



retreat | recreate

Thailand and Lao Textiles and Handcrafts: 26 November – 9 December 2026

Trip Notes (as at 18 March 2026)

Welcome to our textiles tour of northern Thailand and Laos. The textiles arts and handcrafts of these two countries reflect the diverse cultural traditions of the 50+ diverse ethnic groups who inhabit the regions we'll explore during this trip.

The retreat|recreate host for this trip will be Susan Keeble. The local tour leader will be confirmed closer to departure.

These Trip Notes function as your FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) companion. Please read them in conjunction with the tour itinerary.

Please carefully and thoroughly read the **entire** Trip Notes.

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Itinerary disclaimer

- Some changes to the itinerary may occur due to inclement weather or circumstances beyond our control. While we do our best to prevent this happening, it may be unavoidable. It can also happen with little notice, so please bear with us if we have to make modifications to the itinerary.
- Please note this itinerary has been arranged well in advance. Accordingly, we may make slight amendments depending on the planned activities and venues as they are confirmed closer to departure or if any of our activities need to change days or dates. We'll always let you know of any proposed change to the itinerary.
- Due to variable rainfall and upstream dam construction on the Mekong River, water levels aren't always reliable. If water levels aren't adequate, part of the journey on day 8 may need to be made by overland vehicle instead of by boat. Road conditions can change between our trips, so travel times may take longer than expected.

Is this trip suitable for you?

- This trip is for fit, active (see fitness requirements below), adventurous, textile and handcraft enthusiasts.
- You don't need to be an artist or an accomplished, experienced textile or handcraft practitioner.
- If you're curious about the world, have an interest in the art of hand-made, are keen to explore traditional Thai and Lao culture, you understand the importance of being a generous and tolerant group member, you are a courteous and aware traveller who is respectful of local etiquette, traditions, beliefs and customs, and you value socially responsible travel, this is the trip for you!

Health, fitness and mobility

Please carefully and realistically consider your mobility, fitness and health when determining if this trip is right for you.

The itinerary is a full one to ensure value for money, however there are some brief free periods. All travellers need to be in good physical health and have good fitness and mobility to participate fully on this trip. This trip is not for you if your health and fitness are compromised or you use mobility aids.

Due to recent experiences on some tours, we have made the decision to require all travellers to submit a **Fitness to Travel declaration** together with their Booking Application Form, to ensure all travellers are physically suited to our tours. We reserve the right to decline an application if we deem your fitness or mobility levels to be a detriment to your own and others' satisfactory participation in the tour. The specific physical requirements for this tour are outlined on the Fitness to Travel Declaration and below:

All participants must be able to:

- navigate arrival and departure airports without personal assistance
- carry their luggage for short distances
- embark and disembark mini-vans, tuk-tuks and boats without assistance
- manage flights of stairs at a moderate pace without assistance (not all of our hotels have elevators and ground floor rooms are sometimes not available or cannot be guaranteed)
- undertake walking tours including walking on uneven, hilly and possibly muddy terrain
- walk at a moderate pace and keep up with the rest of the group
- cope with warm to hot and sometimes humid weather
- stand for extended periods of time in galleries and museums
- use squat toilets as western toilets are not always available at some of the villages we visit and at some rural road-side stops
- cope with some long travel days and consecutive travel days. Most of our road travel is in two air-conditioned, private mini-buses. Regular stops will be made for bathrooms, meals, sightseeing and photographic opportunities.
- be prepared to travel on rural roads which can sometimes be pot-holed and rough or bumpy and dusty. Some of the roads we encounter may not be maintained in as good condition as those you're used to at home and others do not have concrete/bitumen.
- be patient as distances are not indicative of travel times and sometimes take longer than expected
- use shower over bath facilities, as walk-in showers cannot be guaranteed
- sleep on a firm mattress on the floor in a room (with bathroom) shared between 4-5 people (from within our group) at our simple Hmong guesthouse accommodation on day 4 (one night)
- sit on a low stool or on the floor for some workshops
- be able to satisfactorily participate in the full tour program as described

This tour offers a range of immersive experiences. Some are not readily available to the average tourist and we will occasionally venture off the standard tourist trail. Some of the towns and areas we visit are remote and have little tourist infrastructure in contrast to the major tourist hubs of Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Luang Prabang. While this is not an adventure tour, a 'sense of adventure' is required.

- The minimum age is 18 years at the time of travel
- If you are prone to motion sickness, you should consider how you might manage this. Sitting by a window and/or using motion sickness bracelets, ginger tablets, Kwell tablets and Travelcalm tablets are measures that have assisted our previous tour participants greatly.
- retreat|recreate is able to provide general advice on mandatory health requirements, however we are not medical experts. It is your responsibility to consult your doctor or travel health expert at least two months prior to departure, for up-to-date medical information or for the latest health, vaccination and anti-malarial requirements and recommendations for your destinations. TMVC clinics are recommended for travellers from Australia and New Zealand. www.traveldoctor.com.au
- You must carry your own personal first aid kit at ALL times - paracetamol, bandaids, anti-nausea pills, hydration salts, RAT tests etc in addition to any personal medications or other requirements (eg spare prescription spectacles). For legal reasons the retreat|recreate host and tour leader are prohibited from dispensing any type of drugs including antibiotics and headache tablets. Please ensure that you are personally and adequately prepared as flights, bus trips, lots of walking, warm weather and unfamiliar food can take their toll.
- Mosquito borne diseases:

- Malaria can be a risk in rural areas along with other mosquito-borne diseases, such as Zika virus, dengue fever and Japanese encephalitis, especially during the rainy season (May-Sept). We recommend that you seek medical advice prior to travel regarding medication and vaccination. While travelling, protect yourself by taking measures to avoid insect bites, including always using insect repellent and wearing long, loose-fitting, light coloured clothing.
- Travellers in Thailand and Laos are no longer required to be vaccinated against Covid-19, however we strongly recommend all our travellers are up to date with the recommended Covid-19 vaccination schedule. We also strongly recommend you are up to date with regular vaccinations including influenza, tetanus, etc.
- Carry a copy (digital or hard copy) of your vaccination record.
- We ask all travellers to continue to monitor their health throughout the trip and report any symptoms of any illness to the host and/or guide immediately.
- If you feel unwell or exhibit flu, cold or Covid-like symptoms while on tour, you will be required to take precautionary measures to reduce the risk of transmission, including wearing a mask around others. Please bring rapid antigen tests and masks with you on tour.

Included and optional activities

- Included activities are those specifically listed in the itinerary.
- None of the included activities are compulsory however if you take time out from the scheduled itinerary and choose not to participate in any of the included activities on this itinerary, the cost of those activities will not be refunded. Of course, we hope and expect that you'll enjoy and participate in our itinerary.
- Activities marked as optional are at additional cost.
- Any activities not outlined in the itinerary are at your own expense and are undertaken at your own risk.

Pre-tour and post-tour activities

- While some general tourist activities are included in our itinerary, we can't include everything. A list of suggested activities for your pre/post tour and free time will be provided to confirmed travellers closer to departure.

Accommodation

- Accommodation on this trip is on a twin share basis with a single supplement available at the time of booking if you'd prefer your own room. Note, the single supplement does not apply to our Hmong village guesthouse accommodation (day 4).
- On rare occasions, alternative arrangements may need to be made due to circumstances beyond our control. A similar standard of accommodation will be arranged in these instances.
- A brief description of the accommodation on this trip is below. The star ratings are according to Trip Advisor and are an indication (only) of the general level of features and amenities to expect. The names of our accommodation venues will be provided to participants once the group is confirmed.
 - Day 1-3: Chiang Mai – 4 star hotel, centrally located
 - Day 4: Hmong village guesthouse. Simple accommodation with 4-5 people per room, each on a firm floor mattress with a sheet, quilt/blanket and pillow. Each room has its own bathroom/wet room with a western toilet and hot shower (no shower screen/curtain). The single supplement does not apply to day 4.
 - Day 5: as per days 1-3
 - Day 6 & 7: Chiang Rai – 3.5 star hotel, central location
 - Day 8: Pak Beng – 3.0 star lodge with Mekong river views
 - Day 9: Oudomxai – 4.5 star beautiful riverside eco-resort
 - Day 10: Nong Khiaw – lodge with riverside bungalows
 - Day 11-13: Luang Prabang – 3.5 star, centrally located

Solo travellers and room sharing

- Solo travellers can also elect to share a twin room for the duration of the tour (excluding day 4). While we will do our best to pair you up with another solo traveller, note however that if we receive bookings from an uneven number of solo guests, the last to book will need to pay the single supplement.
- If you are considering requesting to share a twin room with another solo guest, please consider whether you will be able to cope with another person's potential snoring or different understanding of personal space and quiet.
- **Please be brutally honest with yourself about your capacity to share with a stranger as well as your own suitability as a roommate.**
- Be sure to read our tips for successful room sharing at: www.retreatrecreate.com/room-sharing-tips-and-suggestions/
- Unless twin share travellers book together, we'll rotate our twin share solo guests each time we move hotels so that they each have the opportunity to share with each other.

Pre-tour and post-tour accommodation

- We strongly recommend that you extend your stay both before and after the tour to allow time for recovery from flights, different time zones and to explore independently and pursue your own interests.
- Pre-tour accommodation in Chiang Mai and post-tour accommodation in Luang Prabang may be booked through us at an additional cost and subject to availability. Details will be provided to confirmed travellers.
- Check in time at our Chiang Mai hotel is 2 pm. If you arrive before 2pm and your room isn't ready, our hotel will store your luggage in the meantime.
- Check out time at our Luang Prabang hotel is 12pm. If your flight departs later in the day, our hotel can assist with storing your luggage from 12pm until your departure.
- You are welcome to arrange your own pre/post-tour accommodation. Options include using your preferred travel agent, Airbnb or online sites like booking.com.
- Note: if you book pre-tour accommodation other than the tour hotel, your arrival transfer may not be included, depending on the hotel you select. (Please check with us before booking if an arrival transfer is important to you).
- Note too that if you book pre-tour accommodation elsewhere, you will need to make your own way (at own cost) from your chosen accommodation to our starting point tour hotel in time for our 6pm welcome meeting on day 1.

Flights

- Flights to Thailand and from Laos are not included in the trip price. Please don't book flights until you've received confirmation that you have a place on the tour, have paid your deposit and received confirmation that we've reached our minimum group size and the trip is confirmed as proceeding. Information on booking flights and a Travel Details Form will be forwarded for completion once we have our minimum group.
- The itinerary commences in Chiang Mai (CNX), Thailand at 6pm on 26 November 2026 and finishes in Luang Prabang (LPQ), Laos on 9 December 2026 after breakfast.
- We recommend that you arrive in Chiang Mai at least a day in advance to allow for possible flight delays and also recovery from travelling from a different time zone and/or overnight flights. At the very latest, your arrival flight should land no later than midday on 26 November 2026 to allow for flight delays.
- If you are not comfortable booking your own flights or buying travel insurance online, you may wish to consult a travel agent for assistance.

Airport transfers (arrival and departure)

- An **arrival transfer** from Chiang Mai airport to our joining point hotel is included in your tour cost. Details of your arrival transfer will be provided closer to departure. The airport is approximately 5 km from the centre of town.
- **Departure transfers** from our finishing point hotel to Luang Prabang airport are not included in the tour cost. We can assist with arranging a pre-paid departure transfer if you wish. Alternatively, departure transfers may be arranged directly with our Luang Prabang hotel upon arrival. One-way airport transfers cost approximately USD15/AUD20/LAK250,000 depending on the vehicle and number of passengers. Rates are subject to change without notice. The drive to the airport takes approximately 20 minutes.
- Please note also that any unused arrival or pre-booked departure transfers will not be refunded.

Transport

- Transport on this trip is mostly in two private a/c mini-buses, plus a longtail river boat (on day 8) and occasional tuk-tuks and songthaews for short distances.
- Road conditions vary: some roads are in excellent condition while others may be narrow, bumpy, without bitumen etc. On longer travel days, regular stops will be made for meals, bathrooms, sightseeing activities and photographic opportunities. Distances don't necessarily reflect the driving time. Patience and a sense of humour are required. You may also wish to be prepared with your own music, podcasts, small handcraft project or reading material.
- Always wear a seatbelt where available.
- Meal breaks may sometimes be delayed. A small range of snacks will be provided in our vehicles. You may also wish to carry your own preferred snacks.

Meals

- While travelling with us you'll experience a vast array of wonderful food. Our tour leader will be able to suggest restaurants to try during the trip.
- Several lunches and dinners are not included in the tour price, giving guests the flexibility to set their own budget. However, we will frequently eat together as a group, particularly lunches, as we move from a morning activity to an afternoon activity. Please refer to the itinerary for details of included meals.
- Our local tour leader will endeavour to cater for specific dietary requirements however we recommend that you carry extra snacks in case suitable options are limited. For those suffering from particular food allergies, our local tour leader will endeavour to disclose to their fullest knowledge the main ingredients in dishes being consumed, however it is your personal responsibility to ensure that you do not ingest any foods to which you are allergic.
- We recommend that you peel fruit and vegetables before eating, don't eat from street carts and take sensible precautions to avoid travellers' diarrhoea.

Water

- Drinking tap water isn't recommended in Thailand or Laos. Please carry your own refillable drink bottle with you each day. Bottled drinking water is readily available for purchase and some of our hotels have drinking water available. Avoid ice in drinks outside of major cities. We also recommend that you use bottled or treated water when brushing your teeth.
- Travel bottles with their own filter are effective, lightweight and don't add to landfill. Eg. <https://grayl.com/> or <https://www.fill2purefilters.com.au/>

Toilets

- All our accommodation venues have western toilets.
- We are likely to encounter squat toilets at some point during our travels, particularly in public places, rural areas, villages and some road-side stops.
- You may have to pay a few Baht/Kip to an attendant to use a public toilet. Toilet paper is usually provided, although we strongly recommend that you always carry a stash of your own throughout your travels.
- The issue of toilets and what to do with used toilet paper is not always clear. Many sewage systems can't handle toilet paper, so if there's a waste-paper basket next to the toilet, that is where the toilet paper goes. If there's no basket, then flush toilet paper down the toilet.

Workshops and hands-on activities: The hands-on handcraft activities included in this itinerary are not necessarily formal classes with trained teachers. They're more about genuine person to person interactions, cultural exchange and learning directly from authentic, traditional artisans at their work-place, village or home.

Safety:

- Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues, news, travel restrictions, entry requirements etc involved with international travel. We recommended that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information prior to your departure.
- Our tour leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns.
- We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt for the safe-keeping of your money, passport, air tickets and other valuable items. Please leave valuable jewellery at home.
- Not all hotels will have a safety deposit box for storage of valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.
- We recommend that you exercise caution when walking alone and encourage you to walk together and only on main, well-lit thoroughfares at night. Be particularly vigilant on public transport. Simple measures like carrying your day pack on your front, not hanging your bag over the back of your chair and wearing a money belt will reduce any chance that your valuables should go missing.
- Seat belts - Please be aware that local laws governing transportation safety may differ from those in your home country. There's a possibility that some of the transport we use may not provide seat belts.
- Fire Precautions - Please be aware that local laws governing tourism facilities may differ from those in your home country and not all the accommodations we use may have fire exits, fire extinguishers or smoke alarms.
- Swimming pools - You may stay at hotels with unfenced pools and no life guard on duty.
- Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) - Large areas of eastern and southern Laos are contaminated by unexploded ordnance (UXO). Statistically speaking, the UXO risk for the average foreign visitor is low, but travellers should exercise caution when considering off-road wilderness travel in the aforementioned provinces. Stick to marked paths. Never touch an object that may be UXO, no matter how old and defunct it may appear.

Travel insurance

- Travel insurance IS NOT included in the trip price and is mandatory for all travellers on all retreat|recreate tours.
- We require that, at a minimum, you are covered for medical expenses including emergency repatriation, personal accident and death. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, Covid-19 related scenarios as far as possible, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects.

- It is your responsibility to ensure you are adequately covered.
- Be sure to carefully note the circumstances under which your chosen insurer will cover you for cancellation.
- You will not be able to join a tour until evidence of your travel insurance (including credit card insurance) and the insurer's 24-hour emergency contact number have been provided.
- We recommend that you take out travel insurance as soon as you pay your deposit. Insurers will generally allow you to adjust the dates for which you are covered, however if you extend the period for which you are covered, additional charges will apply. Some insurers may charge an amendment fee.

Passports, Visas and Arrival cards

- are the responsibility of the individual traveller.
- Please ensure the name on your passport matches the name on your booking and airline tickets.
- Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months beyond the duration of your trip and have at least four blank pages (two for Thailand, two for Laos).
- We recommend all nationalities check with their nearest relevant consulate or embassy for the latest update on visa requirements, eligibility and costs as these may change without notice. If entering **by air**, most nationalities will be granted a **30 day stay upon arrival** on each visit, provided they have a confirmed ticket out of Thailand (by air, land, or sea) within 30 days. Those entering **by land** at the immigration checkpoints from neighbouring countries will be allowed to stay for **15 days** on each entry, although there are exceptions for citizens of some countries.
- If you happen to be one of the nationalities that are required to obtain a Thai visa prior to arrival, your visa application form may require you to state the dates on which you enter and exit Thailand. Please note, we suggest you list your date of entry a few days before, and date of exit a few days after your intended dates in case you encounter any delays or problems enroute. As per our itinerary, we will leave Thailand and enter Laos on 3 December 2026. The Thailand border is at Chiang Khong. The Laos border is at Houy Xai.
- All travellers to Thailand must complete an online **Thailand Digital Arrival Card (TDAC)** within the 3 days before arrival in Thailand. The online TDAC and instructions are at: <https://tdac.immigration.go.th/arrival-card/#/home>. Please use the individual submission (not the group submission). **Please note: the Thailand Digital Arrival Card is not a visa.**
- We ask that all members of our group obtain their Laos visas at the border (during the tour), and **NOT** in their home country prior to travel – allowing the group to cross the border more efficiently and to minimise delays. Please ensure that you **carry at least 1 passport photo and ~ US\$45 or equivalent in Laos Kip (LAK)** in cash for your application. All visa fees are payable in cash only. Those without a photo will incur an additional charge.

Money:

- The official currency of **Thailand** is the Thai Baht (THB). The most convenient and cheapest way to obtain local currency is via ATMs which are available in most towns and cities. As at March 2026: THB 100 = AUD 4.40 = USD 3.10 = EUR 2.70 = GBP 2.32 = NZD 5.30 = CAD 4.22
- The unit of currency in **Laos** is the Lao Kip (LAK). It's unlikely that you'll be able to purchase Lao kip outside of Laos. US dollars are also quite widely used throughout Laos in main cities but less so in rural villages. ATMs are present in most towns. As at March 2026: LAK 100,000 = AUD 6.60 = USD 4.70 = EUR 4.10 = GBP 3.50 = NZD 8.00 = CAD 6.40
- We recommend that you download the XE currency exchange App to your smartphone for up to date currency exchange rates.
- In both **Thailand and Laos**, foreign currency notes that are torn, old or faded can be very difficult to exchange. Both countries

operate mostly on cash. The use of credit cards is restricted mainly to major hotels and more upmarket restaurants, shops and shopping centres.

- **Spending money:** Every traveller is different and spending money requirements will vary. Please consider your own spending habits when allowing for drinks, shopping, additional sightseeing and activities, laundry, gifts, souvenirs, and tipping. Note that you will need to buy several lunches and dinners. As a guideline, USD25-30 per day will allow you to eat and drink reasonably well. It's always better to allow for a little more than you think you'll need.
- **Gratuities and tips:** If you're happy with the services provided, a tip - though not compulsory - is appropriate. While it may not be customary to you, it's of great significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels, inspires excellent service, and is an entrenched feature of the tourism industry across many destinations. We suggest you carry small notes of local currency to make tipping easier.
- At our group meeting on day 1, our tour leader will discuss the idea of running a group tipping kitty whereby everybody contributes an equal amount and our tour leader pays the tips on behalf of the group, while keeping a running record of all monies spent (except restaurant tips). The amount to budget for the tipping kitty on this trip is approximately USD60-70 per person (TBC), payable in Thai Baht converted at the exchange rate at the time of travel.
- This kitty does not include a tip for our main tour leader. If you are happy with our local guide's services, a tip would be welcome at the conclusion of the tour. As a guideline, we suggest an amount of USD8-10 per person per day (payable in THB, AUD, USD or LAK) but you are welcome to tip more or less depending on your perception of the quality of service.
- **Contingency/Emergency funds:** We try to plan for every eventuality, however there are still some things beyond our control. Please make sure you have access to an extra US\$700/AU\$1000 for emergencies (eg. severe weather, natural disasters, civil unrest) or other events that result in unavoidable changes to the itinerary (e.g. transport strikes or cancellations, airport closures). Sometimes these things necessitate last minute changes to enable our trips to continue, and as a result there may be some extra costs involved.

Commissions

In many countries, the receipt of commissions or kickbacks in exchange for recommending particular shops, services or activities is ingrained in the culture of the tourism industry. In an effort to best control and monitor shopping and activities with an aim for the best possible experience, our guide has curated a small number of carefully selected shopping experiences and activities based on positive feedbacks from previous travellers. On occasion these will be as part of included walking tours or occasionally outside of included activities in free time. Please be assured that if you prefer not to join in on any shopping experiences there is no obligation to do so. If you do attend, be assured you are not under any obligation to buy.

Phone and internet

- Please ensure you have internet access at all times, not just when we're at hotels.
- Internet access is available at most of our accommodation venues except the village guesthouse on day 4.
- If you intend to use your mobile phone for keeping in touch with family and friends at home, we suggest that you make sure you have Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp or other Wifi based communication installed and updated before you leave home as your local App Store won't always work in another country. While you're connected to WiFi, calls and messages are free, otherwise you can use your data connection to make calls and send messages using these Apps.

- We'll set up a WhatsApp group in the week prior to departure to enable us to provide the group with updates and reminders each evening for the following day. Please ensure you have WhatsApp installed at least one week prior to departure.
- If you wish to make international phone calls from your mobile/cellular phone, we recommend that you ensure Thailand and Laos are covered by your usual service provider. Please note that many providers don't cover Laos in their roaming networks. Check out global roaming packages, charges and the activation procedure prior to departure. Don't forget to turn off international roaming when not in use to avoid a huge phone bill.
- Other alternatives for use in an unlocked mobile phone (and to be purchased prior to departure) are:
 - An international eSIM such as <https://esim.holafly.com/> or <https://www.airalo.com/asia-esim> should be arranged before you leave your home country.
 - A travel SIM such as <https://auspost.com.au/travel-essentials/prepaid-travelsim> (available in Australia) or as <https://gosim.com/international-sim-card/>
 - A local SIM card, however you may need separate SIMs for Thailand and Laos eg. <https://www.simcorner.com>

Etiquette:

- Wear modest clothing at all times. At religious sites, a long skirt or sarong is appropriate.
- Remove your shoes when entering temples, homes and some shops.
- Do not photograph monks
- Women should not touch monks or even sit next to them in public transport.
- Don't touch anyone with your feet and never sit with your feet pointing towards another person or a Buddha image.
- Greet people by putting your hands together in a prayer-like position

Group leader and host

- The tour will be fully escorted by a local English-speaking tour leader and retreat|recreate host, Susan Keeble. Once we arrive in Laos, we will also be escorted by a Laos government-accredited guide as required by Laos government regulations.
- The aim of the tour leaders and host is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. In accordance with local regulations the leaders will also be licensed Tour Guides. Our local tour leader/s will provide information on the areas we travel through, suggestions for things to do and see and recommend great local dining venues.
- The retreat|recreate host will provide suggestions of craft and textile-based activities, venues, shopping locations and experiences additional to those included in the itinerary. A list of these additional recommended shops, galleries/museums and activities will be provided closer to departure.

Weather and Climate:

Daytime temperatures in Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Luang Prabang are likely to range from 22-30C/72-86F. Night time temperatures are expected to range from 10-20C/50-68F. Evenings in the mountains on day 4 and 9 may be cool. Although the wet season will be over, be prepared for a shower ... just in case.

What to bring:

- Closer to departure you will receive a list of suggestions for packing. Generally speaking you should pack as lightly as possible as you will be expected to manage your own luggage and walk with it for short distances. It is recommended that you keep your luggage weight to less than 15kg (at least to begin with). It is also essential that you check the weight and dimensions of luggage allowed by the airlines you'll be flying with.

Basic requirements are:

- One lockable suitcase with wheels, or a small-medium sized (40-50 litres) back-pack is ideal
- A daypack/bag to carry water, sunscreen, camera, medical kit etc. for day trips and to function as an overnight bag for our homestay visit (day 4) as our main luggage will remain in the vehicle.
- Easy to wash and fast-drying clothes are a good choice
- We recommend that you dress conservatively in comfortable loose-fitting clothing in light weight, natural fabrics (eg. cotton/voile which breathe in warm weather) and cover shoulders to below knees as a minimum. No mini-skirts, shorts or plunging necklines please.
- Clothing that can be layered is the best way to tackle temperature variations

Responsible Travel

retreat|recreate believes strongly in sustainable, responsible, ethical travel. Responsible travel is all about making good choices and ensuring you have an incredible trip while also having a low impact or rather a positive impact on the local environment, community and economy. **We operate on principles of respect for all people, cultures, religions and traditions and expect our travellers to extend that same respect.**

How can you be a responsible traveller?

- Choose to travel with a responsible travel company like retreat|recreate!
- Consider offsetting your flights with organisations such as www.ecologi.com or <https://sustainabletravel.org> Be responsible for your carbon emissions, provide jobs for local families, improve soil and water quality, restore wildlife habitats and contribute to a sustainable future.
- Say 'no' to plastic. Avoid buying bottled water. Refill a reusable water bottle with filtered water as we travel. A retreat|recreate cloth shopping tote will be provided in your tour welcome pack on Day 1.
- Buy directly from artisans and/or not-for-profit organisations, social enterprises and NGOs. particularly those that support women, girls and marginalised communities. Supporting local artisans helps keep traditional crafts alive.
- ALWAYS ask and receive permission before taking photos of people, including children. Please refrain from posting photos of children on social media as they can end up on the 'wrong' sites.
- Eat at local restaurants so you can contribute directly to local communities and their economy.
- Always be respectful of local customs, traditions, religions and culture.
- Dress modestly and respectfully. Shoulders to below knees should be covered as a minimum, especially when entering places of worship. In rural areas women will also need to wear modest clothing when swimming.
- Always dispose of litter thoughtfully, including cigarette butts.
- When bargaining at markets, stay calm, be reasonable and keep a smile on your face. It's meant to be fun!
- Learn a few words of the local language and engage with the people around you. A list of basic words and phrases will be provided to participants closer to departure.
- Refrain from giving gifts of money to locals. Please do not give children sweets.
- Be an animal-friendly traveller. Only visit venues that respect animals by allowing them to live normally in their natural environment. Steer clear of venues that use animals for entertainment, rides or abnormal activities and/or keep animals in poor and unnatural conditions.

Emergencies and other issues

- While we always endeavour to provide you with the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit, sometimes things may not go quite according to plan.
- Should any issue occur during the trip, please discuss this ASAP with your retreat|recreate host and tour leader so we can do our best to rectify the problem.
- In case of a genuine emergency dial 112.
- Our tour operator's local emergency number will be provided to confirmed travellers closer to departure.

A couple of rules

- You must at all times comply with the local laws, customs, foreign exchange and drug and alcohol regulations. Any illegal activity including the use of illegal drugs will not be tolerated. Possession or use of these substances is not only against the law but puts the rest of the group at risk.
- If you choose to consume alcohol while travelling, we encourage responsible drinking and expect that you'll abide by the local laws regarding alcohol consumption.
- By travelling with us you are agreeing to adhere to these rules.
- Your group leader has the right to remove any member of the group for inappropriate behaviour or breaking any of these rules, with no right of refund.
- If you feel that someone is behaving inappropriately while travelling with us, please inform your retreat|recreate host or tour leader immediately

Travelling on a group trip

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group – patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience. Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a certain place at a certain time, please be on time and ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on everyone's part.

Bring a sense of humour and a sense of adventure!
We're going to have a wonderful trip!

Any questions? Just ask!
Email Susan K at retreatrecreate@gmail.com