

EXPLORE!

NEW

Sumatra and Eclipse

13 days

Indonesia - Trip code SUME



Sumatra and Eclipse

Join us on a comprehensive tour of the Indonesian island of Sumatra. Travelling through rugged landscapes and discovering unique wildlife, we trek through jungles to spot orang-utans in the wild, scale volcanoes for sunrise and enjoy tribal village encounters. This itinerary has been organised to coincide with the annular eclipse, due on the 26th December 2019 where we plan to witness this spectacle from the remote paddy fields of Padang Sidempaun.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Annular Eclipse** - The opportunity to view the solar eclipse from the vast open rice paddies of Padang Sidempaun
- ★ **Bohorok** - Encounter orang-utans in the wild whilst trekking through the jungle in Bukit Lawang.
- ★ **Samosir** - Travel by boat to visit remote Batak villages, learning about their unique ancestral traditions.
- ★ **Bukittinggi** - Discover the 'Indonesian Grand Canyon' on a walk through the lush forests of West Sumatra.

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 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. As we are staying in the jungle and on the fringes of the national park, our accommodation is clean and 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, accompanied by 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 a sanctuary in 1973, helping to rehabilitate orphaned orang-utans, but in the past few years the last gentle giant was successfully re-introduced 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. 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 - Travel by boat to 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 interesting 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 - Drive through Toba Highlands to Padang Sidempuan

After a leisurely breakfast we catch the ferry back to the mainland and drive southwards along the shores of Lake Toba. Passing rice paddies, churches and Toba houses with their distinct arched roofs, we then make our way up into the Toba Highlands. We plan to break the 225 kilometre journey every couple of hours to take in some of the interesting scenery along the way. The route takes us past pineapple, coffee and cacao plantations, and we have the chance to stop at the natural hot springs at Siphoholon. In total the drive should take approximately eight hours.



Accommodation: Mega Permata Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available

DAY 8 - Visit morning market and the house of tribal chief. Optional afternoon exploring Bahal Temples

This morning we head out on foot to explore the lively central market, witnessing locals going about their daily business bartering for their groceries and produce. We then move onto the house of the former chief of the Mandailing Tribe where we share tea and learn about local customs and how the Mandailing people have adapted to live in modern-day Indonesia. This afternoon there is the option to drive approximately two hours to the Bahal Temple Complex. Made up of three main temples and located in an isolated valley with no surrounding settlements or vegetation, not much is known about these temples and why they are here. Interestingly there is no known association to kingdoms at that time, but they are similar in style to other 13th Century temples found in Java and other parts of the Indonesian archipelago. We have some time to explore the complex and surrounding areas before returning to Padang Sidempuan.



Accommodation: Mega Permata Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 9 - Eclipse viewing from the rice paddies of Padang Sidempuan

An annular solar eclipse of the sun will take place today, 26th December 2019. An annular eclipse occurs when the moon and the sun line up perfectly, but due to its distance from the earth, the moon does not completely cover the sun and a 'ring of fire', or 'annulus' remains. We plan to head out to the vast rice paddies of Padang Sidempuan, away from the town and any potential light pollution. The eclipse is scheduled to begin at 10:14 AM, with maximum eclipse occurring at 12:06 PM. The eclipse will end at 2:04 PM. Eclipse glasses will be provided to allow you to view the event safely. Please note whilst Sumatra enjoys an equatorial tropical climate and rain falls throughout the year, there are generally two seasons. The drier season runs from February to August, and the wet season from September to January. The date of the eclipse means this trip will run within the wet season. Rains in the wet season seldom fall all day, they tend to be very heavy downpours that fall for 1-2 hours, before clearing up again. Whilst weather is very difficult to predict in advance, it is estimated that there is approximately a 12% chance of clear skies at that this time of year. We are not able to make any guarantees regarding the weather conditions and the likelihood of seeing the eclipse.



Accommodation: Mega Permata Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 10 - Drive to Bukittinggi, stopping at spice gardens and hot springs en route

We have a long drive ahead of us today as we travel to Bukittinggi, located in the Minangkabau Highlands nearly 1,000 metres above sea level. Although the drive is long, at approximately 9-10 hours, it is scenic, driving past waterfalls, lakes and through sections of tropical rainforest. As we pass from the northern hemisphere to the southern hemisphere, we stop for some photo opportunities in the town of Bonjol, a town that straddles the equator. We plan to arrive in the late afternoon, where we can make the most of the cooler, refreshing temperatures that the elevation of this hill station provides.



Accommodation: Royal Denai Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 11 - Morning walk in Sianok Canyon, afternoon free

Today we have a chance to stretch our legs after the long drive of the previous day. We make our way on foot to the impressive Sianok Canyon, measuring at a depth of 150 metres and a width of around 200 metres. The walk takes us along areas of lush vegetation, through small pockets of forest and alongside the river. It is not uncommon to see long-tailed monkeys playing in the trees, along with the chance to spot gibbons, deer and wild boar. The walk ends in the village Koto Gadang, a village known for its silverwares. We spend some time witnessing the local craftsman working by hand using the silver, before returning to Bukittinggi, where the rest of the afternoon is free to explore or enjoy the refreshing climate.



Accommodation: Royal Denai Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 12 - Morning drive to Padang, free afternoon with the option to visit the beach of museum of West Sumatra

We set off this morning for the coastal town of Padang, the capital of West Sumatra and a historically significant trading port in the days of the Dutch East Indies. The afternoon is free to explore the town, with the option to visit the museum of West Sumatra. Architecturally an interesting building in its own right, it houses a number of exhibits that offers an introduction to the Minangkabau people and their way of life. There is also the option to relax on the white sands of Bungus Bay beach. For those that like spicy food, we find ourselves in the culinary home of the famous Padang Curry, the spicy dish served in creamy coconut curry sauce, and there are some excellent restaurants to choose from.



Accommodation: Axana Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 13 - Trip ends in Padang

The trip ends this afternoon in Padang.

Why book this trip

Sumatra is known for being one of only two places in the world where you can see orang-utans in the wild. But Sumatra offers so much more than it's wildlife, the landscape varies from tropical rainforest to steaming volcanoes to lush rice fields, and it has a rich ancient culture with beliefs still followed and practiced today. This trip has been put together to showcase the best of Sumatra, along with the opportunity to witness the solar eclipse from the vast rice paddies of Padang Sidempau.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 12



Transport

Bus
Boat



Trip staff

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



Accommodation

10 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 sunscreen (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. £35 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.

