

7 Travel Bloggers Share the Southeast Asia Cruise Trips They Loved

By **Kelly Dunning** - August 27, 2016

One of the best ways to see Southeast Asia is by boat. Whether you are slowly chugging down a broad calm river lined with dense forest or you are gliding across the surface of the turquoise ocean you will have a chance to slow down and truly appreciate the beauty around you. A boat trip will take you far away from the beaten path so that you can see what traditional life is like in Southeast Asia beyond the tourist zones.

Who better to tell you about Southeast Asia boat cruise experiences than the travel bloggers who have experienced them first hand? Here are some reports from travel bloggers from all over the world who have been on boat adventures in Southeast Asia.

The Mekong River, Vietnam



Photo by [Bruised Passports](#)

Savi and Vid, the traveling couple behind the blog [Bruised Passports](#), took an unforgettable journey on the Mekong River in Vietnam. This river, known as the “Mighty Dragon” passes through Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand, Laos and China – weaving its way through lush tropical jungles, rice plantations and ancient cities.

“A couple of years ago we found ourselves in the chaotic and colourful quarters of Saigon and loved exploring the alleys bustling with life. When the commotion got too much to handle, we decided to venture out for a day to the Mekong delta. A couple of hours out of the city, we arrived at My Tho, the gateway to the bustling floating markets of Mekong delta. We floated down the river in a private boat as we learnt more about the river’s history, and more importantly about the pivotal role it plays in the everyday lives of the people who call riverside towns and villages home.”

What's more, we loved partaking in a local song and dance ceremony followed by trying our hand at making some coconut candy along with the locals. As expected, we failed miserably, and drowned our sorrows by sipping on some snake wine!

The best was yet to come though. We took yet another "cruise" at the end of the day – this time aboard a sampan – a tiny wooden boat that the locals use to ferry goods from one point on the river to another. We were apprehensive at first, since the boat was tiny and wobbled a lot, but soon that fear turned into sheer bliss as we made our way past lush palm trees and stunning green foliage. It was definitely a day to remember!"

El Nido, Philippines



Photo by [Jeffrey Donenfeld](#)

Travel blogger and photographer [Jeffrey Donenfeld](#) went on a boating adventure in the Philippines, charting a small hobie cat sailboat in El Nido. He loved the opportunity to connect

with the powerfully peaceful vibe on the water.

"I LOVE being on the water. I've been an avid expedition sailor for years, and have led epic sailing expeditions as far off as Bora Bora and the Dutch West Indies. I loved boating all over Southeast Asia for the laid back attitude, tranquility and adventure of being on the water, and reconnection with the natural spirit of the marine environment. Water is peaceful, and powerful."

The Mekong River, South Laos



Photo by Barbara Weibel from [Hole in the Donut Travel](#)

Barbara Weibel from [Hole in the Donut Travel](#) took a slow boat down the Mekong through the tropical islands of Southern Laos. This region of the Mekong is very distinct to other trips down different regions of the river. She loved the slow pace of the journey and the story behind the historic vessel.

“Unlike the mud-churned rapids of the Mekong River in northern Laos, the placid, emerald green Mekong River in the south of the country meanders through scores of tropical islets. My Vat Phou Cruise of this “Four-thousand Islands” area stopped at some of the most historically significant ruins in Laos and visited local villages where time stands still.

It was one of my all-time favorite experiences, not only because it was incredibly peaceful and relaxing, but also because the three-day voyage was aboard an authentic teak barge that had once hauled teak between major Lao cities.”

Kinabatangan River Cruise in Borneo, Malaysia



Photo by [Nomad Is Beautiful](#)

Ivana Greslikova and Gianni Bianchini, the travel bloggers behind the website [Nomad Is Beautiful](#), took an unforgettable cruise through the untouched wilderness of Borneo. This is a great destination for nature lovers as it offers many opportunities to see wild animals close up.

“If there is a place in Borneo where you can see a plethora of wildlife in peaceful environment, then it’s definitely the Kinabatangan River. Here you can see the proboscis monkeys, red-leaf monkeys, lots of hornbills and prepare your camera for a crocodile or two!

And if you get there in the right season, you might be lucky to spot some wild elephants who come to bathe and drink to the river, too.”

Lombok to Flores, Indonesia



Christine from [TheTraveloguer.com](https://www.thetraveloguer.com) took a very exciting boat trip in Indonesia that left her with plenty of great stories to tell upon her return.

“I took a four day boat journey from Lombok to Flores in Indonesia which involved an almost-shipwreck, Komodo dragons and the greatest snorkelling I’ve ever experienced.

Over the four days, we stopped at multiple beautiful islands along the way, walking along a pink sand beach, trekking through a jungle to cool off at the base of a stunning waterfall, and diving into the clear waters every few hours.

While our boat did come close to capsizing during a terrifying storm, and our engine cut out on day three, I would do it all again in a heartbeat!"

Koh Samui and Koh Pha Ngan, Thailand



Photo by Collette and Scott, [Roamaroo](#)

Collette and Scott from the travel blog [Roamaroo.com](#) have very fond memories of their experience on a catamaran cruising around the islands of Koh Samui and Koh Pha Ngan.

"Our favorite boat trip experience in Southeast Asia was with Kunta of Samui Ocean Sports & Yacht Charters. On our first trip to Thailand in 2012, I surprised Scott with a sailing trip for our

anniversary. Kunta picked us up in his Dreamcatcher catamaran (a very fitting name) and sailed us around Koh Samui and Koh Pha Ngan.

He took us to a remote part of Koh Pha Ngan where we swam to shore and feasted on fresh fish caught from the sea that day. We continued to tour the island, stopping on uninhabited beaches (a hard find in Thailand these days!), swimming in the sea, and snacking on fresh Thai fruits. Not only was it an incredible tour of the islands, but we felt like we made a friend in Kunta. We loved our trip so much we actually returned three years later for another sailing trip (this time on the boat Geronimo) with friends.

Our days of sailing with Kunta were filled with pure fun. This wasn't your run of the mill tour. It was not touristy or gimmicky. Our days spent sailing in Samui showed us authentic Thailand in a way not many people get to experience it. Our experience was private, intimate, and exclusive without being pretentious. It is one of our fondest memories of Southeast Asia!"

Halong Bay, Vietnam



Photo by Audrey of ThatBackpacker.com

Cruising through the legendary Halong Bay in Vietnam is one of the best and most iconic boat trip experiences in Southeast Asia. Audrey Bergner from ThatBackpacker.com had an amazing time on her trip.

“One of the travel highlights from my time backpacking Southeast Asia was doing a cruise of Halong Bay. The name translates to “Descending Dragon Bay” and it is just as magical as it sounds. Craggy limestone karsts rise up from the emerald green waters creating one of the most dramatic landscapes in all of Vietnam, and in the mornings when the fog hangs thick over the water, it really does look like a scene from another world.

Another thing I really enjoyed about cruising Halong Bay were all the different activities I got to experience along the way. Whether we were kayaking, beach hopping, climbing through caves,

or settling in to watch the sunset on the top deck of our boat, every moment of the day was filled with some new sight that was even more breathtaking than the last.”



Photo by [Drew Binsky](#)

Travel blogger [Drew “Binsky” Goldberg](#) also did a [Halong Bay tour](#) and was blown away by the natural beauty of this region.

"I loved how relaxing the scenery is, with small mountains coming out of the sea, and the greenery was fantastic. I also enjoyed kayaking in the sea, and taking in the sunshine. I would love to go back!"

These seven cruise experiences offer a way to see the beauty of this part of the world from a different perspective. Have you been on a boat trip in Southeast Asia? Let us know your story in the comments below.

Kelly Dunning

Kelly Dunning is a Canadian freelance travel writer. She lives a nomadic lifestyle with no fixed address - working from the road for the last 5 years with her partner Lee, a web-designer from England. They have traveled to over 40 countries and they offer travel tips, stories and inspiration on Global-Goose.com.

