



# CRUISE PORTS NORTHEAST ASIA

A GUIDE TO PERFECT DAYS ON SHORE

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## Welcome to Northeast Asia

**Modern metropolises and ancient capitals fringe the coastlines of Northeast Asia. Volcanic mountain peaks, glittering ski fields and semitropical islands, blended with world-class eating, irresistible shopping and a fascinating cultural heritage, await those cruising between the region's historic port cities.**

Each stop along your voyage tells a different chapter of the region's story. Some of these historic cities bear few traces of what came before, while others offer windows to the past amid the modernity. It's there in the Ming-dynasty Yuyuan Gardens, the graceful temples and tea ceremonies of Kyoto, and the haunting reminders of unimaginable loss in Okinawa-hontō and Hiroshima.

For generations, the ports of Northeast Asia have been the site of international exchange, meeting points for goods, cultures and people. There's an intoxicating buzz to the region's urban centres, with their vibrant street life, glowing streetscapes, 24-hour drinking-and-dining scenes, and architectural wonders that redefine what buildings – and cities – should look like. Not only Tokyo and Shanghai, but rising stars Taipei and Busan, too.

Beyond the cities lie scenic stars of the natural world: the dramatic volcanic island of Jeju-do, steaming onsen amid powdery winter snow in Hokkaidō, and iconic Mt Fuji among them.

Wherever you go, you're never far from a great meal. Restaurants often specialise in just one dish, and most towns have their own signature preparations and ingredients. From the splendour of a Kyoto geisha dance to the spare beauty of a Zen rock garden to the glamour of a sky-high cocktail bar, Northeast Asia tells a spellbinding tale.

*Each stop along your voyage tells a different chapter of the region's story*



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## Survival Guide

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# Directory A-Z



## Accessible Travel

Accessibility throughout the region is improving, but has some way to go.

On the plus side, many buildings have access ramps, major train stations have lifts, traffic lights have speakers playing melodies when it is safe to cross, and train platforms have raised dots and lines to provide guidance for the visually impaired. You'll find most service staff will go out of their way to be helpful, even if they don't speak much English. Major sights take great pains to be wheelchair friendly and many have wheelchairs you can borrow for free.

On the negative side, many city streets are still rather difficult to negotiate – streets can be narrow and busy, and pavements cluttered, uneven or non-existent. In Shànghǎi, the city's traffic, overpasses and underpasses are the greatest challenges to travellers with disabilities. Try to take a lightweight chair for navigating around obstacles and for collapsing into the back of taxis.

- Download Lonely Planet's free Accessible Travel guide

from <http://lptravel.to/AccessibleTravel>.

- Japan Accessible Tourism Center ([www.japan-accessible.com](http://www.japan-accessible.com)) is a good resource.
- Taiwan Access for All Association ([twaccess4all.wordpress.com](http://twaccess4all.wordpress.com)) provides advice and assistance.



## Discount Cards

Seniors over the age of 65 are frequently eligible for discounts, and in Taipei and China, 70-and-overs often get

free admission, so make sure you take your passport when visiting sights as proof of age.

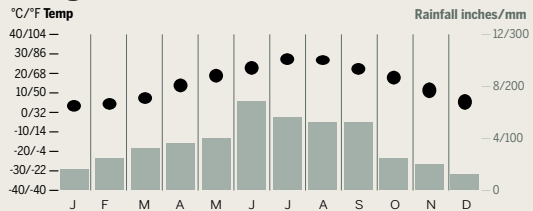


## Health

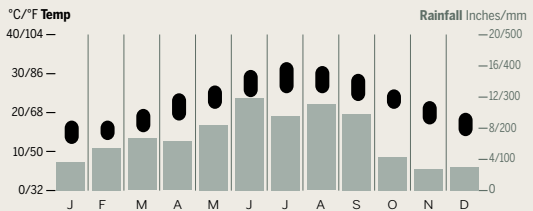
- Health is generally of high standard throughout the region.
- Treatment can be expensive; make sure you are fully insured for your trip. Note, though, the only insurance accepted at Japanese

## Climate

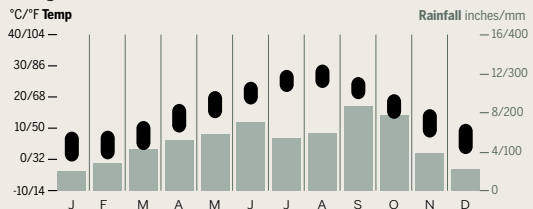
### Shanghai



### Taipei



### Tokyo



## Japan Helpline

English-speaking operators at **Japan Helpline** (☎0570-000-911) are available 24 hours a day to help you negotiate tricky situations. If you don't have access to mobile service, use the contact form on the website (<http://jhhelp.com/english/index.html>).

hospitals is Japanese insurance. You'll have to pay up front and apply for a reimbursement when you get home.

- In Japan, most hospitals do not have doctors and nurses who speak English.
- Expect to pay from around ¥20,000 and upwards for emergency care.
- Health concerns for travellers to Shànghǎi include worsening atmospheric pollution, traveller's diarrhoea and winter influenza. The air quality in Shànghǎi can be appalling. If you suffer from asthma or other allergies you should anticipate a worsening of your symptoms and may need to increase your medication.
- In South Korea, the language barrier will be the biggest obstacle. International clinics in hospitals in large cities will likely have English-speaking doctors, but expect to pay between ₩40,000 to ₩80,000 for the consultation alone.

- Many Taiwanese doctors have trained in Western countries and speak at least some English.



## Insurance

A travel-insurance policy to cover theft, loss and medical problems is essential. Worldwide travel insurance is available at [www.lonelyplanet.com/travel-insurance](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/travel-insurance). You can buy, extend and claim online anytime – even if you're already on the road.

For health insurance information, see p301.



## Internet Access

**Japan** Many cities in Japan (including Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto) have free wi-fi networks for travellers, though the system is still clunky in areas.

**Shànghǎi** Getting internet access will be one constant source of frustration if you rely heavily on being connected, and are used to a lightning-fast service. The Chinese authorities remain mistrustful of the internet, and censorship is heavy-handed. Many popular social networking sites and email providers are blocked – the list changes regularly, so check before you arrive.

**South Korea** With the world's fastest connections and one of the highest rates of internet usage, you'll find abundant free internet access, either via

a computer or wi-fi in cafes, public streets and tourist information centres.

**Taiwan** Free wi-fi is widely accessible in cafes, restaurants, and in some shopping malls.



## Language

**Japan** English use is not widespread, though cities and popular destinations are well-signposted in English and will have Tourist Information Centres (TICs) with English-speaking staff; restaurants in these areas will also often have English menus. Most Japanese are more comfortable with written than spoken English, so whenever possible, email is often the best means of communicating.

**Shànghǎi** Outside hotels, English is not widely spoken. You'll be able to get by in tourist areas, but it's useful to learn a few basic phrases. Some restaurants may not have an English menu. You'll find yourself surrounded by written Chinese wherever you travel, so a Pleco app ([www.pleco.com](http://www.pleco.com)) or phrasebook is useful.

**South Korea** It's relatively easy to find English speakers in the big cities, but not so easy in smaller towns and the countryside. Learning a few key phrases will help you enormously in being able to decode street signs, menus and timetables.

**Taiwan** Although on the street you will hear Mandarin and Taiwanese, plenty of young and

middle-aged Taiwanese speak reasonable English, especially anyone working in the tourist trade. You might have some trouble, though, with taxi drivers. MRT announcements are also in English, and many signs are in English too. Any restaurant that is midrange or above is very likely to have an English menu. Saying all that, a few polite phrases in Mandarin will go a long way.



## LGBT+ Travellers

**Japan** Gay and lesbian travellers are unlikely to encounter problems in Japan. There are no legal restraints on same-sex sexual activities in Japan apart from the usual age restrictions.

**Shànghǎi** Local law is ambiguous in its attitude to LGBT people; generally the authorities take a dim view of same-sex couples but there's an increasingly confident scene, as indicated by gay bars and the annual event-stuffed Shanghai Pride ([www.shpride.com](http://www.shpride.com)). Shànghǎi heterosexuals are not, by and large, particularly homophobic, especially the under-40s. Young Chinese men sometimes hold hands; this carries no sexual overtones.

**South Korea** Korea has never passed any laws that mention homosexuality, but this shouldn't be taken as a sign of tolerance or acceptance. Attitudes are changing, especially among young people, but virtually all local gays and lesbians choose to stay firmly

## Tap Water

**Japan** Tap water is fine to drink.

**Shànghǎi** Don't drink tap water or eat ice. Bottled water is readily available. Boiled water is OK.

**South Korea** Some of the cleanest tap water in the world. Filtered or bottled water is served free in most restaurants and machines with free purified hot and cold water are at most shopping plaza entrances.

**Taiwan** Tap water here is supposed to be drinkable, but nobody does. There are drinking water dispensers in major tourist sites, temples, some MRT stations and hospitals.

in the closet. Gay and lesbian travellers who publicise their sexual orientation tend to receive less than positive reactions.

**Taiwan** In 2019, Taiwan became the first Asian nation to legalise same-sex marriage. Foreign-born gay and lesbian travellers will find Taipei friendly, open-minded and exciting. It's common to see LGBT couples holding hands on the streets, though not common to see them kissing.



## Money

### ATMs

- ATMs are widespread throughout the region, though they may not be open 24 hours.
- Many ATMs in Japan and South Korea do not accept foreign-issued cards. In Japan, most Seven Bank ATMs at 7-Eleven convenience stores (open 24 hours) and Japan Post Bank ATMs

at post offices accept most overseas cards and have instructions in English. In South Korea, look for one that has a 'Global' sign or the logo of your credit-card company.

- In Shànghǎi and Taipei, ATMs generally accept Visa, MasterCard, Cirrus and Maestro cards, as well as JCB and Plus in Taipei. Most operate 24 hours. Bank of China and the Industrial & Commercial Bank of China are the best bets in Shànghǎi.

### Cash

Many places in Japan – particularly outside the cities – don't accept credit cards. Smaller restaurants and shops are common cash-only places, so it's wise to keep cash on hand.

### Credit Cards

Credit cards are increasingly accepted, but plenty of places, including budget or smaller restaurants, stalls and shops still require cash. Always check before

deciding to order in a restaurant. It's also always wise to carry some cash to be sure.

## Exchanging Money

The best rates are given by banks. Note that not all banks will change money and many will only change US dollars. In Japan and China, you will need your passport in order to change money.

Exchange rates in China are uniform wherever you change money, so there's little need to shop around. Whenever you change foreign currency into Chinese currency you will be given a money-exchange voucher recording the transaction. You need to show this to change your yuan back into any foreign currency. Changing Chinese currency outside China is a problem, though it's quite easily done in Hong Kong.

Note that you receive a better exchange rate when withdrawing cash from ATMs than when exchanging cash or travellers cheques in Japan.

## Tipping

- Tipping is not customary throughout the region.
- There's no need to tip in bars or taxis.
- Japanese high-end restaurants usually add a 10% service fee to the bill, as do some in Shànghǎi.
- Guides don't require a tip, but a small gift is appreciated. In Taipei, a 10%

addition to the fee if you are happy with the service is common.



## Opening Hours

### Japan

Some outdoor attractions (such as gardens) may close earlier in the winter. Standard opening hours:

**Banks** 9am to 3pm (some to 5pm) Monday to Friday.

**Bars** From around 6pm to late.

**Department stores** 10am to 8pm.

**Museums** 9am to 5pm, last entry by 4.30pm; often closed Monday (if Monday is a national holiday then the museum will close on Tuesday instead).

**Post offices** 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday; larger ones have longer hours and open Saturday.

**Restaurants** Lunch 11.30am to 2pm; dinner 6pm to 10pm; last orders taken about half an hour before closing.

### Shànghǎi

Businesses in China close for the week-long Chinese New Year (usually in February) and National Day (beginning 1 October).

**Bank of China** Branches 9.30am to 11.30am and 1.30pm to 4.30pm Monday to Friday. Some also open Saturday and Sunday. Most have 24-hour ATMs.

**Bars** Around 5pm to 2am (some open in the morning).

**China Post** Most major offices 8.30am to 6pm daily; some-

times open until 10pm. Local branches closed weekends.

**Museums** Most open weekends; a few close Monday. Ticket sales usually stop 30 or 60 minutes before closing.

**Offices and government departments** Generally 9am to noon and 2pm to 4.30pm Monday to Friday.

**Restaurants** Most 11am to 10pm or later; some 10am to 2.30pm and 5pm to 11pm or later.

**Shops** Malls and department stores generally 10am to 10pm.

### South Korea

**Banks** 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday; ATMs 7am to 11pm (or 24 hours).

**Bars** 6pm to 1am, longer hours Friday and Saturday.

**Cafes** 7am to 10pm.

**Restaurants** 11am to 10pm.

**Shops** 10am to 8pm.

### Taiwan

Some restaurants and cafes and many museums are closed on Mondays. Bars and some restaurants often close an hour or so later on Fridays and Saturdays.

**Banks** 9am to 3.30pm Monday to Friday.

**Cafes** Noon to 8pm (often closed Monday).

**Convenience stores** Most are 24 hours.

**Department stores** 11am to 9.30pm.

**Government offices** 8.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday.

**Museums** 9am to 5pm Tuesday to Sunday.

**Night markets** 5pm to midnight.



**Offices** 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

**Post offices** 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday; larger offices may open till 9pm and have limited hours on weekends.

**Restaurants** 11.30am to 2pm and 5pm to 9pm.

**Shops** 10am to 9pm.

**Supermarkets** Until at least 8pm; sometimes 24 hours.



## Safe Travel

Northeast Asia is generally a very safe region for travel – urban streets are safe and muggings or violent assaults uncommon. Still, it's wise to keep up the same level of caution and common sense that you would back home.

In Shànghǎi, crossing the road is probably the greatest danger: develop avian vision and a sixth sense to combat the shocking traffic. Don't end up in an ambulance: Chinese drivers never give way.

Likewise traffic is your biggest risk in South Korea and Taipei. In South Korea, drivers almost never stop for pedestrian crossings that are not protected by traffic lights, and they routinely jump red lights late at night, so take care on pedestrian crossings even if they are protected by lights. In Taipei and South Korea, watch out for 'wayward' scooters on the roads (or pedestrian crossings, or pavements...).

## Smoking

**Japan** In many cities (including Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto) smoking is banned in public spaces but allowed inside bars and restaurants. Designated smoking areas are set up around train stations.

**Shànghǎi** From 2010, antismoking legislation in Shànghǎi required a number of public venues (including bars and restaurants) to have designated nonsmoking areas and to install signs prohibiting smoking. However, you'll often find this rule flouted in bars and some restaurants.

**South Korea** Nationwide ban on smoking in public enclosed spaces such as bars and restaurants, on train platforms and 10m from station exits. Smoking is not allowed on many tourist streets.

**Taiwan** Not allowed in public facilities, public transport, shopping malls and restaurants and this is strictly enforced. Even some parks are marked smoke-free.



## Telephone

- Japan operates on the 3G network, so overseas phones with 3G technology should work. Prepaid SIM cards that allow you to make voice calls are not available in Japan. Data-only SIM cards for unlocked smartphones are available at large electronics stores (such as Bic Camera, Yodobashi Camera etc) in major cities. You'll need to download and install an APN profile; ask staff to help you if you are unsure how to do this (they usually speak some English).

- In Shànghǎi, a mobile phone should be the first choice for calls, but ensure your mobile is unlocked

for use in China if taking your own.

- Most networks in South Korea use the WCDMA 2100 MHz network, as well as one of five different 4G LTE bands. Most unlocked recent smartphones will work with a Korean SIM. Mobile phones and portable wi-fi eggs can be hired.

- Local SIM cards in Taipei should fit most overseas-bought mobiles. They come with prepaid plans.



## Time

**Japan & South Korea** Nine hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT); do not have daylight saving time.

**Shànghǎi & Taiwan** Eight hours ahead of GMT/UTC. There is no daylight-saving time.



## Toilets

- Public toilets in the region are generally plentiful, free and clean.
- The exception is in Shànghǎi. Often charging a small fee, toilets here run from the sordid to coin-operated portaloos and modern conveniences. The best bet is to head for a top-end hotel, where someone will hand you a towel, pour you some aftershave or exotic hand lotion and wish you a nice day.
- You will come across both Western-style toilets and traditional squat toilets. When you are compelled to squat, the correct position is facing the hood, away from the door.
- In Japan, the katakana for 'toilet' is トイレ, and the kanji is お手洗い. Also good to know: the kanji for female (女) and male (男).
- In Shànghǎi and Taiwan, look for the Chinese characters for men (男) and women (女).
- In Korean, public toilets are *hwajangsil* (화장실).
- Toilet paper is usually provided (except in Shànghǎi), but it is still a good idea to carry tissues with you. In South Korea, toilet paper is usually outside the cubicles.
- Many places in Taiwan ask you not to flush toilet

paper but to put it in the waste-paper basket beside the toilet.



## Tourist Information

### Japan

Tourist information offices (*kankō annai-sho*; 観光案内所) can be found inside or in front of major train stations. Staff may not speak much English; however, there are usually English-language materials and staff are accustomed to the usual concerns of travellers. Many have free wi-fi.

**Japan National Tourism Organization** (JNTO; [www.jnto.go.jp](http://www.jnto.go.jp)) is Japan's government tourist bureau. It produces a great deal of useful literature in English, which is available from its overseas offices as well as its **TIC** (Map p52; ☎03-3201-3331; 1st fl, Shin-Tokyo Bldg, 3-3-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku; ☀9am-5pm; 🚶🇯🇵 Chiyoda line to Nijūbashimae, exit 1) in Tokyo.

### Shànghǎi

Shànghǎi has about a dozen or so rather useless Tourist Information & Service Centres. For competent English-language help, call the **Shànghǎi Call Centre** (☎021 962 288), a free 24-hour English-language hotline that can respond to cultural or transport enquiries (and even provide directions for your cab driver).

### South Korea

If you need interpretation help or information on practically any topic, any time of the day or night, you can call **BBB** (☎1588 5644; [www.bbbkorea.org](http://www.bbbkorea.org)).

### Taiwan

Visitor information centres are present in most city train stations and popular scenic areas. They stock English-language brochures, maps, and train and bus schedules, and usually staff can speak some English. Welcome to Taiwan (<http://eng.taiwan.net.tw/>) is the official site of the Taiwan Tourism Bureau; the **Tourist Hotline** (☎0800-011 765) is a useful 24-hour service in English, Japanese and Chinese.



## Visas

### Japan

Citizens of 67 territories, including Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Korea, New Zealand, Singapore, the UK, the USA, and almost all European nations will be automatically issued a *tanki-taizai* (temporary-visitor visa) on arrival. Typically this visa is good for 90 days. For a complete list of visa-exempt territories, consult [www.mofa.go.jp/j\\_info/visit/visa/short/novisa.html#list](http://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/visa/short/novisa.html#list).

For additional information on visas and regulations, contact your nearest Japa-

nese embassy or consulate, or visit the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan ([www.mofa.go.jp](http://www.mofa.go.jp)).

## Shànghǎi

Citizens from a number of countries including the USA, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Germany, Sweden and France, can transit through Shànghǎi for up to 144 hours without a visa as long as they have visas for their onward countries and proof of passage out of China. Your departure point and destination should not be in the same country. Note also that you are not allowed to visit other cities in China during your transit.

## South Korea

With a confirmed onward ticket, visitors from the USA, nearly all Western European countries, New Zealand, Australia and around 30 other countries receive 90-day permits on arrival. About 30 countries do not qualify for visa exemptions. Citizens from these countries must apply for a tourist visa, which allows a stay of 90 days.

As rules are always changing, see [www.hikorea.go.kr](http://www.hikorea.go.kr) for more visa information.

## Taiwan

Tourists from most European countries, Canada, the US, Australia (until December 2019; see Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs website for updates), New Zealand, South Korea and Japan are

given visa-free entry for stays of up to 90 days.



# Transport

Flights, cars and tours can be booked online at [lonelyplanet.com/bookings](http://lonelyplanet.com/bookings).



## Getting There & Away

### Air

#### Japan

Japan's major international airports include the following:

**Narita International Airport** ([www.narita-airport.jp](http://www.narita-airport.jp)) About 75 minutes east of Tokyo by express train, Narita gets the bulk of international flights to Japan; most budget carriers flying to Tokyo arrive here.

**Haneda Airport** ([www.tokyo-airport-bldg.co.jp](http://www.tokyo-airport-bldg.co.jp)) Tokyo's more convenient airport – about 30 minutes by train or monorail to the city centre – Haneda, also known as Tokyo International Airport, is getting an increasing number of international arrivals; domestic flights to/from Tokyo usually arrive/depart here.

**Kansai International Airport** ([www.kansai-airport.or.jp](http://www.kansai-airport.or.jp)) Serves the key Kansai cities of Kyoto, Osaka, Nara and Kōbe.

## Shànghǎi

### Pūdōng International Airport

(PVG; 浦东国际机场; Pūdōng Guóji Jīchǎng; ☎021 6834 7575, flight information 96990; [www.shairport.com](http://www.shairport.com)) Located 30km southeast of Shànghǎi, near the East China Sea. Most international flights operate from here.

### Hóngqiáo International Airport

(SHA; 虹桥国际机场; Hóngqiáo Guóji Jīchǎng; ☎021 5260 4620, flight information 021 6268 8899; [www.shairport.com](http://www.shairport.com); 🚇 Hongqiao Airport Terminal 1, 🚇 Hongqiao Airport Terminal 2) Located 18km west of the Bund.

## South Korea

International travellers can fly directly to **Gimhae International Airport** (김해 국제 공항; Map p267; ☎051 974 3114; [www.airport.co.kr/gimhaeeng/index.do](http://www.airport.co.kr/gimhaeeng/index.do); 🚇 Busan-Gimhae LRT, Exit Airport), 27km west of Busan's city centre.

## Taiwan

### Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport

(☎03-273 3728; [www.taoyuan-airport.com](http://www.taoyuan-airport.com)) is about 40km west of Taipei, while **Taipei Songshan Airport** (松山機場; Sōngshān Jīchǎng; Map p221; [www.tsa.gov.tw/tsa](http://www.tsa.gov.tw/tsa); 340-9 Dunhua N Rd; 敦化北路340-9; 🚇 Songshan Airport) is just north of the city centre and services direct international flights to China, Japan and South Korea, plus domestic routes.

## A — Z

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## A

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## Our Story

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Dublin, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

## Our Writers

### Ray Bartlett

Ray Bartlett has been travel writing for nearly two decades, bringing Japan, Korea, Mexico, Tanzania, Guatemala, Indonesia and many parts of the United States to life in rich detail for top-industry publishers, newspapers and magazines. Ray currently divides his time between homes in the USA, Japan and Mexico.

### Andrew Bender

Award-winning travel and food writer Andrew Bender has written three dozen Lonely Planet guidebooks (from Amsterdam to Los Angeles, Germany to Taiwan and more than a dozen titles about Japan), plus numerous articles for lonelyplanet.com. Andy also is a tour leader and tour planner for visits to Japan. Follow him on Twitter @wheresandynow.

### Jade Bremner

Jade has been a journalist for more than a decade. She has lived in and reported on four

different regions. Wherever she goes she finds action sports to try, the weirder the better, and it's no coincidence many of her favourite places have some of the best waves in the world. Jade has edited travel magazines and sections for *Time Out* and *Radio Times* and has contributed to the *Times*, CNN and the *Independent*. She feels privileged to share tales from this wonderful planet we call home and is always looking for the next adventure.

### Stephanie d'Arc Taylor

A native Angeleno, Stephanie grew up with the west LA weekend ritual of going for Iranian sweets after *tenzaru soba* in Little Osaka. Later, she quit her PhD to move to Beirut and become a writer. Since then, she has published work with the *New York Times*, *Guardian*, *Roads & Kingdoms* and *Kinfolk Magazine*, and co-founded Jaleesa, a venture-capital-funded social impact business in Beirut. Follow her on Instagram @zerodarctaylor.

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