



Rediscover the
meaning of travel

Tour Notes

East Timor Discovery – Solar Eclipse

Tour Duration – 14 Days
From 17th to 30th April 2023



East Timor Discovery –Solar Eclipse Special Interest Tour

East Timor is a proud nation now at peace after many years of an independence struggle, a land of amazing variety with many fine examples of its Portuguese colonial past awaiting discovery by the intrepid traveller. On this tour we take in its highlights, starting in the relaxed capital Dili, a lovely place to wander around and soak up the East Timorese atmosphere. We head to a strategic observation point to observe the solar eclipse (local conditions permitting). Then, we explore delightful old colonial towns and spend time on the idyllic Jaco Island. Heading inland, we climb up the imposing Mt Ramelau, with its superb views over the surrounding area, before heading back to Dili. This trip shows the curious traveller the very best that this enchanting and little visited nation has to offer.



Rediscover the
meaning of travel

Tour Map



Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Simple but comfortable hotels, local guesthouses and posadas
Included Meals: As per the itinerary (B) = Breakfast, (L) = Lunch, (D) = Dinner
Group Size: Maximum 6 travellers
Start Point: Dili
End Point: Dili
Transport: 4WD vehicle (airport transfers may be carried out in a different type of vehicle)
Country Visited: East Timor





Rediscover the
meaning of travel

Suggested Itinerary

Day 1, 17th April 2023: Arrival in Dili

Arrive in Dili, one of the world's newest capital cities, and transfer to your hotel. After freshening up, embark on a short tour of the capital city. Dili still sports a few Portuguese reminders like the villa-lined beach roads, the former colonial garrison built in 1627 and the church built on the waterfront. However, new shops, restaurants and bars are opening all the time, bringing a new energy and style to this once sleepy city. On this guided tour, we will also visit the excellent Resistance Museum, the Statue of Cristo Rei and walk through the Santa Cruz Cemetery. Overnight Hotel Timor or similar. No meals are included today.

Dili

With its old colonial buildings and tropical sea breezes, Dili is a pleasant and relaxed city – in fact the only city in all of the country. Originally settled in 1520 by Portuguese sailors, Dili was briefly occupied by Japanese forces in the Second World War. Neglected by its colonial master, Dili was substantially underdeveloped when the Portuguese left in 1975 and ravaged by Indonesian troops during its long and brutal occupation, but today it is emerging from its former troubles and starting to establish itself once more. The city is small – most of the main sights can be seen in a day – and pleasant to wander around, taking in the old waterfront villas, Portuguese monuments and the sights and smells of fresh fish being grilled on the numerous fish stalls. It is strongly Catholic, and contains many churches as well as the odd statue of Christ here and there. Most of the activity in Dili is centred around the waterfront, with fishermen unloading their catches and traders walking along the beach selling snacks.

Day 2, 18th April: Dili – Metinaro – Manatuto – Laleia – Vemasse – Baucau (Overall driving time today is approx. 2.5 hours)

After breakfast we start our journey north, driving along the stunning coastal road. Enjoy magnificent views of the ocean, coral reefs, white sand beaches and marble rock beaches, while stopping on the way at several fishing villages and the town of Manatuto. We reach the splendid coast town of Baucau around lunchtime and spend the rest of the afternoon exploring the town. Overnight at the historic colonial Pousada de Baucau, or similar. (B)

Baucau

Baucau is East Timor's second town, a delightfully laid-back town with many old Portuguese buildings, palm fringed beaches and gorgeous sunsets. Previously named Vila Salazar after the Portuguese dictator, much of Baucau suffered during the struggle for independence. Baucau is also a major religious centre and the home of the Bishop Basilio Nascimento, a legendary Timorese regional and national leader. The town is split into two parts, the Old Town where many of the old colonial architecture can still be found, and the New Town, which functions largely as an administrative centre.

Day 3, 19th April: Baucau – Venilale – Lariguto – Ossu – Loihuno (Overall driving time today is approx. 2.5 hours)

This morning we head inland through some wonderful mountain scenery, passing rice paddies on terraced hillsides before reaching Venilale. The town is known for its Portuguese architecture, particularly the 'Escola do Reino de Venilale' that we visit. We then continue to Loihuno, stopping en route at the several Japanese bunkers left during the WWII in the area. On arrival, depart for a short hike to the historic resistance hideout in Wasadiga and Labalou Observation Post and continue with a visit of the refreshing Leki Raka caves. Overnight in a traditional hut in Loihuno. (B)



Rediscover the
meaning of travel

Day 4, 20th April: Loihuno – Observation point for the Solar Eclipse – Loihuno (Overall driving time today is approx. 3 hours)

After breakfast, drive to the coast at Beaco where you will have the best chance to observe the solar eclipse, with forecasted timings (all local times) scheduled as follow:

11:44:22: Partial Eclipse begins

13:19:03: Full Eclipse begins

13:19:41: Maximum Eclipse

13:20:19: Full Eclipse Ends

14:54:50: Partial Eclipse Ends

Once the natural show is over, transfer back to Loihuno and the rest of the afternoon is left at leisure. Overnight in a traditional hut in Loihuno. (BLD)

Day 5, 21st April: Loihuno – Baucau (Overall driving time today is approx. 5 - 6 hours)

Return this morning all the way back to the coastal town of Baucau. The rest of the day is at leisure, for you to either relax or explore this pleasant city further. Overnight at the historic colonial Pousada de Baucau, or similar. (B)

Pousada de Baucau

The Pousada de Baucau was once built as a guesthouse, used by many for their weekend getaways from Dili, to enjoy the cooler microclimate away from the hot capital city of Dili as well as overnight stay before catching the international flights from the international airport which is now no longer in use. The Pousada still features the original hotel building with parquet floors typical of the Portuguese architecture. The Pousada has also a tragic story to it, where its rooms were used as interrogation chambers by the Indonesian army during some of the years of occupation.

Day 6, 22nd April: Baucau – Com – Pitileti village – Tutuala (Overall driving time today is approx. 7 hours)

Early this morning depart to Com, driving by the Crystalized Salt Lake and the Monkey's Lagoon, where if you are lucky, you can spot monkeys playing together and find fossils of giant clams and other marine life. Continue past traditional graveyards, Pitileti Rocky village, Mehara and Italaro Lake to finally reach Tutuala. Overnight at the Pousada de Tutuala, or similar. (BD)

Day 7, 23rd April: Tutuala – Ilikerekere caves - Jaco Island (Overall driving time today is approx. 1 hour)

After breakfast we travel to Tutuala, and the Ili Kere Kere caves, East Timor's most important archaeological site. The walk from the road to the caves can be hot and difficult but it is worthwhile to see the fascinating cave paintings, which have been dated at more than 13,000 years. From the cliff top position of Tutuala we have superb views of the uninhabited Jaco Island. Local fisherman will take us the short distance across to the island. Overnight at Pousada de Tutuala, or similar. (B)

Day 8, 24th April: Jaco Island – Laleia – Manatuto – Dili (Overall driving time today is approx. 7 hours)

Today we drive back to Dili, stopping en route in Laleia, home town of the renowned Timorese Resistance leader Kairala Xanana Gusmao, and then in the coastal town of Manatuto. Overnight Hotel Timor, or similar. (B)

Day 9, 25th April: Dili - Aileu - Maubisse – Hato Bulico (Overall driving time today is approx. 5 hours)

After breakfast, drive southwards to Dare and Aileu. We continue to Maubisse, where we will stroll through the local market and reach Hato Bulico in the afternoon. We then take an easy hike in the mountainous alpine area of the city. Overnight Ovalido Guesthouse, or similar. (BD)



Rediscover the
meaning of travel

Maubisse

Maubisse is located in the main coffee growing region of East Timor, and is surrounded by stunning mountain scenery. Its market is an important meeting place for villagers from miles around, and contains a wonderful old Portuguese guesthouse, now converted into a hotel.

Day 10, 26th April: Hato Bulico - Mt Ramelau – Ainaro – Suai (Overall driving time today is approx. 6 hours)

Our climb (moderate 2.5-hour trek) starts at 3:30am to ensure we reach the summit, weather permitting, for the most spectacular of sunrises. We spend time enjoying the magnificent views before starting our journey back down. Upon return to Hato Bulico, we take a breakfast and then head south to the traditional village of Suai, along scenic mountain ranges. On the way we stop to visit the Supply Base of Timor Leste Oil Industry. On arrival, take a tour of the historic sites including the well-preserved cathedral. Overnight Fronteira Guesthouse, or similar. (B)

***Note:** If you do not wish to hike to the summit of Mt Ramelau you can just stay in the surrounds of the historic Portuguese style guesthouse to enjoy the beautiful scenery. Considering this is the highest point on Timor-Leste this hike to the summit is classified as moderate. There is no technical climbing. Anyone of a reasonable fitness can do it. Just take your time! It is highly recommended.*

Mt Ramelau

At 2963m Mt Ramelau is the highest peak on the island of Timor. A couple of hundred metres below the summit is an area where open air religious gatherings are sometimes held. The peak is marked by a statue of the Virgin Mary, and from the summit there are superb views in every direction. With petrified trees and early morning mist, this is truly a magical place to experience as the sun rises over East Timor.

Day 11, 27th April: Suai – Marobo Hot Springs – Bobonaro – Balibo (Overall driving time today is approx. 7 hours)

After breakfast we drive a scenic road all the way up to Bobonaro. After lunch we stop to the Marobo Hot Springs where you have time at leisure to enjoy the hot waters flowing out from the mountain. Continue to Balibo where we stay for the night. Overnight Balibo Fort Hotel, or similar. (BL)

Day 12, 28th April: Balibo

Spend today exploring the town and taking part into one of the many guided trails nearby Balibo. Overnight Balibo Fort Hotel, or similar. (B)

Day 13, 29th April: Balibo – Loes River – Maubara – Dili (Overall driving time today is approx. 4 hours)

We continue our tour, first stopping along the largest flowing river of Timor Leste, Loes River. We then continue to Maubara where we stop for lunch and visit the old Fort. We arrive back to Dili in the late afternoon. Overnight Hotel Timor, or similar. (B)

Day 14, 30th April: Departure from Dili

Time at leisure until your transfer to the airport for your onward flight. End of services. (B)



Rediscover the
meaning of travel

Inclusions/Exclusions

Inclusions:

Arrival and departure transfers
All accommodation
Transportation throughout with driver
Services of English-speaking guide / tour leader and local guides
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)
Entrance fees for sites listed as part of the itinerary

Excluded:

International flights
Any airport taxes
Travel Insurance
Visas
Drinks
Items of personal nature

Important Information

Foreign Travel Advice Warnings

We constantly monitor the advice posted by the British Foreign, Development and Commonwealth Office (FCDO). In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings.

At the time of writing the FCDO does not advise against travel to any of the areas within East Timor that we visit on our tours. There is currently a global advisory from the FCDO in place due to COVID-19 although with this tour taking place in 2023, we hope this will have been removed. Please feel free to contact us should you have any specific concerns or if would like to know in detail what measures are being taken to ensure visits remain trouble free and without incident.

It should be noted that this information applies to British citizens. Other nationals are asked to check the current position of their respective government.

Accommodation and Meals

Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals. One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.





Rediscover the
meaning of travel

It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'. For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at different times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included. If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis please contact us.

Accommodation Rating

On this tour we use a mix of simple but comfortable hotels and local guesthouses. Bathroom facilities in some places may be shared and in some places you will find squat toilets. Please see table below for more information on expected facilities at the accommodation:

ACCOMMODATION	Facilities	Notes	Meals included
Hotel Timor	Ensuite/hot water, western toilets	Hotel restaurant open to public	Breakfast
Pousada Baucau	Ensuite/hot water, western toilets	Hotel restaurant open to public	Breakfast
Loihuno huts	Ensuite/hot water, western toilets	Meals prepared on order for guests only	Breakfast
Pousada Tutuala	Shared bathrooms/ hot water, western toilets	Meals prepared on order for guests only	Breakfast
Alecrin Guesthouse	hot water (although not reliable), shared squat toilets,	Meals prepared on order for guests only	Breakfast
Fronteira Guesthouse	Shared bathrooms/ hot water, western toilets	Meals prepared on order for guests only	Breakfast
Balibo Fort Hotel	Ensuite/hot water, western toilets	Hotel restaurant open to public	Breakfast

Food & Drink

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B), lunch (L) and dinner (D). Drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash.

Dietary Requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry. For food we anticipate you will require an extra USD 30 per person per day approx. where only breakfast is included.

Tipping – Guide and Drivers

Tipping is not that common in East Timor but is very much appreciated. If your local guide has been helpful then you could think about tipping. This amount can obviously be left to you. When tipping a driver, a guide or hotel staff a few dollars will always be gratefully received.

Foreign Exchange

ATM Availability: We recommend that you bring cash as ATM machines are not always working and we would not recommend relying on them

Credit and Debit Card Acceptance: Cards are not widely accepted

Local Currency: US Dollars

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Pound Sterling, Euros



Rediscover the
meaning of travel

Where to Exchange: Our advice is to exchange sufficient funds in Dili, as banks and foreign exchange bureaus are limited outside of the capital. However given that US dollars are readily obtainable in your home country, it's better to obtain them there.

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

Our advertised prices do not include the cost of international flights. Please contact us if you would like a quotation to book a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.

Visa Information

Most nationals, including those from the UK, EU and US require a visa for entry into East Timor. A 30-day visa is issued on arrival for a charge of US \$30, payable in cash. The process is simple and fairly quick.

Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to your country of origin.

We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively UK citizens can visit www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Vaccinations & Protection

As with travel to most parts of Asia, we strongly recommend that you contact your doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, advice and the necessary vaccinations. For a visit of less than one month, almost certainly you will be advised to have immunisations against the following: Diphtheria and Tetanus, Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Meningitis. Anti-malaria medication is also required and the use of a DEET-containing insect repellent is highly recommended.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on best practice when travelling with medicines. For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you're travelling to.



Rediscover the
meaning of travel

Preparing for your tour

Climate

You might say that to date East Timor does not have a clearly defined peak tourist season. To avoid significant rainfall a good time to visit is May to November, when the weather is at its best. December to April is wet season and due to the poor state of many of the roads, unbridged rivers can hamper travelling at this time.

Clothing

When it comes to clothing it is usually recommended that lighter clothes are worn through the day, and warmer ones at night as it can get very cold in the mountains. A hat is also advised to be worn through the day to protect from the sun, along with at least one piece of waterproof clothing for any days that the weather may be wet or windy.

Equipment

The first thing on your list should be a first aid kit. Whilst there is no undue cause for alarm, travellers are best advised to travel well-prepared: adequately immunized, with sufficient supplies of prescription drugs, along with a medical kit. Suncream/sunblock is a must.

Insect repellent, including a bite spray will also be useful to have. If you will be using a camera which needs film, it is recommended that a supply is taken with you, as it is not always available in East Timor. For those with digital cameras, we would advise you to take a spare battery. As our tour in East Timor involves camping, a torch (flashlight) is essential.

Footwear

Footwear is a main priority on this tour. Comfortable walking shoes/boots are recommended.

Luggage on tour

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). One large suitcase/rucksack, and one small hand luggage rucksack is acceptable.

Driving times

Please note that the driving times mentioned in the day to day itinerary are accumulative. East Timor is very much a developing country and these should only be used as a guide and we ask for your patience on the road if conditions make for slow going.

Electric Supply & Plugs

Electrical supply is 220V/50 Hz and plugs have two-pronged connection with round rather than flat pins holes. Three-pronged flat pin plugs are also accepted, so it is advised that you take a selection of adapters.

Wifi connections are available at hotels in Dili, but rare outside the capital.

Tour Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These tour notes were amended on 16th February 2021.