

Education
First



*College Study
Tours*

THAILAND, CAMBODIA & VIETNAM



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14 DAYS

Thailand • Cambodia • Vietnam

PROGRAM FEE INCLUDES:

- 12 overnight stays in hotels with private bathrooms
- 3 meals daily
- Full-time bilingual EF Tour Director
- Select guides and entrances to special attractions as per itinerary

OPTIONAL:

- Elephant ride



Angkor Wat, meaning “City Temple,” was built in the 12th century.

Bring the Far East closer with this tour of Southeast Asia that showcases the gorgeous extremes of Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. Bangkok’s skyscrapers balance the quiet beauty of Angkor Wat, and the opulent Grand Palace contrasts a Mon tribal village. Ride an elephant, meander through the Cai Rang floating market, walk through history in Ho Chi Minh City and realize the breadth of this one-of-a-kind adventure.

Day 1 Flight

Overnight flight to Thailand • Spend the night flying to Bangkok.

Day 2 Bangkok

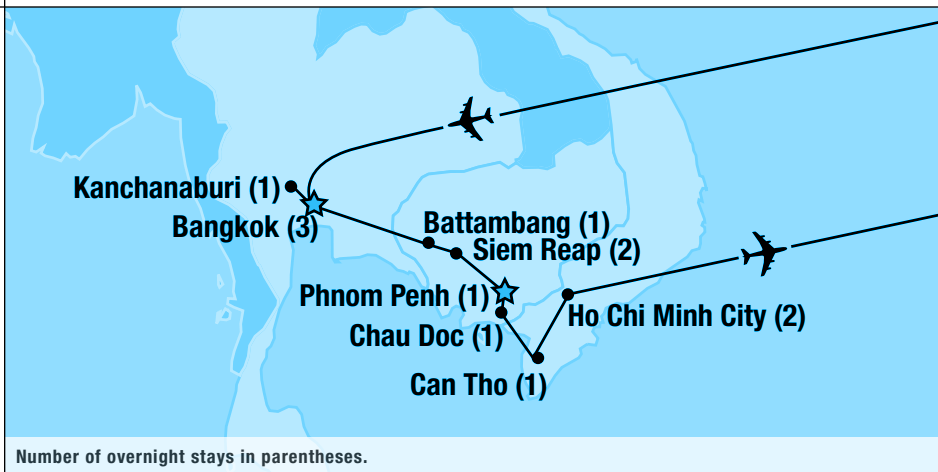
Arrival in Bangkok • Touch down in Bangkok. After clearing customs you are greeted by your bilingual EF Tour Director, who will remain with you throughout your stay.

Day 3 Bangkok

Guided sightseeing of Bangkok • From the gleaming silver skyscrapers that tower over ancient jewel-box temples, to the serene Buddhist monasteries that lie just off the bustling streets, Thailand seems resolved to straddle two millennia. It is a place where ancient traditions still govern the behavior of a modern people, where the timeless merges with the contemporary. In Bangkok, known to Thais as Krung Thep (“city of angels”), you’ll receive your introduction to this enduring and spirited culture. Begin your

day with a boat tour through the Chao Phraya River and *klongs* (canals) that once gave Bangkok the reputation of the Venice of the East. At one time, Bangkok’s canals outnumbered its roads. Today they still play an important role in the life of the city, carrying everything from rice barges to paddled canoes. Stop to visit the Grand Palace, an enormous royal compound bordered by high walls that once served as a barrier between kings and commoners (the palace is still used by Thailand’s king on certain occasions). Admire the gilded rooftops and golden spires of this architectural masterpiece, and enter the Royal Chapel (Wat Phra Kaeo) where the Emerald Buddha, Thailand’s most sacred Buddha image, is housed. Tour the compound and see the many palaces used for different occasions: the Reception Hall, the Royal Guest House, the Coronation Hall, the Throne Hall and the Funeral Palace. Later, visit a Buddhist school in the Mahadhat Temple area.

Thai dinner and traditional dances • This



Traditional conical hats made of straw have their roots in Vietnam.

evening introduces you to mystical dances, authentic cuisine and true Thai ambience. During dinner, feast your eyes on the grace and beauty of the dancers, who elegantly perform stories from classical Thai literature and folktales.

Day 4 Bangkok • Kanchanaburi

Visit to Phra Pathom Chedi • Stop at Phra Pathom Chedi, literally the first (“pathom”) tower-like Buddhist shrine (“chedi”) in this region and also the largest pagoda in southeast Asia. The original structure is more than 2,000 years old, and its towering, golden stupa rises more than 393 feet in the air.

Passage via the Death Railway • Pass through the grim scenery of former labor camps as you travel on the Death Railway. Built at shocking speed to connect sections of the Japanese empire, the railroad earned its infamous nickname when tens of thousands of Asian laborers and Allied prisoners of war died under the harshest of conditions during its construction.

Visit to a Mon village • Travel by jungle raft to an island inaccessible by car, and visit a traditional Mon village. Though many have settled in Thailand, the Mon people are originally from Myanmar and hold firmly to their customs, dress and language. See the elaborate and unique Mon pottery, whose sale to the mainland and to tourists is a major trade of this community. You will be amazed by the beauty of the island landscape as you experience firsthand this local people’s way of life.

Optional Elephant Ride • Join an optional excursion into the jungle—on the back of an elephant! You’ll gain a whole new perspective on your surroundings from 10 feet up in the air.

Traditional Mon and Burmese Dances • Enjoy a presentation of dance and song accompanied by traditional musical instruments, such as the Burmese harp and the Mon brass gong.

Overnight at the River Kwai Jungle Rafts Resort • Spend the night at the River Kwai Jungle Rafts Resort in Kanchanaburi.

Day 5 Bangkok

Transfer to Bangkok via Pakseng • After free time in the morning, sail past plunging gorges, endless beaches, cascading waterfalls and banks of wild orchids as you leave the jungle on your way to Pakseng. Upon arrival, board your coach to Bangkok.

Day 6 Bangkok • Battambang

Transfer to Cambodia • This morning, after breakfast, travel to the Arranyaprathet border, where you will cross into Cambodia. Continue through the Cambodian countryside to Battambang, an elegant riverside town that boasts some of the best-preserved colonial architecture in the country.

Day 7 Battambang • Siem Reap

Visit to Banteay Chmar Temple • Discover the silent beauty of this rarely visited temple. Capital of Jayavarman II, it was rebuilt by Jayavarman VII and dedicated to the latter’s son and four generals who were killed in the Cham Invasion of 1177.

Arrival in Siem Reap • Continue on to Siem Reap (during the August-October wet season, transfer via speedboat), where you will spend the night.

Day 8 Siem Reap

Visit to the Temples of Angkor • As the Colosseum is to Italy and the pyramids are to Egypt, so are the temples of Angkor to Cambodia. Spend the day exploring these stone temples dating back to the 9th through 13th centuries.

Angkor Thom and Bayon • The site of Angkor Thom rivals ancient Rome in size. Pass through its walled enclosure and over the moat (said to have once been swarming with crocodiles) to admire the elaborate stone carvings of both humans and mythological creatures. At the heart

of Angkor Thom sits the Bayon temple. Built in the 12th century, it is surrounded by massive towers carved with more than 200 huge stone faces. Who the faces represent is the subject of fierce debate. Just as impressive are the outer walls, which depict scenes of everyday life in the empire. Search the walls for scenes of harvesting, games and battle.

Terrace of the Elephants and Terrace of the Leper King • Visit two stages for important public events and ceremonies. Bordering the royal palace, the Terrace of the Elephants once topped 1,100 feet in length. Admire its many elephant and bird-man carvings. The Terrace of the Leper King is a huge stone platform carved with mythological beings. The origin of its name is shrouded in mystery; the terrace is crowned with a small statue that is believed to be either a former king or a representation of Yama, the god of death.

Phimeanakas • Built over the 10th and 11th centuries, this king’s temple is the tallest scalable temple in Angkor Thom. Climb the western staircase to the top for an amazing view of the compound.

Angkor Wat • Later this afternoon, visit the temple dedicated to the Hindu god Vishnu, and watch as the sun sets over this massive structure representing the Hindu concept of the universe. The exterior walls are covered in nearly 2,000 bas reliefs depicting Hindu mythology and historical wars. The excessive use of resources that such an extravagant feat of architecture demanded may have led to the ruin of this empire. Marvel at the towering, lotus bud-shaped inner sanctum as you try to imagine how an ancient society could have constructed a temple that remains an architectural wonder even today.

Day 9 Siem Reap • Phnom Penh

Ta Prohm • Built in the 12th century, Ta Prohm is in the same state as when it was first discovered in the 19th century by French explorers. Wander the dark corridors, where tree roots have sprung through the stone

walls, and into the open plazas, where parrots fly overhead.

Neak Pean • This small island temple's name means "coiled serpents." The structure is a lotus pattern made up of eight pools whose waters are thought to have healing properties. The temple also features an intriguing statue of a horse saving drowning sailors.

Preah Khan • This huge complex, whose name means "sacred sword," originally served as a Buddhist school and monastery. A building west of the main temple is adorned with one of the only examples of round columns in this area.

Visit to a *chantier-école* • See traditional handicrafts and apprentices hard at work as you tour a *chantier-école*, a training school for trades such as woodworking and stone carving. Later, test your bargaining skills at a local market.

Flight to Phnom Penh • Continue on to Siem Reap, where you will board an afternoon flight to Phnom Penh. Touch down in the capital of Cambodia, where you will spend the night.

Day 10 Phnom Penh • Chau Doc

Guided sightseeing of Phnom Penh • In this capital city, you are always within walking distance of a pagoda. Follow your local guide who will introduce you to the Cambodian culture. Visit the Royal Palace, built in 1866, and the Silver Pagoda, which has a floor covered with more than 5,000 silver tiles. View impressive displays of priceless objects, including rare turn-of-the-century paintings of the Ramayana epic, a 90-kilogram, solid-gold Buddha, and the Emerald Buddha. Your next stop is the National Museum, which houses the country's most important collection of ancient Khmer artifacts from the 4th to the 13th centuries, as well as many objects from the Angkorian era. Finally, no visit to Phnom Penh is complete without a stop at Wat Phnom, the city's namesake. Legend has it that, in 1372, Lady Penh found a Koki tree floating in the Mekong River. Inside, were four statues of Buddha. Lady Penh built a small temple ("wat") on a hill ("phnom"),

and the area took its name from the hill and its temple builder ("Phnom Penh").

Cruise to Chau Doc • Head to the pier to board your cruise to Chau Doc. A frontier town in Vietnam, it is known as the place of five hills and seven mountains.

Day 11 Chau Doc • Can Tho

Sampan Excursion in Chau Doc • This morning, enjoy a sampan trip. See the hundreds of floating houses and markets that line Chau Doc's canals, as well as the underwater cages where fish are bred. Continue on to the Cham stilt house village of Phu Hiep. Explore its many mosques and admire the vibrant colors of the traditional silk costumes the village women weave on hand looms. Walk up Sam Mountain, covered in miles and miles of rice fields, and visit the Lady Xu temple.

Transfer to Thot Not • On your way to Thot Not, make a stop at the Bang Lang Sanctuary, home to thousands of storks.

Transfer to Can Tho • Continue on to Can Tho, the "west capital" of Vietnam, where you will spend the night.

Day 12 Can Tho • Ho Chi Minh City

Boat trip to the floating market • Enjoy a boat trip to the Cai Rang floating market, one of the liveliest and most colorful markets in the Mekong delta. Experience the hustle and bustle of hundreds of boats jostling for space and shoppers' attention as the rowers try to sell their goods. Continue through the town of Rach Ngong, passing traditional houses and lush, green orchards.

Guided sightseeing of Can Tho • Let your tour director introduce you to the city of Can Tho. The largest city in Vietnam is also the industrial, commercial and cultural center of the country.

Day 13 Ho Chi Minh City

Guided sightseeing of Ho Chi Minh City • Set off on a guided sightseeing tour of Ho Chi Minh City, once called the Pearl of the East and still commonly referred to as Saigon—the city's name before South Vietnam fell to communism.

First stop is the Thien Hau Pagoda, a place of worship where a yearly festival of traditional rituals takes place. Next, pass through the maze of the market in Cho Lon, Ho Chi Minh's Chinatown, where you will find practically every marketable good imaginable. Then head to the History Museum, where you will see over 2,000 years of recorded Vietnamese history. Browse this impressive collection of artifacts dating from the Bronze Age to the French colonial era, and see the famous water puppet theater. Next stop on your tour is the Reunification Palace. Here, everything has been left much as it was on April 30, 1975, when North Vietnamese military tanks crashed the front gates and overthrew the South Vietnamese government. Continue on to the neo-Romanesque Notre Dame Cathedral, a prominent legacy of French culture and style. Last stop is the General Post Office, built in colonial style by Gustave Eiffel of Eiffel Tower fame. Don't miss the large portrait of Ho Chi Minh inside.

Chu Chi Tunnel Tour • Chu Chi is famous for its 124-mile network of underground tunnels built and used by the Viet Cong during the French Indochina War and the Vietnam War. From the mid-1940s onwards, the Viet Cong constructed secret meeting rooms, kitchens, dining rooms, hospitals and printing presses 40 feet underground. The tunnels rarely reached a width of two feet or a height of five feet and had thick roofs capable of withstanding the weight of tanks or the impact of bombs. Your visit includes a historical description of the tunnel system, followed by the opportunity to crawl through parts of the maze.

Day 14 Home

Return home • Your tour director assists with the transfer to the airport, where you'll check in for your return flight home.

For complete financial and registration details, please refer to the Booking Conditions.

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