

CLIA DESTINATION FACTSHEET

EAST ASIA



Floating markets and intricate canals of the Mekong Delta
Vietnam

BEST TIME TO GO/WEATHER

This is such a vast area that weather conditions can vary greatly, though the peak season for cruising here is generally from November to March, avoiding the worst of the rainy season which falls during the summer when conditions can be uncomfortably hot and humid.

The winter is regarded as the cool, dry season with less rainfall, though conditions are generally tropical with temperatures around 30 degrees Celsius.



Raja Ampat - Indonesia



Sumo fight - Japan

10 REASONS TO CRUISE HERE

Tropical escapes – explore paddy fields in Vietnam’s Mekong Delta with farms and floating markets, Buddhist monasteries and Confucian temples in the mountains of Taiwan, and shrines and gardens under the shadow of Japan’s Mount Fuji.

Idyllic islands – from castaway retreats in the Philippines, including beautiful Boracay, and the spectacular limestone seascape of Vietnam’s Halong Bay to Indonesia’s exotic Spice Isles and striking jungle-topped clusters of Raja Ampat.

Ancient dynasties – the imperial rulers of China, Korea and Japan have left a legacy of historic temples, eye-catching pagodas and evocative shrines, while Indonesia reflects the centuries-old influences of Indian and Islamic rulers.

Unesco glories – tick off Cambodia’s breath-taking Angkor temple complex at Siem Reap; the Thang Long Imperial Citadel in Vietnam’s capital Hanoi; China’s Forbidden City in Beijing and army of terracotta warriors in Xian; and Japan’s iconic landmark Mount Fuji.

Glitzy metropolises – dip into the frenetic pace of Shang-hai, the pulsating sprawl of Filipino capital Manila, and contrasting appeal of South Korean capital Seoul where teeming streets give way to tranquil gardens.

Temples, treasures and spirituality – Japan’s former capital Kyoto overflows with castles, temples and historic imperial residences that have won Unesco World Heritage status, as has Indonesia’s extensive Borobudur temple on Java, the world’s largest Buddhist monument.

Wartime stories – discover how atomic bombs obliterated the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, while the Vietnam War pitted US forces against the Viet Cong in a grinding battle of attrition.

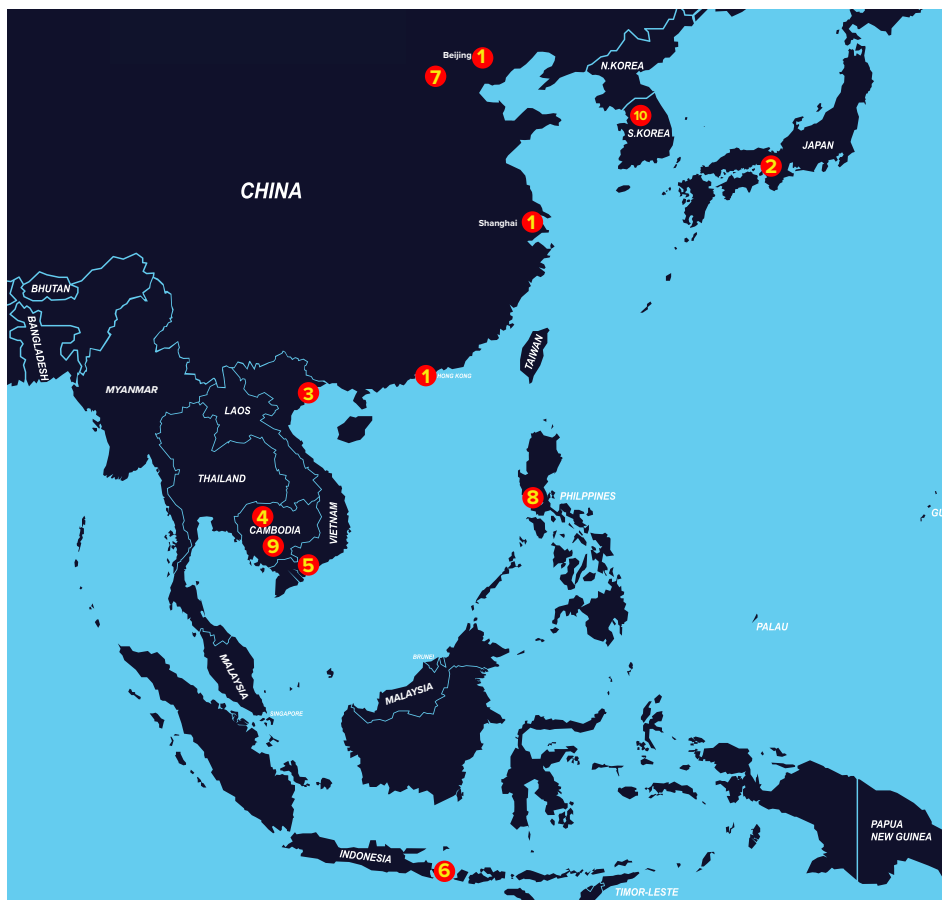
Cultural melting pot – Japan’s sumo wrestlers, geisha women and tea ceremonies; Chinese dragons, festivals and cuisine; Indonesia’s legends, wayang puppet shows (that can be nine hours long!), and ethnic groups totalling more than 1,300.

History lessons – Pol Pot’s murderous reign of terror in Cambodia, the Spanish roots of the Philippines which was ruled by Spain for more than 300 years, Indonesia’s Dutch colonial heritage, and South Korea’s turbulent past and volatile neighbour North Korea.

Animal magic – lovable giant pandas in China, fearsome dragons on the Indonesian isle of Komodo, orangutans on Borneo, and Japan’s famous snow monkeys that frolic in hot springs.

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10 KEY ATTRACTIONS



- 1. Chinese metropolises** – Beijing, Hong Kong and Shang-hai (pictured) are the country's foremost cities with their yin and yang balance of ancient temples and traditions contrasting with a mix of ultra-modern skyscrapers and pulsating neon-filled streets.
- 2. Tokyo** – behind the Japanese capital's uber modern façade sit traces of its dynastic past with the impressive Imperial Palace and Meiji Shrine at the city's centre, while Tokyo Tower presents sweeping views to Mount Fuji.
- 3. Halong Bay** – this ethereal cluster of 1,500 limestone karsts has Unesco World Heritage status and is arguably the most beautiful and magical part of Vietnam's coastline with sparkling grottoes and deserted tiny islets, steeped in legends.
- 4. Temples of Angkor** – famed as the world's largest religious complex, dating from the 9th to 15th centuries, this collection of ancient Khmer temples near the Cambodian city of Siem Reap is another Unesco World Heritage wonder.
- 5. Ho Chi Minh City** – the former Saigon carries a frenetic buzz of scooter-filled streets and a fascinating past with attractions such as the War Remnants Museum, Reunification Palace, French colonial-style Central Post Office and Notre Dame Cathedral.
- 6. Indonesian isles** – from the beaches and rice terraces of the beautiful Hindu isle of Bali to its rugged neighbour Lombok and the jagged attractions of nearby Komodo, Rinca and Flores where notorious deadly Komodo dragons roam.
- 7. China's Great Wall** – arguably the country's most famous attraction, winding more than 13,000 miles, the most popular section is the Badaling section near Beijing, making it convenient but touristy. A quieter alternative is a section of wall at Jinshanling, a three-hour drive away.
- 8. Filipino contrasts** – from the urban sprawl of capital Manila (pictured) to deserted Sibuyan Island, known as the Galapagos of Asia because it is so isolated, plus the coastal city of Puerto Princesa and resort isle of Boracay famed for its beautiful beaches.
- 9. Phnom Penh** – formerly known as the Pearl of Asia, Cambodia's capital is a vibrant mix of busy streets and peaceful temples with haunting reminders of Pol Pot's horrific regime at the Choeung Ek Killing Fields museum.
- 10. Seoul** – the South Korean capital boasts the typical Asian mix of ancient and modern where shopping centres rub shoulders with temples and palaces. The most unique tourist attraction is the demilitarized zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea where there's a museum.

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Phuket Old Town Night Market
Thailand



Saigon river in Ho Chi Minh City
Vietnam



Killing Fields
Phnom Penh



Maiko geishas
Gion



The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ)
Border between North and South Korea



Jianlou seen through Zhengyang Gate
Beijing, China

10 THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO:

- 1. Do your own thing** – there's much to be said for soaking up street life and visiting atmospheric markets, especially night markets, as Asian cities generally have efficient transport systems, are reasonably safe and many locals speak English.
- 2. Location, location** – if you're exploring independently from your hotel or cruise ship, make sure you have the address and port details in the local language as a reference for taxi drivers.
- 3. Seasons vary** – while there are Asia cruises for much of the year, beware the monsoon season when temperatures can be scorching and humidity sky-high. The winter months tend to be the prime time to visit.
- 4. It's all about size** – while larger ships stick to the main ports, smaller vessels can weave into the archipelagos' smaller isles and also navigate the Saigon River to dock in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City.
- 5. Do your research** – there is such a wealth of history, religion and culture in this region, it's worth genning up on the details to pin down what you want to see and pack it all in.
- 6. Soak up the culture** – dig beneath the surface on tours that highlight homespun experiences such as dining with locals in their homes, walking tours and trips to local markets, sampling a Japanese hot springs experience and cooking with local chefs.
- 7. On your guard** – while crime generally isn't an issue, it's still not advisable to flash the cash or expensive jewellery, especially in crowded markets. Look out for pickpockets and be wary of any potential scams.
- 8. Squatters rights** – be prepared for Asian squat loos, especially in China, even in tourist areas. Plan your comfort breaks carefully to take advantage of anywhere that has Western loos, and always have tissues or toilet wipes handy in case none are provided.
- 9. Mind your manners** – especially in Japan which is big on social etiquette. Drinking or eating while walking along is frowned upon, though a positive difference is that tipping isn't required, which saves agonising over gratuities.
- 10. Take some time** – don't waste the opportunity to tag on extra stays either pre or post cruise and turn your trip into a multi-centre, especially in China, or at various departure cities including Tokyo, Shanghai or Hong Kong.

Hanoi at Linh Dam lake

