

east

Travel inspiration from the
Southeast Asia and **Japan** experts

INSIDE  INSIDE 
Japan Asia

PARADISE FOUND

Island hopping

in Vietnam

EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW WITH
**JONATHAN
ROSS**
ON P.28

Rugby in Japan • Trekking the cloud forests of Laos • Photography tips

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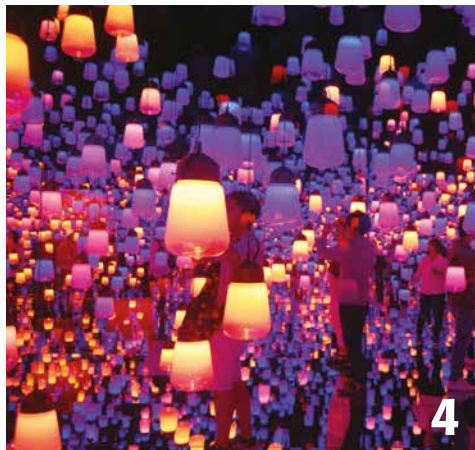
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JUST BACK

You're never far from a travel tale (or two) in our offices. Here's where we've been recently...



Chris Greener

Chris took an intrepid adventure, full of hiking and outdoor activities, in Vietnam and Laos.

Memorable moment: As well as the jungle trek through Nam Et-Phou Louey National Park (p.20), meeting elephants at Mandalao near Luang Prabang was so special.



Anna Tattersall

Anna joined our Japan Unmasked small group tour, before heading to Hakone, Nagoya and Shikoku.

Memorable moment: On my visit to Kanazawa, I loved dressing up in kimono and wandering around the traditional districts and gardens.



Brock Horning

Brock explored Japan's northernmost island, Hokkaido,

starting in Kushiro and ending in Sapporo.

Memorable moment: Standing barefoot in a natural stream surrounded by snow. Luckily, the stream was warm due to geothermal activity – quite a surreal moment!



Charlotte Bower

Charlotte enjoyed a city break in Hong Kong before island hopping in Cambodia and Vietnam.

Memorable moment: When the weather cleared near the top of Victoria Peak in Hong Kong, we got an amazing view over the iconic Victoria Harbour skyline.



Welcome to issue 8

When we founded InsideJapan back in 2000, it was with more than one eye on the 2002 FIFA World Cup. Watching England play in Japan was a dream for us, but we ended up going one better: escorting fellow fans for two weeks to help them experience the best of the country.

Believing that sightseeing should enhance a holiday, rather than be the main focus, we spent just as much time rubbing shoulders with salarymen in *izakaya*, singing karaoke, hiking in the mountains and joining locals in

the *onsen*, as seeing famous temples and ancient castles. As some of our happiest memories, you can imagine how excited we are for the 2019 Rugby World Cup; on p.8, our team share their favourite places to catch the tournament and on p.24, our pick of experiences take travellers beyond the most popular sights.

While we had long fallen for Japan, in those early days we could never have predicted our love affair with Southeast Asia. In this issue you'll discover some of what got us hooked; read about the modern cities and idyllic islands of Vietnam on p.12, intrepid hiking in Laos on p.20 and adventures for all the family on p.19. Over the next 12 months, we'll be busy on the ground to introduce more destinations into the fold. Watch this space!

Have a sense of adventure? Don't forget to enter our competition on p.31 to win ethical travel gear; perfect for a spot in your suitcase on one of our Small Group Tours or Self-Guided Adventures.

As always, we hope you find *east* magazine inspiring,



Alastair Donnelly



Simon King

INSIDESCOOP

BECOMING ART IN ODAIBA



WHEN TO TRAVEL?

Whether you want to join a festival in Japan, or go wildlife spotting in Vietnam, When to Travel is your go-to guide.

insideasiatours.com/when-to-travel

JAPAN

Ever wanted to step inside a piece of art? At the teamLab Borderless digital museum in Tokyo you can do just that. Enormous rooms envelop visitors with projections of swirling images and colours that snake between every wall; see flowers bloom, birds fly and fish swim in a

maze of galleries where every image is transient.

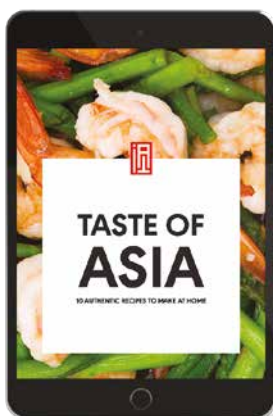
DO IT: MORI Building Digital Art Museum: teamLab Borderless, Odaiba Palette Town, Tokyo. Check opening hours and buy tickets online: borderless.teamlab.art

ASIA

GET A TASTE OF ASIA

Fellow foodies can now download 10 recipes from our new Food & Drink page – you'll be tucking into hearty bowls of ramen, crunchy salad rolls and rich curries in no time.

DO IT: Visit insideasiatours.com/food-and-drink



WINNER

THE
TRAVEL AWARDS
— 2018 —

THE SUNDAY TIMES

TRAVEL EDITOR'S AWARD

SUNDAY TIMES' TOP IN TRAVEL

We couldn't be prouder to have won The Sunday Times' **Editor's Choice Award** at the Travel Awards 2018 in South Africa.



LAOS

New life for rescued elephants

Despite traditionally being known as the 'land of a million elephants', logging and poaching in Laos has seen the number drop to 800, but things are changing. This year, Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith joined protection efforts by saving 13 elephants from an illegal sale to a foreign zoo. Having walked 150km

through the protected area of Nam Phouy, they will live out their days in the 530-hectare protected forest at the Sayaboury Elephant Sanctuary.

DO IT: To meet the new residents, visit the Experiences page on insideasiatours.com or call our Southeast Asia experts on 0117 244 3464



VIETNAM

Remembering Anthony Bourdain

We were shocked and saddened by the passing of world-renowned chef, author and travel presenter Anthony Bourdain, whose work inspired a generation of chefs and open-minded travellers. Watch the Vietnam episode of multi

award-winning series *Parts Unknown* to see Bourdain and Barack Obama sit on low stools, washing down *pho* with Hanoi beer just like the locals.

DO IT: Watch *Parts Unknown* on Netflix

ASIA

TRAVEL FURTHER TOGETHER ON A SMALL GROUP TOUR

New dates, new destinations, new friends. Head to our website to secure a spot on one of our award-winning small group tours.

DO IT: For more information, including pricing and departure dates, visit insideasiatours.com or call our Asia experts on 0117 244 3463



WE'RE A SOCIABLE BUNCH

Want to see the view from Mount Fuji, play games with a geisha and meet the snow monkeys? Our videos take you there: youtube.com/insidejapantours

JAPAN

BOWIE WOODBLOCK PRINT

While the world isn't short of Japanophiles, they don't come much more famous than David Bowie. The late musician returned to Japan time and time again, taking inspiration from the culture for many of his most iconic looks and performances. Now as a reverse homage, Bowie has been immortalised as traditional Japanese characters in two ukiyo-e woodblock prints.

DO IT: Buy prints online from the Ukiyo-e Project: ukiyoe.today

JAPAN



JAPAN HOUSE OPENS IN LONDON

Behind the nondescript doors of an Art Deco building on busy Kensington High Street, a haven of calm awaits: Japan House. This much-anticipated opening showcases Japanese art, design, culture and food in the heart of London. With a shop full of refined pieces, a rolling programme of events

and exhibitions, and a restaurant serving authentic fare (including wagyu beef), you'll want to set aside a few hours to take it all in.

DO IT: Japan House, 101-111 Kensington High Street, London W8 5SA



SOUTHEAST ASIA

Brand new brochure!

Meeting elephants, taking street food tours, sleeping in homestays, kayaking through limestone scenery... After scouting Southeast Asia for the best experiences, we're launching a shiny new InsideAsia brochure, packed full of travel inspiration. Fill out the magazine insert to receive a brochure through the post, or head to our website to read online.



CAMBODIA

Dolphins multiply on the Mekong

Thanks to efforts from the government, local communities and the WWF in Cambodia, numbers of critically endangered Irrawaddy dolphins are increasing for the

first time in 20 years. Support conservation efforts with a dolphin spotting trip on the Mekong; if the endangered 92 remain elusive, you'll still have had a lovely trip on

Southeast Asia's most important river. Win-win.

DO IT: Visit the Experiences page on insideasiatours.com to find out more.

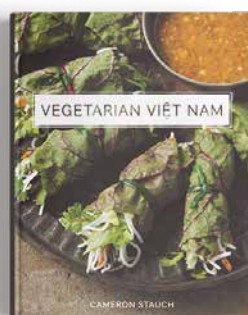


VIETNAM

VEGETARIAN VIET NAM COOKBOOK

Many dishes in Vietnam start with meat or fish (or both), but *Vegetarian Viet Nam* innovatively adapts Vietnamese favourites for vegetarians. The recipes are based on author Cameron Stauch's cooking lessons - with everyone from top chefs to Mahayana Buddhist monks - while living in Vietnam.

DO IT: Buy *Vegetarian Viet Nam* from all good bookstores.



JAPAN

**Young at heart:
Octogenarian idols**



Idol pop groups with countless cutesy teenagers are big business in Japan. But step aside AKB48 (one of the most popular groups), the youngest member of energetic Okinawan supergroup KBG84 is 80, proving that age really is just a number.

VIETNAM

Water without waste

Everyone travelling to Vietnam with us receives a refillable bottle for guides, drivers and hotels to fill up with water while away. Stay hydrated and save the planet. All in a (holi)day's work.



JAPAN

**Discover Hokusai and
Hiroshige in new exhibition**

We're delighted to be partnering with the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery on *Masters of Japanese prints: Hokusai and Hiroshige landscapes*. The exhibition, running until 6th January 2019, reveals methods used by both artists, and features *Sudden Rain* from Hiroshige's *Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido* – a new commission from Tokyo.

DO IT: For more information, visit bristolmuseums.org.uk

JAPAN

“HELLO” TO KITTY MAKEOVER

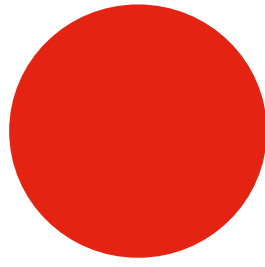
A conspicuous white and bubble-gum pink bullet train has taken to the rails between Osaka and Fukuoka. Encompassing all things *kawaii* (cute), the new Hello Kitty themed *shinkansen* has branded headrests, whimsical posters and a carriage to take photographs with a life-sized statue of the character. Commuting's never looked so fun.

DO IT: Call our Japan experts on 0117 244 3463 to find out more.





Worth another try
Japan have been applying
to host since 2008.



RUGBY WORLD CUP COMES TO JAPAN

The first ever Rugby World Cup in Asia is coming to Japan in 2019. To say we're excited is an understatement. The first game will be on the 20th September and the final match (with fireworks and anticipation aplenty) will be on the 2nd November.

Our rugby travel team have picked five of their favourite host cities and the best ways to make the most of your time in Japan.

48 MATCHES. 6 WEEKS. 20 NATIONS.



BEN WALKER
FUKUOKA

Ben, an InsideJapan tour leader and rugby aficionado, made Fukuoka his home seven years ago. He insists, rather controversially, that it is in fact the best city in Japan.

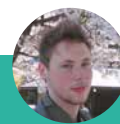
Despite having oodles of entertainment, restaurants and shopping, Fukuoka is an underdog of the Japanese cities – unknown to many first-time visitors to Japan. This cosmopolitan city certainly has enough to keep you entertained though. I suggest starting with a good dose of culture in the temple district; Shofukuji is not only the oldest Zen temple in Japan, but also home to some friendly temple cats!

Indulge in some retail therapy at Canal City (a huge shopping complex), or escape the hustle and bustle at Ohori Park or Momochihama beach. If you do travel to the beach, go up Fukuoka Tower to see the best views of the city. In the evening, lots of *izakaya* (Japanese pubs) serve delicious food, but there are also endless *yatai* – street stalls – selling tasty fare. Head to one of the hip bars in the vibrant areas of Nakasu or Tenjin to round off a busy day.

STADIUM: FUKUOKA

HAKATANOMORI STADIUM

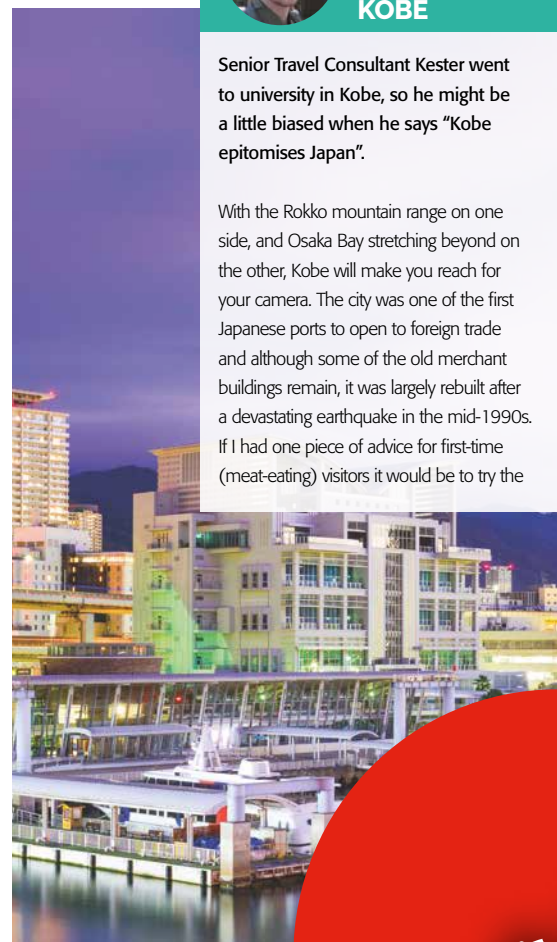
MUST-SEE MATCH: IRELAND VS. SAMOA – 12TH OCTOBER 2019



KESTER WRIGHT
KOBE

Senior Travel Consultant Kester went to university in Kobe, so he might be a little biased when he says “Kobe epitomises Japan”.

With the Rokko mountain range on one side, and Osaka Bay stretching beyond on the other, Kobe will make you reach for your camera. The city was one of the first Japanese ports to open to foreign trade and although some of the old merchant buildings remain, it was largely rebuilt after a devastating earthquake in the mid-1990s. If I had one piece of advice for first-time (meat-eating) visitors it would be to try the



LOUISE LEE
OSAKA

There's nothing Louise doesn't love about rugby or Japan (she's the mastermind behind our rugby travel packages).

The city of Osaka doesn't do things by halves. In the evening, the streets wake up - expect flashing neon, delicious wafts from food stalls, and entertainment quarters buzzing with karaoke bars and *pachinko* (video game) parlours. This is the place to try the best of Japanese street food; fill up on octopus dumplings, *okonomiyaki* (savory pancakes), ramen noodles and *yakitori* (skewered chicken). There are lots of sports fans here too, so it's likely to be

even livelier than usual during the Rugby World Cup. In fact, enthusiastic residents have even been known to jump into the city's canal when their team is victorious. I wouldn't recommend it though... While Osaka also has daytime attractions, such as the aquarium, endless shopping centres and even The Wizarding World of Harry Potter™ at Universal Studios Japan, it's also only a short distance from Kyoto, and the impressive Himeji Castle.

STADIUM: HANAZONO RUGBY STADIUM

MUST-SEE MATCH: TONGA VS.

ARGENTINA – 28TH SEPTEMBER 2019



DO IT: Our rugby travel packages include accommodation, transport and cultural experiences around the matches. You pick up the tickets and we'll take care of the rest.



RACHEL RYKALA
SAPPORO

Having lived on Japan's northernmost island, Hokkaido, Senior Travel Consultant Rachel knows Sapporo and the island's areas of natural beauty very well.

England's Rugby World Cup journey starts in Hokkaido's capital, Sapporo. The city's known for its sparkling snow festival in February, but there's loads to do at other times of year too; my personal highlights include a thirsty trip to the Sapporo Beer Museum and a laidback day at nearby

Otaru, a picturesque town with a canal running through its centre. If you have a week or two to spare, drive out to some of Hokkaido's incredible National Parks – including Shikotsu-Toya, Daisetsuzan and Shiretoko – to see volcanic mountains, huge crystal lakes and steaming *onsen* (hot spring baths).

STADIUM: SAPPORO DOME

MUST-SEE MATCH: ENGLAND VS. TONGA – 22ND SEPTEMBER 2019



city's most famous export: Kobe beef. It is expensive, but always worth it. Rumour has it that the cows are raised on a healthy diet of beer; whatever they're eating (or drinking), it's certainly working. While I lived in Kobe, I was lucky enough to have my *Seijin no Hi* (Japanese coming of age ceremony) at the Kobe Misaki Stadium. If the atmosphere was electric when my peers and I celebrated turning 20, I can only imagine what the city will be like during the Rugby World Cup.

STADIUM: KOBE MISAKI STADIUM
MUST-SEE MATCH: ENGLAND VS. USA – 26TH SEPTEMBER 2019

SAPPORO

TOKYO



BENJAMIN GUEST
TOKYO

Senior Travel Consultant, Benjamin did a lot of exploring during his six years in Japan, but he will always have a soft spot for Tokyo.

Japan's enormous, sprawling capital has so many personality-packed districts it's hard to know where to start. I lived in and around here for six years, and still haven't seen it all. Like much of Japan, it has a wonderful way of encompassing old-world charm with hyper-modernity. I recommend taking in the old by starting in the quaint Asakusa area; this old merchant quarter with the incredible Senso-ji temple feels like a world

away from the city's heady skyscrapers. Then head to the Harajuku area – home to all things *kawaii* (cute), before walking through Yoyogi Park to Meiji Shrine. Dart across the city to tackle Shibuya's famous crossing, go shopping in swish Ginza, visit museums in Ueno, see the bright lights of Akihabara's gaming districts (complete with maid cafés), and finish it all off with a frozen beer in Shinjuku's Golden Gai area. All that and we haven't even scratched the surface...

STADIUM: TOKYO STADIUM

MUST-SEE MATCH: AUSTRALIA VS. WALES – 29TH SEPTEMBER 2019

© Inside/Asia Tours staff, David Lovejoy, iStockphoto

Food for thought
Stocking up at
Saigon's markets



Island dreaming IN SAIGON



WORDS AND PICTURES BY **GEORGIA RAE DUNKLEY**



Hectic, restless and bursting with life, Ho Chi Minh City's heady combination of street food and skyscrapers is an assault on the senses. After exploring the city (often still known as Saigon), **Georgia Rae Dunkley** finds a calm counterpoint across the water on Phu Quoc island.

"The traffic is not so bad on the weekend!" says Troy, Ho Chi Minh City resident and my guide for the day, without a hint of irony.

We've been sitting stationary at a bottleneck junction for 40 minutes to the soundtrack of indiscriminate beeps from surrounding cars - a reflexive action and benign warning to motorbikes competing for inches on the tarmac. It seems the city's 8.6 million population busy themselves on this narrow stretch, but this is a slow Saturday in Saigon.

Metropolis on the move

Traffic light tangles eventually make way for wide boulevards, tall trees and neoclassical buildings and we step out of the car into the midday heat. After passing towering glassy banks, glitzy hotels and designer boutiques, we reach the War Remnants Museum; its moving array of displays, military planes and mock-ups of old jail cells a stark reminder of the struggle to reach today's peace and prosperity. Just around the corner, the

pale-yellow post office, ornate opera house and city hall (reclaimed with a 24ft statue of Ho Chi Minh at the front) are vestiges of the colonial French, who left after the First Indochina War in 1954. The faded red Notre-Dame Cathedral was brought brick by brick to Vietnam from Toulouse and while its silver bell towers may have been imposing in the 18th century, these days they are dwarfed by surrounding skyscrapers.

Off the main square, life ticks by as it always has done. Finding shade beneath tropical trees in the 5-hectare Tao Dan park, men look after caged birds, elderly residents practise tai chi and uniformed kids play games. At nearby Ben Thanh Market, wads of fake money to burn for ancestors are sold on every corner, and in the warren of backstreet stalls people worship at small pagodas between picking up groceries. But despite relics of darker times and long-practised traditions, there's a firm eye on the future; throughout the city, fenced areas mask ambitious building work for a (long overdue) Metro and Landmark 81, a skyscraper set to be the tallest building in Vietnam.

Saigon's street food scenes

After a long (and hot) day sightseeing, I've worked up an appetite and join the halting traffic on a Vespa street food tour. My driver, Trung grew up in Saigon and deftly navigates the roads, finding opportunity in barely perceptible gaps, weaving narrowly between wing mirrors and making relaxed conversation while tilting within a hair's breadth of the curb. After peeking from behind my hands as he speeds past knots of motorbikes wrapped around ring roads, I emerge from my helmet grinning from ear to ear at every stop.

While he drives, it's Jenny, a chirpy student born and bred in Ho Chi Minh City, who leads my culinary journey one district at a time - from shiny cocktail bars with skyscraper views to small cafés with trailing queues - catching up like old friends each time we sit down. At the local's favourite place for *banh xeo* (crispy Vietnamese pancakes), busy chefs spin countless crepes in a sweltering open-air kitchen, arms darting from pan to sizzling pan in a well-practised routine of ladles and flips. Following Jenny's lead, I pull off part of the enormous pancake, spoon in sweet chilli salad and beansprouts, sprinkle in mint and mustard leaves and wrap the whole thing in lettuce. She waits in anticipation as I take a sizeable mouthful, "do you like it?" she asks. I nod, hoping my enthusiasm makes up for a lack of grace.


For our penultimate stop, we swing off the busy main road and past the raucous karaoke of a spirited group on small stools, to a quieter district. At a modest café, myriad dishes are squeezed into every inch of the red vinyl tablecloth; mushroom and tofu spring rolls, hearty vegetable hotpot, cauliflower doused in a sesame sauce, guava with chilli salt, and mountains of Singapore noodles topped with morning glory (green beans fried with garlic and chilli). I look down at the banquet and Jenny leans over seriously, the image of discretion, "if you're still hungry I will order you more food, it's no problem". Rounding off the feast with fresh coconut ice cream and a strong Vietnamese coffee at a live music venue, I'm not sure I'll ever find room to eat again.

Urban sprawl to island idyll

Only a 40-minute flight from Saigon's sprawl, the island of Phu Quoc is a chance to see a completely different side of Vietnam. This unassuming island south of Cambodia was once a quiet backwater known for pepper farms and

Into the blue
Drifting on May Rut's coastline





“Save for the occasional fishing boat, the archipelago is ours...”

fish sauce (the best in the world according to those in the know), and its sandy beaches and swathes of dense jungle were Vietnam's best kept secret. After becoming part of the Kien Giang Biosphere in 2006, it was only a matter of time before it caught the eye of developers, and with hotels springing up and charter routes starting this year there's a sense of urgency to go now, "before it's too late". Most visitors head straight for the 12-mile stretch of golden sand at Long Beach and the town of Duong Dong - east coast hubs with hotels, beach bars, seafood joints and a popular night market - but I've heard Phu Quoc's gems wait beyond its coastline on

the 15 islands of the An Thoi Archipelago. Two years ago, the island's main dirt roads were replaced with stretches of freshly paved tarmac, greenery manicured into anchors and vases dividing the freeway. Getting closer to the port though, sleek roads narrow to rusty red trails with rows of shops selling flowers, mini-motorbikes, rattan furniture, neon shrines and pyjamas - the daytime outfit of choice for Southeast Asian women. Open shop fronts reveal ladies getting their nails done; teenage girls uploading music to their phones; and a café packed with people watching a soap opera, iced coffees in hand, straws standing in condensed milk.

Escape to the archipelago

Down by the water, ladies in conical hats lug buckets of squirming crabs and trays of anchovies, and traditional fishing boats bob alongside rumbling trawlers, their teal paint matching the water. My vessel chugs into life and the maritime smell dissipates as we carve a path through heavy air into the open waters of the Gulf of Thailand; sailing beneath the gondolas of the newly built 8km cable car, beyond craggy headlands that jut into the sea and past long forgotten islands. Save for the occasional fishing boat, the archipelago is ours. After snorkelling off the coast of Vong island,

Catch of the day
Slow afternoon at
An Thoi port



spotting parrotfish and angelfish flit to and fro in the coral of the protected marine park, we stop at May Rut island where a welcome breeze wicks seawater from my shoulders. A smattering of boats line the secluded cove, children sit cross-legged building sandcastles and sun-seeking parents recline on the sand beyond, but there are no signs of rapid development and the white beach is thankfully plastic-free. Back on the boat, the crew whip up a spread of grilled tofu, noodles with heaps of vegetables, crispy spring rolls and chunky slices of watermelon as we putter back to the main island.

On the beaten track

Only 30 miles north to south, it's easy to travel the length of Phu Quoc and only a 45-minute drive from Long Beach to the seclusion of dense national park and hotels with private beaches. While you can fill days with sightseeing – learning about fish sauce production or taking a sobering trip to the prisoner of war camp at

Phu Quoc prison – my time on the island is a welcome break to take stock after the mayhem of the mainland. As a place in flux, only time will tell how much Phu Quoc will change. For now, tour buses are absent, sandy coastlines have plenty of space and there are more islands on the archipelago waiting to be explored.

In Ho Chi Minh City, Troy told me the scent of Phu Quoc's fish sauce is so strong it can't be taken on commercial flights, but there are far fewer suitcases than heavily taped brown boxes at the luggage carousel on my return. Tourism may be growing apace, but I suspect this pungent sauce still elicits more pride than a cocktail bar ever could.

Georgia is the Editor of east and Senior Copywriter in our Bristol office.

DO IT: See a different side of Vietnam on an InsideAsia Tours Fully Tailored Journey. Visit [insideasiatours.com](https://www.insideasiatours.com) or call our Southeast Asia experts on 0117 244 3464 to find out more.



Vietnam Essentials

POPULATION: 92.7 million

CAPITAL CITY: Hanoi

MAIN RELIGION: Mahayana Buddhism

LANGUAGE: Vietnamese

TIME: GMT+7

GETTING THERE: Flight time from London to Ho Chi Minh City: from 12h 30min, Ho Chi Minh City to Phu Quoc: 40 minutes. Island hopping boats depart daily from An Thoi port on the southern tip of Phu Quoc.

WHEN TO GO: November to March is the optimum time to travel to Ho Chi Minh City. For more information about weather and events in Southeast Asia visit [insideasiatours.com/when-to-travel](https://www.insideasiatours.com/when-to-travel)

VISAS: UK citizens do not need a visa to enter Vietnam for up to 15 days, an e-visa is required for visits up to 30 days via evisa.xuatnhapcanh.gov.vn. Consult the Vietnamese embassy for longer trips.

CURRENCY: Vietnamese dong (VND). £1 – approx. VND 30,000. USD widely accepted in tourist areas.

Insider's guide to...

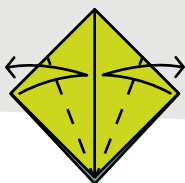
Making an origami PAPER CRANE

Encounters with origami in the West often begin with the humble paper aeroplane; destined to nose dive on a slow day at school. In Japan though, paper folding is a popular way to pass the time from a young age. While designs can be incredibly intricate – cuboctahedron, anyone? – we suggest starting with the basics.

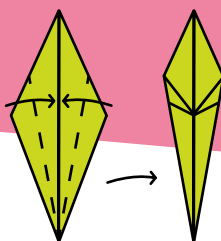
Here's your step-by-step guide to creating the classic paper crane – a creative way to keep entertained on long journeys.

YOU WILL NEED: 1x sheet of square paper, preferably with a different colour on each side.

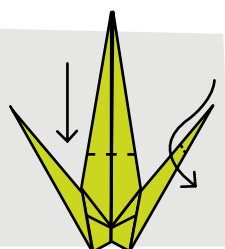
- 3** Fold the top layers vertically into the centre, crease well and unfold.



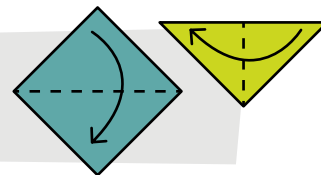
- 6** Fold the top layers vertically into the centre. Turn over and repeat on the other side.



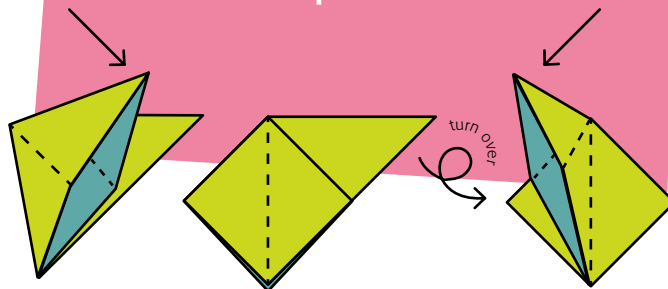
- 9** Fold one end to make the head, then push the two triangles down to make the wings.



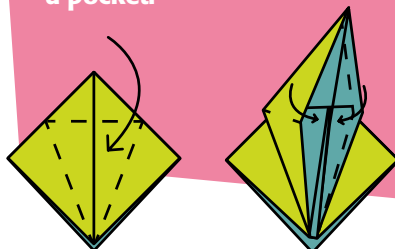
- 1** Fold the paper in half diagonally twice.



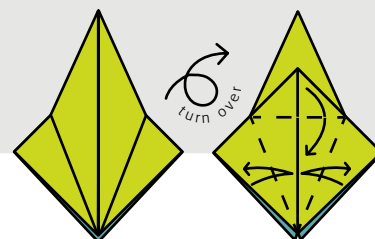
- 2** Bring the top corner of the top layer down to the bottom corner - opening the paper as you go - then flatten to form a square. Turn over and repeat on the other side.



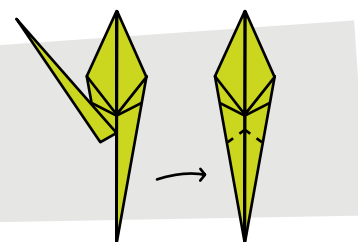
- 4** Fold the top triangle down in line with your creases, unfold and lift the layer beneath upwards creating a pocket.



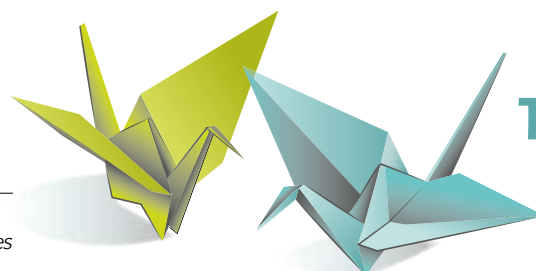
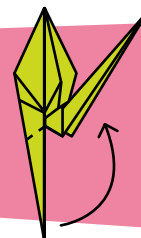
- 5** Without moving the top triangle, fold the sides of the pocket inwards until they're a flat kite shape. Turn over and repeat on the other side.



- 7** The base of your kite shape should now have two legs. Fold each one up, crease well, then unfold.



- 8** Open one of the legs, reverse fold it inwards and push back up towards the centre. Do the same on the other side.



Ta dah!
Your crane is complete.

DO IT: For more information about arts and crafts in Japan, visit the Experiences page on [insidejapantours.com](https://www.insidejapantours.com) or call our Japan experts on 0117 244 3463



EVERETT KENNEDY BROWN



Top 8 travel photography tips

Everett is a photographer whose collodion photography challenges perceptions of cultural value, history, time and place. He's lived in Japan for 25 years and continues to feature internationally in titles including National Geographic, Time, Le Monde, The Times and the New York Times.

How can we create travel photography to cherish when the journey is over? Rather than taking snapshots of a moment, a good image changes our way of seeing the world long after we've returned home.

1 RESEARCH

The secret to taking great travel photos begins at home. Read as much as possible about where you are going for ideas about the kind of photo opportunities to expect. Look at images on the internet to see how others have captured the places you're travelling to and think about how you can approach things differently. The images we have in our heads are like filters on how we see the world.

2 FIND INSPIRATION

Novels and poetry help us go deeper and activate our subconscious imagination. Imagine travelling around Japan through the

eyes of a character from a Haruki Murakami novel – think of all the people and places you would encounter! Words and stories give us images to dream about and help us imagine where we're going before we arrive. As simple, easy to digest visual poems, haiku are great to read before travelling to Japan. They have moments of beauty that catch our eye in the same way a good photographic moment does, and they help us pay the attention to detail needed to take good photographs.

3 TRAVEL LIGHT

This gives more opportunity to be spontaneous, step off the tourist path, get lost and make new discoveries - the back streets of unknown cities open the back streets of our imaginations.

4 GO LOCAL

Eat where the locals eat. Knock on a stranger's door and welcome yourself into their

world – figuratively speaking! Seek out opportunities to interact with local people and allow the spirit of serendipity to kick in. This is where great photographs happen.

5 USE PERIPHERAL VISION

This is important. Spending so much time looking at screens narrows our field of vision and how we interact with the world. Some of the best photographic opportunities come at us from the corners of our eyes, so explore the edges of your peripheral vision to see moments jump out.

6 EXPERIMENT

Shoot away, like a cat playing with its prey. Imagine yourself a painter, sketching sheet after sheet of drawings - digital photography gives us the luxury to snap a lot and delete later. First shoot wide and then explore the details. Pay attention to the background. Get rid of clutter in the image. Shoot high. Go low. Shift gears. See the world the way a child does.

7 TRY NEW TECHNOLOGY

There are lots of cool gadgets to play with these days - experiment with new technology.

8 PLAY!

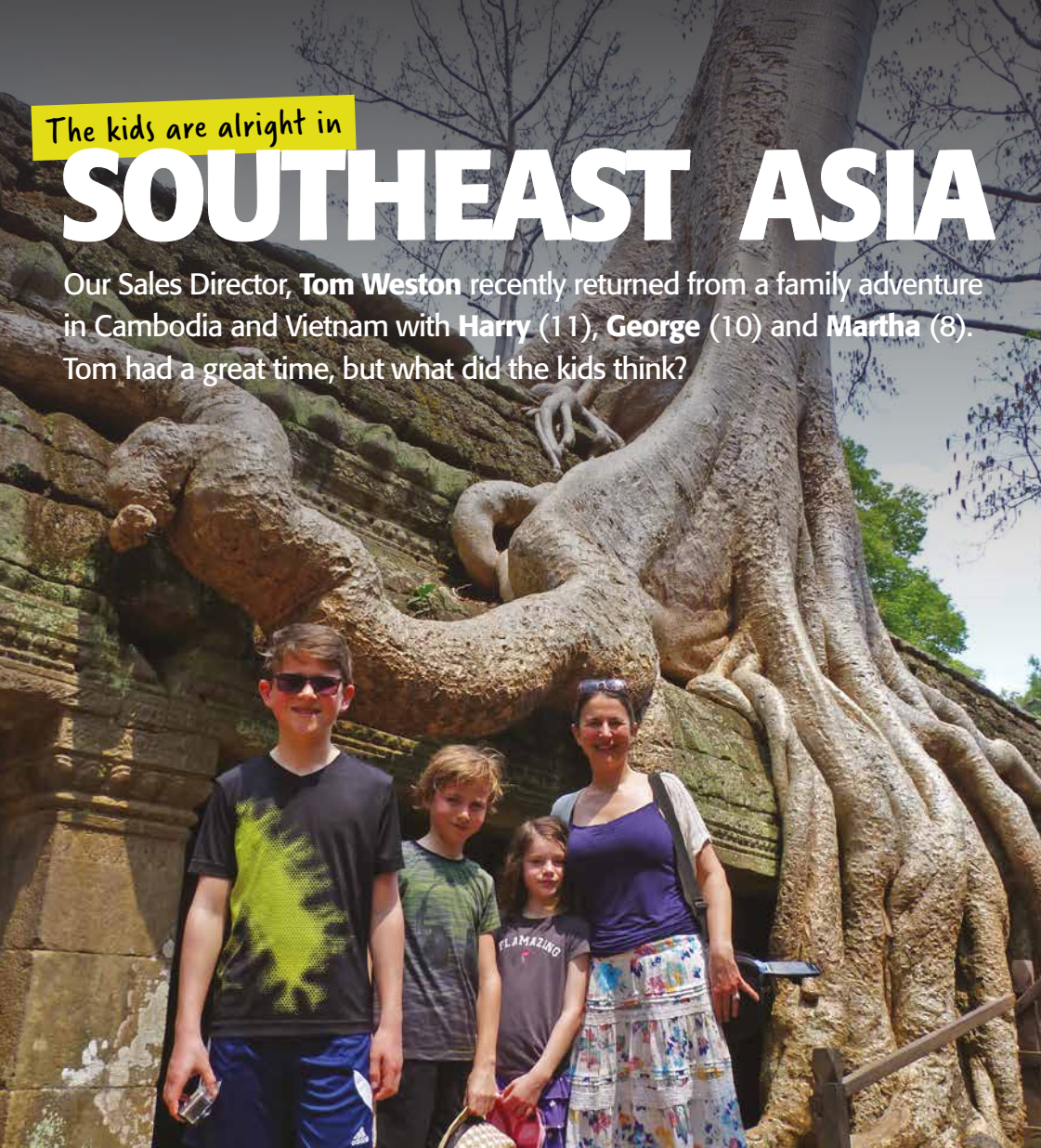
These tools and techniques are great, but in the end, the joy of photography (like travel) is about exploring new ways of seeing the world. Many of my best photographs come from a spirit of play – it's here that great images happen. Travel gives us time to play and photography gives us the opportunity to bring these experiences home.

DO IT: Join Everett on an 11-night tour around western Japan to meet memorable individuals, explore rural communities and take completely unique photographs. Visit getthepicture.tours or call our Japan experts on 0117 370 9751 to find out more.

The kids are alright in

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Our Sales Director, **Tom Weston** recently returned from a family adventure in Cambodia and Vietnam with **Harry** (11), **George** (10) and **Martha** (8). Tom had a great time, but what did the kids think?



"I love cooking and we got to see the market where everything came from. I also ate spicy pig's brains!"



HARRY
AGE 11



GEORGE
AGE 10



MARTHA
AGE 8

WHERE WAS YOUR FAVOURITE PLACE?

■ **Harry:** Siem Reap because of all the activities we did there.

■ **George:** Phu Quoc - I loved the sunset through the palm trees on the beach (and getting a buggy to the restaurant!)

■ **Martha:** Phu Quoc because the main swimming pool was massive, we were right next to the beach and we had our own private pool.

WHAT DID YOU ENJOY MOST?

■ **Harry:** So many things. Can I choose two things? No, three! Firstly, the Vespa tour in Saigon with Mum - it was great to be the only kid to eat all the food and hang out with the adults. Then the Angkor Thom treasure hunt, it was fun to explore the different parts of the city and learn about what life used to be like. Thirdly, the cooking tour in Hoi An, I love cooking and we got to see the market where everything came from. I also ate spicy pig's brains!

■ **George:** Zip wiring through the jungle in Siem Reap, I love heights and going very fast.

■ **Martha:** The fishing and farming tour and the zip wires. I wasn't confident on the zip wires to start with, but it was fantastic being up high when I got used to it. I really liked the little toys and animals people make from palm leaves on the boats, and we caught some fish.

DID YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE DISH OR MEAL?

■ **Harry:** Pig's brains were memorable, but I really liked the fish amok curry and spring rolls.

■ **George:** The crispy vegetable spring rolls in Vietnam.

■ **Martha:** The pizza restaurant we went to in Siem Reap - it was so good we went twice!

DID YOU MEET ANYONE INTERESTING?

■ **Harry:** On the fishing and farming tour in Hoi An we had a fun guy



who took us on a coracle boat. He didn't speak much English, but it seemed like he loved his job and showing us his country. He also showed us how to make things out of palm leaves.

■ **George:** Meeting monks at Angkor Wat. They called Mum 'Grandma' - they were being cheeky!

■ **Martha:** The lady who worked on the farm in Hoi An, she was really nice and we got a photo together.

DID ANYTHING SURPRISE YOU?

■ **Harry:** How polite and respectful Cambodian people are, they always put their hands together and smile when they meet you.

■ **George:** The heat - I didn't expect it to be that hot.

■ **Martha:** If you want to order a drink at the hotel in Hoi An you can wave a flag and the waiter asks you what you want. That was a surprise!

DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER FAMILIES TRAVELLING TO VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA?

■ **Harry:** Put on sun cream (I burnt my feet in Phu Quoc) and learn to haggle without making them angry...

■ **George:** Definitely go to Angkor Wat and Phu Quoc, they were both amazing.

■ **Martha:** Bring binoculars and a big camera so you can see the animals and take pictures - there were monkeys in the trees opposite our room in Phu Quoc!

DO IT: Walk in the Weston family's footsteps with a Fully Tailored Journey to Vietnam and Cambodia. Visit insideasiatours.com/family-travel or call our Southeast Asia experts on 0117 244 3464 to find out more.

CLIMB INTO THE CLOUDS



Adventure enthusiast **Chris Greener** braves the wild landscapes of the Nam Et-Phou Louey Protected Area in northern Laos to track wildlife, make new friends and sleep to the sounds of the jungle.

“If Laos is little-visited, this area feels uncharted”

The air trills with a chorus of “sabaidi!” The whole village is here to greet us. Kids appear from nowhere to see exotic foreigners, chickens jostle at our feet and young men invite me to play pétanque (French boules). I’m in a rural village at the edge of the Nam Et-Phou Louey National Protected Area with my guide Souvit; a local wildlife expert who knows the maze of jungle in northern Laos like the back of his hand.

Meeting the gatekeepers

Having lived in Southeast Asia, I have been to Laos before. But unlike previous visits, I’m travelling to a remote corner where few tourists have been, to embark on an adventure that even fewer have completed: a three-day trek to the 2,257m summit of Phou Louey. If Laos

is little-visited, this area feels uncharted. There are night safaris and gentler hikes for a taste of this evergreen jungle, but having heard about the cloud forests, I’m longing to see the summit.

As home to many endangered species, Souvit is protective of the park and bubbles with enthusiasm about local ecotourism initiatives. The conservation of the delicate ecosystem in these 5,000 square kilometres is managed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, along with the Wildlife Conservation Society, and incentivised for 26 villages such as this one. Their funding is dependent on the upkeep of a ‘core’ wildlife area and the agreement to farm and hunt (using traditional methods) in a controlled zone. Despite being the gateway to the park, the locals are not used to groups of tourists trudging through and I become quite the celebrity.

As I try to grasp the rules of pétanque, Souvit tugs my arm, pointing to a small house where a group rally around, inviting me into a room tightly packed with revellers laughing and joking, football-sized pots of rice wine with long bamboo straws at their feet. As a celebration, I’m told earnestly that it’s tradition for each person to drink two horns at a time.

The gruelling three-day trek hanging over me, this is the last thing I want to do, but politeness gets the better of me. I’ve had my fair share of rice wine while living in Cambodia, how bad could it be? Grimacing, I throw my head back, forcing it down. I feel my face flood scarlet as I splutter and cough, much to the hilarity of the rest of the room. Head fuzzy, we leave the villagers (and their liquor), taking a cook, three porters and two chickens with us.



Hanging out
Suspended sleep in 'The Nests'



"It's as though nature has arranged the cascading waterfall, complete with perfect-sized pools below, just for us"

Fuelling up for the forest

It takes a couple of hours to reach the wildlife conservation area, and as inclines get steeper and jungle thicker, the place crawls with life; furry caterpillars shimmy up tree trunks, beetles scuttle over fallen leaves and spiders busy themselves in filmy webs. Stopping at a ranger station, we sit cross-legged on the floor, a simple spread of sticky rice, boiled eggs, sweet bamboo and morning glory (steamed greens) laid on banana leaves in front of us. Laotians believe no meal is complete without a good helping of chilli, so little dishes of spices are served in with just about everything.

Eating is a communal affair here and our hungry group team up to finish every morsel. Standing up and readying myself for the next part of the journey, I discover some jungle residents tucking into a feast of their own; with Souvit's kindly gifted leech socks buried in the depths of my bag, three of the blighters misinterpret my legs as an afternoon snack. A spray of insect repellent and they go on their way - suffice to say I don't forget my socks again.

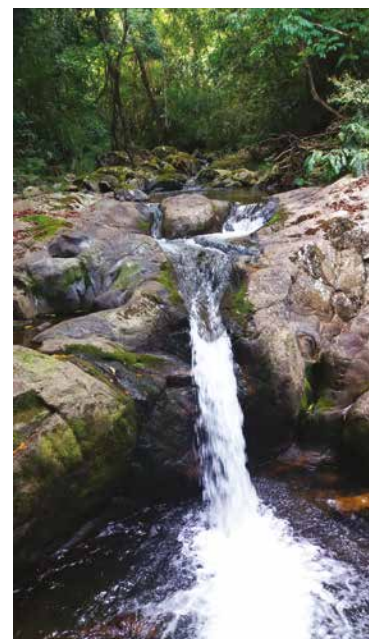
After a long first day, my feet are relieved to see a forest clearing leading to our home for the night. As Keo (one of the porters) sets up the beds, the rest of us seek respite from the heat nearby. It's as though nature has arranged the cascading waterfall, complete with perfect-sized pools below, just for us. Rejuvenated and ready for dinner, two live chickens become one and a barbecue with sticky rice and fresh vegetables is served on a long bamboo table.

Tales around the campfire

Each evening, our little band huddles around the campfire to swap stories about home. Wherever I travel in Laos, there's an inherent curiosity to learn about my life and teach me about theirs in return. In this humid part of the world, jaws drop when I produce photos of my kids building snowmen! Moments like these remain my most treasured memories; our daily lives couldn't be more different and if it weren't for the trip we would never have crossed paths. Flames flickering, we share folk tales too;

one traditional Khmu story is strikingly similar to Aesop's fable *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*. At the heart of it, we're not that different after all.

As stilted wooden huts open to the elements The Ritz this isn't, but a luxury city hotel could never compare. Waking to cicadas singing in the trees and gibbons hollering in the distance is so special, I pinch myself to check I'm really here. One animal is curiously absent from the hoots and howls though; seeing her friend's fate, our second chicken made a brave getaway during the night. Vegetarian food all round!



Chris is Senior
Southeast Asia
Product Executive in
our Bristol office



View from the ridge
Above the clouds on
Phou Louey Mountain

Meeting jungle residents

Souvit is attuned to imperceptible changes in the jungle, and on the next leg of our journey he stops ahead of us, studying the forest. We pause, urging the leaves below our feet to stop rustling. Just as we resign ourselves to a false alarm, a large family of wild pigs burst through the trees, scarpering up the ridge with babies following suit. A reminder that we are not alone in this isolated part of the world, but guests of the jungle.

Reaching each wildlife camera trap, we gather in anticipation as Souvit plugs the memory card into his tablet (strangely anachronistic). Despite only encountering wild pigs, it's exciting to see that samba deer, langurs, civets and monkeys have been here, but it's the clouded leopard strolling nonchalantly across the screen just days before that leaves each of us in awe.

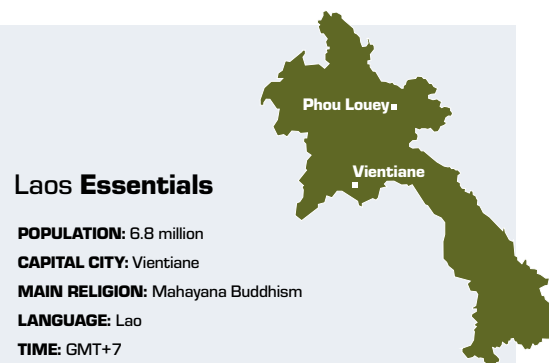
Reaching the top of the world

The final arduous reach is increasingly steep. Souvit warns me that the mountain is usually surrounded by misty clouds, so visibility is likely to be low. Gradually covered head to toe in moss, the surroundings are serene and eerie in equal parts, but after one last scramble we reach the plateau where it all changes. Streams of cloud forests swirl below us and mountains stretch seamlessly into the distance ahead

- there's a reason they call it 'Forever Mountain'. I'm on top of the world. Though I could happily look over that view for days, at 2,257m it's considerably colder than ground level and we don't have long before making our way down, still walking on clouds, elated by our journey.

When I packed my bags, met the villagers and even started the first leg of the trek (missing crucial leech socks), reaching the summit was my ultimate goal, the end point, the whole reason for the journey. But it isn't the view at the top that makes it one of the most rewarding experiences of my life, it's new friendships, learning from Souvit's encyclopaedic knowledge, hearing magical animal alarms and learning the rules of pétanque. When our group says farewell, it is with a heavy heart because not only have we made new friends, we have played a small part in protecting this land at a time when the world's rainforests are most at risk.

DO IT: *For the ultimate outdoor adventure, pack your hiking boots for our Trekking the Cloud Forests of Laos Fully Tailored Journey, from £1,175pp for 9 nights (exc. intl. flights). Shorter treks can also be arranged. Visit insideasiatours.com or call our Southeast Asia experts on 0117 244 3464 to find out more.*



Laos Essentials

POPULATION: 6.8 million

CAPITAL CITY: Vientiane

MAIN RELIGION: Mahayana Buddhism

LANGUAGE: Lao

TIME: GMT+7

GETTING THERE: Flight time from London to Luang Prabang: from 18h 30min with at least one stop. Bangkok and Hanoi are popular layovers - get in touch to plan a few days in your transfer city.

WHEN TO GO: November to March is the optimum time to travel to Laos. Trekking in the Nam Et-Phou Louey National Protected Area isn't possible between June and October. For more information about weather and events in Southeast Asia visit insideasiatours.com/when-to-travel.

VISAS: Take a passport photograph with you and purchase a visa on arrival, roughly \$35. Your passport must be valid for at least six months.

CURRENCY: Laotian Kip (LAK). £1 – approx. LAK 11,000. USD widely accepted in tourist areas.

A person is shown from the side, looking out a window. They are wearing a dark kimono with a light-colored obi tied around their waist. The window has a wooden frame and is letting in bright light, which is casting a warm glow on the person's face and the fabric of their clothing. The person's hair is pulled back, and they have a contemplative expression.

Experience Asia

What makes an ordinary holiday an extraordinary one? Popular sights are famous for a reason, but our travel diaries are full of lively notes about authentic dishes, surprising encounters and cultural exchanges. Guidebooks are great, but it's the experiences we remember for years to come.

JAPAN

Kimono culture in Kyoto

Kyoto's countless temples are extremely popular, but quiet corners with well-preserved streets of *machiya* – two-storey townhouses with wooden lattice shutters, earthen walls, tatami mat floors, sliding paper doors and small courtyards - are only a short stroll away. In a modest corner of the Nishijin textile district, a *machiya* built in 1885 as a kimono workshop is now a living museum: step beyond Tondaya's *noren* curtains to experience traditional Japanese culture. While kimonos are no longer woven here, with a flurry of complicated ties, turns and swish of the *obi* (sash) from 13th generation owner, Tanaka Mineko you'll soon look the part for the traditional tea ceremony and bento lunch.

DO IT: Spend a day at the Tondaya *machiya* on our Hands On Japan small group tour, from £3,950pp (exc. intl flights), call our Japan experts on 0117 244 3463 to find out more.



VIETNAM

Homestay in Hanoi

It's easy to get swept up in the tide of motorbikes and lost in the twisting streets of Vietnam's frenetic capital, but just an hour outside Hanoi, the village of Ky Son offers relief from the commotion. Slow down to the rhythm of local life at the Moon Garden Homestay; airy rooms with chunky teak furniture, sprawling grounds backing onto rice paddies, and beautifully restored buildings (including a 100-year-old church rescued from a neighbouring province), make it an oasis to spend a few days in. Lovely as the surroundings are, it's the activities that make it extra special - wake up with a Yijin Jing exercise class, make rice beds, help with the harvest, cycle to the ancient villages of Son Tay, go fishing, try your hand at making local crafts and cook seasonal Vietnamese food in the enormous kitchen.

DO IT: Stay at the Moon Garden homestay on our Hands on Cambodia & Vietnam small group tour, from £3,850pp (exc. intl. flights), or call our experts on 0117 244 3464 to find out more.



CAMBODIA

Audience with a Khmer Rouge survivor

At least 2 million people - including 90% of Cambodia's artists, musicians, dancers and intellectuals - were killed during the devastating reign of the Khmer Rouge between 1975-79. Born into a family of musicians, Arn Chorn-Pond was sent to a children's labour camp where his ability to play propaganda songs on the flute saved his life. Having been adopted and taken to America, he returned in 1998 to launch Cambodian Living Arts, an organisation working

to revive the country's formerly vibrant heritage. Arn works with the few remaining cultural masters and gives talks about his harrowing experiences; while countless books and films have been made about the Khmer Rouge, meeting a survivor is a rare opportunity to hear a moving story first-hand.

DO IT: Visit the Experiences page on insideasiatours.com or call our Southeast Asia experts on 0117 244 3464 to find out more.

JAPAN

Tokyo ramen safari

Ramen is just noodle soup, right? Wrong! While its origins are unclear, these days ramen finds favour well beyond Japan's shores, but nothing compares to the real deal. Just ask Tokyo locals - at popular eateries, queues snake around the block from sunrise. There are similarities from bowl to bowl, but regional variations are a source of pride with closely guarded broth recipes; noodles that range from thin and tender, to curly and firm; and a mixture of toppings including *nori* (seaweed), soft boiled eggs, *kamaboko* (fish cakes), spring onions and *chashu* (slices of pork with soy sauce).

Confusingly, it is also possible to have cold ramen, ramen without soup (*tsukemen*), and dry noodles served with a separate dipping broth: there's more to that simple dish than you might think. Navigate the best joints on a ramen safari with a Tokyo resident and fully-fledged ramen *otaku* (that's geek to you and me). Top tip: Slurp noisily to your heart's content - it's a sign of enjoyment, rather than poor table manners.

DO IT: Take our Gastronomic Adventure self-guided trip, from £2,430pp (exc. intl. flights), or call our Japan experts on 0117 244 3463 to find out more.





LAOS

Mindfulness by the Mekong

Rik Gadella isn't the first to have a holiday romance, but few would uproot their lives after just a week. In 2007, he fell in love with Laos and left Europe to start something special in UNESCO town, Luang Prabang: the Pha Tad Ke Botanical Gardens. Despite having little prior knowledge about horticulture, the botanical gardens continue to flourish, aiding the conservation of endangered flora and providing employment and education opportunities for more than 50 local people. With a relaxing 15-minute boat ride on the Mekong to the entrance, the journey to the gardens is nearly as magical as the destination. Arrive early and start the day right with a morning yoga and meditation session, before breakfast at the café. Sipping iced tea by the lily pond, whilst surrounded by over 1,000 native species (including orchids, ferns and medicinal plants), you may not want to leave - falling in love just like Rik did.

DO IT: Visit the Experiences page on insideasiatours.com or call our Southeast Asia experts on 0117 244 3464 to find out more.

east meets...

JONATHAN ROSS

The multi award-winning television and radio presenter, actor, comedian, anime enthusiast and creator of *Japanorama* (our favourite TV series) talks to us about his love affair with Japan.


Japanorama was one of the best shows ever in relation to pop culture in Japan, what was your inspiration?

I've always been a comic book fan, but I fell in love with Japan when I discovered Japanese comics. I loved the difference between them and American comics, which I still adore. It was a step on from

that to anime, I've always liked science fiction stories but obviously Japan has a unique cultural take on that kind of thing. *Japanorama* was the chance to go out there and talk about the culture in a way I hoped would not be...

I don't want to be negative about other people, but when I'd seen shows on TV like *Clive James*

in Japan, even though I enjoyed them, they came from the angle of "look at these funny people". I never felt comfortable with that, I've always been so admiring of the differences. I never thought it was 'silly' or 'weird', I always thought it was exciting and different. That kind of sums up Japan for me – exciting and different.

A photograph of Jonathan Ross and his family (two sons and two daughters) standing together in a traditional Japanese garden. The garden features large, moss-covered rocks, a small stone pagoda in the background, and trees with vibrant autumn foliage in shades of red, orange, and green. Jonathan is in the center, wearing a black t-shirt with a skull graphic. His family members are dressed in casual outdoor clothing. The scene is peaceful and scenic, capturing a moment of family time in Japan.

A family affair
From National Parks to ninja training, the Ross family gave just about everything a go in Japan



"That kind of sums up Japan for me – exciting and different"

Do you have a favourite place?

You know what? I can never pick favourites. If you're talking about a family place, we loved Hakone and the open art gallery sculpture garden. The *onsen* at the *ryokan* we stayed at was just beautiful. It was a lovely experience, incredibly comfortable and wonderful food; we like to think of ourselves as good travellers because we are always respectful, like when we had... what are those big feasts?

Kaiseki?

Yes, the *kaiseki* dinners. Sometimes you're given things I'm sure some Western people would say "I can't eat this" to, but we always provide them with an empty plate! We're not really gallery or museum goers on holiday, and we're not big shoppers; we like activities more than anything so normally we wouldn't think of going somewhere like that, but we loved it.

You've done lots of activities, any stand outs?

The Ninja Dojo lesson was great - the guys there were tremendous and welcoming; we're mixed abilities, but they made us all feel included. It was fascinating as well, because you learn so

much about the history, which has been widely misrepresented in the media. Fake food making in Tokyo was great fun too. What we also liked - but people do have to be a bit more adventurous - is Nagashima Spa Land. I think we were the only Westerners there, it was a lively, joyful place.

How would you rate Japanese theme parks? You're a bit of a fan, aren't you?

I recommend Fuji-Q to everyone, the hotel there wasn't particularly high-end, but it was still luxurious and comfortable, and the people were super friendly. In Japan, you're also lucky because you've got DisneySea. I would suggest that to any Western travellers because it's recognisably Disney, but also uniquely Japanese. There are rides that only exist there and the food and culture is very different. Also, we're still collecting Pokémon; if you want to catch Pokémon, we've never got so many as from walking around there.

Pokémon Go lives on in the Ross family?

Yes! I'm on level 37. There's one Pokémon you can only get in Japan called *Far Fetched*. My wife got it first and I was slightly resentful of her until we all managed to get one!

Do you have any tips for people who are new to anime?

One of the things that's joyful about anime is there are so many genres, so almost anything you might be into already, you'll find an anime about. The classic is Studio Ghibli. You should find a way to go to the Ghibli Museum, there's a mini sequel of *My Neighbor Totoro* which they only show there.

Any recommendations for first-time visitors to Japan?

Explore different areas of Tokyo, and if you can afford to have a driver for a few days it's good to have someone with local knowledge. Do a bit of research yourself too so you get an idea of what's available. You guys are great and know so much, but you can't be mind readers so it's good to know what you're excited about. If anyone's interested in vintage Japanese toys or movie posters, they should take a trip out to Nakano Broadway. For people like me who like that kind of stuff, it's heaven. The cookery class was also fun, as was the mother of pearl workshop. The people were sweet and very calm, and we came home with a nice tray.

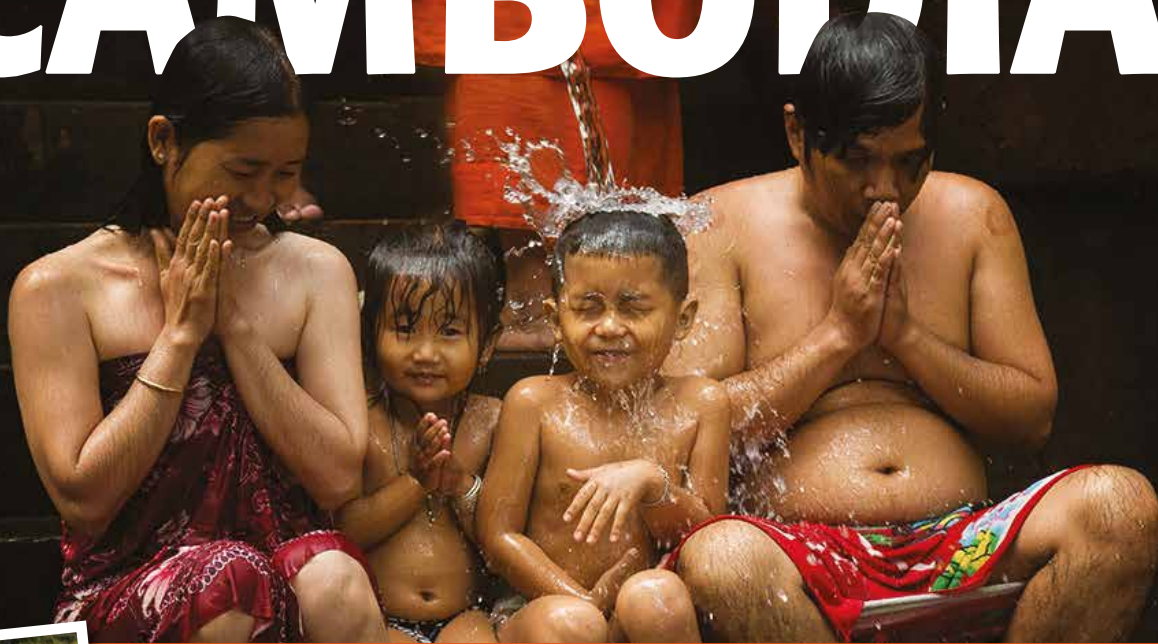
You've mentioned people a lot through this, Japan is largely about the people isn't it?

It's a mixture of the people and being a spectacular place to go to. There's breathtaking natural beauty but also some remarkable man-made attractions. If you've got little kids, spending the morning at SEGA Joypolis over in Odaiba or Sunshine City and Namja Town is amazing. There are so many things when you're there, like an aquarium on the top floor and a dog petting area. It's a good place to go when you arrive. The first day is often a bit arduous because you've got that terrible jetlag and you need to stay awake. The hotel probably isn't ready for you for four or five hours, so leave your bags and go somewhere that's noisy. Immerse yourself into it and keep awake for a few hours with something that's easy on the brain.

DO IT: To plan your own activity-packed Japan adventure visit the Experiences page on insidejapantours.com or call our Japan experts on 0117 244 3463.



WINNING A TRIP TO CAMBODIA



We were overwhelmed with entries to our travel photography competition in issue 4 of *east*, but it was the lively image of boys jumping into a river in Myanmar that won **Ian Stone** a trip to Cambodia. He packed a camera, tripod and sense of adventure in search of Siem Reap, capturing moments and meeting local people along the way.

The euphoria of winning a trip to Cambodia, a country I had never been before, is one of those life experiences I will never forget. My wife and I extended the trip by a week to make the most of our time meeting local people and finding photographic opportunities.

Early starts in Angkor

Siem Reap has thousands of temples and ancient monuments with lots of people jostling to see them. The trick is to get there in the early morning or evening for the best light – this did mean getting up at 3am! It was worth it to see the sunrise over temples, palm trees and ancient ruins.

Unexpected inspiration

It's easy to get 'templed-out' in Cambodia, but there are photographic opportunities around every corner. We saw a monk in splendid orange robes throwing water over people as a blessing, fig tree stems winding around ancient

temples, great stone building blocks balancing on ruined walls and children playing in front of ancient bas-reliefs. Rather than rushing in and out, we took time to enjoy what was going on around us, not knowing what would happen next.

"As in all countries, it was the people that made our holiday memorable"

Meeting Cambodian people

As in all countries, it was the people that made our holiday memorable. Staying in a homestay, going to the local market and seeing the countryside's changing agricultural industry were great ways to meet people and something I would love

to spend more time doing when I go back. Poverty is never far away in rural areas, but you can help by taking pens and paper or donating to a local charity.

Our guide was crucial to build rapport in these communities - taking us to watch fishermen cast their nets at sunset and visit families in stilted houses by the side of the lake. I'd recommend all travel photographers enlarge their images on the camera screen and share them with their subjects. Cambodian people are always friendly and willing to make conversation, despite language barriers - a smile and a wave goes a long way!

DO IT: *Ian took a Fully Tailored Journey to Cambodia. Visit insideasiatours.com or call our Southeast Asia experts on 0117 244 3464 to find out more.*

If you've had an adventure with InsideAsia Tours that you'd like to share, get in touch!



east COMPETITION

WINNER

Congratulations to **Philip Courter** for winning a Vietnamese cooking set with his photograph of a hostess serving at Shiraume Ryokan in Kyoto. Thank you to everyone who entered.



WIN a £250 voucher from Sherpa Adventure Gear



We think a good print magazine should keep you company when you're on the go. Take a picture of *east* somewhere interesting to be in with a chance of winning a **£250 voucher to spend on ethical travel kit from Sherpa Adventure Gear**. That's not all – one lucky runner-up will also win a Sherpa Adventure Gear **Yatra backpack and matching toiletry bag**.



About Sherpa Adventure Gear

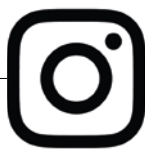
Sherpa help support Nepalese communities with steady employment, quality working conditions and education opportunities – by wearing their travel clothing and accessories, you're doing good, as well as having everything you need for an adventure. P&P is **FREE** for *east* readers with the code: **SHERPAFREDEL18**

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HOW TO ENTER:

- 1) Read our Terms & Conditions online: insideasiatours.com/magazine
- 2) Send us a photograph of *east* magazine somewhere interesting. It could be taken up a mountain, outside a temple, in a hot air balloon, on the beach... You can take it just about anywhere, except maybe scuba diving. You must have the rights to the photograph.
- 3) Send it to east@insideasiatours.com, or post it on social media and tag us in by 5pm (GMT) on 15th December 2018. The winner will be revealed in our next issue. We look forward to seeing your entries!



Tag your photos on Instagram with **#InsideAsia** or **#InsideJapan** and we'll share our favourites. Anyone else reaching for their suitcase?



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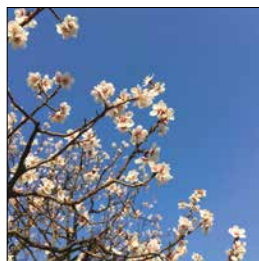
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