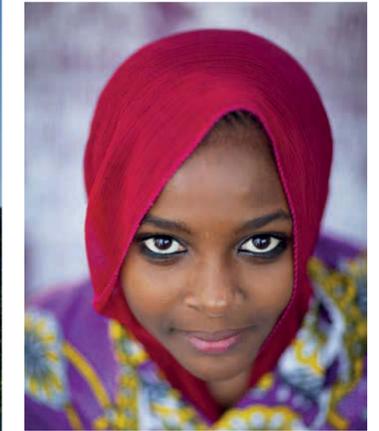


The Story of The Travel Book

Most travel journeys take in just a country or two, but the journey you're about to embark on incorporates every country on earth. In this book you'll find evocative glimpses of every single country in the world, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, from the postage-stamp-sized Vatican City to the epic expanse of Russia.

To actually visit all the countries in this book would require several passports and a suitcase of plane tickets, or it can be simulated with a turn of these pages. Highlighted by some of the finest photography in the world, *The Travel Book* offers a glimpse of each country's perks and quirks: when to go, what to see, how to eat it up and drink it in, and ways to immerse yourself in the life and the land. What results is a grand snapshot of our diverse and kaleidoscopic world rather than an encyclopedic reference. It's a book that unashamedly views the planet through the prism of the traveller, focusing on places for their beauty, charm or singularity, even if this does sometimes conflict with defined political or geographical borders.



The Country Conundrum

A country count can be an arbitrary thing. As a starting place we've used the United Nations' list of 192 member states. Every one of these countries features in the book, but we've also built on the list to include foreign dependencies, whether they be self-governing or not, that are popular traveller destinations. Thus you'll find Caribbean islands (Anguilla, Cayman Islands, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Puerto Rico, Turks & Caicos, Virgin Islands), Atlantic islands (Bermuda, Falkland Islands) and Pacific islands (Cook Islands, Guam & Northern Marianas, New Caledonia, Pitcairn Islands, Tahiti & French Polynesia). There are the two great land masses of Antarctica and Greenland, which are too large and fascinating to leave out of any true world guide. There are disputed lands such as Tibet and Taiwan, and recognisably unique regions such as Hong Kong, Macau and French Guiana. We've also divided the United Kingdom into its component parts – England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – to recognise their individual appeal and their rich and distinctive histories and cultures.

MIKE MORGAN // JONATHAN GREENSON // BRUCE LAFORQUE // PHILIP LEE HANNEY

At the book's end you'll find an additional 11 places of interest, chosen by Lonely Planet's founder and chief frequent-flyer Tony Wheeler. These bonus destinations are small dependencies that still hold great attraction, whether it be the smoking cigar of Montserrat or that little piece of Britannia on the Mediterranean, Gibraltar. In total, you can read about 230 countries and destinations. It's exhausting just to think about.

The Structure

The Travel Book follows the most straightforward of formats – A to Z – rolling through the alphabet of nations. From a traveller's perspective, a country's might and power aren't necessarily relative to its fascination and appeal, and we've tried to capture that, giving equal weight to every country regardless of whether it has had 15 minutes or 15 centuries of world fame – the likes of South Sudan and Suriname are as noteworthy here as the superpowers of the US and China.

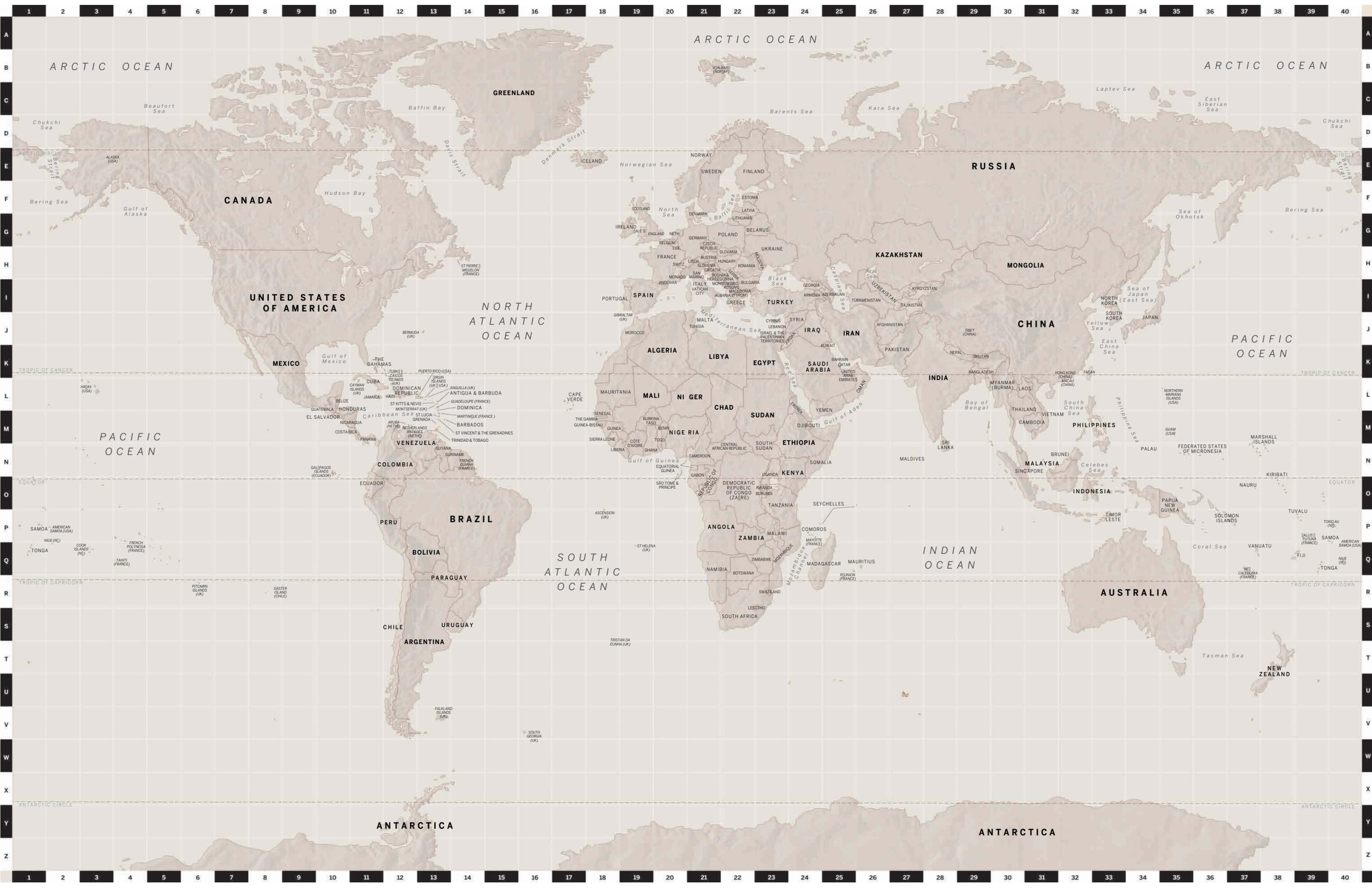
The book's guiding philosophy is to present a subjective view of the world from Lonely Planet's perspective, looking below the surface to show a

slice of life from every country in the world. Entries evoke the spirit of each place by appealing to the senses – what you might see and feel, what kind of food and drink might flavour your visit, and which books, music or films will help prepare you for the experience. You'll find the events, objects and people that are central to each country's identity and you'll find curious, little-known facts.

Photos are paramount to capturing and sharing the spirit of a place and its people, and images in this book have been chosen to weave stories of their own. Clichéd icons and picture-postcard views have been avoided in favour of photos that tell of life in its myriad forms – at work, at play, at worship, laughing, singing, relaxing, dancing or just surviving – in order to bring you countries, not brochures.

You may never visit all *The Travel Book's* destinations, but if it's true, as Aldous Huxley once wrote, that 'to travel is to discover that everyone is wrong about other countries', then to read about them all is to find out if you are right.

We hope this new edition of *The Travel Book* inspires a world of travel.



A CAPITAL BUENOS AIRES // POPULATION 42.6 MILLION // AREA 2,780,400 SQ KM // OFFICIAL LANGUAGE SPANISH

Argentina

Think big. Argentina boasts the highest Andean peak (Aconcagua) and the world's southernmost city (Ushuaia), while sparsely-populated wildernesses like Patagonia or Tierra del Fuego render the scale of the hugeness huger. Buenos Aires offers countless avenues to all-night revelry, but beyond the city limits, nature comes unabashed and boundless. The dry pastel hues of the northern desert erupt into the thunderous falls of Iguazú, the crisp skies of the lakes region and the craggy, glacier-clad south. Do as locals do: slow down, accept time is fluid, and you will draw in all manner of encounters.



Best time to visit

March to May (autumn) for Buenos Aires, December to March (summer) in Patagonia

Top things to see

- The soaked and ear-shattering panorama of the spectacular Iguazú Falls
- The sultry steps of tango performed on the streets
- Endangered southern right whales in Reserva Faunística Península Valdés
- The massive Glaciar Perito Moreno calve with thunderous cracks
- Stray cats and sculpted mausoleums in Recoleta Cemetery, the final stop for Buenos Aires' rich and famous

Top things to do

- Live it up till the sun comes up in Buenos Aires' bars and clubs
- Feel sporting tensions run high at a Superclásico clash between Buenos Aires footballing heavyweights Boca Juniors and River Plate
- Test run various vintages on a *bodega* (winery) tour outside Mendoza
- Ride the windy range with *gauchos* (cowboys) at a Patagonian *estancia* (grazing establishment)
- Feast on steaks and every other part of a cow at a backyard *asado* (barbecue)

Getting under the skin

Read: anything by the lyrical master of the short story, Jorge Luis Borges

Listen: to the wandering alt rhythms of Juana Molina, the tangos of Carlos Gardel and gritty classic Argentine rock such as that of Charly García

Watch: a young Che Guevara discover Latin America in *The Motorcycle Diaries* or quirky man-and-his-dog road trip flick *Bombón El Perro*

Eat: *empanadas* (pastries stuffed with savoury fillings), *alfajores* (delicious multilayered cookies) and *facturas* (sweet pastries)

Drink: *maté* (pronounced mah-tay), a bitter tea served in a gourd with a metal straw and shared among friends and colleagues – or a fruity Malbec red wine for something stronger

In a word

Qué copado! (How cool!)

Trademarks

Tango; *maté* rituals; football; the Pérons; glaciers; Patagonia; *gauchos*; grass-fed beef

Random fact

At 70kg per capita, yearly beef consumption in Argentina is the world's highest

1. Patagonia's constantly advancing Glaciar Perito Moreno
2. A *gaucho* herds cattle at Estancia El Roble in Buenos Aires province
3. Cerro Aconcagua rises over a vineyard in Mendoza



A CAPITAL CANBERRA // POPULATION 22.3 MILLION // AREA 7,741,220 SQ KM // OFFICIAL LANGUAGE ENGLISH

Australia

Australia is as big as your imagination. There's a heckuva lot of tarmac across this wide brown land and the best way to appreciate the country is to hit the road. Sure, it's got deadly creepy crawlies and sharks, but they don't stop people from coming here to see its famous natural beauty – from endless sunbaked deserts to lush tropical rainforest and wild southern beaches. Scattered along the coasts, its cities blend a European enthusiasm for art and food with a passionate love of sport and the outdoors. Those expecting to see an opera in Sydney one night and spy crocs in the outback the next morning will have to rethink their geography: it is the sheer vastness that gives Australia – and its population – such immense character.



Best time to visit

Any time: when it's cold down south it's warm up north

Top things to see

- A concert, dance or theatrical performance at the country's most recognisable icon, the Sydney Opera House
- The red hues of Uluru, an awe-inspiring natural monolith that is both ancient and sacred
- Broome, where the desert meets the sea in contrasting aquamarines, rust-reds and pearl whites
- Provocative and engaging art at the world-class MONA, a museum housed in an underground lair in Hobart
- Paradisiacal beaches and an astounding underwater world as you island-hop around the Whitsundays on the Great Barrier Reef

Top things to do

- Discover Aboriginal culture, rock art and biological diversity at majestic Kakadu National Park
- Wind your way beside wild waters and craggy rock formations then whip inland through rainforests driving the Great Ocean Road
- Sip on a well-balanced shiraz or crisp sauvignon blanc in the Barossa Valley or Margaret River
- Spy 'gentle giant' whale sharks at the World-Heritage-listed Ningaloo Reef
- Tackle the waves at one of the world's hippest beach spots, Sydney's Bondi

Getting under the skin

Read: *Cloudstreet*, Tim Winton's fascinating novel that chronicles the lives of two families thrown together in post-WWII Perth

Listen: to Slim Dusty's 'Pub with No Beer', a classic Australian country tune; or the soothing Aboriginal voice of Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu on his album *Gurrumul*

Watch: *Rabbit-Proof Fence*, a true story about three forcibly relocated Aboriginal girls who trek 2400km to return to their families

Eat: fresh Sydney rock oysters; barely cooked purple-red kangaroo meat; Vegemite

Drink: craft beer or any one of a huge selection of local wines

In a word
G'day mate!

Trademarks

Dangerous creatures; surfing; endless coastlines; outback pubs; barbecues; wildlife warriors; beer; Aussie Rules football; sunshine; Aboriginal art

Random fact

Great Australian inventions include the bionic ear, the black box flight recorder, the notepad and the wine cask

1. Melbourne's vibrant Federation Square illuminated at dusk

2. The estuary and rainforest of Hill Inlet on dreamy Whitsunday Island

3. A drover contemplates the Mount Mulligan range in Queensland



B CAPITAL SARAJEVO // POPULATION 3.9 MILLION // AREA 51,197 SQ KM // OFFICIAL LANGUAGES BOSNIAN, CROATIAN & SERBIAN

Bosnia & Hercegovina

This Eastern-European crossroads is finally enjoying a peace to match its charm and beauty. The variety of this 'heart-shaped land' is astounding: the buzzing, bohemian cafe culture of Sarajevo, doughty medieval fortresses, muezzins calling the faithful to prayer from Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) minarets, austere architectural vestiges of Tito's Communism, and Orthodox monasteries clinging to vertiginous hillsides – it can be hard to pin down the 'true' Bosnia and Hercegovina. Ultimately, it's beyond the cities that this deeply traditional country best expresses itself, through spreading vineyards, quiet villages and a patient pace of life.



Best time to visit

April to September

Top things to see

- Daredevils plunging from Mostar's bridge into the racing green waters below
- Sarajevo, the 'Jerusalem of the Balkans', a fabulous, vibrant, riverside city with cultural events and nightlife aplenty
- The castle and Ottoman-era architecture of Travnik
- The spectacular medieval Bosnian capital of Jajce, cut by the Pliva Waterfall and defended by imposing gates
- Secluded attractions such as the petite village of Vranduk, the craggy castle of Srebrenik or the ecovillage of Zelenkovac

Top things to do

- Wander the cobbled alleys, coppersmith workshops and artisanal stalls of Baščaršija in Sarajevo
- Join the pilgrims as they wait for an apparition of Mary in Međugorje, or nod at Sufi tombs in the Tekija (dervish lodge) in Blagaj
- Plummet down the Vrbas or Buna rivers on a raft or in your own kayak
- Skip up the cobbled streets of Počitelj to look out over domes, minarets, slate roofs and the Neretva River

Getting under the skin

Read: *Sarajevo Marlboro* by Miljenko Jergović, tales set during the siege of Sarajevo; or *People of the Book*, Geraldine Brooks' fictionalised tale about the Sarajevo Haggadah

Listen: to *sevdah* music, Bosnia's folk music, an excursion in harmonious melancholy

Watch: Danis Tanović's *No Man's Land* or *Grbavica: Land of my Dreams*, by Jasmila Žbanić, both poignant reflections on the Bosnian war

Eat: *zeljanica* (tasty spinach pastry); or *meso ispod sača* (lamb or kid stewed under hot coals)

Drink: the local dry red wine, Blatina; or *šljivovica* (plum brandy)

In a word

Živjeli (Cheers)

Trademarks

Copper coffee pots; mountain villages; juxtaposed mosques and churches; rafting on emerald rivers

Random fact

The black market is one of the biggest industries in the country: the 'shadow economy' accounts for more than 30% of Bosnia and Hercegovina's GDP

1. Mostar and its elegant reconstructed 16th-century Stari Most (Old Bridge)
2. The Tekija (dervish lodge) in Blagaj nestles between the cliff-face and the Buna River
3. The intricate lace of Kravice Falls on the Trebižat River



L CAPITAL VIENTIANE // POPULATION 6.7 MILLION // AREA 236,800 SQ KM // OFFICIAL LANGUAGE LAO

Laos

Like neighbouring Vietnam and Cambodia, Laos dropped off the overland trail during the Vietnam War, and it took a generation for this fascinating Buddhist backwater to be fully rehabilitated into the backpacker fold. Today, Laos is the country that everyone falls in loves with in Southeast Asia, partly for its laid-back way of life and rich culture, but mostly for its famously friendly people. Escaping the hubbub is the most popular thing to do, whether that means sipping a Beer Lao in the sleepy colonial city of Luang Prabang, trekking to remote tribal villages in the mountainous north, drifting around the pocket-sized capital, Vientiane, or literally drifting on the surging waters of the Mekong at Si Phan Don.



Best time to visit

November to February, to avoid the worst of the humidity

Top things to see

- A forest of golden spires at the Pha That Luang stupa in Vientiane
- One monk's vision of heaven and hell in the sculpture garden at Xieng Khuan
- Irrawaddy dolphins splashing around the 4000 river islands at Si Phan Don
- Royal relics and ancient monasteries in World Heritage-listed Luang Prabang
- Rafting, caving and climbing around the dramatic karst outcrops at Vieng Xai and Vang Vieng

Top things to do

- Drop into a Lao *wat* (Buddhist temple-monastery) for a chat with the novices
- Trek to tribal villages in the Nam Ha National Protected Area
- Take a slow boat along the Mekong from Luang Prabang to Nong Khiaw
- Eat a Lao lunch of barbecued pork and sticky rice overlooking the Mekong River
- Stay in tree houses that are only accessible by zip line in the forest home of the black gibbon

Getting under the skin

Read: Brett Dakin's *Another Quiet American* or Dervla Murphy's *One Foot in Laos* for a personal take on the Lao PDR (People's Democratic Republic)

Listen: to the undulating melodies of the *khene* (the traditional reed pipe of the Lao tribes)

Watch: *Good Morning, Luang Prabang*, the first ever privately funded Lao movie

Eat: *laap* (spicy, marinated meat); or *tam maak hung* (green papaya salad)

Drink: *lao-lao* (rice liquor); or Beer Lao, the nation's favourite brew

In a word

Su kwan (The calling of the soul)

Trademarks

Angular stupas; monks with umbrellas; monsoon

rains and rice paddy fields; dragon boat races along the Mekong; unexploded ordnance (UXO)

Random fact

Laos has the unenviable status of being the most bombed nation in the world – the estimated 80 million unexploded bombs left at the end of the Vietnam War continue to be a threat to the populace

1. Buddhist monks circumambulate Pha That Luang in Vientiane
2. Jagged karst peaks surrounding Vang Vieng
3. Street markets offer a variety of handicrafts
4. Traditional paper umbrellas for sale in Luang Prabang

