journey. In such instances, we will assist with onward travel arrangements, however full cancellation penalties will apply as per our cancellation policy.

Please check to make sure your travel insurance covers at a minimum the risks we have identified and that activities on your itinerary are not excluded from cover.

HEALTH & FITNESS

Travelers to ExoAsia destinations should take the same precautions as they would elsewhere in Asia. In remote areas medical facilities can be particularly basic. Some of the diseases known to exist in Asia include malaria, hepatitis A & B, typhoid, tuberculosis, Japanese encephalitis, dengue fever, diphtheria, tetanus, polio, rabies and HIV/AIDS. We strongly recommend you take adequate preventative measures to minimize your risk of exposure to these health risks. We are

a travel company and we are not qualified to provide detailed medical information appropriate to your individual needs. We recommend you consult with your local doctor or a specialist travel medical center for current health information on vaccinations and medicines for your trip at least one month prior to departure.

We suggest you bring:

- Aspirin or paracetamol
- Antihistamine
- Cold & flu tablets
- Diarrhea medication
- Nausea medication
- Rehydration sachets
- Insect repellent
- Antiseptic & bandages
- Sunscreen & lip balm
- Antibiotics (discuss with your doctor)
- Medication/prescriptions (it is a good idea to have a doctor's letter if you are carrying a large amount of medication)

As part of our registration process at the start of any trip with ExoAsia, you will be asked to declare any serious pre-existing medical conditions or allergies and subject to those declarations, in the interests of the traveler and fellow travelers, ExoAsia reserves the right to prevent participation in the journey. In such instances, we will assist with onward travel arrangements, however full cancellation penalties will apply as per our cancellation policy.

Each Journey on our website has a grading to assist you in choosing a holiday best suited to your level of fitness. It is essential for group dynamics that the presence of a less able traveler does not significantly affect enjoyment of the journey for others in the group. We ask you to carefully consider these gradings and think carefully about the Small Group Journeys most appropriate for your level of health and fitness. While it is not a requirement to undertake rigorous fitness regimes to join our holidays, travelling with us does require a capacity and willingness to engage in physical activity. All our trips, whatever their grading, require walking and general mobility. Travelers must be able to walk reasonable distances unassisted, negotiate uneven surfaces, climb stairs and board boats as the journey requires. Some journeys involve long distance travel and occasional basic accommodation. We may require a doctor's certificate prior to confirmation for each traveler that is over 70 years of age or has a pre-existing medical condition, relevant for all our Small Group Journeys, both in your own interests and in the interests of your fellow travelers. Final confirmation of a booking is subject to receipt of complete and accurate information about the fitness of all members of your party. If you are at all concerned about the physical (or mental) ability of any member of your party to undertake a Small Group Journey, we recommend tailored travel arrangements. We would be happy to assist in organizing these.

TRANSPORT

TAXIS

Taxis are usually metered and inexpensive and we recommend their use for personal transport in cities where available, rather than cyclos or tuk-tuks. It is generally safer to ask your hotel to call a taxi rather than hailing one on the street. Be wary of imitation taxi companies. The drivers' identification should always be on display and they should willingly turn on the taxi meter.

If they will not use the taxi meter, we suggest you find another taxi that will. To assist in finding your way back to your hotel, make sure you obtain a hotel address card to show drivers where you want to go.

MOTORBIKE TAXIS

Many countries in Asia have either official or unofficial motorbike taxis in operation. You will usually see these waiting on street corners. We do not recommend the use of motorbike taxis. A helmet may not be provided for the passenger, the motorbikes may drive quite fast and are generally unlicensed or not recognized as an official form of transport. If you have an accident while riding a motorbike taxi there is a strong chance that your travel insurance policy will not cover you. ExoAsia does not, and will not, use motorbike taxis as transport on tour.

VEHICLES

On the road we generally use latest model air-conditioned buses, vans or cars for our Small Group Journeys - depending on the size of the group. Modern sedan cars and minibuses are used for transporting smaller numbers. Seat belts are not always present, particularly in the back seats of vehicles in some countries. Vehicles in more remote areas and lesser developed countries may not be of the same standard as those in the bigger cities and more developed countries. Where seat belts are present we strongly recommend you use them even if local laws or conventions do not make them compulsory.

FLIGHTS

Most airlines within Asia operate relatively modern, well-maintained fleets, however schedules frequently change or flights can be cancelled and this can sometimes result in alterations to your program. ExoAsia has no control over these situations.

TRAINS

Some tours involve overnight rail journeys. Accommodation (usually first class) is in mixed gender, four berth, shared 'soft-sleeper' cabins which are usually air-conditioned. These have two lower bunks and two upper bunks with limited storage space underneath the lower bunks and sometimes above the door to the cabin. Sheets and blankets are usually provided and are generally of good standard. The cabin door can be locked from the inside only. Western and/or Asian (squat style) toilets are available at each end of the carriage with wash basin facilities. Note that many Asian train stations will have crowded areas and lots of stairs. Keep this in mind when packing luggage as it not only needs to fit into the areas designated for storage on overnight or day trains, but you will also need to carry it on and off trains and through train stations.

BOATS

Some Small Group Journeys and independent travel arrangements involve boat journeys. These are great experiences and provide you with terrific photo opportunities. Toilets on boats, where available, are generally Western style. Many larger overnight cruise boats offer private cabins with suites, similar to hotel room style. Life-jackets are available on all boats used by Travel Indochina. Local authorities and boat operators are experts on the weather conditions likely to be encountered while on a boat trip. At times they may decide that it is not safe to operate the cruise as scheduled and alternative arrangements will be made. Again, Travel Indochina has no control over these situations.

CYCLOS

Some of our tours include travel on cyclos. The pedalled cyclo is a fun and environmentally-friendly form of transport which allows for ground-level sight-seeing, 'local style' but it does expose you to all the same on the road risks associated with pedalled power transport. Travellers should be especially aware of their belongings while on a cyclo, in particular cameras held in the hand as they are an easy target for theft.

TUK TUKS

In Thailand and Cambodia Tuk Tuks are a common form of transport. A Tuk Tuk is a small carriage attached to a motorbike. We suggest that you do not use Tuk Tuks in Thailand, unless this is part of itinerary, which has been arranged in advance. In Cambodia they are included as a form of travel on parts of most journeys. It is imperative that you are mindful of all bags and belongings when travelling in a Tuk Tuk. When using a Tuk Tuk whilst not on tour it is important that you agree on the cost of your journey before beginning your ride.

ANIMAL RIDES

A holiday in Asia may be the only time you will have the opportunity to ride a camel or elephant. We try to use well trained and well maintained animals but there are inherent risks in riding any animal of course. Helmets are usually not provided in Asia to ride animals.

SWIMMING

Swimming at the many beaches and bays in Asia is usually safe. On occasion jellyfish can be found in the waters around Asia, the most likely time of year they are present is during the months of June through to August in the north, and during the months of August and September in the south. Swimming can still be enjoyed during these months, however please be aware and exercise some caution. During the typhoon season in October and November surf can get rough in many parts of Vietnam and Cambodia. Please note that beaches in Asia are not normally patrolled by surf lifesavers as they are in many developed countries. Travelers should make their own decisions about the safety of swimming and the current surf conditions and swim at their own risk.

Child proof fences and gates surrounding swimming pools are not common in Asia.

CYCLING

Cycling can be a rewarding feature of travel in ExoAsia destinations. It is also a dangerous activity. Your tour leader or local guide will be positioned to point out some excellent cycling places during your travels. Should you be interested in cycling during your holiday, please consider the following:

Are you an experienced cyclist? Asia is not the place to take up a new hobby or reacquaint yourself with an old hobby. If you have not ridden a bicycle in the past year, it is not advisable to take up the interest during your holiday.

Do you have a helmet? A helmet is strongly recommended for cycling in all of our destinations. Please consider the risks of riding without a helmet carefully before deciding to do so. Although helmets are included on our trips and, we recommend you bring your own, as this is more hygienic for you and, if provided, helmets may not meet international safety standards.

Keep your eyes on the road! Riding country roads through lush rice paddies may seem a harmless activity. Not so. Levels of traffic awareness across Asia tend to be poor and the quality and maintenance of road surfaces can be poor. This problem is even more acute in remote areas.

Avoiding heavy vehicles and other hazards requires concentration. Stay focused on the road. Don't be tempted to play games with your fellow cyclists.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

There are many opportunities to participate in experiences outside of your scheduled touring. ExoAsia does not take responsibility for any activity that a client participates in that is not part of our itinerary or not booked through ExoAsia.

ACCIDENTS HAPPEN!

Even if you have followed these hints, accidents do occur. Please note that in the often hot and humid conditions of Asia even minor abrasions can quickly become infected and almost certainly some level of medical aid will be required - another reason to have comprehensive travel insurance and to pack a basic medical kit.

So, if you miss seeing a temple or a boat trip, or the itinerary has been impacted due to safety concerns, it is because we have put your safety first.

Enjoy your holiday with ExoAsia and safe travels!