ASEAN Adventure Travel

ASEAN for ASEAN Campaign
Adventure travel in Southeast Asia doesn’t get better than this!

This handy guide contains just some examples of the many exciting ways to enjoy Southeast Asia. The ten ASEAN nations offer a diverse wealth of natural attractions and challenging terrains, perfect for indulging in a variety of outdoor pursuits such as biking, trekking, hiking, climbing and camping. The seemingly endless coastlines coupled with the abundance of inland river waterways in this part of the world also make water-based activities a popular pursuit in this region, whether it’s surfing in Thailand, scuba diving in Malaysia, kayaking in Viet Nam or kitesurfing in The Philippines. On top of that, annual running marathons across Southeast Asia not only allow visitors to stay active but also provide sightseeing from a different perspective.

To find out more about soft adventure opportunities all across the ten ASEAN nations, visit: www.aseantourism.travel
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ULU TEMBURONG NATIONAL PARK

The jewel in Brunei’s impressive crown of natural attractions, this 500 km² (193 sqm) National Park is covered by pristine tropical rainforest teeming with amazing ecological diversity, allowing visitors to easily and safely experience the real primeval Borneo jungle, complete with a thrilling set of interconnected canopy walkways towering above the treetops and offering 360° views of a natural environment undisturbed by civilisation for as far as the eyes can see.

The easily accessible National Park, located in the sparsely inhabited district of Temburong that is separated from the rest of the country by a sliver of Malaysia, is only two hours away from the capital by a boat, bus and native longboat trip that in itself feels like an adventure. Day trips
to a pristine rainforest environment are therefore a possibility, allowing a wider audience, or those with little time available, to enjoy such an experience. For those with more time on their hands, an overnight or two in the rainforest can be a more fulfilling way to discover and appreciate this environment. Accommodation choices range from simple but comfortable tour-operator-run lodges downriver from the Park, to the elegantly appointed Ulu Ulu Resort located inside the Park. Night walks, river activities and greeting the morning sun from above the tree canopies are some of the strong experiences one can enjoy when staying overnight.

Outside the Park, local communities living in traditional longhouses or in rural villages can be visited, with some even accommodating tourists in homestay style.

**BERAKAS FOREST RECREATION PARK**

Muara–Tutong Highway, BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN – This forest reserve which is located just off the Muara–Tutong Highway, about 10 kilometres from the capital, covers 199 hectares of rolling hills covered with heath down to the coastline where a deserted white sandy beach stretches invitingly for kilometres in each direction. The drive into the park is along a well-posted road that leads past several picnic shelters, toilets and a lookout tower to a parking area conveniently located beside the beach. Open daily 7.45am-6.00pm, admission is free.

**LAKE MERIMBUN**

TUTONG – Lake Merimbun, 27 kilometres inland from Tutong, has developed into a popular picnic spot attracting large crowds on Sundays. The shallow freshwater lake is about 500 metres long by 150 metres wide, fringed by swamp and long grass. In the middle of the lake is an island. Elevated wooden walkways criss-cross the lake connecting the shore and island at several points. Pavilions built off the walkways provide benches, tables and shade for picnics.
MENDARAM WATERFALL

BELAIT – the tranquil Mendaram Waterfall is enclosed by tall trees. The water feeds a deep pool that is excellent for swimming. The path to the waterfall starts 3.5 kilometres from the end of the sealed road at Labi on the left hand side. It is signposted Wasai Kadir. Stepping stones lead across a stream where the path rises steeply on the opposite bank. Further on, it rises steeply again to skirt a large boulder fall. Here the path can be treacherous, particularly during the wet season. The walks to the waterfall take about 15 minutes.

BUKIT SHAHBANDAR FOREST RECREATION PARK

Muara–Tutong Highway, BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN – Bukit Shahbandar spills over 70 hectares of undulating land close to the main Muara–Tutong Highway. A network of well-maintained and signposted paths criss-cross the area, and hill peaks and observation towers have panoramic views towards Muara, across Bandar Seri Begawan and over Jerudong. Here you will find the most challenging and wildest trails in the capital. Climb well-marked footpaths and have fun sighting plentiful wildlife (including monkeys), or just take in breathtaking views of BSB. Alternatively, cycling enthusiasts can take the mountain bike trail which gets tough in parts.

This park is one of the most popular trekking trails among the locals. Open daily 7.45am-6.00pm, admission is free.
Koh Rong Samloem is known for its diving and snorkelling, with outfitters Eco Sea, The Dive Shop and Coral Gardens Dive Centre all based here and others from the mainland like Scuba Nation running trips here. Eco Sea sunk a boat in August 2014 to create an artificial reef just off M’Pai Bei village, though the natural reefs are teeming with enough life to keep you entertained underwater. Many of the places to stay on the island rent out snorkelling gear.

This island stretches from south-east to north-west, encompassing an area of 78 sq. km. The terrain is predominantly hilly with a sizable mountain (316 meters) at the island’s north-west. The hills provide water for countless creeks and estuaries. The island’s interior is almost completely forested, concealing a number of seasonal waterfalls. Koh Rong has around 43 kilometers of delicate beaches. Tourists can enjoy scuba diving to explore marine life there.
Cambodia’s Sihanoukville may top the backpackers’ hitlist, but it’s what lies offshore that has caught our eye. Song Saa Private Island in the Koh Rong Islands is an eco-luxe escape spread over a pair of pristine isles, with thatch and stone villas dotted among the jungle canopy or lolling above the sea. Being green-minded has never been so glamorous.

SOKHA BEACH

Sokha Beach is located in Preah Sihanouk province, about 230km from Phnom Penh. Its fine, silicon-like sand squeaks loudly underfoot. The tiny eastern end of Sokha Beach is open to the public and rarely crowded. The rest is part of the exclusive Sokha Beach Resort. Tourists can also enjoy diving, swimming, snorkeling at Sokha Beach.

OCHHEUTEAL BEACH

Located in Commune 3, Preah Sihanouk Province, Ochheuteal is the most popular beach with the most beautiful sand, shallow water, and tranquil sea. The Ochheuteal Beach boasts thatched-roof shacks and seafood bars very popular with budget travellers. It also has several seaside restaurants and bars catering for a cocktail or dinner party. A nearby hotel offers holiday bungalows and a beautiful dining room overlooking the spectacular sea. Tourists can enjoy swimming and scuba diving organised by the Golden Sand Hotel.

Koh Dèk Koul Resort

Koh Dèk Koul is a small island located about 7km off the coast of Preah Sihanouk City, in southern Cambodia. The exclusive Mirax Resort is based on Koh Dèk Koul. Tourists can enjoy scuba diving and relax there.
RAJA AMPAT ISLAND

The Raja Ampat islands are truly natural phenomenon with enormous biological diversity. The amazing marine landscape means that underwater photography should be on top your list during your stay. Raja Ampat or ‘Four Kings’ is the name given to these islands and comes from a local myth. The four major islands found here are Waigeo, Misool (which is home to ancient rock paintings), Salawati and Batanta.

The territory within the islands of the Four Kings is enormous, covering 9.8 million acres of land and sea, home to 540 types of corals, more than 1,000 types of coral fish and 700 types of molluscs. This makes it the most diverse living library for the world’s coral reef and underwater biota. According to a report developed by The Nature Conservancy and Conservation International, around 75% of the world’s species live here. When divers first arrive here their excitement is palpable.
The Komodo Dragon (Varanus komodoensis) is an endangered species which can only be found in the Komodo National Park (KNP) in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). Because of the unique and rare nature of this animal, KNP was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1986. The park includes three major islands, Komodo, Rinca and Padar as well as numerous smaller islands, together totalling 603km² of land. The total size of Komodo National Park is presently 1,817km². Proposed extensions of 25km² of land (Banta Island) and 479km² of marine waters would bring the total surface area up to 2,321km².

KNP has a rich and amazing underwater sea biota. Divers claim that Komodo waters are one of the best diving sites in the world. It has fascinating underwater scenery. You can find 385 species of beautiful corals, mangrove forests and seaweeds as a home for thousands of fish species, 70 types of sponges, 10 types of dolphins, 6 types of whales, green turtles and various types of sharks and stingrays.
TANJUNG PUTING

Tanjung Puting is located in Central Kalimantan. The area was originally declared as a game reserve in 1935 and became a national park in 1982. The park, which covers a territory the size of Bali, is home to an amazing array of wildlife including its world famous orang utans. The park is also home to monkeys, birds and other wildlife, not to mention the pristine vegetation of the jungle itself. This is a world-famous natural treasure which attracts a growing number of international visitors each year.

Because the vegetation of Tanjung Puting supports a large population of animals, this park is one of the most important areas in Southeast Asia for the preservation of primates, birds, reptiles and fish. The incredible jungle surroundings make this an amazing place to visit if you’re after a truly outdoor adventure. It is an oasis of pure clean air, a clear night sky and a home to the gentle people of the jungle – the orang utans. The orang utans are undoubtedly the best-known inhabitants of the park, made famous through the work of the Orang Utan Research and Conservation Program based at the Camp Leakey research station. Camp Leakey is an orang utan preserve and the site of the longest continuous study of any wild animal in the history of science. With around three quarters of the world’s orangutan population living on Borneo, this park is the ideal place to see these incredible creatures in the wild.
MOUNT KELIMUTU NATIONAL PARK

Mt. Kelimutu National Park is the smallest among six national parks in the stretch between Bali and the Nusatenggara islands. Its size obviously does not matter much when it offers one of the most spectacular wonders that nature has to offer. There are three lakes on the mountain sharing the same name, Kelimutu, meaning ‘the boiling lake’. Each has its own colors and a local name. But all are believed to be the resting place of departed souls.

Unlike the Blue Lake in Mt. Gambier, South Australia, that changes colour from blue to cold steel grey within a predictable period, or Lake Yudamari in Mt. Nakadake, Japan, that changes from blue-green to green, the Kelimutu lakes are unpredictable as to when and what colour they will change into. Sometimes, the colours are blue, green, and black, and at some other times they turn to white, red, and blue. The last time a traveller saw them, one was dark brown, just like a pond of chocolate. Previously, the east lake was red and the middle lake was blue.

MOUNT BROMO

Mount Bromo is a part of the Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park that covers a massive area of 800 square kilometres. From a vantage point on Mount Penanjakan (2,770 meters above sea level), 2.5 hours from Malang, visitors from around the world come to see the sunrise over Mt. Bromo. From this spot the vista is magnificent. Experience the remarkable Tengger Caldera, Java’s largest, with its 10km barren desert-like sea of sand. Within the caldera rise the deeply fissured volcanic cones of Batok and Bromo – the latter is still active with a cavernous crater from which smoke blows skyward.

The eerie landscape has spurred countless legends and myths. Mt. Bromo has particular significance for the Tengger people who believe that this was the site where a brave prince sacrificed his life for his family. The people here appease the Gods once a year during the annual Kasada festival where offerings of vegetables, chickens and money are thrown into the crater of the volcano.
ROCK CLIMBING THE KHAMMOUANE KARSTS

The climbing area near Thakhek called “Pha Tam Kam” is hidden in a small valley which ends in the back of the beautiful Xiengliaab Cave (12 km outside from Thakhek). You will find wonderful routes with tufa’s, sintering and face climbing. The gigantic roof with routes ranging from 6b+ to around 8a is unique. So far there is a total of 150 routes ranging from 4 to around 8b. Be it advanced climber or beginner, you will have a lot of challenges and amusement!

For the beginner and advanced climbers, Green Climbers home staff offer climbing classes. For those who travel without climbing gear it is possible to rent a harness, climbing shoes, a rope, quick draws and a belay device.

ROCK CLIMBING IN VANG VIENG

Over the past years, Green Discovery has been working with climbers from all around the world to develop climbing in Vang Vieng area. Two areas were developed with a total of 50 routes ranging from 5a to 8a+ (French) with all the classic steep limestone jaggy stuff so Climb and enjoy!

Approximately: 15 minutes’ transfer / 1-hour instruction / 3-4 hours climbing per day If you know anybody with a drill and the skill let them know that there’s a plethora of rocks in shady crags by the river just waiting for some traffic!
The majestic Mount Kinabalu is one of the highest mountains in South East Asia standing at 4095.2 metres.

There are two trails to get to the top, Summit Trail and Mesilau Trail. While you do not need special skills to climb, you must at least have the basic fitness level. Both trails offer fantastic view and the opportunity to encounter amazing plants.

Apart from traditional mountain climbing, visitors can also experience the Mountain Torq, the world’s highest, and Asia’s first, Via Ferrata or ‘iron road’ at 3,200m to 3,800m above sea level. The various routes on the northern rock faces of Mount Kinabalu consist of a ‘trail’ that is made up of iron rungs, palettes, cables and rails. Depending on the preferred difficulty level, visitors can enroll in various activities such as the intro to single pitch or multi pitch sports climbing, intro to rappelling (abseiling) and introduction to rope ascending.
DIVING IN MABUL ISLAND

Mention Mabul Island and visions of swaying coconut trees and idyllic water villages come to mind. And that’s just above the water. Located only about 15 minutes by speedboat from the famous Sipadan Island, Mabul has gained its own recognition as one of the best muck-diving (a term used to describe limited visibility dives at shallow sites with usually sandy bottoms) sites in the world.

Mabul is a small oval-shaped island fringed by sandy beaches and perched on the northwest corner of a larger 200-hectare reef. The reef is on the edge of the continental shelf and the seabed surrounding the reef slopes out to 25–30m deep. Mabul is also renowned for its amazing array of macrolife, making it an underwater photographer’s dream location to capture some of the rarest ecological species on film. Flamboyant cuttlefish, blue-ringed octopus, spike-fin gobies, frogfish and moray eels are just some of the spectacular critters you will encounter beneath the waters of Mabul.

Although all the excitement is underwater, you can always set your scuba gear aside for a day to laze on Mabul’s soft sand to work on your tan.

CAVING IN MULU CAVES

The cave is probably the largest natural limestone cave in Peninsular Malaysia. Located within the vicinity of Gopeng, 24km south of Ipoh, the cave is approximately 1.5km long. Made up of five huge domes with a ceiling resembling coconut shells, each dome had different formations of stalagmites and stalactites. The domes also differ from one another in terms of temperature, water level, content of limestone and marble.
GUNUNG LEDANG/MOUNT OPHIR

Shrouded in mystical legends and folklore, Gunung Ledang continues to charm and intrigue locals and visitors alike. According to the legend of the Princess of Gunung Ledang, the Sultan of Melaka wanted the Princess’ hand in marriage and she, not wanting to marry him, demanded that the Sultan present her with seven jars of women’s tears, seven trays of mosquitoes’ hearts and seven bowls of the Sultan’s son’s blood. After he was unable to meet these impossible requests, she fled to the mountain and continues to live in a hidden cave, to this day.

The mountain is ideal for a myriad of outdoor activities with challenging mountain trails, icy waterfalls, and exotic flora and fauna, including many species of birds. At the relatively flat summit, which is 1,276m above sea level, a panoramic view of the Straits of Melaka and even the Sumatran coastline can been seen on a clear day. Sagil Waterfall is also a popular picnic spot at the base of the mountain.

TREE TOP WALK SUNGAI SEDIM

The 950m-long Tree Top Walk in the Sedim River Recreation Park is the longest canopy walk in the world. The Tree Top Walk Sedim River was built within the lowland of dipterocarp compartment 15 of Gunung Inas Forest Reserve.

The spectacular view you get when you stroll through the jungle canopy is the main draw for visitors from far and wide to this quiet, all-natural corner of Kedah.

Strolling high above the ground of this primeval rainforest affords visitors an unexpected and exciting perspective. Call it a “monkey’s eye view”. Visitors will enjoy the fabulous sight of rushing streams and truly fascinating flora and fauna – all from 50m up!
BIKING AROUND MANDALAY

Using the historic town of Mandalay as a jumping off point, cyclists can experience a truly “authentic” Myanmar. Discover the city’s narrow alleyways and bustling markets, as well as the surrounding areas. It’s a short bike ride to cultural treasures such as the Shwenandaw Monastery, the Kuthodaw Pagoda, and the outsize Buddha in repose at Mahamuni Pagoda. Moving into the countryside, the paved roads give way to gravel and mud trails, and the river valley surroundings come into their own, revealing a relaxing, natural panorama. The road to Amarapura takes you across the U Bein Bridge, the longest teak bridge in the world, and eventually leads to the former royal capital of Ava.

The river valley terrain around Mandalay is easiest to cycle during the cooler and drier months between October and February.

DIVING THE MERGUI ARCHIPELAGO

Although they are geographically located in Myanmar, the waters of the Mergui Archipelago – a chain of over 800 islands in the Andaman Sea – can only be reached by liveaboard dive boats that leave from the nearby Thai ports of Phuket, Khao Lak and Ranong. The dive sites here have only been open to the international dive community since 1997 so the reefs are still pristine. And with over 36,000 square km of marine territory, much of the area remains unexplored. It requires about 10 days to dive around the archipelago’s top sites, including mysterious caves, rock walls and massive seamounts. Surprisingly, there is an abundance of marine life to see as well.

The liveaboard tours operate from October to May, when water conditions are optimum, and from Thailand the boats stop in Myanmar at Kaw Thaung for immigration purposes. Visiting divers must bring passports and a USD 200 visa fee.
WHALE SHARK ADVENTURE
DONSONL – WHALESHARK ADVENTURE & TOURS

Swim and interact with WHALE SHARKS, the largest gentle fish in the world! Go for island hopping, take a dip in crystal-clear waters or a splash in our natural hot and cold spring resort! Opt for diving at world-famous Manta Bowl with the sightings of Oceanic Manta rays, Treshershark and Hammerheads or catch the splendour of our water panorama! Climb our mountains and trek the majestic Mayon Volcano.

EL-NIDO

El Nido really is a magical place. From its ageless towering marble cliffs to its white sandy beaches with crystal clear water, many refer to it as paradise. There are over 50 beaches to discover, so many in fact that sometimes you feel as if you are on your own secluded private beach. You will also find enchanting lagoons with tranquil turquoise-green water, caves that can take you to hidden beaches, and a very diverse variety of wildlife.

MOUNT PINATUBO

There is more to the lava-filled valleys and boulders – the true gem of Mt. Pinatubo is its crater lake. You can view this famous lake after 2.5 hours of trekking.

PUERTO PRINCESA SUBTERRANEAN RIVER

Puerto Princesa’s pride is easily the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River (or Underground River), a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the New 7 Wonders of Nature.

The 8.2km river, said to be the longest navigable underground river in the world, winds its way underneath a mountain range, through the St. Paul Underground River Cave, before going out into the South China Sea. The journey through the cave system alone is 24 kilometers long.

The entire area where the Underground River is located is actually a national park and a model of biodiversity. More than 800 plant species, including almost 300 trees, 195 bird species, 30 mammals, 19 reptiles and eight bat species call this area home.
RESORTS WORLD SENTOSA (RWS) – SHARK DIVE AND OPEN OCEAN DIVE

OPEN OCEAN DIVE
Immerse yourself in the awe-inspiring Open Ocean habitat, the centrepiece of S.E.A. Aquarium. Descend up to 12 metres to marvel at majestic manta rays, groupers, and schools of fish swimming in unison for an unforgettable close encounter with the ocean’s gentle giants.

Note: SCUBA-certification is required.

SHARK DIVE
Experience the thrill of swimming with the apex predators of the seas! Dive into our Shark Seas Habitat for the rare opportunity to get up close and personal with over 100 sharks from 12 different species, including the endangered scalloped hammerhead shark, silvertip shark and sandbar shark.
FAMOUS DIVE SITES OF THE ANDAMAN SEA: MU KO LANTA NATIONAL PARK

Mu Ko Lanta National Park in Krabi province is a destination for famous dive sites of the Andaman Sea among divers from all over the world, as it is blessed with an abundance of natural resources, both on land and in the water. It consists of over 20 beautiful islands and comprises beach forests, mangrove forests and an intriguing collection of marine life. Hin Daeng, Hin Muang and Mu Ko Ha are the famous dive sites in Mu Ko Lanta National Park. “Hin Daeng” or “red rock” is one of the world’s top ten dive spots with the dazzling array of red soft corals that cover the pinnacle making the rock glowing red during beautiful sunset while “Hin Muang” or “purple rock” is full of soft corals, sea anemone, and a remarkable variety of fish.

Divers can enjoy spotting an amazing range of marine creatures; such as, lobster, ghost pipefish, and squid. If lucky, divers might spot barracuda, manta rays, moray eels, leopard sharks, whale sharks, and grey reef sharks.
DIVING WITH THE GIANT WHALE SHARK: MU KO CHUMPHON

There are over 41 islands in Chumphon Sea, however, only 7-8 islands have popular and beautiful diving spots especially Ngam Islands. The undersea world around the “Ko Ngam Noi and Ko Ngam Yai” is full of huge brain corals, staghorn corals and colourful sea anemones dancing to the rhythm of the stream. These corals and sea anemones provide food and shelter for various species of colourful sea fish such as butterfly fish, clownfish, angelfish, rabbit fish, etc. If you are lucky, you might see the friendly giant whale shark swimming around to find food in the waters of these two islands. The most beautiful diving spot in Chumphon Sea is at “Ko Lak Ngam” with the approximate depth of 9-20 m. Here you will find the amazing colourful branches of one of the thickest black coral reefs in Thailand. You can also see the red sea whip, large colonies of sea anemone, schools of different species of fish and a large number of phyllidia coelestis.

About a 100m away from the North of Ko Ngam Yai, you can see a pile of rocks known as “Hin Phae” that is full of Black corals, Sea whip and Corallimorph. It is a home of big fish like Whale shark, Barracuda, Round batfish, Red snapper, Jackfish and large schools of yellow stripe trevally swimming around including Leopard shark and Stingray.

“Ran Pet & Ran Kai” are two small islands that have the very rich deep-sea coral reefs containing black corals in different colours-light yellow, white and gold, as well as Red neptune’s cup sponge, Red sea whip, Yellow-band fusilier and Saw blade shrimp. “Ko Mattr” is the best snorkelling spot in the area with massive coral and brain coral reefs, white clownfish with black spots and small Rabbit fish. Moreover, there are several small coral reefs under the sea around “Ko Thalu” and “Ko Langka Chio” which are homes of big fish such as Rabbit fish, Fusilier and sometimes Blacktip reef shark.

Know Before You Go
“You can most often see the whale shark in April. By the way, the National Park does offer boat trips for tourists”

Recommendation
“Stay over at Mattr Island”

Travel Info
From Chumphon town, drive along Highway 4001 for about 7km to Tha Yang Pier. Lots of local buses and taxis can take you there. An easier way is to book a tour package with Chumphon Cabana Resort.
THE BEST DIVE SITE IN THAILAND; VISITING A CONDOMINIUM OF MARINE LIFE: MU KO SURIN

The Surin Islands comprise five main islands, including two large islands consisting of Ko Surin Nuea and Ko Surin Tai which are adjacent to each other like twin islands. They are separated by the 200m-width shallow sea where “Richelieu Rock” – one of the best places in the world to encounter whale sharks and a vast array of spectacular marine life – is located. With a depth of 5-37m towards the south of the dive site and colourful soft corals decking the intricate peppering of granite pinnacles, it deserves at least three dives where you will still keep discovering new stuff. Tigertail Seahorses, Ghostpipefish, Frogfish, Octopus, Cuttlefish, many different varieties of Scorpionfish, Lionfish, Pipefish, Cleaner shrimps, Moray eels including White Mouth Morays, Rays, Nudibranchs, Barracuda, Trivially, Jacks, Tuna, Groupers, Harlequin shrimps and more make Richelieu Rock their home – like a condominium for marine animals.

The other three islands (Ko Mangkon, Ko Klang and Ko Torinla) are small rock islands with some dwarf trees and rainforest plants. They are a source of the biggest and best fertile shallow coral reef in Thailand, and in many places the reefs have grown right up to just 1m or so below the water’s surface, bringing the marine life that much closer to the snorkeler, particularly at Ko Torinla in the south and Ko Mangkon in the west. Here, you will be amazed with very healthy coral reefs in different colours. Other snorkeller sites that are worth to visit include Mai Ngam Bay and Suthep Bay.

RAIN FOREST ADVENTURE IN THE MAJESTIC TREETOPS: CHIANG MAI

Take an adventure and enjoy the scenic jungle from the top view. An unique sling tour at the top of the tree will show you a green fertile tropical jungle and raise your adrenaline as you will glide along the zipline on a very high tree that you cannot see its top with your bare eyes through different layers of the rainforest canopy in pretty much the same fashion like the monkeys.

The next thing you hear is the sound of your own shriek and see different kinds of birds flying around, apes, and boars running below.
RAPPELLING INTO THE SINKHOLE: UNLOCK THE WORLD MYSTERY SPIRIT WELL CAVE

The Spirit Well Cave, also known in Thai as “Tham Nam Bo Phi”, is Lahu people’s spirit cave. It is considered the biggest and deepest sinkhole in Thailand with a size as big as two football fields. The most amazing part is the 140m depth, measured from the opening to the lowest point. The only way in and out is by one-hour rappelling down and two-hour climbing up the ropes. Cavers have to trust their lives with 2 strings of ropes and a few pieces of equipment for rappelling to the lush rainforest down there.

Once reaching the floor of the sinkhole, you will be stunned by thousands of beautiful stalactites in different sizes on the ceiling of this vast cave. The fault lines of rock layers at the cave’s wall, as well as piles of rocks falling down on the slopes, which is covered with fine-grained dust, provide evidence of its age which is thousands of years. You will feel like you have journeyed back to the pre-historic era, especially when you look around and find that you are surrounded by lush green rainforest and the sound of birds chirping from the deep forest far away. After sunset, fog will descend downwards to the bottom of the sinkhole. At sunrise, you will see the golden sun shining down the hole, making it even more excitingly mysterious.
BACH MA MOUNTAIN

Location: Bach Ma (White Horse) Mountain is located in Phu Loc District, 60km from the south of Hue City.

Characteristic: It is about 1,450m above sea level in a transition zone of the northern and southern climate, so it bears a temperate climate, similar to Sa Pa, Tam Dao, Da Lat, etc.

There, the green vegetation is abundant all year round. The animals are also rich with chirps and calls all day and night which sound both wild and familiar. Bach Ma Mount also has many limpid brooks and picturesque waterfalls. Sixteen kilometres on Cau Hai-Bach Ma road, after turning left and walking for 20 to 30 minutes, tourists will also find the magnificent 400m-high, 20m-wide Do Quyen Waterfall which suddenly appears as if it were suspended in the sky. In the summer, rhododendron flowers bloom on both sides of the fall like two huge flowery silk carpets. At the centre of the resort is Bac (Silver) Waterfall, only 10m-high and 40m-wide, looking like a spotless white curtain swayed by the wind.

More than half a century ago, the French recognised the beauty of Bach Ma and began
CU LAO CHAM (CHAM ISLANDS)

Location: Cu Lao Cham (Cham Islands) is situated in Tan Hiep Commune, Hoi An City, about 20 kilometres off the Cua Dai coast.

Characteristics: It consists of eight islets set very close together in the shape of an arc – Hon Lao, Hon Kho Me, Hon Kho Con, Hon Tai, Hon Dai, Hon La, Hon Mo and Hon Ong – serving as a protective barrier for the ancient town. The area is renowned for its beauty, clean and vast biodiversity with pristine white sandy beaches and crystal-clear water.

From Cua Dai coast, after about 20 minutes by hydrofoil or 25 to 30 minutes by high-speed canoe or if someone wants to enjoy the beautiful view from tourist boat, which will take about 60 to 90
minutes depending on the weather, travellers will reach Cu Lao Cham, which is abundant in tourism potential. Various tourist activities are offered to meet almost all tourist demands. Tourists can relax, go hunting, fishing and get the chance to view sea swallow’s nests clinging to the towering cliff. Tourists can admire the beauty of corals by diving. The best season for diving is summer (from June to the end of August) when sunlight is strongest. Cu Lao Cham is popular for its seafood and delicacies (octopuses, lobsters, fish’s fin, abalone, kaki, chonoli’s eggs and birds’ nests) and fascinating souvenirs (pearls, conches and tortoise’s shells).

FANSIPAN MOUNTAIN

Location: Fansipan Mountain is located 9km southwest of Sa Pa Townlet in the Hoang Lien Mountain Range

Characteristics: Fansipan is known as “the Roof of Indochina” at the height of 3,143m. It is acknowledged as one of the very few eco-tourist spots in Viet Nam, with about 2,024 flora varieties and 327 fauna species.

The topography of Fansipan is varied. Muong Hoa Valley, at the lowest altitude of 950-1,000m, is created by a narrow strip of land at the base of the east side of the mountain.

The summit of Fansipan is accessible all year round, but the best time to make the ascent is from mid-October to mid-November, and again in March.

Foreigners prefer to book Fansipan tours between October and December, as this period is more often than not free from the heavy rains that obstruct the jaunt. But the Vietnamese prefer their tours to the peak of the mountain from February to April, as it is not so cold then. However, the best time for a trek to the top of mountain is from the end of February to the start of March, when the flowers all flourish and climbers may see carpets of brilliant blossoms, from violets and orchids to rhododendrons and Aglaia’s.
HON MUN ISLAND

Location: Hon Mun Island is situated on the south of Nha Trang Bay, Nha Trang City, Khanh Hoa Province.

Characteristic: Hon Mun has high-rise cliffs with dangerous wattles forming caves and grottoes, with stones are as black as ebony, which could rarely be found in other areas.

In the black stone caves of Hon Mun, flocks of swallow migrate to the area every year to build their nests. Due to the island’s location adjacent to the hot sea-currents from the equator, which is an ideal condition for corals and various types of tropical sea creatures, the sea bed of Hon Mun is home to an abundant and diverse group of marine species, providing an interesting and useful place for researchers, oceanographers and tourists to learn more about marine life.

In Hon Mun, visitors can dive or take grass-bottom boats to admire the colourful coral and sea creatures.

LANGBIANG MOUNTAIN

Location: In Lac Duong Town, Lac Duong District, in the Central Highlands province of Lam Dong, about 12km north of the centre of Da Lat City.

Characteristics: The mountain is well known for its primeval and mighty scenery and is said to be the rooftop of the Lam Vien plateau. The mountain has two peaks, with one reaching a height of 2,169m and the other, 1,950m.

The 1,950m peak can be reached by trekking a long zigzagging path through a pine forest or driving self-supported cars. At the peak, there is a flower garden, statues of K’lang and H’biang and souvenir shops. From here, visitors can view as far as Vang (Gold) and Bac (Silver) streams winding below and the entire Da Lat City far away.

A trip to conquer the 2,169m peak will challenge visitors physically. Visitors can take the same road to the 1,950m peak but will then need to make a right turn into another path as they get nearer to the peak. The peak can be reached by trekking through primeval forests in changeable weather for at least two hours and then climbing up steep mountain cliffs for two hours more.