

TRAVELTIMES

In this issue

Our latest itineraries
Guidebooks
Northern Laos Travel forums
Fly low-cost around the world

Our latest itineraries

We have been busy adding new FREE itineraries to the website. You can now download the following from travelocator.co.uk:

Africa and Middle East

- Syria (10 days)
- Tunisia (14 days)
- Namibia (8 days)

Americas

- Northern Mexico (14 days)



Uluru, as featured in the new Highlights of Australia itinerary

- Cities of East USA (14 days)

- Ecuador & Galapagos (17 days)

Asia

- Trans-Siberian & Mongolia (14 days)

- Kerala & Goa (13 days)

- Malaysia (15 days)

Australasia

- Australian Highlights (13 days)

- North Island (16 days)

Europe

- Croatia (15 days)

- Portugal (13 days)

For every destination imaginable there is invariably a guidebook, and for some destinations there are several guides to choose from. So, which should you pick?

Different brands each have their unique style. Some find that *Lonely Planet's* precise pricing most useful, others think

Guidebooks

that *Rough Guide's* price categories are less susceptible to price fluctuations.

So what do we recommend?

The likes of *Lonely Planet*, *Rough Guide* and *Footprint* are good for planning independent travel.

The more 'brochure'-like style of guides such as *DK's Eyewitness Guides* are useful for taking on pre-planned tours or for short city breaks.

But the only way in which you can know for sure which is

best for you is to sample one in a bookshop or, better still, visit the *Google Books* website where you can get previews of all the latest guidebooks.

The ultimate test, however, is taking a guidebook with you on your travels. You will soon enough discover whether or not it is any good for you!



Forums

There comes a time in travel planning when you just have to ask someone who has been there and done that before.

Travel forums are the best place to find such people and Our favourites include

indiamike.com for all India and Nepal related questions, travelfish.org for anything to do with South East Asia and *Lonely Planet's Thorn Tree* for just about everything else.

Don't forget to search the forums first, in case your question's already answered.



Visit for your SE Asia questions

Northern Laos

In some places, Laos remains untouched. But get there quick, as this beautiful country is fast being discovered.

Vientiane may seem like an obvious place to start your trip to Northern Laos. Yes, it is the nation's capital, but it often disappoints with its relatively few sights.

Pay a visit to Pha That Luang, wander along the waterfront then move on to Vang Vien.

Those seeking peace and solitude will not find it here. Thailand's hedonists have spilled over to this stunning village, going from one river

the next bus to Luang Prabang. Sedate, ornate and generally just great, LP also attracts its fair share of tourists.

But those who visit here are the sort who appreciate Laotian culture, whether to explore the intricate Phra That Khong Santi Chedi, the bustling night market or the unforgettable views over the town and Mekong beyond on Phu Si Hill.

This next part is where you start to leave the crowds behind.

Keep your camera close for the ferry ride up-river through untouched countryside and lofty hills to the village of Nong Kiaow on the banks of the Nam Ou.



Akha hill tribe girl

the Vietnam war, is a short walk away. Travelling further north you will eventually come to Luang Nam Tha, close to the border with China.

This town is the perfect spot from which to arrange treks in the region, the most popular being those that visit hill tribes.

On a one-day trek you can expect a hike through the rainforest. You will also call in at a hill tribe village where the chief will ply you with potent rice wine.

From Luang Nam Tha there are buses which take you in to Northern Thailand for onward journeys to Bangkok.



Luang Prabang's main street

side bar to another on inflated tubes.

There's no avoiding the party here, so if drunken westerners are not your thing then get on

Enjoy some Laotian cookery at a riverside restaurant and watch the sun go down. The nearby Pha Tok cave, where the villagers hid from the ravages of

Fly low-cost around the world

Yes, it's possible. Here's one way how to do it from the UK: **easyJet to Istanbul**

Or travel overland to Turkey through Europe

Air Arabia to Sharjah Sharjah is next to Dubai

Air Arabia to Bangalore

Spend a while in India, where other cities connect to SE Asia

Tiger Air to Singapore

Bus up to Kuala Lumpur to tap in to Air Asia's huge network

Air Asia to Hanoi

Travel through SE Asia to get to back to Kuala Lumpur

Air Asia to Melbourne

Spend time in Oz or fly to New Zealand (Using Virgin Blue) fly out of Sydney

Jetstar to Hawaii

Spend at least a week in Hawaii

Hawaiian Air to Los Angeles

Bus, rail or drive through the USA to reach New York

Air Berlin to London

Via Dusseldorf



Air Asia; popular and with an extensive network