Malaysia and Thailand - ‘The Malay Peninsula’

October to April, inc. 15 days/14 nights ex London or 13 days/12 nights Kuala Lumpur to Bangkok.

Discover a vibrant mix of cultures; spectacular scenery, exotic wildlife, delicious local food and plenty of friendly people. Visit Kuala Lumpur; the old hill station of Cameron Highlands and the historic port of Georgetown, before heading into the rarely visited interior of the Malay Peninsula – still covered by vast expanses of dense jungle and inhabited by indigenous tribes - and finishing on an unspoilt tropical island on Thailand’s Andaman Coast. An off-the-beaten-track look at this fascinating and surprisingly little known region.

Day 1 Departure from London for Kuala Lumpur.

Day 2 Morning arrival in KL and transfer to our hotel in the heart of the Capital’s bustling Chinatown. Afternoon to relax, get over your jet-lag or explore the area’s lively markets before an evening trip on the ‘skytrain’ to see the famous Petronas Towers by night.

Day 3 Walking tour of some of the very varied sites of the fascinating Malaysian capital: Little India, the fabulous Victorian era architecture of Merdeka Square and the Central Mosque.

Day 4 Scenic morning drive to the old British hill station and tea growing region of the Cameron Highlands – an area famed for its spectacular jungle-clad mountain scenery and mild temperatures. Afternoon to discover the lush tropical vegetation as well as a visit to one of the famous tea plantations.

Day 5 Continue up the west coast to Ipoh town from where we’ll Head off into the rarely visited interior; through the jungle-clad, hills to tranquil Banding Island in Temenggor Lake. Stops on the way will include the awesome San Poo Tong Cave Temples and the excellent Lenggong Archeological Museum. Afternoon arrival at and accommodation in a beautifully situated, lakeside eco-resort.

Day 6 Expedition into the surrounding Belum Forest, hike through pristine rainforest to mountain streams and waterfalls, visit a village of the indigenous, forest-dwelling Orang Asli tribe, an exciting night hike through the forest and camping overnight in the jungle. With luck we’ll see monkeys and maybe even elephants - spectacular scenery guaranteed!

Day 7 Second day of our exploration of Belum continues with a boat trip on Lake Temenggor and an afternoon return to the eco-lodge for some R & R.

Day 8 Drive through the mountains to the West Coast and Penang where we’ll stay in the heart of UNESCO World Heritage Georgetown, the Island’s capital: - a bewildering mix of Malay, Indian and Chinese cultures, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim and Hindu religions with Thai and Indonesian influences thrown in for good measure! Walking tour of this well preserved, historical town in collaboration with the ‘Penang Heritage Trust’: temples, Chinese clan houses and British colonial period architecture.

Day 9 Visit Penang Hill with its Victorian era cable car, graceful villas and spectacular views and hike down the forested slopes to the famous Botanical Gardens. Evening visit to one of the town’s famous street markets.

Day 10 Morning transfer to the Thai border at Satun Town and a chance to visit to the lively border market. After lunch we’ll continue to Trang on the Andaman Sea Coast with a stop on the way to check-out the excellent Trang Botanical Gardens and canopy walkway.

Day 11 Head for the coast to Ban Chao Mai National Park where we’ll canoe through mangrove swamps and along underground streams to visit the spectacular and mysterious sacred sea caves. Afternoon transfer to Koh Libong Island for accommodation at a secluded beach resort.

Day 12 Leisurely day on this tranquil island; make the most of the turquoise waters and sandy beaches, sling a hammock between a couple of palm trees or visit the local fishing village.
Day 13 Boat tour through the spectacular scenery of Chao Mai National Marine Park; snorkel and swim on the archipelago’s vibrant coral reefs.

Day 14 Morning at leisure to explore the island or top up your suntan, before returning to Krabi for an evening flight to London via Bangkok.

Day 15 Arrival in London

Highlights: Kuala Lumpur, Cameron Highlands, World Heritage Georgetown, Penang, jungle expedition, flora and fauna, Banding Island, local food, Canopy Walkway, Canoeing in mangrove swamps, Libong Island, snorkelling on coral reefs

Fitness: easy to moderate – maximum trekking 3 – 4 hrs on day 8

Accommodation: hotel, jungle camp, eco-lodge, beach chalet

Transport: minibus, 4WD, internal flight, boat

Meals: full board except for lunch on days 2, 12 & 14 and dinner on days 6, 12 & 14

Note: this tour is offered with or without return flights from London. Persons not wishing to take up the flight option will join the tour on day 2 in Kuala Lumpur and depart in Bangkok on day 14.