



Join us on this special journey to the ancient land formerly known as Siam. Explore a Buddhist country filled with temples, spices, floating markets, amazing textiles, lush green countryside, flowing rivers, and warm, friendly people.

Our program begins in Bangkok, where you will experience famous Buddhist landmarks and authentic markets, and then moves on to Ayutthaya, the ancient capital and UNESCO World Heritage Site. Then, it is north to Chiang Mai, where a wide variety of cultural and natural experiences await. Lastly, we visit Phuket, a rainforested, mountainous island in the Andaman Sea. Along the way, we will learn about the natural, political, and cultural histories of this beautiful country.

For those wanting to expand the journey, there is a four-day extension to Cambodia to explore the area around Siem Reap, including the famous Angkor Wat, the exquisite remote villages of Banteay Srei and Mechrey, Tonle Sap Lake, and the historic Roluos Group Temples.

**For more information and registration, visit us at**

**[www.uaf.edu/summer/travel](http://www.uaf.edu/summer/travel)**

**or call (907)474-7021**

**Important notes:**

Travelers will be required to have their COVID-19 vaccinations. Travel insurance is always recommended for any travel out of the United States. There are several ways to purchase coverage. Some credit card companies insure trips that are purchased with their card. Another option is to check with a local travel agency.

**Note about Mobility:** Our tours are designed for people who are able to walk comfortably for up to 3 miles per day, sometimes on uneven terrain, as well as handle stairs easily. If you have any concerns about this tour, please contact Summer Sessions.

**Tour Dates:**

October 12-26, 2024

Cambodia Extension

October 26-29, 2024

**Tour Cost:**

**\$4,000.00**

Single supplement: \$750.00

Cambodia Extension:

\$1,200.00

Single Supplement: \$250.00

**Inclusions:**

- 24/7 Tour Director/Guide
- Accommodations
- In country transportation
- Entry fees
- Gratuities
- Educational programs
- Three meals per day
- Transfer to and from the airport

Transportation costs to and from Thailand are NOT included in this tour price. All travelers must arrange their own transportation to and from the starting and ending cities.

## Day 1, October 12: Bangkok

- Welcome to Thailand. Meet your tour leader for dinner and an orientation to the tour.

## Day 2, October 13: Bangkok

- Morning visit to Bangkok's most famous landmark: the Grand Palace/Wat Phra Kaew complex. We will visit Wat Phra Kaew, the temple that houses the Emerald Buddha, Thailand's most revered Buddha image. From Wat Phra Kaew it is only a short distance to Wat Pho, the oldest and largest Buddhist temple in Bangkok that houses the famous reclining Buddha image.

- Lunch at a local riverside restaurant. After lunch, we board a traditional boat for a cruise on the Chao Phraya river and through the famous waterways (Khlongs) of Bangkok and visit the Royal Barges, as well.

- In the evening, we enjoy a dinner river cruise.



## Day 3, October 14: Bangkok

- After breakfast, we drive to the Tha Kha Floating Market, a hidden gem of Bangkok. After the market, we will explore the beautiful countryside around this market via row boat.

- Later we visit Damnoen Saduak, the most popular floating market in Ratchaburi province. The market came about after a manmade canal was dug during the reign of King Rama IV to facilitate transportation by boats in the area. This canal was later named Damnoen Saduak, meaning "convenient travel". Highlight of this market is the variety of local snacks, tropical fruits, and the famous "boat noodles". We will have lunch here.

- Next, we head to the Maeklong railway market, known by the locals as "Talad Romhoop" or "market with closed umbrellas". Watch merchants quickly fold their stall covers and move their products away from the tracks when the train is arriving at 1430. Then, see them skillfully roll tables and baskets back into position in seconds to resume their business after the train leaves.

- Evening visit of the Asiatique evening market. We will give you a budget to have dinner on your own.



## Day 4, October 15: Bangkok- Ayutthaya

- In the morning, we head north to Ayutthaya, the second capital of the Siamese Kingdom and a UNESCO World Heritage site. We will visit some of the highlights of Ayutthaya, including Wat Phra Si Sanphet, with its three iconic chedis in the heart of the palace of the kings of Ayutthaya; Wat Mongkhon Bophit; Wat Mahathat, a sprawling complex with its Buddha head buried in the roots of a banyan tree; and Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon

- Lunch will be at a local restaurant. After lunch, we will board a boat for a private cruise around this UNESCO World Heritage Site. We will stop at the fascinating temple Wat Phutthaisawan and the majestic Wat Chaiwatthanaram, one of our favorite temple, where we will disembark.

- Return to the hotel before dinner at a riverside restaurant.







## Day 5, October 16 - Ayutthaya- Chiang Mai

- After breakfast, we drive to Bangkok airport for your flight to Chiang Mai.
- Walk to Wat Chai Mongkol, where we will board a small boat for a cruise on the Ping River, where we'll see several landmarks, such as the first Christian Church and the Chansom Memorial Footbridge. After disembarking at Wat Chai Mongkol we walk back to the hotel.
- We will have dinner at a riverside restaurant next to the famous Iron Bridge. After dinner you can explore the Night Bazar on own.

## Day 6, October 17 - Chiang Mai

- Early departure to Doi Suthep, Chiang Mai's holy mountain. We will participate in an essential Buddhist daily ritual at the shrine of Kruba Srivichai, the "monk-engineer" and patron saint of Northern Thailand. Guided tour of the temple where our guide will explain the main tenets of Buddhism.
- Travel to the Hmong village Doi Pui. We descend the mountain and briefly stop at Wat Pha Lat, the "temple of the sloping cliff".
- We enjoy a lunch of Northern Thai specialties after which we visit Wat Suan Dok, an important temple that houses the reliquaries of the former ruling family of Chiang Mai. Here you will have the opportunity to talk to the monks at this temple and learn about meditation.



## Day 7, October 18 - Chiang Mai

- A full day at the Elephant Nature Park, a sanctuary takes care of elephants and also of dogs, cats, buffaloes, cows, horses, etc. All animals are equal for Khun Lek Chailert, the founder of Elephant Nature Park, and her husband Derrick from Canada. They take care of almost 5,000 animals. We will meet elephants but also spend time at the dog rescue center and the cat kingdom. There is so much love at this place! It is a wonderful day that you will never forget.
- Enjoy a Kantoke dinner with traditional Northern Thai dances at the Old Chiang Mai Cultural Center.



## Day 8, October 19 - Chiang Mai

- Morning visit to the Ban Mae Sa Mai Royal Project station, initiated by the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej to end opium cultivation and introduce cash crops as substitutes. We'll have a guided tour of the greenhouses and continue to Ban Mae Sa Mai village, the largest Hmong community in the north of Thailand, where we will meet local villagers and learn about their culture. Lunch at the Hmong Wisdom Center.
- Afternoon walk through the agricultural fields and visit to the workshop of a women's textile cooperative. Finally we will learn about the forest restoration program of Chiang Mai University, which restored the watershed highlands of the village.





## *Day 9, October 20 - Chiang Mai*

- Morning visit to the Warorot Market. After a walk through this fascinating market we get on samlors, the traditional bicycle taxi for a tour to Wat Phra Singh and Wat Chedi Luang, the two most famous temples in the Old City. Next, we will visit the Chiang Mai Women Correctional Institution Vocational Training Center, where we will have lunch.
- In the afternoon, enjoy a culinary experience at Grandma's Cooking School. Thailand's cuisine is world-famous. Upon arrival enjoy a welcome drink and a guided tour at the organic farm where you will collect some fresh ingredients. After this you will learn to prepare a variety of typical Thai dishes. Enjoy your self-prepared dinner.



## *Day 10, October 21 - Chiang Mai – Phuket*

- Free morning in Chiang Mai.
- Midday flight to Phuket.
- After checking into the hotel, enjoy free time until our dinner in the hotel.

## *Day 11, October 22 – Phuket*

- This afternoon, we head to the pier to board the vessel of John Gray's Sea Canoe that will take us through beautiful Phang Nga Bay. On the way to our first island enjoy a Thai style light lunch. We will visit two islands where we will explore caves and enclosed lagoons (hongs). The Sea Canoe guides paddle us through this amazing natural landscape.
- Before dinner you will learn to make your own krathong (a piece of banana trunk decorated with flowers, banana leaves, candles, and incense sticks). We enjoy dinner on the boat after which we will launch krathongs and watch "Bioluminescent Plankton" after dark.



## *Day 12, October 23 – Phuket*

- This morning, we will board a speed boat and spend a wonderful day on the Andaman Sea. We will make several stops at spots that are great for swimming and snorkeling. Our destination today is Phi Phi Island where we will spend free time on the beach before enjoying lunch on the beach.
  - After lunch, relax on the white sand beaches of Phi Phi and swim in the crystal clear water.
- We head back to Puket in the late afternoon and eat dinner at a local restaurant.





## Day 13, October 24 – Phuket

- Walking tour of the Old Town of Phuket. Authorities have worked hard to restore old Phuket town to its former glory. We will visit the Thai Hua Museum, the Thavorn Museum, and walk through the streets lined with Sino-Portuguese style houses. We will also visit the Chinpracha Museum, where we will meet the family that owns the house to learn about the history of the house.
- After that, we will visit a small shop that exhibits old pictures and utensils. The owner is an amateur historian and will tell about the history of Phuket and its transformation from a tin mining island to a tourism oriented peninsula. We will enjoy lunch at one of the restaurants that specialize in Hokkien noodles.
- After lunch we will return to the hotel for free time on the beach.
- Dinner at a local restaurant.

## Day 14, October 25 – Phuket – Bangkok

- Spend a free morning as we prepare to bid farewell to beautiful Phuket.
- Enjoy lunch will be at the hotel before the transfer to the Phuket airport to board the flight from Phuket to Bangkok.
- Farewell dinner will be at the hotel.

## Day 15, October 26 – Bangkok – home

- Departure from Thailand.
- Eat breakfast at the hotel if your flight schedule allows it, before the hotel transfers you to the airport.



# Optional Add-On Cambodia



## Day 1, October 26 – Siem Reap

- Flight to Siem Reap, Cambodia. Transfer to hotel, check in and eat lunch at the hotel.
- After lunch, visit Angkor Wat, the largest and most breathtaking monument at Angkor. It was built as the funeral temple for Suryavarman II who ruled from 1112 to 1152. Angkor never fails to awe visitors with its grand scale, surreal bas reliefs, and unbelievable attention to detail.
- NOTE: Visiting temples or other religious sites in Cambodia, visitors are advised to follow a dress code consisting of long trousers or skirt which covers the knees as well as covered shoulders. Skirts, short shorts, tank tops and revealing clothing are culturally insensitive and not allowed.

## Day 2, October 27 – Siem Reap

- Full day visit to the South Gate of Angkor Thom and the temples of Bayon, Baphoun, Phimean Akas, The Royal Enclosure, the terraces of Elephants, the Leper King and Preah Khan. Take a break lunch at local restaurant.
- Next we'll explore Ta Prohm. This jungle-clad temple with overgrown trees exudes a haunting and exotic atmosphere. The magnificent tree roots push between the temple's huge stone blocks in a strange embrace. Ta Prohm is particularly amazing in the late afternoon light after most of the crowds have left.
- Dinner will be served at a local restaurant

## Day 3, October 28 – Siem Reap

- Morning trip to Banteay Srei, which for many years was off limits due to its remote location and Khmer Rouge activity. Built in the late 10th century and dedicated to Shiva, Banteay Srei's pink limestone walls contain the best bas reliefs of any temple at Angkor. Lunch at a local restaurant.
- Afternoon excursion to Mechrey Village on Tonle Sap Lake. En route, stop at Ampil Peam for a stroll through this traditional village. Continue to Mechrey, a small community on Tonle Sap Lake. Board a local-style boat and explore the area. Learn about the biodiversity in this area and the importance of the lake for the livelihood of thousands of locals. Tonle Sap, meaning "Great Lake", has been declared a UNESCO biosphere, recognizing its great importance to the surrounding eco-system.

## Day 4, October 29 – Siem Reap

- Today we visit the Roluos Group Temples including LoLei, Preah Ko, and Bakong. The LoLei Temple was built on an islet by Yasovarman I (who ruled from 889 to 910), the founder of the first city of Angkor. Preah Ko was erected by Indravarman I in the late 9th century in dedication to his defied ancestors in 880. There are inscriptions in Sanskrit on the doorsteps of each temple. Bakong, built and dedicated to Shiva by Indravarman I, is the largest and most interesting of the Roluos Group of temples and still has an active Buddhist monastery.
- Later in the day, you will be transferred to the airport in time for your flight to Bangkok.