

In 2021 the opening of 416 kilometres of railway between Vientiane, Luang Prabang and Boten finally gave Laos a decent train ride and happy alternative to lumpy roads. There are express and local services, with some stations still to open. Inside Asia Tours has taken advantage with a scenic “Laos by Rail” tour that offers cultural immersion, sustainable activities and glorious scenery.

See insideasiatours.com

White-water rafting in Bali

Combat heat and humidity on an adrenaline-filled splash that takes you 10 kilometres down the Ayung River in central Bali on a raft or two-person inflatable kayak. Alternatively, the faster-flowing Telaga Waja River is more demanding: it starts on Mount Agung’s volcanic slopes and culminates in a four-metre spill down a dam. The gorge gets narrower downstream, widening occasionally into refreshing natural pools.

See raftingbali.net

Philippines by expedition ship

Our near neighbour is overlooked by expedition cruises despite its island-spangled seas, karst scenery, great reef snorkelling and friendly inhabitants. Aussie cruise company Coral Expeditions is changing that with a new 16-day expedition that takes in colonial and WWII history, busy Manila, and numerous stunning islands such as rugged Calayan, Palaui Island National Park and Maripipi, with its white sand and turquoise waters.

See coralexpeditions.com