Tu Lan Cave Encounter Tour

This tour offers a glimpse into the amazing beauty of the Tu Lan area: caves, karst mountains, jungle, and waterfalls. It is an opportunity to escape civilization and go deep into the rugged and untouched nature of Vietnam.

Tour details

DURATION
2 days 1 night

DIFFICULTY LEVEL
Moderate

AGE
16-70 years old

GROUP SIZE
10 customers (Join-in)

OPERATION
mid-Nov to mid-Sept

PRICE
USD 253 • VND 6,700,000/pax

Source: https://oxalisadventure.com/tour/tu-lan-cave-encounter/

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> Please read this pack carefully before your departure and bring it with you.

Overview

On joining the 2 days 1 night Tu Lan tour, visitors may experience firsthand the ecosystem of a tropical forest and admire the beauty of the Tu Lan Cave system, Quang Tri. You will swim in the underground river of a cave carved out millions of years ago, trek along forest trails, spend the night camping in the wild by the side of a waterfall. These experiences will help you temporarily forget the hectic city life and immerse yourself in nature.

The highlights include:

- **Explore stunning caves**: Journey through the remarkable Tu Lan cave system, exploring both dry and river caves like Tu Lan, Kim, Hung Ton and Song Oxalis. Each cave offers a distinct world, revealing magical landscapes and a rare, pristine beauty hidden beneath the mountains.
- **Immersive underground river swimming**: Experience the most iconic and memorable part of the Tu Lan challenge: swimming through dark, underground caves. The valley is crisscrossed by hidden rivers, and as you swim through these subterranean passages, natural light disappears. All you'll hear is the sound of flowing water and see the sparkling reflections of your headlamp on the cliffs. This feeling of excitement and awe turns every stroke into an adventure into a mysterious, underground world. (Note: If you prefer not to swim, you can choose to hike over the mountains to enjoy the wild, majestic scenery.)
- **Camp in a primeval forest oasis**: Spend a night fully immersed in the wilderness at the Tu Lan camping site. Carefully selected for its beauty, the site is situated next to a waterfall and natural swimming pool. Surrounded by vast primeval forests, it offers a clear view of the sparkling Milky Way once night falls.
- **A journey that transforms lives**: Beyond the natural splendor, your presence contributes to a powerful story of community resilience and growth. Sustainable tourism has played a key role in transforming Tan Hoa, driving the poverty rate down from 85.7% in 2010 to just 2% in 2024. This expedition supports vital initiatives, including the construction of floating houses and septic toilets to improve local living standards. Furthermore, Oxalis is committed to future generations, sponsoring free open swimming and safety training to over 300 children in Tan Hoa and along the Rao Nan River every year.

Itinerary

The Tu Lan Cave Encounter tour schedule may be adjusted according to the weather conditions. The trek can be quite muddy and slippery when it rains.

DAY 1

Tan Hoa - Hung Ton Cave - Song Oxalis Cave - To Mo Campsite

From 07:30 to 08:00, the vehicle will pick you up in Phong Nha and take you about 70 km to Tan Hoa Village. Upon arrival, you will receive a safety briefing, sign the Release Form, and receive the necessary safety equipment.

The journey begins with a 2.5 km trek across corn and peanut fields to the Rao Nan River. After crossing the river, the adventure becomes more challenging as you climb 60 m of rocky and uneven terrain to reach Hung Ton Cave.

Hung Ton Cave is nearly 500 m long. Many seashells and snail shells have also been found scattered across the cave floor. This has led experts to believe that the cave area may once have been used by humans as a shelter.

To pass through Hung Ton Cave, you will climb a 15 m ladder and swim through parts of the cave. After exploring the cave, the group continues to the To Mo Valley for lunch and a rest at the campsite.

From here, you will trek up a hill about 200 m above To Mo Valley to reach Song Oxalis Cave. Inside the cave, you can admire its unique and impressive stalactite formations before returning to the campsite.

You will have time to shower, relax, and enjoy the peaceful surroundings of the forest. The day ends with dinner prepared by a local chef. Surrounded by nature, you can unwind and enjoy a restful night at the campsite.

DAY 2

To Mo - Kim Cave - Tu Lan Cave - Tan Hoa - Phong Nha

After breakfast, the group will pack up and begin the journey to explore Kim Cave and Tu Lan Cave. These two distinctive caves in the Tu Lan area feature unique underground rivers, impressive stalactite formations, and beautiful waterfalls inside the caves.

With a total length of more than 1.2 km, Kim Cave features both water passages and dry passages, with some sections reaching up to 25 m wide. The cave also offers some of the most exciting experiences of the journey, especially swimming through its underground river.

The journey continues with an exploration of Tu Lan Cave, where impressive stalactite formations rise about 30 m above the cave floor, creating shapes that resemble natural chandeliers.

The group then returns to the Tu Lan campsite for lunch and a rest. In the afternoon, you will climb the Xoai Slope to reach the Hung Ton Valley. Along the way, you will cross the Rao Nan River and walk through green corn and peanut fields before returning to the Oxalis office.

At the Oxalis office, you will collect your luggage, shower, and take some time to rest before the vehicle takes you back to Phong Nha. The tour is expected to finish at around 6:00 - 6:30 PM. If you would like to stay for a few more nights or join other activities in Tan Hoa or Phong Nha – Ke Bang, you can contact an Oxalis Adventure consultant in advance for help planning your trip, or ask your hotel reception to arrange it for you.

Suggested itinerary before and after the tour:
To ensure the best preparation before your journey or to relax after the expedition, Oxalis suggests staying at Chay Lap Farmstay if you wish to combine exploring Phong Nha with experiencing a peaceful countryside atmosphere, or Blue Diamond Retreat if you prefer to immerse yourself in nature and enjoy relaxing moments amidst the mountains and forests. Special discounted rates exclusively for Oxalis guests are 1,100,000 VND/room/night at Chay Lap Farmstay and 1,600,000 VND/room/night at Blue Diamond Retreat.

During your time in Phong Nha, the Phong Nha Caves Exploration Museum (open daily from 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM, free admission) is a must-visit destination. Here, you can experience the Son Doong 5D VR technology for 500,000 VND per ticket. All proceeds from this activity are contributed to the Oxalis Foundation to support local community projects, making your journey even more meaningful.

Gallery

Difficulty Level and Physical Fitness Requirements

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Requirements: Within the past 12 months, participants must have completed at least one overnight camping trek in a forest/mountain setting or 1–2 day treks (each covering a minimum of 6 km per day over rocky and steep terrain, with a total elevation gain of at least 500 m across the entire journey). Participants must possess a baseline physical fitness level, demonstrated by completing both of the following activities (performed independently, not necessarily consecutively): an outdoor 5 km run within 45 minutes and climbing 5 flights of stairs continuously, without experiencing symptoms of dizziness, lightheadedness, headaches, nausea, abnormal shortness of breath, or chest pain/tightness. Participants must not suffer from any medical conditions included in the restricted list for trekking and caving activities as recommended by Oxalis.

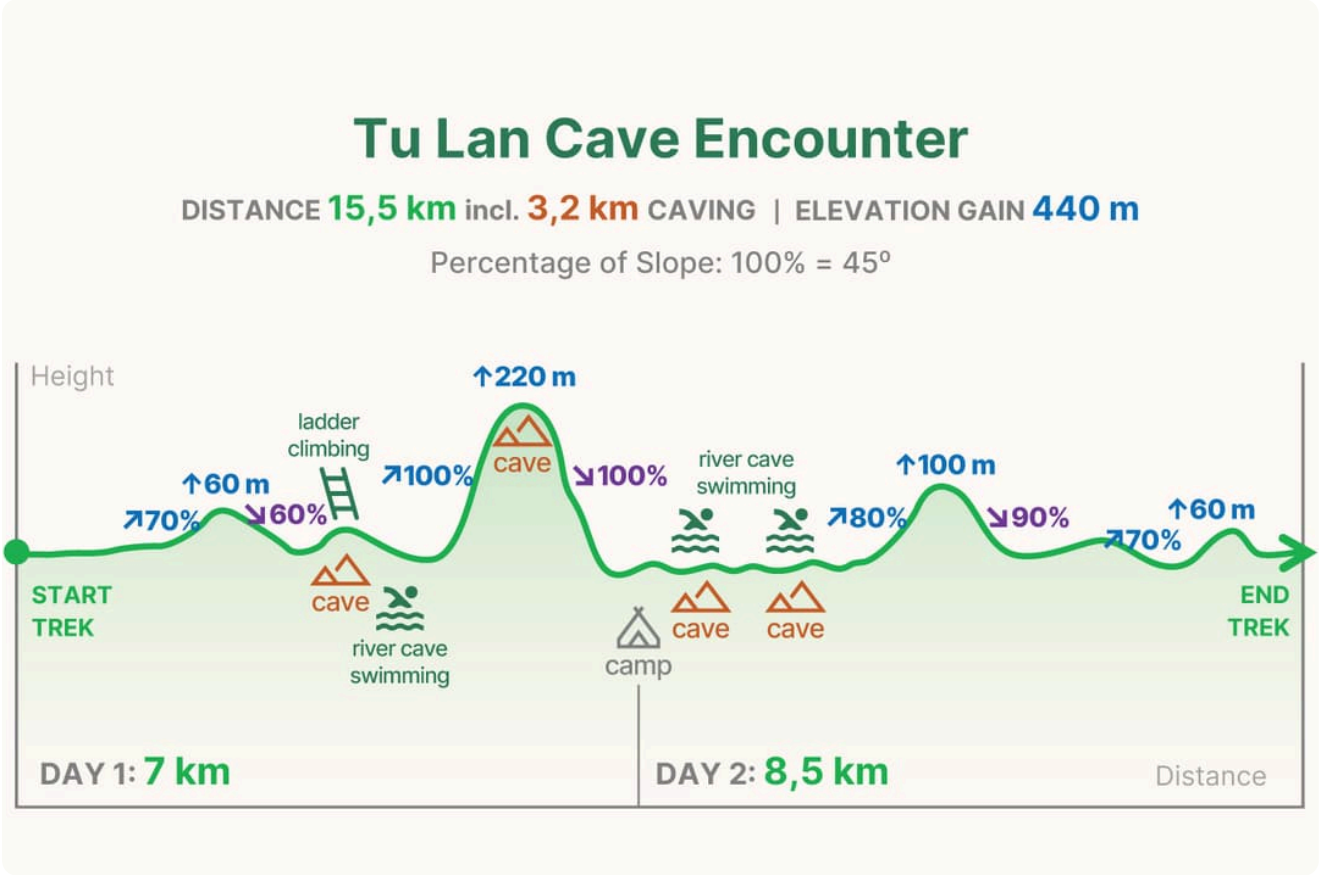
Suitable for: Guests with trekking experience and good physical fitness.

Tours with the same Difficulty Level: Hang Va Expedition Tour 2D1N , Hang En Cave Adventure 2D1N, Tu Lan Cave Encounter 2D1N, Hang Tien Endeavor Tour 2D1N, Wild Tu Lan Cave Explorer Tour 4D3N.

Terrains

The tour takes place in remote areas with complex terrains. Customers must be physically fit. Please carefully read the tour itinerary and honestly fill out the booking information yourself, especially your experience and health condition.

- Easy to moderate trekking
- 15.5 km of trekking including up to 3.2 km of caving
- 440 m elevation gain
- 1km swimming in the caves with a life vest provided by Oxalis
- Descend 15m ladder in cave with a safety rope and harnesses, operated by the safety team.



For more information on the necessary physical activities for a successful trip, please refer to: https://oxalisadventure.com/getting-ready-oxalis-tour/.

Safety on the tour

This is always the top priority of Oxalis Adventure to ensure the safety of both visitors and Oxalis' staff on any trip, including multi day adventures. We only use high-quality equipment meeting international standards, mainly imported from France, the UK, and Switzerland. The tour guides must undergo

professional training and be tested for skills regularly. Only qualified guides may lead an Oxalis tour. Visitors can learn about the "safety management" and " safety equipment" that Oxalis uses here.

By signing the Release Form, visitors agree to follow all tour safety regulations and the instructions of the cave experts and guides throughout the expedition. To ensure the safety of the entire group, the safety experts and guides have the authority to require any guest to end the expedition if they fail to comply with the safety regulations explained during the briefing.

Items to bring on tour

All adventure tours in Vietnam will cross a variety of terrains and customers will be asked to prepare suitable clothing for safety and comfort. Clothing should be good for trekking in the jungle, river crossings, or exploring the cave as well as avoiding dangers and risks from sharp rocks, snakes, insects, or poison ivy. Visitors need to choose a good and well-fitting pair of shoes for steep rocky terrain.

You need to prepare

Essential clothing

- [ ] Trekking clothes:
  - 2 quick-dry, bright, long-sleeved shirts
  - 1-2 pairs of long trekking pants (quick-dry)
  - 1 waterproof jacket (winter months November to March)
- [ ] Campsite clothing sets:
  - Warm clothes for winter from November to March
  - Shorts and T-shirts for summer from April to September
- [ ] 1 pair of good gripping trekking/approach closed shoes.
- [ ] 2 pairs of calf-length, thick socks
- [ ] 1 pair of sandals/slides for campsite
- [ ] Swimwear using at the Campsites

Personal items

- [ ] Mosquito repellent
- [ ] Sunglasses, sun hat, sunscreen
- [ ] Hand fan for summer (April to September)
- [ ] 1-2 medium towels
- [ ] Underwear
- [ ] Personal hygiene items (toothbrush, toothpaste, nature-friendly shampoo & soap, ...)
- [ ] Power banks
- [ ] Personal medication
- [ ] Antifungal foot powder
- [ ] Passport

Oxalis provides

- [ ] Camping equipment: tent, mattresses, pillow, sleeping bags
- [ ] Caving and safety gears: helmet, headlight, gloves, ...
- [ ] 1 PVC backpack (25L) to carry helmet, dry box, water and things you need during the trek.
- [ ] Basic trekking shoes are available to borrow from Oxalis (sizes 36-44). If you use Oxalis shoes, please bring thick socks and two pairs of insoles to help prevent blisters. A VND 50,000 cleaning fee applies.
- [ ] Water bottle (1L)
- [ ] Water filter
- [ ] Compost toilet, toilet paper, hand cleaner
- [ ] Shared dry box and semi-dry bag (15L)
- [ ] First aid and medical rescue equipment
- [ ] Portable fan (in summer)

Optional items

- [ ] Arm cover if wearing short-sleeved T-shirts
- [ ] Camera & Tripod
- [ ] Ear plugs
- [ ] Bandana or headband
- [ ] Rehydration tablets
- [ ] Blister prevention tape
- [ ] Personal dry bag/box for electronic devices

Food and drinks in the tour

Although the expedition takes place deep in the primary forest and inside the cave, you will be provided with three meals a day: breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Oxalis has a dedicated team of cooks who prepare

fresh ingredients brought directly to the expedition route, ensuring you receive the nutrition you need throughout the long days of trekking.

For your health and safety, all drinking water served during the expedition is treated through a specialized water filtration system and thoroughly boiled at the campsites to meet strict safe drinking-water standards. Hot drinks such as tea and coffee are also available.

The menu offers a variety of options, including standard, vegetarian, and special-diet meals. If you have specific dietary requirements or food allergies, please note them on your booking form so the Oxalis team can make the necessary preparations in advance.

Camping, Showers and Hygiene During the Expedition

The campsite for the Tu Lan Cave Encounter is located in the most beautiful camping spot of the Tu Lan area. The campsite is located in the heart of To Mo Valley, about 150 m from the entrance of Hung Ton Cave. Tall limestone mountains surround the area, creating a bowl-like landscape when viewed from the valley floor. From the campsite, you can see the entrance to To Mo Cave directly across the valley. A small waterfall also flows out of Hung Ton Cave, winding through the valley before entering Kim Cave. Looking up at the distant mountain slopes, you may sometimes catch a glimpse of the Oxalis Son Cave entrance between the limestone cliffs.

The average temperature in winter is around 15 to 18 degrees, and in summer from 30 to 38 degrees Celsius. Customers are provided with warm sleeping bags in the winter or a battery-powered fan in the tent during summer months. More information about "The campsites at the Tu Lan Cave System ".

Tents: At each campsite, you will stay in tents specially designed by Oxalis. Each tent offers enough space for one or two people to sleep comfortably, and is set on a sturdy raised platform 30 cm above the ground, helping minimise moisture and insects. The tent walls are made of breathable mesh, with a fan provided inside to keep the space cool while allowing you to stay connected with the surrounding natural environment. Each tent is also equipped with a mattress, pillow, and sleeping bag, all thoroughly cleaned before every expedition to ensure a comfortable night's sleep.

Toilets and water facilities: Each campsite is equipped with modern toilets and convenient shower facilities. All water used for washing and other daily needs is carefully treated through a filtration system to ensure safe use throughout the expedition.

Waste management and environmental protection: To help preserve the cave ecosystem, 100% of solid waste generated during the expedition is carried out of the cave. For wastewater and toilet waste, Oxalis uses portable septic tanks combined with an advanced filtration system to ensure that discharged water meets Vietnam's strict environmental standards.

Tour booking process

This is a tour that requires careful logistical preparation from both guests and Oxalis. Reading the tour information thoroughly will help you make an informed decision before booking. If you have any questions or are unsure about anything, please chat with an Oxalis adventure consultant using the chat

icon in the bottom-right corner of the screen, or contact us via hotline at +84 919 900 357 for assistance. The booking process is as follows:

Step 1: Learn about the tour

Visit oxalisadventure.com to learn more about the itinerary, highlights, adventure level, tour price, and most importantly, the health and fitness requirements.

Step 2: Choose your departure date

Click "Book Now" on the tour page to view the available departure dates. Available dates will be shown on the calendar. Select your preferred date and enter the number of participants.

Step 3: Provide your information

Complete your contact details accurately, especially your email address and phone number. You must provide truthful information about:

- Your health condition and any medications you are currently taking;
- Allergies or special dietary requirements, such as vegetarian meals or food allergies;
- Trekking experience;
- Exercise frequency and level of physical activity.

Important: Oxalis reserves the right to cancel your booking without a refund if any information provided is found to be false or incomplete, particularly information related to your health and physical fitness.

Step 4: Complete your booking request

Select any additional services you may require, such as transfers or accommodation at Chay Lap Farmstay and Oxalis Home.

Read and agree to the booking terms and conditions, then click "Submit Booking Request." The system will send a booking code to your email address.

Step 5: Consultation and information confirmation

Within 48 working hours, an Oxalis travel consultant will contact you by email or phone to:

- Provide detailed information about the expedition;
- Confirm your booking details;
- Assist with arranging any additional services you have requested.

Step 6: Payment

Once your information has been confirmed, Oxalis will send you an invoice and payment instructions. You must complete the payment within 24 hours of receiving the payment instructions. After this period, your booking request may be automatically cancelled.

Step 7: Booking confirmation

Once Oxalis receives your payment, you will receive an official booking confirmation by email.

From this point, you can begin preparing your clothing, equipment, and fitness for the expedition.

Terms of tour cancellation

To confirm your booking, you will be required to pay the tour deposit after completing the booking process. Guests may cancel the trip 7 days prior to the departure date and receive a full refund. For cancellations after 7 days, no refund will be given. See more details in "Terms of tour cancellation".

Useful Information

Weather and Climate in Tu Lan - Tan Hoa area

Tu Lan - Tan Hoa has 4 seasons in a year (spring, summer, autumn and winter) like many northern provinces of Vietnam. Due to the weather conditions, and because Oxalis Adventure wants to protect and conserve the Tu Lan Cave System. The Tu Lan Cave Encounter Tour will only be available from mid November to mid September every year. Weather conditions in the Tu Lan – Tan Hoa area are different in each season.

- From January to March, there are some cold days, especially on rainy days but there are also many warm sunny days.
- April and May are the warmer months, and this is the time when wildflowers are blooming.
- From June to August are the hot summer months, but most of the time visitors are in the cave with the temperature from 22 to 25 degrees, or forest, so it should not feel too hot. In the summer months, visitors can comfortably swim in the streams and underground lakes inside Vietnam caves, so exploring Tu Lan is the ideal suggestion for you if you don't know where to go for 2 days and 1 nights.

Each season will have its own unique features for visitors to explore, and find out more about the uniqueness of nature. In addition, visitors can check the weather in Tu Lan - Tan Hoa before joining this caving adventure tour.

The weather & climate in Tan Hoa, Minh Hoa area

Communication on tour

The Tu Lan Cave Encounter Tour is a unique adventure tour with some difficulty, located deep in the forest, far from outside support such as medical assistance, hospitals etc.

The trekking tour follows jungle trails, with hills up and down, and no paths are suitable for vehicles. There is no phone signal, no wifi, and no charging facilities. Each Oxalis caving adventure is equipped with 1 satellite phone for the guide to contact the office in case of emergency. Guests can only use the internet and phone at the hotel before and after the Oxalis tours. While trekking in the mountains and exploring the caves, the safety team will communicate with each other by walkie-talkie if necessary.

Emergency Response Procedure

Oxalis Adventure has an established "Emergency Response Procedure" that includes on-site first aid and rescue if an accident occurs during trekking or cave exploration. We organize many training courses for first aid, rescue, and evacuation, and have rescue teams for each tour operation area. The specialized equipment is imported from abroad and complies with European standards. Due to the remote location, rescue teams and medical assistants will take from 30 minutes to 2 hours to reach the location. Therefore, the safety of visitors is the top priority of Oxalis in any activities related to caving in Vietnam. For Experts and Sales consultants to give suitable advice, guests are required to fill in their fitness and health information in the Booking form honestly. They are also required to update the information to the Oxalis consultant 45 days before the tour departure.

* *Please note that tour communication is conducted in English and Vietnamese.*

How to get to Phong Nha

To join the Tu Lan Cave tour, visitors need to arrive in Phong Nha before 7:00 AM. Phong Nha is about 45 km from Dong Hoi, Quang Tri. Visitors can take a bus directly to Phong Nha for a more convenient journey. If you arrive in Dong Hoi by plane or train, you will need to arrange a private transfer or take a taxi to Phong Nha.

By air

Dong Hoi Airport is about 45 km from Phong Nha and currently offers direct flights from Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and Cam Ranh. From the airport, Oxalis offers a private transfer from Dong Hoi to Phong Nha at VND 650,000 per one-way trip for a 7-seater vehicle.

- Hanoi - Dong Hoi: Vietnam Airlines and Sun PhuQuoc Airways currently operate daily direct flights between Hanoi and Dong Hoi. The flight takes approximately 1 hour 5 minutes.
- Ho Chi Minh City - Dong Hoi: Vietnam Airlines and Vietjet Air operate direct flights from Tan Son Nhat International Airport to Dong Hoi, with a flight time of approximately 1 hour 40 minutes.
- Nha Trang - Dong Hoi: Sun PhuQuoc Airways operates direct flights between Cam Ranh International Airport and Dong Hoi, with 3 round trips per week.

By train

Dong Hoi Railway Station is located on the North-South railway line, approximately 45 km from Phong Nha. Trains to Dong Hoi are available from Hanoi, Ninh Binh, Hue, Da Nang, Nha Trang, Ho Chi Minh City, and many other cities and provinces. From the station, an Oxalis vehicle will pick you up and transfer you to Phong Nha. There is also a Hue-Phong Nha tourist train, offering a direct connection between the two destinations as part of a journey through Central Vietnam. This is a convenient option for guests who wish to combine a visit to Hue with their Son Doong Expedition.

By bus

Sleeper buses are a convenient option if you prefer to travel directly to Phong Nha without transferring to Dong Hoi. Direct bus services are currently available from Hanoi, Hue, Da Nang, Hoi An, and several other destinations.

International airports: There are 3 main international airports for international flights: Tan Son Nhat International Airport (SGN), Noi Bai International Airport (HAN) and Da Nang International Airport (DAD). From Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) or Ha Noi, travellers can book domestic flights to Dong Hoi Airport (VDH). From Da Nang, travelers can catch a train or bus to Dong Hoi/Phong Nha.

You can check out the means of transportation to Phong Nha here. “How to get to Phong Nha?". All participants of Oxalis Adventure tours will be picked up at their designated hotel around Phong Nha town on the morning of the departure day.

Vietnam visa: Vietnam currently grants visa exemptions to citizens of 29 countries and has expanded its E-visa program to apply to nationals of all countries and territories.

Upon arrival and during their stay, travelers are required to present a valid passport together with a valid visa or other legal residence documents in Vietnam so that accommodation providers and tour operators

can complete temporary residence registration as required by Vietnamese regulations.

For the latest details on travel policies, please verify the information here: Vietnam Travel Policy Updates

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Tu Lan Cave Encounter tour price includes

The Tu Lan Cave Encounter tour price is 6,700,000 VND (US$253) per person, this tour price includes VAT, entrance fee and forest environment service fee. The tour includes the following services:

- Logistics: Each tour of 10 guests will have: 1 guide, 2 safety assistants, 1 cook, 2 kitchen assistants and 4 porters, cleaning and maintenance costs for the whole route. The number of team members may vary depending on the group's physical condition.
- Meals: Oxalis provides food, tea and coffee for visitors during the journey (excluding extra requests by guests). Dinner at the local household. The dishes follow a fixed menu. There are vegetarian or vegan options available. Please request in advance.
- Accommodation: Oxalis offers 1-night camping in the jungle and 1 night at Rural Homestay in Tan Hoa after the tour.
- Safety equipment: Oxalis will provide safety equipment such as helmets, harnesses, headlamps, gloves and other safety equipment.
- Travel insurance: Oxalis buys travel insurance for all guests participating in the tour with a maximum compensation of 10,000,000 VND. Visitors are advised to purchase their own comprehensive travel insurance prior to joining the tour.

Carbon Footprint Index

At Oxalis Adventure, we are dedicated to minimizing our environmental impact and promoting sustainable tourism practices. Since 2023, Oxalis has conducted annual greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories as an essential part of our journey toward Net Zero tourism.

According to the 2024 greenhouse gas inventory, participants of the Tu Lan Encounter Tour were associated with an average carbon footprint of 90.1 kgCO2e per person. This figure comprehensively accounts for all emission sources, including transportation, accommodation, and tour-related activities.

FAQs

Best time to visit Quang Tri?

Each time, each season has its own beauty. The weather in Quang Tri in general goes through three seasons: end of winter, spring and summer. The cave tour to Hang En operates from December until the end of August every year. Throughout the season, depending on the time that you choose to visit Quang Tri, Hang En adventure tour will give you different experiences.

What if I am a solo traveler, can I join a group?

Solo travelers are most welcome and make up a large percentage of most groups.

What can I do If I want to talk to/contact a consultant?

You can easily contact a consultant via chat box (on the right corner) on Oxalis website or email to: contact@oxalisadventure.com; Hotline: +84-919900357.