

Tu Lan Cave Expedition Tour

TL4 • Adventure level: Demanding

• Age 18-70 years old

A 6 day 5 night tour journey exploring the Tu Lan Cave System with spectacular caves and underground rivers where the movie Kong: Skull Island was filmed. With 3 nights jungle camping and 2 nights stay at beautiful Chay Lap Farmstay and Tu Lan Lodge.

The Tu Lan Cave Expedition - TL4 is one of the “must do” caving tours in Vietnam for many visitors nowadays. This hiking adventure run by Oxalis Adventure Tours, this expedition is ranked as adventure Level 5: “Demanding”, and is just below the [Son Doong Expedition](#) and [Hang Ba Deep Jungle Expedition](#) which are currently ranked at level 6: “Hard”, the highest level in the Oxalis Adventure’ caving tour scale relating to physical fitness and ability.

The [Tu Lan Cave system](#) was discovered by a local named Dinh Hong Nham in 2009. During his fishing trips, he discovered three caves - Tu Lan, To Mo large and To Mo small in the area. The cave system was then explored and surveyed by Mr. Howard Limbert with the British - Vietnamese Cave Expedition team, and now includes more than 25 large and small caves. The Tu Lan Caves were featured in [National Geographic Magazine in 2011 together with Hang Son Doong](#). A photo of Hang Ken taken by photographer Carsten Peter won the National Geographic photo award in the same year.

Tu Lan Expedition is one of the longest Oxalis Adventures tours, enabling you to explore all seven of the most beautiful dry and river caves of the Tu Lan Cave System. This tour includes a series of fascinating experiences such as trekking through the forest, wading in streams, swimming in the caves, abseiling down into underground rivers, climbing steep hills, walking through beautiful valleys, exploring the largest dry cave in the system - Hang Tien, and camping for 3 nights by the riverside and amidst the majestic natural scenery. Tu Lan Expedition highlights include:

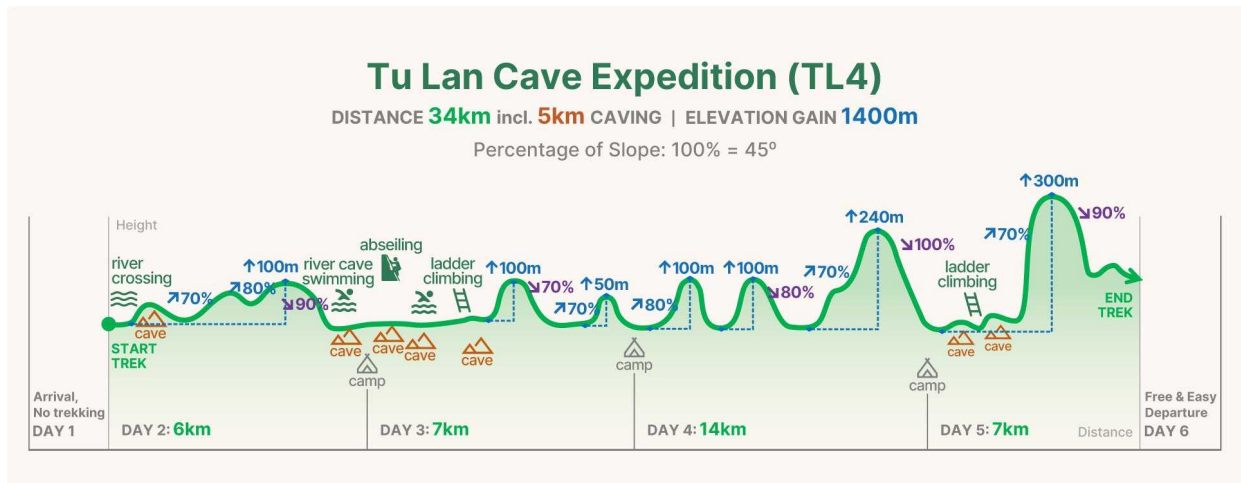
- ✔ **Swim in the underground rivers inside the caves:** The valleys are connected by unique underground caves. Guests can experience the special feeling of swimming inside the caves with total darkness. This is one of the great experiences of caving tours in Tu Lan. If you don't want to swim for a specific reason, you can trek up the mountains.
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- ✔ **Explore many magnificent caves:** This is a Vietnam adventure tour where customers can explore seven different caves, from caves with rivers flowing through them, to dry caves with river passages, and totally dry caves located high on the mountain. Each cave has its own unique features so there will be a new experience with each cave you visit. The dry caves have magnificent speleothems, while the water caves have a unique underground river, blue lakes or unique stalactite curtains hanging from the ceiling of the cave.
- ✔ **Camp in the primary jungle:** Guests participating in the Tu Lan Expedition will have 3 nights camping at Tu Lan campsites in the primary jungle. The camps are located in the most beautiful locations, with waterfalls and natural swimming pools among the vast primeval forests.
- ✔ **Become a real caver:** Tu Lan Expedition participants will receive basic training on how to use technical equipment for a 15m abseil in the darkest part of the cave. Or use safety equipment to experience crossing the underground river with the flying fox system.
- ✔ **Experience Local Cultures:** At the end of the trek, guests will have dinner at one of the local homes in Tan Hoa. Guests will have the opportunity to learn about the life and beautiful culture of the Nguon people (considered a minority group) in the mountainous areas. Guests will understand more about how tourism activities have helped change their lives. Cycling to explore the beautiful Tan Hoa village is a peaceful experience.
- ✔ **Unique accommodation before and after the trek:** Guests will stay 1 night at Chay Lap Farmstay before the trek and 1 night at Tu Lan Lodge in Tan Hoa Village after the trek. These accommodations have been built by Oxalis to adapt to nature. The rooms are built on the hillside or floating house style to adapt with seasonal flooding in September and October.

Note: 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.

To book a tour for a group, please send the tour information to them and instruct each member to complete the booking form on their own. Our booking system lets each person fill in their own information, avoiding errors or missing details when someone else does it for you. Read more about [Oxalis Adventure Level](#).



Itinerary

TL4 tour itinerary is subject to change due to weather conditions. The path can be quite muddy and slippery when it rains. This trekking adventure has a technical difficulty second only to the Son Doong Expedition tour, and is one of the best treks in Vietnam, however it will require endurance because in order to see all of the majestic caves in the area, customers have to earn it by climbing up and down many hills. Many parts of the Tu Lan trekking tour will require swimming in the caves, so all visitors and staff are required to wear life jackets when swimming underground. In case you do not want to participate in swimming for a specific reason, you can sit on the raft or boat arranged within the caves. The activities on the tour are diverse and this is a true adventure tour for those who are passionate about hiking in Vietnam and want to explore the caves.

[Download the itinerary](#)

Day 1: Arrival

Oxalis will pick you up at the airport or Dong Hoi train station and transfer you to Chay Lap Farmstay for check-in. There are some free activities that you can enjoy while staying at Chay Lap Farmstay including: kayaking on the Chay River or cycling through a peaceful village, so make the most of your time here. In the evening, you can have dinner at Chay Lap Farmstay (at your own expense); the restaurant serves very delicious local food. Relax and prepare for the next day's trip.

Day 2: Chay Lap - Secret cave - Tu Lan campsite

At 08:00 am on the morning of the departure day, an Oxalis guide will pick you up from [Chay Lap Farmstay](#) to head to the home of the Tu Lan Cave System (112 km from Dong Hoi, 70

km from Phong Nha). At Oxalis Tan Hoa office you will have a safety briefing, including regulations, safety instructions, and the tour schedule. You will sign the [Release Form](#), receive safety equipment, pack up and start the expedition.

The team will start by hiking across the farmland to reach the first cave of the Tu Lan Cave System. After wading across the river, explorers will climb up a small hill leading to the entrance of Secret Cave, which is quite small and was discovered in recent years by one of Oxalis' Tu Lan porters. Secret Cave is an old cave with many unique cave formations, there are many cave pearls on the cave floor and visitors need to follow the ribbon that marks the path. After that, visitors will return and have lunch at the cave entrance.

Following lunch, the group will hike through the forest and over the hills to reach the campsite in Tu Lan Valley. Guests will explore and swim in Hang Ken Cave in the afternoon. Hang Ken Cave is one of the most beautiful river caves in the Tu Lan Cave System. After finishing exploring this cave, the team will return to the campsite to arrange their tents, and have free time for swimming and leisure. Enjoy a delicious dinner prepared by local chefs with many choices including options for vegetarians. After dinner, guests can enjoy chatting with guides and porters or relax and enjoy watching the galaxy in the dark sky.

The campsite is fully equipped with clean and hygienic Oxalis composting toilets, changing rooms, tents, mattresses, sleeping bags and pillows, to make your night's camping comfortable.

Day 3: Tu Lan Cave - Kim Cave - Hung Ton Cave - Hung Dung campsite

Guests will explore the 3 beautiful caves of Tu Lan Cave, Hang Kim Cave, and Hung Ton Cave on this, the second day. After breakfast, the guide and safety assistants will provide a demonstration on how to use the abseil equipment. After the training session, the group will hike from the campsite to Tu Lan Cave entering via a dry cave entrance. Guests will complete the adventurous 15m abseil from the dry passage to the river passage of Tu Lan Cave, one by one. The landing spot is on an inflatable raft. After everyone finishes the abseil, the group will paddle out of Tu Lan River Cave, and enjoy the marvelous natural scenery of jungle, river and mountain.

After Tu Lan Cave, the group will continue to explore and swim through Hang Kim Cave. Guests will explore a 300m dry section and view the natural light shining into the cave from the higher cave entrance. Following some swims and cascades the group will exit Hang Kim into the picturesque To Mo valley with waterfalls and a turquoise lake in the middle of wild mountains and forests. Guests can swim in the lake and relax while waiting for lunch to be served.

After lunch, the group continues with the exploration of Hung Ton Cave. The entrance is located right next to the waterfall flowing into To Mo Valley. Guests will swim about 100m to reach a dry cave passage, and then climb a ladder using specialized safety equipment to exit the cave. The group will then climb a hill called "Lom Com" to reach La Ken Valley. After crossing La Ken Valley and climbing another mountain pass the team will reach Hung Dung campsite, where they will camp for the night. Hung Dung campsite is located next to a crystal clear river and surrounded by primeval jungle trees.

*Due to high water levels at Hung Dung Campsite after the rainy season, you will camp at La Ken Campsite from November to January for safety reasons.

Day 4: Hung Dung campsite - Hung Nhai - Hang Tien campsite

On this day guests will mainly trek through the forest, wade across streams and climb over the hills. From Hung Dung Valley, guests will hike to Hung Nhai Valley, crossing steep hills, forests and streams to reach Hang Tien campsite. This is one of the most beautiful campsites on this Tu Lan tour. The day's trek is about 8 km and elevation gain is about 350m.

The campsite is located right next to the stream and the Mooc Lake also called the "natural infinity swimming pool" by guests. Guests can swim in the infinity pool or paddle a SUP on the Rao Nan River in front of the campsite.

Day 5: Hang Tien 1 Cave - Hang Tien 2 Cave- Tu Lan Lodge

After breakfast, guests will explore Hang Tien 1 - the largest dry cave of the Tu Lan Cave System. Hang Tien Cave has been carved by nature into mysterious and spectacular shapes and patterns. The group continues along the rocky passage, climbing a 10m ladder with a safety rope to reach the exit of Hang Tien 1.

From the exit, enter a large primary jungle with huge trees and beautiful flora. Continue through the forest to reach Hang Tien 2. The entrance of the cave is rather small and quite breezy. The wind carries cool air from inside the cave to make the entrance feel like a natural air conditioner. The group can rest here for a while before going down to explore the cave. Hang Tien 2 is famous for its unique rock patterns along the cave wall, numerous gour pools forming layers, each one lower than the previous like terraced fields. After exploring Hang Tien 2, the group will return to the cave entrance and start hiking up the rocky mountains with an elevation gain of about 200m. Lunch will be prepared in the valley along the way.

From the top of the mountains descend the forest path leading down to the road where a

bus and cold drinks are waiting. Oxalis Adventures will award the Tu Lan Expedition medal to all members of the group for successfully conquering Quang Binh's adventure tour of a lifetime. The group will take the bus back to Oxalis Tan Hoa office, enjoy a shower and check-in at the [Tu Lan Lodge](#). Free leisure time until dinner. At 17:30 pm, the group will cycle to a local house for dinner, then return to Tu Lan Lodge.

Day 6: Departure

In the early morning, guests can enjoy watching the sunrise over the beautiful Tan Hoa green fields, or cycle to explore [Tan Hoa Village](#). Enjoy breakfast prepared by the chef from the tour at Tu Lan Lodge.

OPTIONAL: For those still very passionate about adventure, you can register for the [ATV - Moto off-road tour to explore Lim forest and Kong's home](#), right at Tu Lan Lodge, for two hours. These are sports tourism activities where clients can ride the ATV upon slopes, fording streams, crossing green fields, and especially passing through the man made cave, the home of King Kong.

Please inform the consultants of the departure time of your plane/train/car at least one day in advance so that they can conveniently arrange the transfer. Hotel check-out time will be 12:00 noon. There will be a shuttle service from Tan Hoa to Phong Nha or Dong Hoi City at 12:30 pm after the Tu Lan Cave Expedition tour. If you leave Quang Binh that day, make sure your flight/train/bus is scheduled after 4:00 pm.

If you want to stay a few more nights at the hotel or are interested in other sightseeing activities in the Phong Nha - Ke Bang area, please contact your Oxalis Adventure Consultant in advance so she or he can help to arrange that. Or talk to the front desk for last minute arrangements.

Adventure level on tour

After many years of adventure tourism activities, Oxalis Adventure has created a Level of Adventure scale to help guests participating in Oxalis tours to visualize and choose the adventure tour most suitable for their fitness and health. This scale is not to be applied to other companies or tours with different conditions and terrains. The easiest level (level 1) anyone can join, and the most difficult level - 6 requires regular exercise and some trekking experience.

Those who regularly practice sports or regularly participate in mountain climbing and trekking tours in the forest can complete this tour easily.

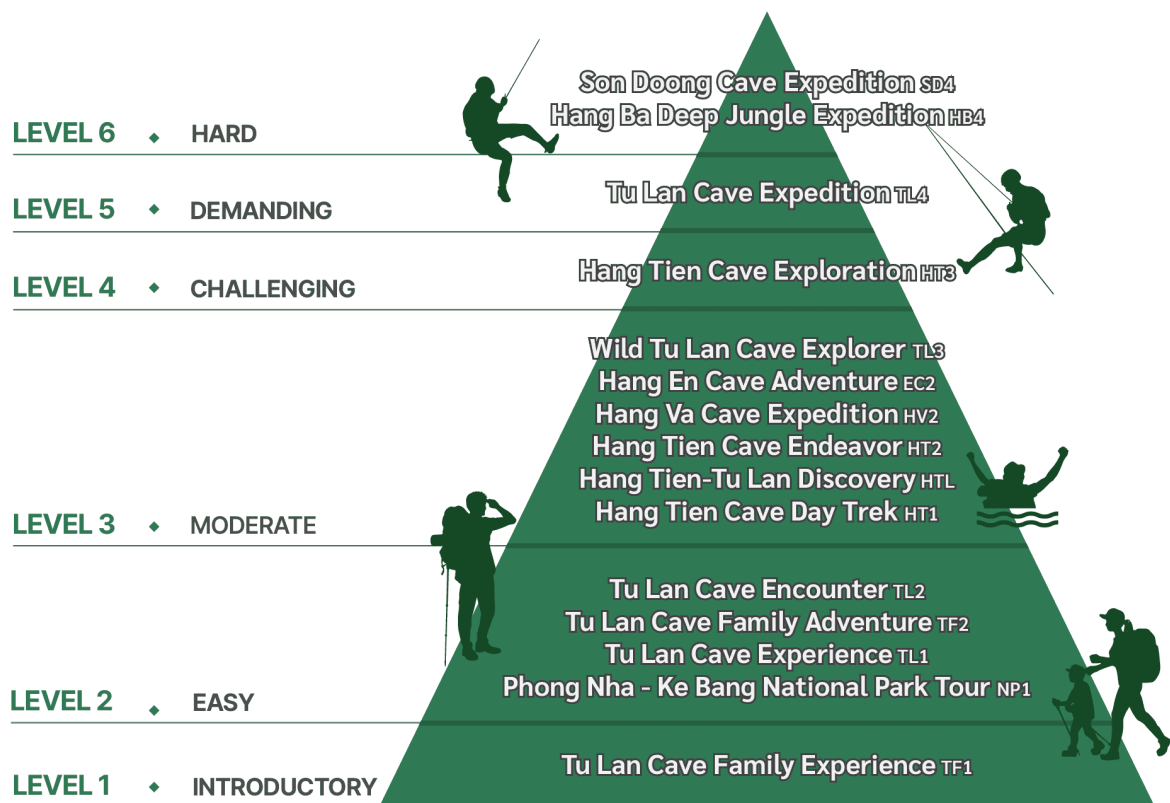
Adventure level 5 · Demanding

The Tu Lan Cave Expedition tour is rated as Demanding (Level 5) on the Oxalis adventure level system. The difficulty of the tour is based on the physical fitness and health of average active people, not runners, athletes, or intensely active individuals.

Activities: Crossing rocky terrain, climbing steep hills, hiking long distances, swimming and using technical equipment, caving.

The number of guests per tour: Maximum 8 customers; Age 18-70 years old.

- ★ Terrain with many steep hills
- ★ Trekking 34km of mountainous terrain
- ★ Elevation gain of 1400m
- ★ 5km of cave exploration
- ★ River and stream crossings
- ★ Swimming underground rivers (Total 1km intermittently)
- ★ 15m adventure abseil in the cave (directly guided and supervised by the guide)



Tu Lan Cave Expedition (TL4)

DISTANCE 34km incl. 5km CAVING | ELEVATION GAIN 1400m

Percentage of Slope: 100% = 45°



Items to bring on Tu Lan Cave Expedition tour

Tour TL4 is a multiple-day trek and considered to be the one of the toughest Vietnam jungle tours, with many different terrains and you need to have a thorough preparation for the trip. 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.

Oxalis provides

Camping equipment: tent, mattresses, pillow, sleeping bags

Caving and safety gears: helmet, headlight, gloves, dry box for electric device, mini size camera ...

PVC backpack (35L) to carry helmet, dry box, water and things you need during the trek

Basic jungle boots (size 36-46 EU)

Water bottle (1L)

Water filter

Compost toilet, toilet paper, hand cleaner

You need to prepare

ESSENTIAL CLOTHING

Trekking clothes:

- 3-4 quick-dry, bright, long-sleeved shirts

- 2-3 pairs of long pants (quick-dry)

- 1 waterproof jacket (winter months December 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 shoes (drainable);

Optional

Arm cover if wearing short-

sleeved T-shirts

Camera & Tripod

Ear plugs

Bandana or headband

Rehydration tablets

Blister prevention tape

Personal dry

Semi-dry bag (15L) for
campsite clothing sets and
personal items
First aid and medical rescue
equipment
Satellite phone
Mini-size portable fan inside
the tent (in summer)
Secure storage at office

*Waterproof/Gore Tex shoes
are not recommended.
4 pairs of calf-length, thick
socks
1 pair of sandals/slides for
campsite
Swimwear using at the
Campsites

bag/box for
electronic
devices

OPTIONAL 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
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Photos

