

Best of Vietnam and Laos tour

18 days

(Vientiane – Luang Prabang - Hanoi – Halong – Hue – Hoian - Saigon – Mekong River Cruise)

Itinerary Overview

Day	Destination	Meals
Day 1	VIENTIANE ARRIVAL	--
Day 2	VIENTIANE CITY – BUDDHA PARK	B
Day 3	VIENTIANE – LUANG PRABANG	B
Day 4	LUANG PRABANG – PAK OU CAVE	B
Day 5	LUANG PRABANG – KUANG SI WATERFALL & COUNTRYSIDE	B/L
Day 6	LUANG PRABANG – HANOI – FOODIE TOUR	B/D
Day 7	HANOI – HALF DAY CITY TOUR	B
Day 8	HANOI – HALONG BAY	B/L/D
Day 9	HALONG BAY CRUISE – HA NOI – DA NANG - HOIAN	B/L
Day 10	HOIAN – COUNTRYSIDE & FOODTOUR BY VINGTAGE VESPA	B/D
Day 11	HOIAN – FREE DAY	B
Day 12	HOIAN – HUE SCENIC TRAIN JOURNEY	B
Day 13	HUE – CITY TOUR	B/L
Day 14	HUE – SAIGON – HALF DAY CITY TOUR	B
Day 15	SAIGON – CU CHI TUNNELS	B
Day 16	SAIGON – MEKONG RIVER CRUISE	B/L/D
Day 17	MEKONG - SAIGON	B
Day 18	SAI GON - DEPARTURE	B

Note*: B: Breakfast / L: Lunch / D: Dinner

Travel Map



Detailed Itinerary

Day 1 VIENTIANE ARRIVAL

Arrive in Vientiane. Greeted by your driver at the airport. Transfer to your hotel in the city centre for check-in and at leisure in the rest of the day.

Meals: N/A

Accommodation: Hotel in Vientiane

Day 2 VIENTIANE CITY – BUDDHA PARK

After breakfast, we drive out of town to the eccentric Buddha Park, built by a Lao man after studying in India, in order to teach following generations of Lao about religions around the world. Here we will discover many Buddhist and Hindu statues in traditional and modern styles. One of them is the largest Reclining Buddha in Laos.

Back to the city center, we head to the religious museums of Wat Sisaket and Ho Prakeo. Wat Sisaket is the oldest temple to have survived the Siamese War of 1828 and its cloister contains more than 8000 Buddha statues. Ho Prakeo was the former home-temple of the Emerald Buddha statue, or Pra Keo, from the early Lane Xang Kingdom until the 18th century. Today it contains a collection of Buddha statues, antiques and artifacts found in Vientiane.

We then drive to That Luang Stupa, the single most important monument in Laos. This Stupa was built to cover the original, smaller stupa containing a piece of the breast bone of Buddha. That Luang is the largest stupa in Laos and serves as the main symbolic stupa for all of Laos. It's also our national symbol, a gathering place for our national Buddhism ceremony, and recognized throughout the world. We then head to Patouxay, sometimes called the Arch de Triumph of Vientiane. This landmark is not as old as the other landmarks we visit but provides an interesting insight into Lao's more recent and turbulent history. Despite its more modern history this is still an important landmark for the people of Laos and serves an important role in many national celebrations.

Meal: Breakfast

Accommodation: Hotel in Vientiane

Day 3 VIENTIANE – LUANG PRABANG

After breakfast, we drive to the airport for the flight to Luang Prabang. Upon arrival, enjoy half day city tour to explore Luang Prabang.

You will start your first tour in Luang Prabang with a visit to Royal Palace Museum, which hosts a range of interesting artifacts. Our next stop is Wat Mai, a temple renowned for its golden bas-relief, which is one of the most beautiful temples in town.

In the late afternoon, we climb up to the top of Mount Phousi for an enjoyable exploration of the sacred, gilded stupa as well as a panoramic sunset view of the city and the Mekong River.

Meal: Breakfast

Accommodation: Hotel in Luang Prabang

Day 4 LUANG PRABANG – PAK OU CAVE

We depart from Luang Prabang by boarding a boat and beginning our cruise along the amazing Mekong. We pass idyllic scenes of rural riverside life and spectacular scenery until reaching the beautiful Pak Ou Caves, sitting amongst the limestone cliffs where two rivers meet. The caves are filled with thousands of Buddha images and statues which have been placed here over many centuries. A short distance away from Pak Ou Caves we visit a village which has been making clay jars for centuries. These jars are then used to ferment Lao rice wine. Nowadays the tradition continues however the village now also specialises in producing a wide range of 'Lau Lao' Lao whisky and 'Lau Hai' Lao wine. Be sure to try just a little before we head of back down river to Luang Prabang in the late afternoon.

Meal: Breakfast

Accommodation: Hotel in Luang Prabang

Day 5 LUANG PRABANG – KUANG SI WATERFALL & COUNTRYSIDE

We depart from Luang Prabang by minivan and drive to an ethnic Khmu village where we will start our adventure. We start by trekking to a nearby Hmong village. You will be able to learn about the lifestyles of Khmu and Hmong people, these two culturally very different minorities and see how, despite their differences, they work together on a daily basis and even share the same school.

As we continue onwards the trail leads through rice paddies and vegetable fields before reaching the mountainous forest. Along the way we explore a cave which was used as a bomb shelter by the local villagers during the second Indochina War.

After visiting the cave we continue trekking to one of the many springs which feeds Kuang Si waterfalls, where we can see a beautiful pool full of sacred fish. After descending from the top of the waterfall we enjoy a Lao style lunch amongst some beautiful settings!

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fter lunch we will relax by the waterfall with plenty of time for swimming and taking pictures of the magnificent falls and the turquoise pools.

Before leaving Kuang Si Waterfalls we will pass through a rescue and refuge centre for bears saved from the illegal wildlife trade. On our way back to Luang Prabang we will also have the opportunity to visit Lao's only buffalo dairy and try some of their buffalo cheese. We will then drive back to Luang Prabang. Arrive the hotel in late afternoon.

Meal: Breakfast/Lunch

Accommodation: Hotel in Luang Prabang

Day 6 LUANG PRABANG – HANOI – FOODIE TOUR

Enjoy your free time to explore Luang Prabang city. Depending on flight schedule, we arrange airport transfer for the flight to [Hanoi](#). Upon arrival, enjoy Hanoi street food by night.

Your local guide will give you an insight into the intricacies and traditions of Vietnamese food culture including details on ingredients and historical backgrounds of popular northern dishes. We eat as we go, trying seasonal fruits and sampling a tasty French-inspired snack from a street cart.

Walking through the maze of bustling streets that make up Hanoi's Old Quarter, we tempt our tastebuds with the famed Hanoi dish Banh Cuon at a local eatery. Watch in awe as the skilled chefs demonstrate for you how this tasty dish is put together. Continuing into the atmospheric heart of the Old Quarter, we wander past street stalls and quiet residential lanes where you can observe local life that has changed little since Hanoi was founded over 1000 years ago.

Our next two snack stops are at outdoor barbeque stalls. We sit down with the Hanoi locals and sample various meat, vegetable and bread specialties that are flame grilled over hot coals for extra flavour. It's then time for dessert as we venture down a small alley to join in the local tradition of feasting on fresh fruit served in a cup and smothered with crushed iced and condensed milk – this speciality is one not to be missed!

Your local guide will then take you to one of Hanoi's best kept secrets, a hidden street food restaurant to taste top ten street foods in Hanoi is Banh My Hanoi, Vietnamese Rice Wine and famous Egg Coffee. This hard-to-find café is one of the few left in the narrow street inside the old quarter of Hanoi. Or, if coffee is not your style, a cold beer awaits! At the end of the trip you are free to continue exploring the area or your guide will assist you back to your hotel.

Meal: Breakfast/Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel in Hanoi

Day 7 HANOI – HALF DAY CITY TOUR

Free to relax in the morning.

13:30: Pick up at your hotel. We will spend a half day to visit the city. We start with visit to President Ho Chi Minh's mausoleum (Outside). We also visit the famous One Pillar Pagoda nearby. Leaving the President's complex, we continue to visit the Temple of Literature (Van Mieu). Although several Van Mieu can be found throughout Vietnam, the most prominent and famous is that situated in the city of Hanoi, and was functioned as Vietnam's first university.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: Hotel in Hanoi

Day 8 HANOI – HALONG BAY

08:00 – 08:25 : Pick up at your hotel near by the Old Quarter in Hanoi by shuttle bus

12:30 – 12:30 : Embark the cruise at Tuan Chau harbor. Enjoy welcome drink, cruise briefing & start cruising.

13:00 – 15:30 : A stunning lunch is served while cruising into the Halong Bay with thousands of extraordinary shaped limestone islands considered as the heaven on the earth

15:30 – 17:00 : Explore the area and be charmed by the outstanding masterpiece of the Mother Nature. Visit Mê Cung Cave – one of the most beautiful caves in Halong Bay. Climb up & see the panoramic view of the bay from above. Enjoy swimming in the crystal water of the peaceful Bay.

17:00 – 19:00 : Return to the cruise the Sunset party and admire the best moment of the day when the sun starts to set. Or enjoy the massage treatment in your comfortable cabin.

19:00 : Savor an amazing and dreamlike dinner in Fairy cave (or Drum cave) with extremely delicious food which is not only impressed by its incredible taste, but also by great fruit and vegetable carving performance. Socialize with new friends and crew members, enjoy squid fishing or leisurely relax on the top deck in the middle of the tranquil bay.

Note*: the itinerary and activities on board would vary depending on the boat you choose. Please see the choice of boat in Hotel Inclusions.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Night on board

Day 9 HALONG BAY – HANOI – DANANG - HOIAN

07.00: Coffee and tea will be served

08.00: Continue cruising

08h15: Visit splendid Sung Sot Cave

09h00: Check out and enjoy a fantastic cruise on the bay, passing Dinh Huong Island, fishing villages, Ga Choi Island, Dog Island and Sail Island.

09.30: Buffet brunch (breakfast/lunch) while cruising back through Halong Bay to the pier

11h30: Arrive at the pier. Time to say goodbye to the crew.

12.00: Return from Halong to Hanoi. Arrive Hanoi at about 17pm.

Airport transfer for late flight to Danang. Transfer to the hotel in Hoian upon arrival.

Note*: the itinerary and activities on board would vary depending on the boat you choose. Please see the choice of boat in Hotel Inclusions.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch

Accommodation: Hotel in Hoian

Day 10 HOIAN – COUNTRYSIDE & FOODTOUR BY VINGTAGE VESPA

Enjoy your free morning to relax in Hoian.

15.30 At your hotel, you meet our drivers, guide and classic vintage Piaggio Vespa. After a quick briefing, it's time to jump on, click on your helmet and off we go! Listen to the sounds of this famous engine as you whir away on the start of your journey. First stop is a Vietnamese traditional cake: Banh Beo – a popular snack of Hoi An people. You will have a chance to talk and take photos with the owner of the shop.

16.30 After our first taster, we head across the [Cua Dai](#) bridge with its spectacular panoramic views of Hoi An and surrounds. We take a moment to stop for photos and stretch our legs before continuing the trip along little countryside laneways and alleys to the water coconut palm fringed Cam Thanh.

17.00 Afterwards, on our drive through the countryside, you'll experience up close the resplendent beauty of the rice paddies, grazing buffalo, all of which are guaranteed to provide plenty of perfect photo opportunities.

17.45 Next, our team will ride and take you to a very old pagoda in Hoi An. The pagoda is a place for quiet reflection, listening to your heart, forgetting your troubles and enjoying the harmonious environment of the monastery. The sun is starting to set and the sky begins to change colour. We then take a lovely trip through the countryside and see farmers working on the rice paddies under the sun to Ha My beach and get to sample some of seafood in an atmospheric Vietnamese seafood restaurant, overlooking beach as the sun sets on Hoi An & enjoy a few cold beers.

19.30 To finish the night visit a local coffee shop for live music. Sit down and enjoy the romantic melody by local people in a cosy atmosphere. All will give you an experience of lifetime.

Meals: Breakfast/Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel in Hoian

Day 11 HOI AN – FREE DAY

Free and easy day to explore [Hoian town](#) or swim at nearby beach.

Optional tour:

- [My Son Tower](#) Tour

- Golden Hand Bridge Tour

Meal: Breakfast

Accommodation: Hotel in Hoian

Day 12 HOI AN – HUE – SCENIC TRAIN JOURNEY

Free in the morning.

In the afternoon, transfer to the station for day train to Hue. Enjoy scenic view of Hai Van pass on the way. Arrive Hue in late afternoon and transfer to hotel in Hue. Free time to explore Hue by night.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: Hotel in Hue

Day 13 HUE – CITY TOUR

08:00 – 08:20: Pickup at the hotel.

Today, we will spend a full day touring Hue city.

In the morning: visit Old Imperial City, Flag Tower, Thien Mu Pagoda and Dong Ba bustling market. Lunch at the local restaurant.

In the afternoon: visit Royal Tombs of Minh Mang and Khai Dinh. We will also visit a Conical hat village and incense stick village

Enjoy free night time to explore Hue city.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch

Accommodation: Hotel in Hue

Day 14 HUE – SAIGON – HALF DAY CITY TOUR

Pick up at the hotel in the morning. Transfer to airport for the flight to Sai Gon.

Upon arrival, enjoy half day city tour to explore Saigon city. Our city tour will help you to see the best of Saigon. We visit the historic Reunification palace and War Remnants Museum, followed by the

architectural treats of French colonial Notre Dame Cathedral and the post Office. Free time at leisure or shopping at Ben Thanh Market nearby.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: Hotel in Saigon

Day 15 SAIGON – CU CHI TUNNELS TOUR

In the morning, pick up at your hotel for about 1 and a half hour drive to Cu Chi tunnels .

Upon arrival, before exploring the tunnels, you will have some short introduction followed by introductory video about how the tunnels were constructed and how the people survived in the harsh conditions of the war time. Then, spend your time to explore the remaining area and tunnel systems which included the special constructed living areas with kitchens, bedrooms side by side with other martial facilities like storage, weapons factories, field hospitals, and command centers helping whoever lives inside the tunnels meet their basic needs. Besides, there are also many hidden trap doors and dangerous traps within the maze-like tunnels for security purpose during the war. Afterward, special tea and cassava (guerilla's food during the war) will be served.

Break time for relax or time for those who want to try the real shooting gun (optional). Then get back to to city at about 3pm.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: Hotel in Saigon

Day 16 SAI GON – MEKONG RIVER CRUISE

Note*: depending on the cruise availability, you would do the Caibe – Can Tho or Can Tho – Caibe itinerary. We will keep you updated.

07:10 – 07:30: Pickup at the hotel for Cantho – Caibe itinerary

08:00 – 08:20: Pickup at the hotel for Caibe – Can Tho Itinerary.

You board your comfortable wooden [Mekong Eyes](#) cruise vessel around noon. After a refreshing welcome drink we show you our on-board facilities and your cosy cabin. As lunch is served, the Mekong Eyes Cruise starts cruising. Sit back and watch the fantastic scenery and the daily life of the Mekong people.

In the afternoon you can disembark for a guided leisurely stroll through a village and the surrounding fruit orchards or rice fields. Meet the friendly locals and taste the local produce and fruits.

Get back on board and enjoy a drink at the bar or relax on deck as the sun sets over the magnificent water landscape of the Mekong river. The Mekong Eyes Cruise will anchor for the night. The day ends

with a delicious on-board dinner. You stay overnight on board your floating hotel in the Mekong Delta.

Meal: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Mekong Eyes/Le Cochinchine Cruise

Day 17 MEKONG - SAIGON

Wake up well rested to the sound of the river and get ready for another exciting day of sightseeing in the Mekong Delta. At 6.30h the Mekong Eyes cruise vessel sets off for a sunrise cruise. Watch the locals go about their daily work drying exotic fruits and building ships on the wooden yards while enjoying an early breakfast.

After breakfast, we will board a sampan boat to Cai Be or [Cai Rang floating market](#), the region's busiest and most lively markets. Marvel at the sheer abundance of exotic fruits, vegetables and skilfully handcrafted regional products. We will pull up to the boats for talking and bargaining with the merchants. We will also visit some of the local candy and cake making factories or boat through the green water landscape to see local houses, verdant orchards and ship-building yards.

Note*: The floating markets in the Mekong Delta are no tourist markets but wholesale markets where produce of the Mekong Delta like fruits and vegetables are traded. For this reason the number of boats on the market fluctuates depending on harvesting seasons and market demand. Furthermore, modern wholesale markets are becoming more popular in Vietnam. This can result in decreasing numbers of boats being present on the markets.

Meal: Breakfast

Accommodation: Hotel in Saigon

Day 18 SAIGON - DEPARTURE

Enjoy your free time to explore Saigon till pickup for airport transfer. Trip ends!

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: n/a

Inclusions & Exclusions

Inclusions:

- Overnights in selected hotels or similar
- Halong bay 2 day Cruise package
- Mekong 2 day cruise package for tour option 1 – by Mekong Eyes/Le Cochinchine Cruise
- All in-tour stationed local English speaking guide.
- Entrance fees for sightseeing mentioned in the itinerary
- Excursions as mentioned in the itinerary
- Transfers as mentioned by air-conditioned vehicles (including airport pick up & see off)
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- 4 Internal flights (Vientiane – Luang Prabang, Luang Prabang – Hanoi – Danang, Hue – Saigon)
- 1 day train for Danang – Hue

Exclusions:

- Early checkin/late checkout at hotels
- Meals and services other than those noted in the itinerary
- Visas fees
- Laundry, telephone calls, and personal expenditures
- Gratuities for guides, drivers, porters, boat crew, and personal, non-itinerary services (US\$5/person/day is suggested for the guide/driver for the day with tours)

Payment & Terms

Payment

- To guarantee your land tour booking, a deposit 20% must be paid in advance. The balance must be settled 30 days prior to departure
- We accept payments in cash, by credit card or by bank transfer and Western Union. Any charges to settle the payment must be paid by the Clients. We will recognize the amount receive only.

Cancellations

Cancellations for all or any part of the trip will not be effective until received in writing. Should you have to cancel, the following terms will apply:

- Cancellation received 60 days or more before arrival date: 10% of total rate
- Cancellation received from 30 days to 59 days prior arrival date: 20% of total rate
- Cancellation received from 15 days to 29 days prior arrival date: 30% of total rate
- Cancellation received from 7 days to 14 days prior arrival date: 50% of total rate
- Cancellation received less than 7 days prior arrival date or No show: 100% of total rate

Note: We strongly recommend for your protection that you purchase a trip cancellation insurance.

Important Information

Emergency Contact

Should you need to contact us during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call the travel consultant whom you deal with and then our hot line contacts. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please send us a detailed message and contact information by email to the agent and to info@indochinatreks.com, we may check and return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

Our all travel consultants use WhatApps. Please ensure that you have the contact number. It's best to buy a local sim-card upon arrival. Most hotels offer free wifi. So it's very easy to contact in urgent case.

Emergency contact numbers

Mr. Kelvin Do: +84 986759655

Ms. Thuy Pham: +84 984654964

Internal Flights

For all internal flights, we would use Vietnamairlines, Vietjesair, Jestar, Cambodia Angkorair or Laos Airlines. Most domestic flights in Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar, airlines would use small 70 seat ATR72 for short distances. Most airlines in Vietnam use the Airbus A321. 20kg for checkin luggage and 7kg for hand-bag is included in the price.

International flights before/after the tour must be booked by yourself before travelling date.

Accommodation

We would use different hotel categories and you can select any basing on your budget. So your travel companions would not stay at your hotel. A Hotel Voucher will be provided once your tour is confirmed with all hotel details.

Packing List

Conservative Dress

- Modest clothing that covers knees and shoulders (Long pants, long skirts, shirts that cover shoulders)
- Shawl or scarf (for temple visits)

Note*: Please pack clothing for the season in which you will be travelling. From Dec-Feb weather can be cold, so please pack warm clothing. From May-Nov it is the wet season, so please bring waterproof clothing.

Documents

- All tickets (required)
- Passport (required) (With photocopies)
- Required visas
- Hotel & Tour Vouchers
- Meeting sign (with your names and flight details that we will use for transfers)

Train Travel

Train travel in Vietnam is very basic and train cleanliness is often not a priority for train staff. Sleeper trains normally have 4 seats per compartment, which convert into sleeping bunks (two upper and two lower). A sheet, pillow and blanket are provided, although many people prefer to bring their own sleeping sheet. At times, passengers of different genders may be required to share a sleeper train berth and/or share a compartment with people not travelling in your group. For short distance - 3 hours (as Hue to Danang or vv), you will do the trip on soft/hard seat carriage.

Simple food is available on the train but many people like to stock up on freshly baked bread, cheese and fruit prior to departure. Water should also be bought before the journey.

Train journeys in Vietnam are an experience and allow you to get a real taste of Vietnam.

Airport transfers

All airport transfers are included in the tour price. You should provide us your arrival/departure flight details and we will arrange things basing on the information. A meeting sign with your name and all flight details will be sent to you. Please be ready at the lobby at pointed time for pickup.

Driver/guide should always be present at the airport before your arrival time. If you could not find the driver, please contact your travel consultant who you deal with. For any reason that airport transfer could not be arranged, please take the taxi to the hotel. We will refund the money then.

Travel insurance

Travel insurance is not included in our tour price. When travelling with us, you are suggested to buy insurance that covers all medical coverage, cancellation, personal liability, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects.

Trip Specific Safety

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Be aware that petty theft can be an issue in some towns and cities especially late at night. A common tactic is opportunists on motorbikes that drive by and snatch bags. Please always leave valuables and

passports etc in your hotel in safety boxes if available and only carry with you enough cash to spend for the day. Bags should always be carried over the neck and not left to sit on your shoulder.

Warming

Please do not buy gems unless you know what you are doing. Even if genuine you should not expect to be able to sell them at home. If you fall victim to a gem scam, we are unable to assist you.

Visas and Entry Requirements

Please note that visas for Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos are the responsibility of the individual traveller. The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. For the most up to date information please check your Governments Foreign Ministry website or with you travel agent as rules do change.

CAMBODIA - Visas can be obtained at the Cambodian border or Siem Reap Airport for approx. \$35 USD very easily. Please have *at least* 2 passport photos with you as well.

VIETNAM - As of March 2017, a select 80 nationalities are now eligible to enter Vietnam with an E-Visa. Please contact your Foreign Ministry or Vietnamese consulate to see if your nationality is eligible. Please note that you should ONLY apply for a Vietnam E-Visa if you are entering Vietnam by international airport - either Noi Bai International Airport (Hanoi) or Tan Son Nhat International Airport (Ho Chi Minh City).

If you are entering Vietnam by land border, please apply for a regular visa for Vietnam. Many of the land borders we travel through do not accept the Vietnam E-Visa. Please view this link to apply E-Visa: <https://evisa.xuatnhapcanh.gov.vn/web/guest/trang-chu-ttdt>

LAOS - Visas are issued upon arrival in Laos. You will need two passport size photographs and approx \$35. Tourists are generally admitted to Laos for 15 days with a visa on arrival or for 30 days with a visa issued at a Lao embassy. Please bring visa photos with you.

Please be aware that you will require four clean pages (minimum) in your passport and at least six months validity.

Tipping

It is customary in Asia to tip service providers such as waiters, at approximately 10%, depending on the service. Tipping is expected - though not compulsory - and shows an expression of satisfaction with the people who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are several times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers we use. Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from \$3-\$5 USD per person per day depending on the quality and length of the service.

Electricity

Indochina Countries use 220V, and a mixture of flat 2-pin, round 2-pin or 3 pin plugs. It is recommended to bring a universal plug adapter.