

EXPLORE!



Highlights of Sumatra

8 days

Indonesia - Trip code SUM

Highlights of Sumatra

We spend 8 days taking in the rugged landscapes and discovering the unique wildlife of Northern Sumatra. We trek through jungles to visit the Bohorok Orang-utan Sanctuary, scale volcanoes for sunrise and enjoy rural village encounters on this adventurous trip through the biggest island of the Indonesian Archipelago. This trip has been carefully planned to be easily combined with our Exotic Java and Bali trip. Please contact our reservations team for more information.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Bohorok** - Encounter Orang-utans in the wild when trekking through the jungle in Bukit Lawang.
- ★ **Berastagi** - Stroll through fruit markets and climb the active volcano of Mount Sibayak.
- ★ **Samosir** - Travel by boat to visit the remote Batak villages, learning about their unique ancestral traditions.
- ★ **Lake Toba** - Enjoy the peace and tranquillity, with the chance for a refreshing swim in the largest crater lake in the world.

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:

Moderate

Moderate pace tours are ideal if you want a holiday which combines exciting activities and experiences with plenty of time to relax and unwind. Typically you'll be active and busy for part of the day but then also have time to rest and recharge your batteries.

GROUP SIZE:

10 - 16

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip in Medan

Join the trip in Medan, where today is free at leisure. Medan is Indonesia's third largest city and is the capital of the island of Sumatra. Through colonisation and centuries of prosperous trading, Medan has grown to become home to a number of diverse ethnic groups including Chinese, Tamils, Malay, Batak natives and the Dutch. This interesting blend of cultures has made the city into a veritable melting pot, with a wonderful mouth-watering array of food to try from street vendors, curry houses and noodle bars.



Accommodation: Hotel Antares (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Explore the city of Medan; Afternoon drive to Bohorok

This morning we set out on foot to explore the metropolis of Medan. We start with the jewel in the city's crown, the Great Mosque or Masjid Raya Al Mashun. Taking its influences from Arabia, India and Europe, it is a beautifully ornate piece of architecture and we have the rare opportunity to enter inside to witness the daily rituals of the locals. We then move onto the Dutch-built Maimoon Palace, the former royal palace of the Sultanate of Deli and an excellent example of colonial buildings in Indonesia. We leave the city behind after lunch and head into the jungle. Our route snakes north on occasionally potholed roads, past lush rice fields before these give way to swathes of palm trees lining the road. We will see many palm plantations on our travels in the next few days, and whilst the palm oil crop is controversial, our Leader will offer explanations from a local's perspective. We plan to arrive in Bukit Lawang in the late afternoon, with the rest of the day at leisure. Please note that as we are staying in the jungle and on the fringes of the National Park, our accommodation is clean but basic, with no hot water or air conditioning. The showers are refreshing after time spent in the rainforest, and the room temperature is kept cool with a number of fans.



Accommodation: Rindu Alam Hotel (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Morning rainforest walk to spot wild Orang-utans. Afternoon optional walk in rice fields

We leave our lodge today on foot, crossing the river via a footbridge and into the National Park, past locals swimming and bathing. Here we begin our three to four hour search for wildlife, made with a local guide with intimate knowledge of the surrounding rainforest, so the chances of spotting the 'men of the forest' are very good. Bukit Lawang was originally set up as an orang-utan Sanctuary in 1973, helping to rehabilitate orphaned orang-utans, but in the past few years the last gentle giant was successfully reintroduced into the wild, so the feeding platform has closed down and now the orang-utans forage and fend for themselves. The orang-utans are now interspersed throughout the area, and with a bit of luck we should be able to enjoy spending time observing them in their natural habitat. Other wildlife we are likely to encounter include the endemic Thomas Leaf Monkey, long-tail macaques, slow loris, snakes, Sumatran peacock, flying squirrels and mouse deer. Also present in the jungle are Sumatran tigers, rhinos and wild elephants, but the chance of encountering these are incredibly rare. We return to our lodge for lunch, where the rest of the afternoon is free to spend at leisure. It is possible to organise a massage, or to take a walk through nearby rice fields to learn more about the harvesting of the Indonesian staple of 'Nasi'.



Accommodation: Rindu Alam Hotel (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Drive to the hill station of Berastagi; explore the colourful fruit market

Our journey today takes us from the lush green jungles of Bohorok, through small villages before the jungle starts to give way, with the road snaking upwards as we start to gain altitude. Berastagi sits at 1400 metres above sea level, this elevation brings cooler climates and offers a welcome respite from the heat of the equatorial jungles. It also brings with it a change of scenery as thick rainforest and palm trees are replaced with tall pine and cedar trees. We check into our hotel, where, on a clear day, the rear of our hotel has wonderful views to the nearby Sinabung Volcano and its frequent mini-eruptions. This afternoon we will visit the town's fruit market, a colourful place the locals visit on a daily basis to pick up their eclectic range of produce. Because of the varying climate, exotic fruits like papaya, durian, red guava and lychee sit alongside the more recognisable broccoli, carrots and apples.



Accommodation: Hotel Sibayak Internasional (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Optional sunrise climb of Sibayak volcano. Drive and then boat to Samosir island.

We rise early this morning for the relatively easy walk up to the crater of Mount Sibayak (2,212 metres), an active volcano with a dried-up crater at its peak. We start the journey by vehicle, snaking our way up the hairpins of the lower volcano to a small rest area half way up. It is here where we continue our journey on foot to the summit. The walk starts steeply but quickly eases off to a more

gentle gradient, and it should take around 1 ½ hours to reach the crater (total ascent approximately 300-400 metres). There are several active gas holes to be found around the crater, hissing and spewing out billowing sulphurous gases. The last eruption here was well over a century ago, but it still remains the site of geothermal activity, with the vents producing crystalline sulphur which can be found littered over the crater rim. We return along the same path, meeting our vehicle and heading back to the hotel to freshen up before we drive onto Lake Toba and Samosir Island. The drive to edge of Lake Toba takes a couple of hours, and we stop here at a scenic viewpoint for some lunch. We then continue along a road skirting around the edge of the lake, with traditional Batak houses beginning to pop up along the route. On arrival in the small market town of Parapit, we board our ferry to Samosir Island, an island located in the middle of the lake and our night stop for the next two nights.



Accommodation: Toledo Inn (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Visit the Batak villages dotted around Lake Toba, learning about their unique customs and rituals

At 100 kilometres long and 30 kilometres at its widest point, Lake Toba is the largest crater lake in the world. It is also home to the Batak people, an ethnic group of people that are indigenous to this area, along with other parts of inland Sumatra and western Java. They are known for their colourful hand-made shirts and garments, as well as their eye-catching homes with large pitched roofs that arch up into the sky, resembling the hull of the boats they use to fish. After our lake-side breakfast this morning, we board our boat and head up the lake for the settlement of Tomok. Here we find a small traditional Batak village and learn about how the chief presides over the village, how law and order is kept, and how cannibalism used to play a part in the punishment of crimes. We then move onto Simanindo, where several Batak families still live and practice their ancient traditions. We are invited to explore their unique homes and may even have the opportunity to witness some of their spiritual dancing. This afternoon can be either spent relaxing at our lake-side hotel where we can take a refreshing dip in the lake, or perhaps visit the village of Ambarita with its handicrafts market and Batak graveyard.



Accommodation: Toledo Inn (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Morning drive to Medan; free afternoon in the city

After a leisurely breakfast we catch the ferry back to the mainland this morning, where we meet our vehicle and head back to Medan by road. The journey will take around four to five hours, dropping down from the mountains into the jungle, and past numerous rice paddies. There will be opportunity to stop at a number scenic points, and we take lunch at a local restaurant en route. We plan to arrive in Medan in the early afternoon, where the rest of the day is at leisure, perhaps to shop for souvenirs in Medan's various markets and malls.



Accommodation: Hotel Antares (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available

DAY 8 - Trip ends in Medan

Trip ends in Medan after breakfast.



Why book this trip

This is an adventurous trip that combines unique and endemic wildlife, stunning natural scenery and fascinating cultural encounters, all within a week. Sumatra receives few tourists relative to the more popular islands of Java and Bali, so this trip offers a chance to see the 'real' Indonesia, away from the tourist crowds. Accommodation in the jungle is basic, but the incredibly rewarding experience of seeing Orang-utans in the wild more than makes up for the lack of hot showers.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7



Transport

Bus
Boat



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



Accommodation

5 nights standard hotel
2 nights simple hotel

Trip information

Country information

Indonesia Holidays & Tours

Climate

Lying on the equator, Indonesia stays hot all year round, with daytime temperatures in the 80's (26°-28°C). Humidity is usually high. The wet seasons are roughly: Java- October to April; Bali- November to May; starting later the further east you travel. Nights are much cooler in the mountains than on the plains. Sea breezes normally keep the coastal strips of the islands from becoming too uncomfortable.

Time difference to GMT

+7

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Islam, Christian, Hindu

Language

Indonesian (official), numerous regional dialects, Sundanese, Javanese and some English.

Budgeting and packing

Clothing

The region is tropical (humid) and days can be very hot. Casual clothes are the most practical, whilst tight fitting garments should be avoided. Please bring long skirts, trousers and shirts to cover yourself fully in order to respect local sensibilities, and to cover your arms and legs in the jungle. Bring some warmer clothing for the time spent at higher altitudes. Light rain gear and/or an umbrella is excellent in sticky, tropical conditions. A sunhat is essential.

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes, trainers and sandals

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daysac. Remember, you are expected to carry your own luggage and cabin space is limited, so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

Binoculars, torch, water bottle, insect repellent (tropical strength), high factor suncream (at least factor 15), good quality sunglasses and a lip salve with sun protection. Although not mandatory, you may wish to bring walking poles for Mt Sibayak.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff look to members of the

group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly you should allow approx. £25 for gratuities for local staff.

Country Information

Indonesia Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£5

Dinner price

£9

Beer price

£1

Water price

£0.5

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Rupiah (Rp).

Recommended Currency For Exchange

USD, EUR and GBP.

Where To Exchange

Always check rates first. Banks and moneychangers usually have the best rates. Exchange is also possible at airports. Always keep receipts.

ATM Availability

In major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance

In major towns.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques are accepted but require the purchase receipt. Well known brands and higher denominations are recommended.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Boat

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Please note that the accommodation in Bohorok, Berastagi and Samosir Island do not have air conditioning. In the jungles of Bohorok, the rooms are kept cool with a number of fans, whereas Berastagi and Samosir Islands are situated at elevated altitudes,

resulting in much cooler and more comfortable evenings.

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Indonesia: British nationals travelling to Indonesia for tourism purposes can enter the country without a visa for up to 30 days at certain ports of entry including international airports in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Bali, Medan, Surabaya and Batam, and sea ports in Batam and Bintan. If travelling on a free visa you must also exit via one of these approved ports. All passports must have at least 6 months validity remaining after departure from Indonesia. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for

your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

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Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, tetanus, infectious hepatitis, typhoid and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on Malaria and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Although not compulsory, travellers may wish to immunise themselves against Japanese encephalitis. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.
