

Treasures of Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia

FROM LUANG PRABANG TO ANCIENT HANOI AND ANGKOR WAT



Wilderness Travel



Treasures of Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia

TRIP DATES

2024

November 8-23, 2024

December 6-21, 2024

December 20, 2024-January 4, 2025

2025

January 9-24, 2025

February 4-19, 2025

February 13-28, 2025

November 8-23, 2025

December 20, 2025-January 4, 2026

Gold-leafed pagodas glinting in the sun, women carrying goods to market by yoke basket, young monks in saffron robes—the visual images of Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia are striking. In Luang Prabang, Laos’ timeless temple town, we boat along the Mekong and meet hill villagers. In Vietnam, we take a bicycle rickshaw through Hanoi’s Old Quarter, overnight on a private boat in Bai Tu Long Bay, stroll the lantern-lit lanes of Hoi An, and marvel at the palaces of the Nguyen emperors in Hue. Our final treat is Angkor, Cambodia’s surreal “lost city,” where the stone towers of a medieval metropolis rise out of an enveloping forest. Our incredible Trip Leaders ensure an unforgettable cultural immersion in these ancient lands.

Itinerary

DAY 1

LUANG PRABANG, LAOS

Arrive in Luang Prabang, Laos' ancient royal capital, where you will be met and escorted to our hotel. Luang Prabang is set on the Mekong River and encircled by mountains. It is a charming town of gilded temples, palaces, and French colonial architecture, now preserved as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The whole area is noted throughout Asia for its distinctive Lue handloom weavings, and the local market operates as a venue for the Hmong hilltribe communities, with their unique cross-stitch and appliqué work. Our overnight is at the Maison Souvannaphoum...D

DAY 2

LUANG PRABANG

We set out for a walking tour through the atmospheric lanes of old Luang Prabang, visiting several temples dating to the 15th century, including the magnificent Wat Xieng Thong ("Golden Temple"), and getting to know some of the local people and their traditional and unique lifestyle. After lunch, we walk to the former Royal Palace, now a museum housing heirlooms of the deposed Lao monarchy. The collections include the highly revered Pra Bang Buddha image, claimed to have been cast in Sri Lanka over 2,000 years ago. Later this afternoon, we can climb Phu Si Hill, an important site with fine views over the town and the Mekong River. This evening we enjoy a special private baci ("welcoming") ceremony with villagers, followed by dinner at a local European-Asian restaurant...BLD

DAY 3

LUANG PRABANG / MEKONG RIVER TRIP

In the Morning Market, we'll see all manner of edible items on display including fish, frogs, insects and birds, as well as areca (betel) nuts, and a wonderful selection of tropical fruits and vegetables. We then board our private local boat for a journey up the Mekong River to the Pak Ou Caves, a Buddhist pilgrimage site located above the river. Over the last five centuries, processions of worshippers, from kings to peasants, have brought Buddha images to these sacred caves and it is a fascinating site to visit. Farther upriver at a traditional village, we get a glimpse of the life of rural Lao people first hand, with a visit to a local family and to the simple village school. After lunch, we return to Luang Prabang, where we visit a local silk-weaving community. There is also a vibrant hilltribe market in the old town that you're free to visit on your own. Dinner tonight is at a charming Lao restaurant in town...BLD

DAY 4

HILLTRIBE VILLAGES / HANOI, VIETNAM

Each day after sunrise, a procession of a hundred or more monks and novices passes through the lanes of Old Luang Prabang on their alms round. This offers us the opportunity to "make merit" by donating food to the monks, while we in turn receive their blessing, and it can be a wonderful photographic opportunity. After breakfast, we drive out of town into the surrounding hills



TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

Length:	16 days
Arrive:	Luang Prabang, Laos
Depart:	Siem Reap, Cambodia
Lodging:	14 nights deluxe hotels, 1 night aboard private traditional junk
Meals:	All meals included except 1 lunch and 4 dinners (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
Activity:	Archaeology, Cultural Adventures
Trip Level:	① 2 3 4 5 6 Cultural explorations and walking tours

HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore Luang Prabang's ethereal golden temples, meet hill tribe people
- Discover Hanoi's Old Quarter by bicycle rickshaw
- Experience surreal Bai Tu Long Bay on an overnight cruise
- Enjoy the majesty of Cambodia's temple-city of Angkor

Itinerary (cont'd)



“This was my second time on this trip, and I found it as enchanting as the first time.”

Judith M., Albuquerque NM



to visit a Hmong hilltribe village and a Khamu hilltribe village. Over 100 years ago, the Hmong were gradually displaced from their ancestral home in the mountains of Yunnan in southern China and many settled in the hills of Laos. During the Vietnam War, the CIA actively recruited Hmong “warriors” in the CIA’s secret war with the Pathet Lao communists, and many subsequently fled to Thailand (and the US) with the fall of the Royal Lao government in 1975. Hmong villagers still practice ancient animistic rituals including animal sacrifices, and some still dress in traditional handmade clothing and silver jewelry. We have an opportunity to meet with several Hmong families inside their simple bamboo and wood homes, and to experience the fascinating lives of these mountain people. We’ll also visit a village of Khamu, a people who were originally from the lower mountains of northern Laos. They have a very different culture, language, dress, and religion from the Hmong. A direct afternoon flight brings us to Hanoi, where we head to our hotel. Dinner this evening is on your own. Your Trip Leader will be happy to make recommendations, depending on how fancy or how local you want to go...BL

DAY 5

HANOI

Hanoi lies in the mighty Red River Delta and has a turbulent history going back over two thousand years. It is Vietnam’s bustling capital, graced by many parks and lakes, and the Old Quarter and the up market French Quarter still features some French colonial architecture. We explore some of Hanoi’s fascinating ancient sites, starting with the Confucian Temple of Literature, a university for Mandarins founded in 1070 by Emperor Ly Thanh Tong to honor scholars and men of administrative and military accomplishment. We also visit Quan Thanh Taoist Temple, established in the 12th century and dedicated to Tran Vo (“God of the North”), and we’ll explore Tran Quoc Pagoda, one of the oldest Buddhist pagodas in Vietnam and still in active use. After a lunch of cha ca, Hanoi’s famous fish and noodle specialty, we visit Hanoi’s excellent Museum of Ethnology. Designed with the help of the Musée de l’Homme in Paris, it features a collection of art and artifacts gathered from throughout Vietnam and its diverse tribal people. Hanoi is the undisputed art capital of Vietnam, and there are numerous artists of international caliber who reside and work in the city. This afternoon we visit the studio of one of Hanoi’s more renowned artists in lacquerware painting, an art form unique to Vietnam, and this evening we dine in one of Hanoi’s finest restaurants...BLD

DAY 6

UNCLE HO / HANOI’S OLD QUARTER

Our first visit is to “Uncle Ho” in his final resting place deep within the impressive Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum. It can be a chilling or an emotional experience, but one that is not easily forgotten. (Please note that Ho Chi Minh’s Mausoleum is occasionally closed for periodic maintenance October through December.) We walk via the beautiful Presidential Palace, formerly the Palace of the Governor of French Indochina, to Uncle Ho’s simple stilt house, where he lived between 1958 to 1969. At the Army Museum, we’ll see excellent

displays from both the “French” and the “American” wars in Vietnam. Finally this morning, we enter the notorious “Hanoi Hilton” prison (formally the French Maison Centrale), now a museum. Inmates here included Senator John McCain and Pete Peterson, who became the first post-war US Ambassador to Vietnam in 1995. In the afternoon, we take a break from the recent past when we explore Hanoi’s Old Quarter by cyclo (bicycle rickshaw) and on foot. In the 13th century, Hanoi’s 36 guilds established themselves here, each taking a different street. The streets still remain today, with Silversmiths Street, Incense Street, Buddhist Altars and Statues Street, Coffins Street, Fish Street, etc., as well as streets selling lacquerware, silk, paintings, and other commodities. It’s a fascinating kaleidoscope of activity and lots of fun to browse around. Later we attend a performance of Hanoi’s famous national Water Puppets...BLD

DAY 7

BAI TU LONG BAY / OVERNIGHT CRUISE ABOARD A CHINESE JUNK

We head out of Hanoi for a scenic drive to Hong Gai harbor. Arriving just before lunchtime, we board our private boat and enjoy lunch on board as we head out for an overnight cruise in Bai Tu Long Bay, one of the natural marvels of Vietnam and part of UNESCO's Halong Bay World Heritage area. It lies well off the beaten path and with fewer visitors than the now over-touristed Cat Ba area. Bai Tu Long National Park protects a spectacular karst landscape of sheer limestone islands jutting out of the South China Sea. As we begin our sail around the bay, we view the stunning rock formations and lagoons. Our explorations today and tomorrow may include Vung Vieng, a floating village where we can see a bit of the daily life of the fishing communities who live in the bay, and Thien Canh Son Cave, a huge cavern full of magnificent limestone stalactites and stalagmites.

Being aboard our private boat is in itself a delight. Constructed to resemble the picturesque centuries-old Chinese style junk, it has a flat bottom and high stern. The cabins are very spacious and have outward-facing windows, twin or queen beds, fans, air-conditioning, and private bathrooms. The dining room has picture windows so we can enjoy the views during meals. After dinner, some of the boat’s crew may bring spotlights out on the back deck and fish for squid. We are welcome to join them and try our hand at squid fishing! Our overnight in Halong Bay is a unique opportunity to capture and photograph the evening and early morning vistas...BLD

DAY 8

BAI TU LONG BAY / HOI AN

After a morning cruise around the bay, with breakfast served on board, we make our way back to Hanoi and proceed to the airport for our afternoon flight to Danang, with lunch on your own. On arrival, we head to the picturesque riverside town of Hoi An, about 20 miles south. Hoi An is one of Asia’s most enchanting places with a real sense of history in its streets. Known as Faifo to early European traders, it developed into a major international port between the 15th and 19th centuries, during



“Our Trip Leader was outstanding. His extensive knowledge, charm, patience, and delightful sense of humor made for a memorable trip.”

Anne W., Riverside, CT



Itinerary (cont'd)



“The trip was wonderful. I am impressed not only with the itinerary, hotels, and food, but also with how smoothly the trip runs.”

Robert B., Berkeley, CA



which time many splendid houses and other buildings were built by prosperous European, Japanese, and Chinese merchants. When the Cai Thu Bon River silted up, the port was moved to Danang and Hoi An was virtually abandoned to a legacy of its glorious past. Today, Hoi An contains numerous ancient buildings and lanes and is another UNESCO World Heritage Site. For dinner tonight, we sample Vietnamese fusion cuisine at a local restaurant...BD

DAY 9 HOI AN

We'll spend much of the day strolling around this charming town and visit several houses, temples, a museum, and the old Japanese Covered Bridge. We also visit the lively market on the quay and see fishermen bringing their catch to market in small boats. For lunch, we sample delicious cao lau noodles, unique to Hoi An. In the afternoon, we take a river trip and see how local fishermen employ gigantic nets to catch fish. Hoi An is something of an artists' colony and there are a number of studios and galleries, and excellent tailor-made silk clothing is available. Dinner is on your own tonight...BL

DAY 10 COASTAL DRIVE TO HUE

Today we head out on a beautiful and scenic drive along the magnificent coast from Hoi An to Hue, stopping en route in Danang, central Vietnam's major port city. Our first stop will be at Marble Mountains, five hills representing the five elements of the universe: water, wood, fire, metal, and earth. We climb Thuy Son ("Water Mountain") and explore its natural caves and Buddhist sanctuaries. We'll then stop briefly at China Beach, the notorious R&R stop for American troops during the war, and after that the Cham Museum, housing an exquisite display of Cham sculpture. The Indianized kingdom of Champa flourished from the 2nd to the 15th centuries, even conquering the mighty Angkor Empire in 1178 (scenes from this battle are sculpted in bas-relief at the Bayon Temple in Angkor). Our route to Hue takes us over Hai Van ("Sea Cloud") Pass with spectacular views, and we'll have lunch overlooking the South China Sea. We arrive in Hue in the late afternoon with time to visit Thien Mu Pagoda, one of the most famous structures in all Vietnam and a symbol of Buddhism and nationalism during the 1960s. A number of monks are resident here and we may have the opportunity to discuss Buddhism with one of them over a cup of Vietnamese tea. We then take a private "dragon boat" from the pagoda directly to our hotel. Dinner tonight is at a French-Vietnamese restaurant near the Citadel...BLD

DAY 11

HUE / THE ROYAL TOMBS / THE CITADEL

Hue was Vietnam's political capital from 1802 to 1945 under the reign of 13 emperors of the Nguyen Dynasty, and was also the site of some of the bloodiest battles of the 1968 Tet Offensive. This morning we venture into the countryside to visit two Royal Tombs of the Nguyen Dynasty: the majestic and serene tomb of Emperor Tu Duc is exquisite, set amid lovely gardens and pine groves; in contrast, the grandiose concrete tomb of Emperor Khai Dinh represents the later decline of the Vietnamese monarchy under French colonialism. We return to Hue city for lunch. In the afternoon we walk inside the moated Citadel, which formerly housed the Royal Palace, including the Forbidden Purple City. Much of the complex was damaged in the Tet Offensive, but ghosts of the past still lurk around its massive walls. Major restoration projects within the Citadel are ongoing under UNESCO, with excellent results. Later today we may stop to visit Dong Ba Central Market, where many goods are on display, including exotic fruits and vegetables, traditional Hue clothing, and the famous Vietnamese conical hats. Dinner on your own...BL

DAY 12

SAIGON

A morning flight brings us to Ho Chi Minh City, still known to the locals as Saigon. Here we enjoy a brief sightseeing trip around this big, bustling city, stopping to see the French Notre Dame Cathedral and the distinctive post office built in Colonial French style, before transferring to the Caravelle Hotel, situated adjacent to the Saigon Opera House, a former French colonial building in the heart of Saigon's lively downtown area. After a lunch of pho (Vietnamese style noodles), we visit the historic Reunification Palace (formally the Presidential Palace of South Vietnam), where the ornate and spacious chambers are in sharp contrast to the simple Uncle Ho house we saw in Hanoi. Diem, Thieu, war rooms, underground telecommunications centers, pictures of VC tanks crashing through wrought iron palace gates—the history of America's war in Vietnam is all here. The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure for you to explore this vibrant city on your own. The War Remnants Museum contains graphic displays of the US-VN war. Saigon also has some of the best shopping in Vietnam and excellent massage is available. Our last Vietnamese dinner this evening will be at one of Saigon's finest restaurants...BLD



Itinerary (cont'd)



DAY 13

FLY TO SIEM REAP, CAMBODIA / ANGKOR THOM AND THE BAYON

We have a midday flight to Siem Reap, the gateway to Angkor. Covered with intricate bas-reliefs and scattered across a tropical landscape, Angkor is a lasting monument to the glory of a bygone Khmer civilization and is one of the wonders of the world. Built between the 9th and 13th centuries to glorify a succession of Khmer kings, the temples are massive and majestic, with wide causeways, imposing gateways and towers, huge moats, and colossal sculptured Buddha images—all in a wonderful jungle setting. This afternoon we will visit the “Great City” of Angkor Thom, which was larger and more splendid than any city in Europe of the late 12th century. We start our explorations at the South Gate of Angkor Thom, and its impressive causeway flanked by gods and demons. We then proceed directly to the East Entrance of the magnificent Bayon Temple, noted for its gigantic Bodhisattva sculptures. First, we explore its remarkable bas-reliefs that depict a uniquely beautiful history of both Kings and the day-to-day life of Commoners in late 12th century Angkor. Later, we can climb atop the temple for close-up views of the massive Bodhisattva heads, each with eyes half-closed in silent meditation, and each with its own unique features. We return to our hotel, the Sofitel Angkor Phokeethra Resort, our home for the last three nights of the trip, for dinner at the Royal Court Terrace, which will be accompanied by a classical Khmer dance performance...BLD

DAY 14

TEMPLES OF ANGKOR / ANGKOR WAT / TONLE SAP CRUISE

We begin today's Angkor explorations with a visit to the Khmer's grandest and most inspiring temple complex: Angkor Wat. This architectural masterpiece was constructed in the 12th century and covers an area of over 500 acres. We explore its many galleries with columns, libraries, pavilions, courtyards, and ponds full of water reflecting the temple. Intricately carved bas-reliefs extend the length of the outer walls and corridors, depicting mythological scenes of Hindu epics and the magnificent court of King Suryavarman II, the builder of the temple. From Angkor Wat we drive along a rough track to the obscure Death Gate, one of Angkor Thom's five mammoth gates, where we climb atop the massive 26 foot high ancient city wall and walk through the quiet jungle canopy to Victory Gate (about 500 yards). Both gates have magnificent giant Bodhisattva heads towering above them. Also this morning we will see the Elephant Terrace, Phimeanakas Temple, the Royal Palace Enclosure, Preah Palilay Temple, and the Leper King Terrace, all within the “Great City” of Angkor Thom. After a delicious Khmer lunch in town, we drive to Tonle Sap (“Great Lake”) where we'll take a short excursion by private boat, stopping to visit Khmer and Vietnamese floating villages, a glimpse of Khmer life in the raw. Dinner this evening is on your own...BL

DAY 15

THE TEMPLES OF ANGKOR / BANTEAY SREI / ROLUOS GROUP

Today we drive out into the Cambodian countryside to experience some very special Khmer sites. Beyond the main Angkor complex, we discover the enchanting 10th century Banteay Srei Temple. It appears that the temple was designed to leave no space undecorated, and its extraordinary fine carvings in pink sandstone are quite unique. From here, we make our way to an atmospheric 11th century temple, now lying in ruins. The templet itself is small, but is inside a larger compound, surround by a laterite wall and moat. Time permitting, we can also visit a nearby school and village. We then head to the 9th century Roluos group of temples where we'll visit Prasat Bakong, a temple representing Mount Meru. Following lunch in Siem Reap, we visit Les Artisans d'Angkor, a school promoting the arts and crafts of Cambodia, much of which were temporarily lost under the Pol Pot regime (those who wish may proceed directly back to the hotel). Tonight we celebrate our Farewell Dinner at Mouhot's Dream, a lovely French themed restaurant in our hotel...BLD



DAY 16

THE TEMPLES OF ANGKOR / TA PROHM / PREAH KHAN / DEPART

On our last day in Angkor, we visit two special temples. Ta Prohm is a favorite with visitors because of the way in which huge fig, banyan, and kapok trees have grown throughout the temple's walls, their giant roots splitting open ancient Buddha sculptures with surreal effect. We also visit Preah Khan, the "Sacred Sword," a magnificent structure dedicated to the Buddhist religion by King Jayavarman VII. This huge temple complex is also largely overgrown with great trees and smothering roots still clinging to the sandstone. We return to our hotel for lunch and then transfer to the airport for early evening homeward-bound flights...BL



Trip Cost, Payment & Insurance

TRIP COST

Prices are per person, valid through Spring 2025

Call for details

*Note on Day 7 in Bai Tu Long Bay: Single cabins may not always be available on our private junk in Bai Tu Long Bay. For this overnight, if there is an unusually large number of single room requests, some trip members might be asked to share a twin cabin with a same-gender trip member.

To offer the lowest possible cost, our trips are priced according to the number of participants on the trip. All costs are per person, based on double occupancy. If you wish to have a single room, you must pay the single supplement fee. Please note that Wilderness Travel staff, or guests of Wilderness Travel such as travel writers, photographers, or leaders-in-training, are not included in the tier pricing count.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATE

Because the prices published for our program are set so far in advance of the trip dates, we are occasionally faced with exceptional cost increases and/or currency fluctuations that affect the actual cost of running the trip. In most years, no price changes are necessary. However, we do reserve the right to raise or lower the trip price if there is a significant change in costs or exchange rates. If this is the case, your final invoice will reflect the difference in trip cost.

TRIP COST INCLUDES

- Expert leadership of a Wilderness Travel Trip Leader and local guides
- Accommodations
- All meals included except 1 lunch and 4 dinners as indicated in the Detailed Itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Sightseeing as noted with entrance fees to sites and museums
- Surface transportation in buses or vans
- Land transportation, airport transfers for all passengers, and baggage handling

TRIP COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

International airfare, any meals not specified after each itinerary day, international airport departure taxes, optional tipping or gratuities to leaders or staff, hotels en route to/from Asia and any additional hotel nights that may be necessary due to airline schedule changes or other factors, pre-trip expenses of medical immunizations (if any), travel insurance, or passports and visas, and other expenses of a personal nature (premium alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation	\$600
90 days prior to departure	Balance

CANCELLATION AND TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE

Minimum fee (Internal airfare): \$200 per person
61-90 days prior to departure: 25% of trip cost
46-60 days prior to departure: 50% of trip cost
45 days or less: 100% of trip cost

*Please note that this differs from our regular catalog departures.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We highly recommend you purchase travel insurance. You can take advantage of a comprehensive Travel Protection Plan designed for Wilderness Travel by Travelex, or purchase other insurance on your own. See our website for details:

www.wildernesstravel.com/toucan/travel-insurance

Bangkok Extension

Discover the wealth of beautiful cultural monuments of Bangkok, one of Asia's most exciting cities. With a private guide, journey by private longtail boat through the winding klongs (waterways) of the Chao Phraya River, then spend the day visiting the city's ornate and beautiful sites, including Wat Arun, Bangkok's most well-known landmark, the dazzling Grand Palace, the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, the enormous gold-plated Reclining Buddha, and the vibrant market at Pak Klong Talad, where a vast variety of orchids and colorful flowers are sold.

DAY 1 ARRIVE BANGKOK, THAILAND

Arrive and transfer to your hotel...meals on your own

DAY 2 BANGKOK CITY SIGHTS

This morning you'll meet your guide and drive to Wat Pho in time to experience the monks' morning chanting ritual. Wat Pro is one of the oldest temples in Bangkok and houses the famous 148-foot reclining gold-plated Buddha as well as the original school of traditional Thai massage. From here, a tuk-tuk ride brings you to Pak Klong Talad flower market then onward to the spectacular Grand Palace, home to the most revered Buddha image in Thailand, and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha (which is actually made of jade or jasper). After a visit to Wat Arun, once the grand royal temple of King Rama II, enjoy lunch at a local restaurant, then take a one-hour boat ride on the klongs of the Chao Phraya River. In Chinatown, which offers a first-hand look at Old Bangkok, walk along Yaowarat Road, with its shops selling everything from gold and garments to antiques and musical instruments. In this colorful neighborhood, have a cup of Chinese tea with the locals at a very old teashop (it dates to 1782). Explore the bustling Talad Kao Market, where a variety of food, fresh fruits, and Chinese herbs are on display. Overnight at hotel...BL

DAY 3 BANGKOK / DEPART

Morning at leisure for optional touring until noon check out. Transfer to the Bangkok airport for departure...B

EXTENSION PRICING

TBA

Special Note: Airline flights (to/from Bangkok) are not included in the Tour Cost. Wilderness Travel can book these flights for you at additional cost, or you can book them on your own. If you are interested in a longer stay in Bangkok, please call us for details and pricing.

Extension Cost Includes: Services of local English-speaking guide, accommodations, meals as indicated, activities as indicated and entrance fees for activities as listed, ground transportation and transfers as indicated.

Not Inluded: International airfare; any additional hotel nights that may be needed before or after your extension; airport departure taxes; any meals not specified after each itinerary day; gratuities to local guides, drivers, and transfer agents; pre-trip expenses of medical immunizations; visa fees (if applicable); travel insurance; any other expenses of a personal nature (alcoholic beverages, sodas, laundry, etc.).



Accommodations



MAISON SOUVANNAPHOUM

Luang Prabang, Laos

Days 1 to 3 (3 nights)

Steeped in history and colonial charm, the Maison Souvannaphoum is a former royal residence with contemporary design features. Each guest room has a balcony (rooms in the Garden Wing face the pool) and feature one king bed or two single beds. Facilities include an outdoor swimming pool (a treat after a long hot day in town) and a full-service health spa, including great massages. It's a short stroll to the night market, and if you like, you can borrow a bike from the hotel and take a spin to see the town from another perspective.



MELIA HANOI

Hanoi, Vietnam

Days 4 to 6 (3 nights)

This large modern hotel is centrally located, close to the Old Quarter, and offers great views of the city from the higher floors. Facilities include two restaurants featuring both international and Vietnamese cuisine, bar/lounge, and a deli offering quick breakfasts or afternoon snacks. There are also a fitness center, outdoor swimming pool, and spa services.



SIGNATURE HALONG CRUISE

Hanoi, Vietnam

Day 7 (1 night)

The Halong Bay Cruise is an elegant ship designed to make her way through the limestone islands and inlets of Halong Bay. This 40-passenger vessel has a 2 to 1 passenger to crew ratio, 12 spacious cabins, and three decks. Cabins feature hand-crafted wooden desks and wardrobes, remote-controlled AC, and private Jacuzzi bathtubs. Relax on one of the ship's sun terraces—the Rooftop Sun Terrace is a guest favorite, or have a drink at the bar beneath the sway of the ship's sails. The restaurant serves fresh seafood, Vietnamese, and international cuisine with lively Asian flavors.



HOTEL ROYAL HOI AN

Hoi An, Vietnam

Days 8 to 9 (2 nights)

In a quiet area just a short walk to the majestic Old Quarter of Hoi An and bordered by the tranquil Thu Bon River, the Hotel Royal Hoi An features stylishly decorated modern rooms, two restaurants, a charming spa, and a swimming pool.



AZERAI LA RESIDENCE, HUE

Hue, Vietnam

Days 10 to 11 (2 nights)

Located on the Perfume River near the center of Hue, Azerai La Residence is a former governor's residence renovated into a boutique hotel with a French colonial ambiance. The hotel overlooks the Citadel of Hue and features tranquil, jasmine-scented gardens, Art Deco-inspired rooms, bar, and restaurant. Unwind in the luxurious spa, swim a few laps in the huge saltwater pool, check out the gym and tennis court, or rent a bike from the hotel for a spin through town.



CARAVELLE HOTEL

Saigon, Vietnam

Day 12 (1 night)

The chic Caravelle is situated adjacent to the Saigon Opera House in the heart of downtown. Many luminaries have stayed here, including former US President Bill Clinton and actor Michael Caine, and the Saigon Saigon Bar, once a famous gathering place for war correspondents, is still a lively venue every evening. Guest rooms offer a choice of king-sized or two large single beds with views of the city. Recreational facilities include a fitness center, outdoor pool, Jacuzzi, salon, and spa. The Caravelle has two restaurants, four bars, and a casino. Shoppers take note: Some of Saigon's best shopping is in the streets immediately around the hotel.



SOFITEL ANGKOR PHOKEETHRA RESORT

Siem Reap, Cambodia

Days 13 to 15 (3 nights)

Set among lovely gardens and ponds, the Sofitel Angkor Phokeethra Resort will feel like an oasis of serenity after a full day exploring the temples of Angkor Wat. A combination of French and Khmer architecture, the hotel features tastefully decorated guest rooms with wooden floors, ceiling fans, soft linens and vibrant local silks, as well as a friendly staff. Set just 10 minutes from the Angkor Archaeological Park, the hotel features a spa, a huge free-form swimming pool, and a poolside Jacuzzi. There are three restaurants, including the Royal Court Terrace featuring nightly Khmer dance performances under the stars.

These are our signature accommodations for this trip. Although it is highly unlikely, we may make substitutions when necessary. To see more photos and descriptions, please visit our webpage and click on "Accommodations."

Arrival & Departure

Upon confirming your trip reservation, we will send you a Welcome Packet that includes a list of documents (passport, visas, etc.) required for your trip. Please feel free to call if you would like this information before making your air arrangements.

ARRIVAL & MEETING PLACE

Maison Souvannaphoum
Luang Prabang, Laos

Date: Day 1

Suggested arrival time: early afternoon

Suggested Arrival Airport
Luang Prabang, Laos (LPQ)

A complimentary transfer is provided from the Luang Prabang airport to the Maison Souvannaphoum. A representative will meet you outside the customs area and will be holding a Wilderness Travel sign. If you are arriving on a different day, a transfer will also be arranged for you. If you have booked extra services through Wilderness Travel for early arrival, a voucher for your transfer and extra hotel nights will be sent with your final documents.

DEPARTURE

Sofitel Royal Angkor Hotel
Siem Reap, Cambodia

Date: Day 16

Suggested departure time: after 5:00 pm

Suggested Airport for Departure
Siem Reap, Cambodia (REP)

There are activities planned on the morning of Day 16, the last day of your trip, so please arrange for a late afternoon/evening departure. A complimentary transfer will be provided from the hotel to the Siem Reap Airport. If you are departing on a different day, a transfer will also be arranged for you. If you have booked extra services through Wilderness Travel for an extended stay in Siem Reap, a voucher for your transfer and extra hotel nights will be sent with your final documents.

INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAVEL

You are responsible for making your own arrangements for flights to Luang Prabang, Laos, and from Siem Reap, Cambodia. The most convenient routing is via Bangkok. Airlines with the most convenient schedules for this trip include:

Emirates (via Dubai)
800-777-3999
www.emirates.com

Singapore Airlines (via Singapore)
www.singaporeair.com

United (via Japan/Taiwan)
800-241-6522
www.united.com

Korean Air (via Seoul)
800-438-5000
www.koreanair.com

If your international carrier does not include the flights from Bangkok to Luang Prabang or from Siem Reap back to Bangkok, we recommend you book these flights directly through Bangkok Airways. www.bangkokair.com

There are many online consolidators for booking travel, but for more personal help arranging air transport, you can contact Exito Travel at 1-800-655-4053 in the US or 1-800-670-2605 in Canada. They are very adept at putting flight itineraries together, to even the most far-flung places. More information can be found on Exito's website at www.exitotravel.com.

The name on your airline ticket must match the name on your passport exactly, and your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of return to the U.S.

Please do not purchase your tickets until you are confirmed on the trip. Once your tickets have been purchased, please forward a copy of the email confirmation that shows your exact flight arrival and departure times. It is your responsibility to ensure your flight times coordinate with the arrival and departure logistics for this trip.

EXTRA HOTEL NIGHTS IN BANGKOK

Depending on your routing, it is necessary to depart from the US one or possibly two days prior to Day 1 of the trip itinerary. We recommend an overnight in Bangkok the night before the trip. The Novotel Suvarnabhumi Airport Hotel (www.novotel.com) is conveniently located next to the Bangkok International Airport.

For longer stays, we suggest a downtown hotel:

Royal Orchid Sheraton Hotel
www.royalorchidsheraton.com

Siam Heritage Hotel
www.thesiamheritage.com

The Peninsula Bangkok
www.peninsula.com/bangkok

Bangkok Marriott Resort & Spa
www.marriott.com

Navalai River Resort
www.navalai.com



Trip Leaders

Wilderness Travel Trip Leaders have a passion and a joy for creating an unforgettable journey. We are extremely proud of them and the incredible travel experiences they make possible. For more information about our Trip Leaders, including client comments about them and which specific trips they will be leading, please visit our webpage and click on “Trip Leaders”: www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/vietnam-cambodia-laos-indochine-tour/



DAVID HENLEY

David Henley was born and raised in England, where he studied as a commercial photographer before embarking on an extended adventure throughout Asia. He eventually settled in Chiang Mai, where he has been living for over 25 years. In addition to trip leading and traveling throughout Southeast Asia, David continues to nurture a passion for photography. He is the Managing Director of CPA Media, a mixed media company, and also owns and operates an online picture library that deals in historical and contemporary images of Asia. His guidebooks include Insight Guides and Eyewitness Guides, and his photography has appeared in numerous newspapers and magazines including the Washington Post, National Geographic Traveler, and Hemispheres. David is a founding member of Chiang Mai’s renowned Writers Club. Whether he is photographing people and places, or sharing his historical and cultural knowledge of temples and palaces, his trip members appreciate his keen intelligence, depth of knowledge, and engaging personality.



MATHEW SMITH

Mathew Smith, a former language teacher from the UK, went to Thailand to teach in 1987 and fell in love with Southeast Asia. Fluent in Thai, Mathew is revered by trip members for his extraordinary knowledge of Southeast Asia’s politics, history, and culture, and also for his easygoing style and sense of humor. Mathew has led Wilderness Travel’s Indochine trips for almost twenty years, yet he’s still constantly intrigued, surprised, and delighted by the people he meets and the places he explores. “It is seldom that you get to lead a trip to three such fascinating countries—Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia—whose histories and cultures, although unique, complement each other so well.” He also explores Burma frequently, enchanted by the country’s quiet beauty. “I particularly love the rural areas and am inspired by the nature of the relationships between the Burmese people and their environment...this is an especially exciting time to travel there.” Mathew is a gentleman and scholar with an uncanny ability to run a smooth trip. His home base is in Chiang Mai where he lives with his wife and daughter.

Trip Details

WHAT THE TRIP IS LIKE

The trip is Level 1+, or Easiest. It is an overland cultural adventure, and for the most part, physical activity is light but we still encourage participants to get in shape for the trip because travel to remote places does require some physical stamina. We ask that you make a special effort to bring flexibility and a spirit of adventure to this unique journey.

WEATHER

Laos in November and March should be warm-to-hot (80°Fs) during the days, with pleasant evening temperatures (60s). Laos in December-February will be cooler (70s), with cool-cold nights (50s) and cool, foggy mornings. Normally, there is only a small chance of rain from November through early March, and weather for the most part should be sunny.

Vietnam lies within various climate zones. Hanoi during November-March should be warm (70s) during the day with pleasant evening temperatures (60s), while in December through February can be chilly (50s-60s) during the days with cold nights (50s). During winter (November-March), Hanoi has the possibility of drizzle or rain. Bai Tu Long Bay weather is similar to that of Hanoi.

Hue during November-March has a very varied climate (different from all other regions) that may include some drizzle and rain. Hoi An during November-March should be pleasant, sunny, and warm (70°F-80°F) with nice sea breezes but on occasion it can also be rainy. Saigon during November-March (their “dry” season) will be hot and steamy during the days with warm, pleasant evenings (70s), similar to the climate of Bangkok.

Cambodia (Angkor) during November-March is likely to be hot and sunny during the days (80s-90s) with warm, pleasant evenings (70s). The climate at Angkor is dryer and hotter than Hanoi and Laos. Our trips schedule temple visits in the early morning and late afternoon with a rest break during the midday heat.

BEING A CONSIDERATE TRAVELER

Please show respect for the cultures we are visiting by observing local customs concerning appropriate dress, particularly in sacred places. Your Trip Leader is always available to answer any questions that you may have regarding this. If it is necessary to use a cell phone during the trip, please do so privately. Smoking is rarely an issue these days, but if you do smoke, please do so only away from the group.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT TRIP

Adventure travel often involves exotic destinations, unusual levels of physical exertion, or activities you may not have participated in previously. We work hard to help you choose the right trip for you, paying attention to your individual interests, abilities, and needs. If you have questions about the level of comfort or any of the activities described in this itinerary, please call Wilderness Travel at 1-800-368-2794 and ask for the Asia Manager or email us at asia@wildernesstravel.com.

REFERENCES

We'd be happy to put you in touch with a past client that has traveled with us on this or a similar trip.

Average Daily Max/Min °F												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Luang Prabang	84/56	89/59	90/64	82/69	97/74	79/57	89/74	87/74	82/72	88/70	84/64	79/57
Hanoi	67/56	68/59	73/64	80/70	88/75	90/78	91/79	89/78	87/76	83/71	77/65	71/59
Siem Reap	90/67	91/69	94/79	95/77	95/77	92/76	90/76	89/77	90/76	88/75	87/72	87/68
Rainfall - Inches												
Luang Prabang	0.6	0.7	1.2	4.3	6.4	6.1	9.1	11.8	6.5	3.1	1.2	0.5
Hanoi	0.7	1.0	1.7	3.6	7.4	9.5	11.4	12.5	10.5	5.2	1.7	0.9
Siem Reap	0.28	0.13	1.1	2.4	6.9	8.7	9.3	5.9	10.8	9.7	3.2	0.3

Toucan Club Rewards & Discounts



MEN'S T-SHIRT



WOMEN'S T-SHIRT



PATAGONIA SYNCHILLA FLEECE VEST
PLUS INSULATED CAMELBAK WATER BOTTLE



PATAGONIA R1 PULLOVER

We are very proud to have one of the highest rates of repeat travelers in the business, and have established the Wilderness Travel Toucan Club to reward you for your loyalty. For more information, please visit the Toucan Club page of our website at www.wildernesstravel.com/toucan.

Here's how it works:

YOUR FIRST TRIP

As a first-time traveler, you receive a lightweight Wilderness Travel T-shirt and set of durable WT Luggage Tags. On subsequent trips, we're happy to send you a new WT T-shirt and set of Luggage Tags by request.

YOUR SECOND TRIP

A top quality Wilderness Travel insulated stainless steel water bottle by CamelBak and a cozy Wilderness Travel fleece vest by Patagonia (\$130 value).

YOUR THIRD TRIP

A versatile Wilderness Travel R-1 pullover by Patagonia (\$140 value).

YOUR FOURTH TRIP

Discounts on the cost of your trip begin! You receive a 4% discount on the tour cost.

FIVE AND MORE TRIPS

You receive a 5% discount on the base trip cost. On your sixth trip, you receive a 6% discount, and so on up to your 10th trip. The maximum discount is 10%, with a ceiling of \$500.

Note: Due to special pricing considerations, Toucan Club discounts do not apply to our Private Journeys or Special Events. However, your participation on these trips does count toward your Toucan discount on future departures of Wilderness Travel's regular adventures.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Toucan Club travel discounts cannot be used in conjunction with any other discount, unless otherwise specified. Discounts are deducted from the base trip cost and shown on the final invoice. The base trip cost is the main land/tier cost and does not include single supplement fees, extensions, internal airfare, or other additional charges. Bonus gifts (T-shirts, luggage tags, vests, water bottles, and pullovers) will be mailed approximately three weeks prior to trip departure. Terms and conditions of Toucan Club bonuses are subject to change or cancellation at the discretion of Wilderness Travel, Inc.



WILDERNESS TRAVEL HAS BEEN AWARDED:

Best Travel Specialists in the World: *Condé Nast Traveler*, 2024, 4-time winner

World's Best Tour Operators: *Travel + Leisure*, 11-time winner

Best Wildlife, Hiking & Walking Trips: *AFAR Magazine*, 3 years in a row

Best Adventure Travel Companies: *USA Today*

Trip of the Year: *Outside Magazine*, 9-time winner

50 Tours of a Lifetime: *National Geographic Traveler*, 9 years in a row

Best Adventure Travel Companies: *National Geographic Adventure*, 3-time winner

Please be advised that California has established a Travel Consumer Restitution Fund under the California Seller of Travel Law that took effect January 1, 1996. This fund is designed to protect consumers from unscrupulous practices by discount airfare ticket sellers or air charter operators. Unfortunately, this law does not cover non-California residents and, even in the case of California residents, it does not cover any foreign travel where the foreign "providers of transportation or travel services" are not in compliance with the Sellers of Travel Law (compliance being defined as registered as a Seller of Travel in California and a participant in the Travel Consumer Restitution Fund). Thus none of Wilderness Travel's tours qualify and we are required by law to advise each client that they are not covered by the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires sellers of travel to maintain a trust account or bond. This business has a trust account. California Seller of Travel #100769640

While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities and trip routing, rather than an inflexible schedule of events; it is subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. This trip is subject to the Limitation of Liability and all the terms and conditions as detailed in the General Information section of the Wilderness Travel Catalog.

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