

Tour Information and preparation



About us

Timor Adventures is a Timorese company and is registered and licenced by the Timor government to operate tours in Timor-Leste. We have strong personal ties to Timor-Leste and a firm commitment to contribute to Timor-Leste's growth as a nation.

Our vision is to take travellers on an adventure of discovery. To allow them time to connect with Timor-Leste's natural beauty and amazing people. And through learning something of Timor-Leste's turbulent past feel a part of its exciting future. Equally we have a commitment to development and creating meaningful employment through tourism.

The 1942 Commando Track

In 1942 members of Australia's 2/2nd Independent Company came to Portuguese Timor and successfully fought a guerilla war against the Japanese. This would not have been possible without the support young Timorese men that walked with these soldiers. The Independent Companies were Australia's first commandos.

The 1942 Commando Track aims to connect many of the sites that were significant to this campaign. The track is being developed in sections. The final track will commence on the north coast near Bazatete to the 2/2nd evacuation point on the south coast near Betano.

Section 1 of the track connects 4 important sites

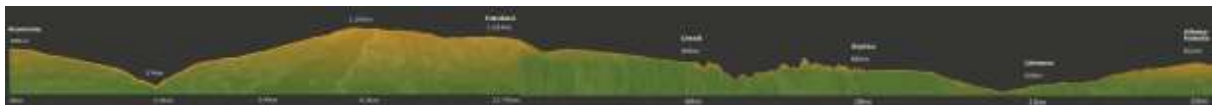
- **Bazatete:** A battle site between the 2/2nd and the Japanese
- **Fatubesi:** The site where a radio was acquired that would later be rebuilt to contact Australia
- **Hatolia:** The Japanese demanded surrender and this was rejected
- **Atsabe:** Battle site and Platoon HQ

Section 1 of the track

Section 1 of the track is 50km. The track starts in the village of Asumanu, 14km south of Bazatete. It takes about 1 hour in a 4wd to drive into the mountains. The road is steep and the road is a bit bumpy but the views are spectacular at the top of the mountain in Kotulau, the place where the Australian battelled the Japanese



The trekking starts at Asumanu and we bed down in a house on our first night in Fatubesi, the home of the “mother coffee tree”, the first coffee tree planted by the Portuguese. The trek on day 2 to the village of Abote where we join the main road and walk down to the village of Hatolia. We stay in a basic guest house that night with a real bed!



Day 3 of the trek sees us descending from Hatolia into a valley and across a river. There is then a long ascent to the village of Raibo where we bed down in the house of a local family. The last day we continue to climb, cross one final river and into the mountain village of Atsabe where we stay in a guest house. The following morning there is time to explore Atsabe before the journey in a 4wd back to Dili.



Health, safety and fitness

How fit do you need to be?

You need to be in excellent physical condition, with good endurance and stamina. You need to be able to walk up to 7 hours per day in hot and humid conditions for 4 days. The terrain tough and very steep in parts. You need a strong heart, lungs, quads, calves and a strong and positive attitude. A training program to prepare for the trek will not only improve your overall fitness but make the trek more enjoyable. In any training program it is essential that you schedule the use of the equipment you will be using such as the clothing, boots and pack. There is some great information online about trekking preparation or contact your local gym.

Please consult your medical practitioner before undertaking any new training program.

Mosquitos

Mosquito borne diseases such as dengue happen across much of Asia, so be prepared but not alarmed, basic precautions will go a long way to preventing illness. Use of tropical strength personal insect repellent is recommended as a preventative against mosquito born diseases. We also recommend light weight long sleeved shirt and pants when outside in the evenings.



Vaccinations and prescription medications:

Please check with your doctor about vaccinations. If you have personal prescription medications please ensure they are in the original packaging with your name on them.

Limited medical facilities in Timor-Leste.

Much of the 1942 Commando Track is in remote areas with very limited road access. There is no emergency helicopter service in Timor-Leste. Evacuation is a complex, time consuming and expensive process. It is your responsibility to be aware of the risk and accept them if you decide to come on this trek.

Getting to Timor-Leste

Dili, the capital city of Timor-Leste is about 700km North West of Darwin, just over 1 hour by plane. Several airlines fly to Darwin including Jetstar, Virgin, and Qantas fly to Darwin and Airnorth operates from Darwin to Dili. airnorth.com.au



It is also possible to fly via Denpasar to Dili. The Indonesian airline Citilink operates this service. While Timor-Leste is only a short distance away it is an international flight so remember you will need to allow plenty of time at the airport and **your passport must be valid for at least 6 months on arrival. A visa for 30 days costs \$30 USD on arrival at Dili airport.**

Money

The currency in Timor-Leste is USD. The most useful notes are small denominations \$5, \$10 and \$20. USD notes printed before 2009 are generally not accepted. Timor-Leste has its own coins from 5c to \$2 called Centavos.

There are a number of ATM's in Dili which accept Visa, but they can be unreliable. There are a few ATM's outside of Dili and credit cards are not accepted. Master Card and American Express is not accepted anywhere in Timor-Leste. **Our advice, bring cash!**

You will need \$30 USD for a visa on arrival, and you'll need the correct change for this. Please note that in the area where you purchase your visa on arrival there is no ATM. They do not accept any other currency such as Australian dollars.

Tour inclusions and exclusions

We aim to make our tours all inclusive, with the exception of personal spending however there are a few pre tour items that you need to budget for

- **Airfares** to and from Dili
- **Travel insurance:** Travel insurance is mandatory. We will require a copy of your travel insurance as part of the application process, refer to Clause 7 of the terms and conditions. It is your responsibility to make sure it covers trekking in remote areas of Timor-Leste. Our guides carry a copy of your travel insurance information including your name, policy number and the international emergency contact number.
- **Entry visa:** \$30 USD on arrival at the airport.
- **Personal expenses** such as souvenirs, drinks and personal snacks
- **Mobile phone and internet,** you may want to purchase a local SIM and phone credit
- **Tips for local tour guides,** which although not mandatory, are very much appreciated.

Tour price: Please note that we reserve the right to alter pricing under some circumstances, refer to Clause 4 of the terms and conditions. For more details about deposits and payment, refer to Clause 2 of our terms and conditions.

Phones and internet

Mobile phone & Internet. The mobile phone system is reasonably good and cheap. If you have an unlocked phone you can buy a SIM card in Dili and top up for phone calls and the internet. There is Wi-Fi at some hotels but it is generally very slow.

There are 3 telecom companies in Timor-Leste and the coverage of each company differs depending on where you go. Our guides carry mobile phones and have SIM cards for all 3 companies. Coverage is generally good along the track but there are a few 'black spots'.

Electricity. Timor-Leste has an electricity grid but it does not go to every village and it can also be unreliable. If you need to charge your phone on the trek then bring a USB battery. The electricity sockets generally have a 2-round pin (Indonesian style) plug but some places in Dili also have Australian plugs. It is best to pack a universal power adaptor

Hiking equipment

Hiking boots/shoes

In places the track is steep and the ground is loose, you need good hiking boots/shoes. They must be comfortable, have an aggressive grip on the sole, be light weight and preferably waterproof. Do not arrive on the trek with new boots/shoes that you have not worn before. You need to have worn the boots/shoes in before you arrive. It is also important to have at least 2 pairs of good hiking socks.

There are several river crossings, if you have quick drying Gortex boots you may be able to walk through rivers with these and they will dry quickly, if not you may want to bring other footwear for the river crossings.



Trekking packing list

Please note that good quality hiking equipment is very difficult to get in Timor-Leste. You should bring your own equipment and have "worn it in" before you come trekking.

- Hiking pack, large enough to carry everything you need to take. Keep it as light as you can, it is a long way to walk. If you are preparing for the trek use the pack in your training so you can make any adjustments.
- Tent: Optional, many people choose to sleep in a sleeping bag on a mat either in the open or in a local house.
- Sleeping bag
- Sleeping mat
- Mobile phone, USB battery charger and phone charger
- Maps (hard copy or saved on phone). The track maps are on Wikiloc: wikiloc.com.
- Phone (with sufficient battery, credit and data)
- Fully charged external battery pack/s
- Camera, SD cards, batteries
- Money: USD in coins and small denomination notes.
- Dry sack/s
- Torch (spare batteries if required)
- Personal first aid kit (any required medicine, paracetamol, anti-histamine, anti-bacterial cream, strapping tape, blister band aids). With the different environments, conditions, food and water, upset stomachs, vomiting and diarrhoea can occur. Please ensure you bring adequate medication. Also download the Red Cross first aid app.
- Personal toiletries (tooth brush, tooth paste, toilet paper, hand sanitizer, wet wipes, small soap)
- Sunscreen

- Mosquito repellent
- Snacks (enough for the duration; nuts, granola bars, protein bars, biscuits)
- Electrolytes (to aid hydration)

Water:

You need to carry a minimum of 3 litres of water but personal requirements can vary enormously. Some people prefer a camel back and others bottles. There are flowing water sources along the way and this water can be purified so bringing your own water purification tablets or device such as a steripen or life tube. It is essential that you take electrolytes/Gatorade/Staminade etc with you. Put in your water, every 3rd litre, it prevents dehydration due to high perspiration losses due to exertion and high humidity. Dehydration, overheating and hyponatremia can become major issues

- Water purification tablets such as aqua tabs or drinking water purification equipment such as a steripen, life straw or other water purification system
- Basic cutlery (knife, fork, spoon)
- Clean, dry clothes for post hike at night (socks, underwear, long pants, t-shirt, long-sleeved top, beanie) stored within a dry sack.
- Spare, clean, dry clothes for next day of hiking (just in case the others are wet and cannot be dried). Socks, underwear etc.
- Small towel
- Baseball cap/hat
- Sunglasses
- Rain coat
- Rain cover for pack
- Bag for rubbish: We do not leave any rubbish on the track; it is your responsibility to take out what you bring in
- Metal or bamboo reusable straw for drinking out of coconuts.

Washing cleaning and toilets

The facilities are very basic at best.

- Toilets on the Track are limited and are squat toilets. There are western style toilets at the accommodation in Hatolia and Atsabe.
- You do need to take your own toilet paper (2 rolls).
- There are cold "bucket" showers in Hatolia and Atsabe (The water can be very cold!). The rivers can be used for having a wash. We suggest you bring environmentally friendly soap.
- Antibacterial Hand Gel is essential.
- There are no specific changing rooms on the track

Food and meals

There is good food to be had in Dili with cuisines from all over the world and is heavily influenced by the cuisines of China, Indonesia and Portugal. Seafood is plentiful. There are a number of large supermarkets in Dili to stock up on snacks and treats for on the track. On the track we buy local fruits and coconuts and we also buy local vegetables from markets along the way for our evening meal. Most meals include rice. There is tea and Timorese coffee, which is exceptionally good

Peanuts and other food allergies:

It is your responsibility to advise us of any food allergies and the impacts of these on your health. It may or may not be possible to accommodate your requirements, please talk to us about this well in advance. Please be aware that Medical services are extremely limited and medical evacuation is a long and complex process.



Accommodation

In Dili there are good 3 or 4-star hotels however the accommodation along the 1942 Commando Track is much more basic. The places we stay in Fatubesi and Raibo mean sleeping on a mat in a sleeping bag. The guest house in Hatolia is also basic, mattress are on the floor and there is a shared bathroom. The guest house in Atsabe is good with a private room and bathroom. There are no hot water showers on the track.

Temperature and weather

Timor-Leste has extreme wet and dry seasons. Day temperatures can be around 30 to 35 degrees in the lowland areas dropping to 26 degrees overnight. In the mountains day time temperatures are still warm to hot but night temperatures can drop to 15 degrees or lower.

The most reliable weather site is tempu.tl/en. Mouse over the map to check the weather for Bazatete, Hatolia and Atsabe then click on "Details".

Community development and responsible tourism

There has been a great effort by the Timorese people with the support of many countries to rebuild the country. Many people, and in particular Australians, have donated their time, energy and resources to this effort. During the course of the tour we will get a chance to see firsthand some of this work. Tourism is one of the emerging industries for this country and is very important to the future of Timor-Leste. Your participation in this tour will help contribute to local families, local economies and Timor-Leste.

Responsible tourism

Timor Adventures is committed to responsible tourism which aims to minimise the impact on the environment and culture while helping to generate income and employment for the local people of Timor-Leste.

Here are a few things extra things to consider:

- **Read up** about the culture, history & politics of Timor-Leste
- **Learn** some of the local language Tetum
- **Purchase** locally made products, support traditional crafts. When buying or bargaining for an item remember that small amounts of money can be significant to the seller.
- **Dress respectfully** and be aware of the local standards.
- In line with current child protection policies, we request our tour participants **refrain from taking portrait/identifiable images of children**. Additionally, we request you always ask first before photographing or videoing anyone and consider carefully what message the image is conveying about the person. If you take a photo on a digital camera, show the person and ask if the photo is OK.
- **Minimise waste** and where possible use renewable resources and on the trek, take your rubbish with you.
- **When you return home** find out more about organisations and programs that are working in Timor-Leste to protect the welfare, culture and environment and consider supporting them.
- **Avoid giving money or gifts** to children and people you have just met. Find other ways to support communities through local community development projects, schools and clinics.
- Help build good relationships and understanding between our cultures by **behaving equitably and respectfully**

10 things you can do to prepare for a Timor Adventure tour:

1. Book your place in a tour
2. Check with your doctor and take all necessary medical precautions
3. Prepare the equipment for trekking and start to use it
4. Check with your doctor and then research, plan and do an exercise program ready for the trek. It will make the trek enjoyable and you'll be fit!
5. Book your flights
6. Make sure you have at least six months left on your passport
7. Organise travel insurance that will cover you during the tour
8. Check with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs for any travel warnings and register with Smart Traveller, (or equivalent for other countries).
9. Read about the history of the 2/2nd Independent Company and of Timor-Leste. See our website timoradventures.com.au/1942commandotrack for details
10. Learn some of the local language Tetum. Just search Tetum on your apps store and download the Tetum translation app
11. Get some US dollars and pack your bags
12. Enjoy the adventure

See you in Timor-Leste