

Best Of Asia OVERLAND

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Group size

Our trips have a maximum of 14 passengers and we need to have at least 6 passengers for the trip to run in our Mercedes Benz all-terrain coach style overland vehicle.

Who travels with Best Of Asia Overland?

Anyone and everyone travel with BOA. We have people from all over the world, all ages and all backgrounds. In fact the more nationalities we have, quite often the more interesting the trip will be. One common bond most of our passengers have (as well as crew) is a passion for travel.

General health and age concerns

We ask all of our passengers to declare any pre-existing medical conditions that could affect them on the trip. For trips that travel to areas of high altitude we also recommend all passengers download our information pack on travelling at altitude and acclimatising.

We don't have age restrictions, if you have a passion for exploring new and interesting places and feel you are up to the rigors of overlanding, we won't hold

you back.

The ratings for each trip are a good indication as to how challenging they are and in some cases, passengers should be prepared for long driving days and very often, limited facilities. One should be aware, quite often we are travelling in very isolated and remote places and help just isn't around, we may even be in an area that is quite populated, but the medical system isn't of the same standard as one would expect if they were in their home country.

We are always happy to give extra advice if you have additional concerns. The World Health Organisation has in-depth details of vaccinations and health issues. <http://www.who.int/en/>

It's also a good idea to consult a travel advice centre in your local area well in advance of your trip departure for advice on recommended vaccinations.

Our crew and guides

Our crew are passionate about travel, Asia and always up for adventure. It takes someone special to become a BOA leader. All of our crew have had years of on road experience working for other reputable overland companies. This is one of BOA's requirements before employing any leaders, generally we don't employ leaders who are new to the industry.

We have a crew of two, one western leader/driver and one local crew who keeps the passengers informed with local knowledge, including culture, language and cuisine! Both of the crew are responsible for the group and the day to day running of the trip and will accompany you for the duration.

With many of the sites and cities we visit, we also have an English speaking local guide accompany us and offer their extensive local knowledge as well as real insight into the lives of the local people

Meals and group participation

There are no cook groups on BOA trips and there isn't really much group participation either... unless one considers playing cards group participation or taking an Everest Mountain flight... or sitting back in an easy chair sipping a G&T and taking in a glorious Himalayan sunset!

We know it's always been a big part of overlanding... the pitching in thing and giving a hand, but times are changing and we know people want to get the most out of their adventure holiday, so now we try to keep all of the group participation stuff fun! Why stress out in a market food shopping for fellow travellers? We would rather have you out there soaking in some local culture or taking a few more photos of that pilgrim prostrating around the Barkhor in Lhasa or having a little bit of extra time sipping chai on that busy street corner in Udaipur watching life go by or...

Meals on our trips are fully inclusive. Our evening meals will be either buffet meals at our hotels and or we'll have a group meal somewhere special. The only time one may pay for their own meal is if one wants a bit of time out from the group and goes off to do their own thing.

On our drive days, sometimes we'll take a packed lunch with us, or perhaps set up our kitchen in an appropriate spot and have a meal out in the open... or we may pull up at a road side restaurant.

Pre and post trip accommodation and connecting flights

All of our trips have a city tour at the start of the trip and if the trip finishes in a different city, there will also be a city tour. So unless you want to spend extra time in any of our joining/finishing cities, there is no need to arrive before the trip start date or extend your time after the trip finishes unless you would like a bit of extra time before the start of the trip to acclimatise to the local culture or shake off that jet lag.

BOA can pre-book extra accommodation at our joining/finishing hotels trips if you wish. We will need to have your flight arrival details to ensure smooth airport transfers.

BOA does not book airline flights unless a flight is included with the trip, for example: Lhasa to Kathmandu.

Accommodation on tour

Our overland trips are designed for either twin shared/double accommodation or single supplement accommodation. If you are travelling alone and wish to twin share, we will do our best to arrange this with another group member of the same sex, **however this can't always be guaranteed**. If you are travelling alone and don't want to share accommodation, single supplements can be made available.

Most of our hotels range from beautiful five stars with excellent facilities to three stars with facilities that are quite acceptable. However, some of the destinations we get to are quite removed from the normal tourist path and when this is the case, we use the best accommodation available... not 4 or 5 stars! We even utilise a very basic and local home stay on a couple of our trips.

The only camping on our trips is in Western Tibet, simply because accommodation is not available. When we camp, we use a support vehicle and crew and every day our camps are magically organised for us as well as all meals. Our camps consist of personal tents and a kitchen tent, a dining tent (with tables, chairs and heating), and toilet tent (with a toilet seat). We also supply mattresses, sleeping bags and safari cots.

We also utilise tasteful and comfortable permanent tented accommodation when we stay at the Last Resort on our Crème De La Crème Nepal loops and High

Road To/From Lhasa trips trips. These are safari style tents where one can still stand fully upright and there is a proper bed.

Responsible tourism & code of conduct

BOA is committed to ensuring that we have a positive impact on local communities and that we implement policies to minimise any negative impact on the local environment.

We are dedicated to making sure that we adopt a responsible attitude to the areas through which we travel and believe that our trips should benefit the local people and their environment. BOA recognises that we are guests of local communities and strive to make these communities our partners.

All passengers are required to obey all laws of the countries through which we pass. This particularly applies to the smuggling of contraband and possession of narcotic drugs, firearms, antiquities and ivory. The local law deals with all offenders equally... no exceptions.

Any passenger found contravening such laws or customs may be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price or local payment.

Overland travel, security and comfort

One of the real advantages of overland travel is that the vehicle provides a very real level of security when travelling. There is no doubt that a properly equipped overland vehicle, with a safe, fully lockable doors and windows is an obvious advantage when travelling in Asia.

We recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt whilst travelling for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items (although most of these can be locked in the safe whilst you are on the trip) and advise passengers to leave any valuable jewellery, watches etc at home. External bum bags can be a magnet to would be thieves and opportunists. BOA doesn't recommend them!

Generally speaking, you will not be travelling on local public transport (though we do utilise a train in India and a ferry in Bangladesh) and will have the added security of travelling in a group with experienced crew on hand to offer advice. Remember our crew have had years of experience on the road and their advice is invaluable. Sometimes it may even sound silly or over the top, but believe us, it won't be.

Please note that any personal effects that are left on the truck, even if they are stored in the safe, are left at your own risk and BOA cannot be held responsible for any damage or theft that may occur.

BOA's all terrain Mercedes Benz coach style overland vehicles have been designed by us for comfort and spaciousness. Standard features include air conditioning and heating, extra wide reclining seating, tables, a library, on board computer(s) and Internet facilities, plenty of storage space for personal effects, windows that open and close, a refrigerator, 240V and 12V charging facilities and kitchen facilities! As mentioned earlier, we don't have more than 14 passengers on our trips, vehicles our size usually pack in 23 plus; we have ample legroom and aisle/storage space!

Adventure & safety

The safety of our passengers, leaders and operators is a major priority of BOA. With this in mind we monitor, not only Asian events very closely, but the whole world. By the very nature of the adventure travel that we take, there are risks and hazards that are inherent in our itineraries. BOA makes operational decisions based on informed advice from a number of sources...

The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice
Commonwealth Office travel advice
Reports from other travel companies and local suppliers
Leaders reports from off the road
Local contacts.

Unfortunately we have had to withdraw all of our Pakistan itineraries for the time being. We decided to do this after taking travel advice from several of our sources. We are hoping to include them as part of our scheduled itineraries again in the future when the region is more stable.

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. It's a good idea to always make yourself aware of the travel advice before you book and again before you travel. Below are links to some of the websites.

Britain. <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country>

Australia. <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/>

New Zealand. <http://www.safetravel.govt.nz/>

United States. http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html

Canada. http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-eng.asp

Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you have comprehensive travel insurance. Without evidence of valid travel insurance you will not be allowed to start the trip.

Whatever policy you choose, you must ensure that it is designed for adventure/overland travel. As such it must cover you for adventure activities such as white water rafting, trekking, horse-riding and that the 24 Hour Emergency

Assistance Company must be experienced in handling situations in developing countries – for example they have the ability to arrange repatriation from remote areas such as the Tibetan Plateau or if you were trekking in the Himalayas.

BOA does not accept travel policies that come with a credit card. These policies have many conditions and quite often the bearer of the card is confident of full travel insurance but in fact, when it comes to a claim, if one of these conditions hasn't been met, the claim in all likelihood will be rejected. BOA has a firm policy with credit card insurance and no one will be allowed on our vehicles with this type of insurance.

We recommend that any policy have the following minimum levels of cover:
Medical (incl. repatriation) US\$5,000,000
Personal Liability US\$2,000,000
Cancellation and Curtailment US\$10,000
Loss of Baggage, personal effects, money and other inclusions are down to personal choice.

The local payment

The local payment is a group fund and forms part of the trip price on our trips. It's an amount that each passenger puts into a central fund and is monitored by the BOA crew. We use these funds to pay for anything that hasn't been pre-paid in advance of the trip including accommodation, meals, entrance fees, fuel and other miscellaneous expenses. As stated at the beginning of the paragraph, the local payment is part of the trip price; if there are any monies left at the conclusion of the trip, the balance will **not** be redistributed amongst the passengers.

BOA only accepts American dollars. We will NOT accept local payment with a credit card, traveller's cheques or local currency.

Contingency emergency fund

Sometimes, civil or political unrest, or other reasons beyond BOA's control (e.g. a natural disaster), can mean that an itinerary is disrupted and we have to make a contingency plan. This may involve hiring alternate transport or even the whole group flying over an area. Although BOA will help organise alternative travel arrangements, in circumstances outside BOA's control, it's a good idea to be prepared to pay for unexpected costs and therefore we ask you to bring along a 'Contingency Fund' of USD400. In almost all cases trips run smoothly and this fund is therefore rarely used.

We also recommend that you take along an internationally recognised credit or charge card with a healthy limit in case of emergencies, such as medical treatment en route, or even the need to be repatriated; though these occurrences are rare. Remember that travel insurance policies usually only refund you for expenses after you have already paid out.

Tipping

On our trips, often we also use a local guide as well as our BOA crew and it is usual to tip them when they have finished utilising their services, however, BOA have already taken care of all tipping of local guides as well as any other help along the way, so please do not feel you have to tip

In regards to the BOA crew... if you feel you have received excellent service, please feel free to give a little extra at the end of the trip, but don't feel obligated, a tip is something that should be earned... not expected.

Once you have booked

Once you have booked you will be sent our Trip Update and Joining Instructions about 10 weeks before departure. This document will provide you with in-depth information on the following:

- . Arrival/Joining Instructions
- . Passport information
- . Local payment notes
- . Insurance
- . Health and immunisation advice
- . Money and Personal spending, advice on currencies and security
- . Kit lists
- . Medical kits and staying healthy
- . Visas