

18 Day

Grand Indochina Expedition

Laos, Vietnam & Cambodia

USA – Bangkok – Luang Prabang – Vientiane – Hanoi – Halong Bay – Hue – Da Nang – Hoi An – Saigon – Siem Reap (Angkor Wat) – Bangkok – USA

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	Los Angeles San Francisco		New York			
	Tour Cost	Cash Discount Price	Tour Cost	Cash Discount Price		
-2009 Departures- Jan 9, Feb 13, Mar 6, Apr 3, May 1, Sep 18, Oct 16, Nov 6, 20 -2010 Departures- Jan 15, Feb 26, Mar 12, Apr 2	4688	4488	4860	4660	3871	1134

US tax \$98, intl flight fuel surcharge \$290, and Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia domestic air tax of \$122 per person is extra.

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Day01 Los Angeles – Bangkok

Depart from Los Angeles, San Francisco or New York. Enjoy award winning in-flight meals and services. Move the watch one day ahead as we cross the international dateline. *Prices for departing from other major gateway cities are available upon request. F

Day02 Arrive in Bangkok

After immigration and customs, a local representative will greet and accompany us to the 4 star, deluxe, *Century Park Hotel Bangkok*. Enjoy a restful day to recover from jetlag. F

Day03 Bangkok – Luang Prabang, Laos

Our *Bangkok Airways* flight PG941 will depart at 9:30 a.m., arriving in Luang Prabang at 11:30

a.m.. After immigration and customs, we will go to the 4 star, superior, [Ramayana Boutique Hotel and Spa](#). Welcome to Luang Prabang, a small, dream like UNESCO World Heritage Site,



a tonic for the soul, at the confluence of the Nam Khan and the Mekong River. From 1353 until 1545 it was the capital of Lan Xang Kingdom. After King Phothisarath (1520 – 1548) moved the capital to Vientiane, Luang Prabang remained the royal heart of the kingdom. Kings ruled here until the monarchy was officially dissolved by the Pathet Lao in 1975. Luang Prabang's royal legacy, though a story of decline, combines with its splendid natural setting creates one of the most intriguing and magical cities in Asia. It's thick with the perfume of pearly frangipanis and the enticing flavors of high-quality Asian and European food. The greens of the giant shade trees contrast with the burnt sienna robes and bare-foot silence of countless Buddhist monks and novices collecting alms. And the gleaming temples, French-era place and villas, and the multiethnic peoples who live here give Luang Prabang a romantic and relaxed feel that can captivate even the most jaded travelers. We begin our exploration with a visit to [Wat Wisunalat \(Wat Vixoun\)](#), the oldest active temple in town dating back to 1512, famous for its [watermelon-shaped stupa](#), and an impressive collection of antique gilded wooden Buddhas from the 15th and 16th centuries. The next stop is the crowning jewel of Luang Prabang – [Wat Xieng Thong \(Golden City Monastery\)](#).



The temple, which epitomizes in its low sweeping roofs the classic Luang Prabang style of temple architecture, was built in 1560 and patronized by the monarchy right up until 1975. Inside the [main sanctuary](#) the eight thick supporting pillars, richly stenciled in gold, guide the eye to the serene golden Buddha images at the rear, and upwards to the roof which is covered in *dharmma* wheels. Outside the hall there is an elaborate mosaic of the Tree of Life set against a deep red background. Throughout, the combination of splendid gold and deep red give this temple a captivatingly regal atmosphere. Adjacent stands the Red Chapel, dubbed by the

French “La Chapelle Rouge”, containing a unique reclining Buddha figure that was displayed at the Paris exhibition in 1931. Close to the east gate stands the [royal funeral chapel](#)

housing the 40 ft high [royal funeral carriage](#). Continue to [Wat Mai Suwannaphumham](#), built in the late 18th century and most famous for its beautiful 5 tiered roof on the [ordination hall](#). The main attraction is the gilded walls of the front verandah, the designs of which recount scenes from the *Ramayana* and the Buddha's penultimate incarnation. Within the compounds are two long [racing boats](#) holding up to 50 rowers each, kept in their own shelter. They are used during Lao New Year in April and the Water Festival in October. We then [stroll down the main street](#) and observe the bustling local life. Time permitting, we will stop at more temples that line its sides. Early this evening we will go to [Mount Phousi](#) and climb the 328 steps to the top for a great view of sunset and moonlight over the temples and river. We then stroll through the vibrant [night market](#) where we can bargain for the ethnic minority art works, paper lanterns, hill-tribe jewelry and textiles.



B/D

Day04 Luang Prabang

Today we continue our exploration to the [former Royal Palace](#), now the [National Museum](#). It is a graceful building, which combines traditional Lao and French beaux-arts motifs. This turn of the century royal residence has been preserved as it was when the royal family last lived here and provides unique insights into the history of Laos. We will see royal Throne of the Lan Xang Kingdom and other pieces of regalia and religious treasures, including the precious [Pra Bang](#), the 32 inch tall image in the attitude of Abhayamudra, or “dispelling fear”. It is almost in pure gold and weights between 95 – 120 lbs and was given by the Khmers to King Fa Ngum. We then board a [wooden boat](#) and enjoy a scenic [cruise down the Mekong River](#), passing villages and rice fields. We will reach Pak [Ou village](#) at the mouth of the [Nam Ou River](#) around noon. After the lunch at the river front restaurant, enjoy *Orient Odyssey's* “[People to People Contact](#)” by strolling to the nearby [village](#). Observe villagers' daily activity and gain insight into the rural life of the country. We then cruise across

the river to visit [Caves of a Thousand Buddhas](#). Two caves on the limestone cliffs are said to be discovered by King setthathirat in the 16th century, and they have been venerated ever since. Both are full of gilded Buddha of all shapes and sizes. Tham Ting, the lower cave is easily accessible with natural lights. The upper one, Tham Phum, is reached by a steep staircase and requires a flashlight to explore. We cruise back to the city and stop at [village of Ban Xan Hai](#) on route. Observe how *lao-lao*, a local moonshine rice whisky is made. B/L/D



Day05 Luang Prabang – Vientiane



This morning we rise early and observe the daily ritual of [alms giving](#). Every day at dawn local peoples give ubiquitous sticky rice and other offerings to the saffron clad monks with their black alms bowls. Then we return to the hotel and still have time to rest or explore the

city at our own pace, or [visit the colorful market](#). We then go to [Vientiane](#) via a short 40 minutes flight. Welcome to the “[Sandalwood City](#)”, capital of Laos. Located on the banks of the [Mekong River](#) amidst fertile alluvial plains, “*Wieng Chan*” still feels like a sleepy city with a relaxed charm, tree lined boulevards, interesting wats and colorful markets, while retaining a hint of its French colonial past. We will check-in at the 4 star, deluxe, [Lao Plaza Hotel](#). Enjoy our free time to [stroll along the Mekong riverbank](#) at our own pace. We can observe locals socializing, and children playing along the mudflats of the river. B/L/D

Day06 Vientiane – Hanoi, Vietnam

We first visit the gleaming golden spire of [Pha That Luang](#), “[the Great Sacred Reliquary](#)”, a national symbol of Lao sovereignty and a Buddhist shrine. Then we drive to [Haw Pha Kaew](#), a museum converted from a [former royal temple](#) built in 1565 with ornately carved doors. Across the street is the delightful [Wat Si](#)



[Saket](#) with its small niches carved in interior walls holding more than 2,000 silver and ceramic Buddha images. Enjoy a short stop at [Patuxai](#), a large monument in the style of the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. From the top we [enjoy a panoramic view of the city](#). Time permitting we will also visit [Wat Si Muang](#), which contains the *lak muang*, or city pillar, acting as the home of Vientiane’s guardian spirits. The guide will assist our check-in for [Vietnam Airlines](#) flight VN824, departing at 2:10 p.m., reaching Hanoi at 3:30 p.m.. After immigration and customs, we will go to the 4 star, deluxe, [Sunway Hotel](#). Welcome to Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam, a city of lakes, tree-lined boulevards and public parks, complimented by the mystery and charm of past centuries in narrow lanes of the old city. B/L



Day07 Hanoi

First we visit the [One Pillar Pagoda](#). Built by the Emperor Ly Thai Tong in the 11th century, it is constructed of wood on a single stone pillar, designed to resemble a lotus blossom. Then we continue to the [Temple of Literature](#) founded in 1070. It is an excellent example of traditional Vietnamese architecture, a peaceful series of walled courtyards and graceful gateways. The initial temple was dedicated to Confucius. In 1076 it was adjoined by the Quoc Tu Giam, School of the Elite of the Nation, and became Vietnam’s first university. After passing exams at the local levels, scholars aspiring to become senior mandarins came here to study for rigorous triennial examinations. There is a pavilion housing 82 stone stele, survivors of the original 117, rest on the backs of stone tortoises. The stele are inscribed in the 82 examination sessions held between 142 and 1779. Afterwards we



drive to the massive marble and granite [Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum](#) in Ba Dinh Square where Ho Chi Minh delivered Vietnam's declaration of independence in 1945. From there we [walk past](#) the [Presidential palace](#), a sumptuous colonial mansion built in 1906 as the residence of the French Governor-general of Indochina, to the modest two-room [Stilt House](#), where Ho Chi Minh spent the last decade of his life in spartan conditions. After lunch we continue to [Hoan Kiem Lake](#), or [Lake of the Restored Sword](#), with a tortoise pagoda standing on an islet. Drive around the city, we will take a [picture stop](#) at the magnificent 1911 [Opera House](#) and the [St Joseph Cathedral](#), a neo-



Gothic piece finished in 1886 with square towers, an elaborate altar and stained glass windows. In the afternoon we visit the [History Museum \(Bao Tang Lich\)](#). Once the museum of the Ecole Francaise d'Extreme Orient, the 1930's elegant building now houses exhibits spanning the Vietnam's history including prehistory, proto-Vietnamese civilizations, the Dong Son culture, the Oc-Eo culture and the Khmer Kingdoms. Early evening we will enjoy *Orient Odyssey's* "People to People Contact" program and [discover the old quarter of Hanoi](#) by [cyclo \(a tricycle rickshaw\)](#). The ride will go through busy streets and markets where we can have close-up views of local's daily about. The area is often referred to as "[the 36 streets](#)", where narrow lanes lies in a 600 year history as an artisans' district, with crafts and trades concentrated in a single area on 36 lanes. Tonight we will see a traditional [Water Puppet Show](#) – a fascinating, delightful spectacle accompanied by traditional music. B/L/D

Day08 Halong Bay Excursion

Today we drive through the paddy fields and small towns of the [Red River Delta](#) to [Halong Bay](#), dotted with well over 3,000 limestone islands and islets. Bizarre rock sculptures jutting dramatically from the sea and numerous grottoes have created an enchanted, timeless world. The sails of the junks and sampans gliding on the bay add further to the beauty of the scene. The bay was declared by



the United Nation as a "World Heritage Site of Outstanding Natural Beauty". Halong means, "where the dragon descends into the sea"; legend has it that a celestial dragon and her offspring were ordered by the Jade Emperor to halt an invasion from the sea. The creative dragons spewed out bits of jade that turned into wondrous islands and karst formations, thereby scuppering the enemy ships. According to other versions, the jewels were pearls and the bay was created when the dragon flung herself into the sea; on the way her swishing tail dug deep valleys and crevices in the mainland, which were subsequently filled by the sea. Regardless, the dragon was so pleased with her creations that she settled amongst them. She is said to live under the bay to this day. Board a [traditional wooden boat](#) and enjoy 4 hours' relaxing cruise. Countless limestone islets, many containing beautiful grottos, rise from the sea. We cruise on the emerald clear waters, passing craggy limestone cliffs, stopping at an [island](#) to explore its [caves](#). We [sail past floating villages, fisherman casting their nets](#) and [pearl fisheries](#). Observe rhythms of the peaceful daily life on the bay. After a sumptuous [seafood lunch](#) on board we continue with our exploration. Halong has been the setting of many historic battles against invasions from the north. It is believed that the sharp bamboo stakes that General Tran Hung Dao planted in the Song Bach Dang to destroy Kublai Khan's invasion fleet were stored in caves here. In the evening we return to Hanoi. B/L/D

Day09 Hanoi – Hue

Our guide will accompany us to the airport and assist our check-in for *Vietnam Airlines* flight VN245, departing at 10:10 a.m., arriving in Hue at 11:20 a.m.. Check-in at the 4 star, deluxe, *Saigon Morin Hotel*. The charm of this timeless old capital lies not only in its historical and architectural value, but also in the natural beauty of its location along the banks of the seductively named [Perfume River](#). In the spring of 1601, the Nguyen lords established a kingdom here. An uninterrupted succession of 10 feudal lords ruled over this area until 1802, when the 10th Nguyen lord proclaimed himself Emperor Gia Long and founded the Nguyen dynasty, which would last for 143 years. A quick succession of 13 emperors graced the throne until the abdication



of Bao Dai, the last of the Nguyen emperors in 1945. Today the remaining French colonial garden houses and villas, the quiet streets, the riverbanks, the outlying tombs and pagodas that escaped war damage – all give Hue a unique atmosphere of tranquility. We begin our sightseeing with a visit to the [Imperial Citadel](#). Modeled on Beijing’s Forbidden City, [Hoang Thanh \(Yellow Enclosure\)](#) and [Tu Cam Thanh \(Forbidden Purple City\)](#) are enclosed within the all-encompassing [Kinh Thanh \(the external enclosure\)](#). Stone, bricks and earth were used for the 26 ft high and 65 ft thick wall, with 10 large and fortified gates, each topped with watchtower. The citadel was initially built during the reign of Emperor Gia Long in 1804. Most of the buildings, palaces and halls were destroyed during the Tet Offensive of 1968 during the Vietnam - American War, but the monuments that remain provide a fascinating glimpse into the court life of the Nguyen dynasty. First we will see the striking [Flag Tower](#), where a giant



Vietnamese flag waves proudly. Then we enter the imposing [Ngo Mon Gate](#), the principal entrance of the Imperial Enclosure. The central passageway with its yellow doors was reserved for the Emperor’s use, as was the bridge across the lotus pond. The next stop

is the courtyards in front of the [Thai Hoa Palace](#), the magnificently decorated reception hall, with an ornate roof of huge timbers supported by 80 carved and lacquered columns. We also see the myriad [Hall of the Mandarins](#), the [Nine Dynastic Urns](#) and the [ruins of the Purple Forbidden City](#). Later, with [Orient Odyssey’s “People to People Contact”](#) program, we will stroll through the bustling [Don Ba Market](#), offering a great variety of local products and gastronomic delights. Check out the famous “poem hats” which, when held up to a light source, reveal the shadow of a scene or a poem. Observe the interesting insight into local daily life. [B/L/D](#)

Day10 Hue

This morning we enjoy [a boat trip](#) on the [Perfume River](#) to the [Thien Mu Pagoda](#), “[Celestial lady Pagoda](#),” Situated on the hill overlooking the river, the pagoda was built in 1601. Each of the seven tiers of its [octagonal tower](#), guided by six statues of deities, represents a different reincarnation of Buddha. Many

generations have heard the tolling of the pagoda’s enormous 4,600 lb, 6 ft high bell since it was cast in 1701.

It is such a fine bell that it can be heard nearly 10 miles away. We continue our river cruise to the [Imperial Tomb of Emperor Minh](#)



[Mang](#). It is a majestic complex of courtyards, pavilions and temples in a beautiful natural setting, known for its architecture, military statues and elaborate decorations. In the afternoon we drive to the [tombs of Emperors Tu Duc and Khai Dinh](#). The tomb of Tu Duc, who reigned from 1847 to 1883, the longest of any Nguyen emperors, is a royal palace in miniature and harmonizes beautifully with the natural surroundings. Tu Duc designed this elegant tomb by himself. The construction lasted through out his life time. He used it as a retreat for meditation, reading and theatre performances. We will take some time to soak up the tranquil atmosphere, wandering among the [gracefully proportioned pavilions](#) set among the [forested hills, courtyards and lotus ponds](#). Tu Duc, spent his leisure hours in the two pavilions beside the lake, Luu Khiem. Here he wrote poetry, no doubt inspired by the beauty of his surroundings, fished, and enjoyed the fragrance of the lotus. Our next stop, the [tomb of](#) the 20th century [Emperor Khai Dinh](#) incorporates distinct European elements into the traditional Vietnamese architecture. Completed in 1931, it sits magnificently on the verdant slopes of Chau



E mountain in Chau Chau village. A grandiose dragon staircase leads up to the first courtyard, from where further stairs lead to a courtyard lined

with stone [statues of elephants, horses, and civil and military mandarins](#).

Once inside, the contrast is striking. Colored tiles pave the floor, a huge “dragon in the clouds” mural, painted by artists using their feet, adorns the ceiling of the middle chamber. Jade green antechambers lead off to the left and right. [Bright frescoes composed of many thousands of inlaid ceramic and glass fragments](#) depict various themes. Animals, trees, and flowers provide a visual feast. Each piece of the ornate glass and porcelain

mosaics were carved carefully to fit the design. B/L/D

Day11 Hue – Da Nang – Hoi An

A beautiful day awaits! The [scenic coach ride](#) climbs the dramatic [Hai Van Pass](#), “[the Pass of Ocean Clouds](#)”, crossing over a spur of the [Truong Son Mountain Range](#) that juts into the [South China Sea](#). Enjoy the spectacular views over the coastline. On route we will stop at the [Lang Co Fishing Village](#) where a lovely stretch of beach curves outwards between a clear blue lagoon and the South China Sea. Approach Da Nang – Vietnam’s fourth largest city, which marks the northern limit of the country’s tropical zone, and boasts a pleasant year-round climate.



We visit the famous [Cham Museum](#), home to some 300 magnificent Cham sculptures, dating to 4th century. The museum was founded in 1915 by the Ecole Francaise d’Extreme Orient. We will also stroll on the famous [China Beach](#). Stretching for 18 miles, with “pink” sands and roaring waves, it was the famous landing spot and resort for American soldiers during the Vietnam War. Also on the agenda is a visit to the [Marble Mountain](#), consisting of 5 stone hillocks, rising sharply from the surrounding rice fields. Riddled with caves and shrines, they are said to each represent one of the five elements of the universe. The largest and the most famous hill, [Thuy Son](#), has a number of natural caves in which Buddhist sanctuaries have been built over the centuries. When the Champas ruled this area, these caves were also used as Hindu shrines. We will reach Hoi An in early evening. Check-in at the 4.5 star, luxurious, [Hoi An Riverside Resort and Spa](#). B/L/D

Day12 Hoi An

This charming old town was once an important and flourishing trading port and the meeting place of East and West, a center of cultural exchange. Hoi An appeared in western travelogues in the 17th and 18th centuries as Faifo. Chinese, Japanese, French, English, Spanish, Portuguese and other traders all established their



communities here, and the [old wooden houses, bridges](#) and [temples](#) that remain are reminiscent of the old days. Today it is a graceful, picturesque, back water town with [hump-backed bridges and shops](#) bursting with silks, paintings, embroidered goods and lacquer ware. During a walking tour we see the distinctive [low tiled roof houses](#) and the bustling [central market](#). Visit [old Chinese temples, pagodas, and assembly halls](#). We walk along the [Tran Phu Street](#) to the [Japanese Covered Bridge](#), constructed in 1593 by Japanese community to link the town with Chinese quarters across the stream. The bridge was provided with a roof so it could be used as a shelter for rain and sun. We also visit [family](#)



[chapels](#) and [private houses](#) that are occupied by the same family for up to eight generations. We have the opportunity to [interact with family members](#) while inspecting the beautiful engraved panel with exquisite figures. Enjoy [Orient Odyssey’s “People to People Contact”](#) program and [board a traditional wood fishing boat](#) to [cruise down the Thu Bon River](#) to visit a [pottery village](#) and a [woodcarving village](#). [Interact with the locals](#) – peasants, boat builders and craftsman. We then return to the small [Hoi An Harbour](#) where colorfully painted boats are moored. The remaining of the day is at leisure to rest, or to



explore this historic town at our own pace. Hoi An is a shopper’s paradise. One can bargain for paintings, silk fabric and clothing, ceramics, Chinese

lanterns, chopsticks, lacquer ware, teapots and embroidered tablecloths and napkins. B/L/D

Day13 Hoi An – Saigon (Ho Chih Minh City)

We take a morning drive to Da Nang Airport. Check-in for [Vietnam Airlines](#) flight VN321 departing at 8:00 a.m., reaching Saigon at 9:10 a.m.. Welcome to [Saigon](#), also called [Ho Chi Minh City](#), Vietnam’s most vibrant metropolis teeming with energy and activity. The meeting of traditional and modern life is visible everywhere. The emerging modern skyline stands next to colonial buildings and traditional temples. Young professionals zip by on motorcycles,



chatting on cell phones. Inside quiet temple courtyards, worshippers pray amidst clouds of incense. Within this teeming metropolis are 300 years of timeless traditions and the beauty of an ancient culture. We start our visit with an [overview drive round the city](#); passing the [Opera House](#), and [Dong Khoi Street](#), formerly known as the [Rue Catinat](#) during the French Years, now the main shopping avenue in the heart of the old colonial Saigon. Enjoy short picture stop at the red-brick [Catholic cathedral of Notre-Dame](#), the nearby 19th century Empire-style [Post Office](#), the next door "[Hotel de Ville](#)" or [City Hall](#) with its distinctive gingerbread facade and the [Opera House](#). Guilt around the turn of the century to house the lower division of the National Assembly, the Opera House is now a municipal theatre and Saigon Concert Hall. We visit the landmark [Reunification Palace](#), formerly the [South Vietnamese Presidential Palace](#). On April 30, 1975, a Vietcong tank stormed the modern compound, signifying the fall of South Vietnam. We visit various halls, presidential living quarters, and the underground communication bunkers. We can also see the North Vietnamese tank on display near the entrance gate. Next stop is the harrowing [War Remnants Museum](#), depicting the bloody fights by the Vietnamese against the French and Americans. Next, we head to the west of the city to District 5, the sprawling, densely packed Chinese neighborhood called "[Cholon](#)". Cholon means "big market", but the area is commonly referred to as [Chinatown](#). Visit two of the oldest and most interesting pagodas in the city, the [Jade Emperor Pagoda](#) and [Giac Lam Pagoda](#). We also take a short stroll in the fascinating [Binh Tay Market](#), the vast wholesale market selling every kind of good from dried foods to T shirts to electronics. Then proceed to [Thien Hau Pagoda](#), built by the Cantonese congregation and dedicated to the heavenly goddess. Today's program ends at [Ben Thanh Market](#), where vendors display a vast array of goods and handicrafts, appealing to every taste. Tonight we stay at the 5 star, luxurious, [Hotel Equatorial Saigon](#). B/L/D

Day14 Saigon

Today is designed as a [free day](#) for us to rest, shop or explore the bustling city at our own pace. The guide can also arrange any of the following excursions (with extra cost) upon request. Note each of the following excursion involves two to



7

three hours drive (one way) from Saigon.

[Cuchi Tunnels](#):

The 150 miles of tunnels is an incredible underground network, dug by hand out of hard laterite, connected command posts, hospitals, shelters and weapon factories. From here the North Vietnamese waged their guerrilla warfare against Americans. See cleverly disguised entrances and elaborate booby-traps, underground kitchens, living areas and meeting rooms. Those who are more adventurous may explore the deeper second, and even third level tunnels.

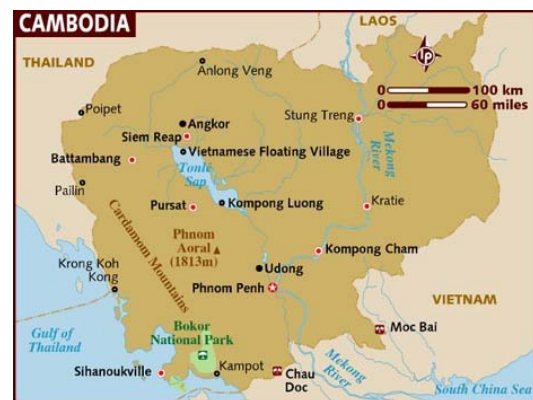
[Tay Ninh](#)

The birth place of Vietnam's own unique Cao Dai religion, a fusion of Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Christianity, Islam and native Vietnamese spiritual beliefs. We observe the noon time ceremony at the Great Temple from the upper balconies, see worshippers garbed in colorful robes flocking to participate in the prayer sessions.



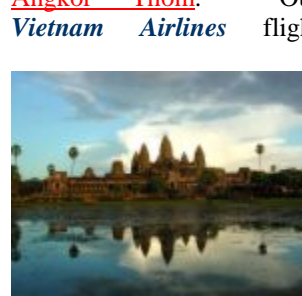
[Mekong Delta and My Tho Village](#)

My Tho is a bustling town in the rich agricultural region of Mekong Delta. Enjoy cruises on a river boat and a wooden sampan to Mekong River islands with lush palm fringed shores lined with fishing boats. Take a rest at a local village and enjoy fruit, tea, and folk music performances.



Day15 Saigon – Siem Reap, Cambodia

Today we fly to Siem Reap for a highlight of our journey: the Khmer temples of [Angkor Wat](#) and [Angkor Thom](#). Our [Vietnam Airlines](#) flight



VN827 departs at 11:40 a.m. arriving in Siem Reap, Cambodia at 12:40 p.m.. After immigration and customs, the local representative will greet and accompany us to the 4.5 star, deluxe, *Angkor Century Resort and Spa*. The ancient capital of the Khmer kingdom is the cultural and spiritual heart of Cambodia. Although monumental in scale, it offers intimate glimpses into lives lived in a distant past. Angkor is one of the wonders of the world. Perhaps nowhere else on earth, unless in the Valley of the Nile in Egypt, are the relics of antiquity found on so monumental a scale. It is one of the world's great architectural achievements. In 1858, a French naturalist **Henri Mouhot** first stumbled upon Angkor in the jungle. We will spend our days exploring in a leisurely fashion the fantastic temples, gates, and stone carvings. The entire afternoon will be devoted to Angkor Wat, the crowning jewel of Khmer architecture, the national symbol of Cambodia, and the highlight of any visit to Southeast Asia. The largest, best preserved and most religiously significant of the Angkor temples, Angkor Wat impresses visitors with its sheer scale, beautifully proportioned layout, and the delicate artistry of its carvings. "*An epic poem*," **Arnold Toynbee** once wrote. "*Like the Odyssey and like Paradise Lost, it makes its effect by the grandeur of its structure as well as*

the beauty of its details." To approach the site, we first cross the vast moat, continuing along a broad causeway lined with naga balustrades. As we enter the main building, ascend through a series of galleries and courtyard before reaching the central sanctuary, which offers beautiful views back over the causeway and across the surrounding countryside. We will marvel at the intricate stone carvings that adorn nearly every surface, with some 1,700 Apsaras, or celestial dancers, sculpted into the walls. Along the outer gallery walls runs the stunning, longest, continuous bas-relief in the world, which narrates stories from Hindu mythology which include scenes of battles, depictions of the Ramayana and the Churning of the Ocean of Milk. The temple ground covers 81 hectares and took more than 30 years to complete in the 12th century. Now considered by art historians the definitive example of classical Khmer art and architecture, it is designated by UNESCO as a World Culture Heritage Site. Angkor Wat is stunning at any time of the day, but the sunrise and sunset are especially beautiful times to watch the play of light on the stones. At dusk, we will watch the sunset over the Cambodian countryside from the upper terraces of an ancient Angkorian Temple! B/L/D

Day16 Siem Reap

Today we continue our comprehensive exploration of spectacular ruins and temple grounds. We first go to the fortified royal city of [Angkor Thom](#), built in 1100, and covering 10 square km. It is enclosed by a wall and five monumental [gates](#), encircled by a [moat](#) 100 meters wide. Inside are many of Angkor's most popular sights. We enter the imposing [South Gate](#) over a [causeway](#) lined on either side by statues of demons and gods, each carrying a giant naga. Continue to the [Elephant Terrace](#), once used for viewing public ceremonies, and also as a base for King's grand audience hall. View the famous lines of elephants at either end of the retaining walls. We then proceed to the [Terrace of the Leper King](#), a platform with a nude statue, one of Angkor's many unanswered mysteries. We will visit the ruined [Baphuon](#), [Royal Enclosure](#) and [Phimeanakas - the Celestial Palace](#). The highlight will be a tour of the stunning [Bayon Temple](#), one of the most popular



and compelling places in Angkor. We first explore the [exterior gallery walls](#) that contain some of the most remarkable bas reliefs at Angkor. They combine numerous domestic and everyday scenes with historical details of battles won and lost by the Khmers. The

domestic scenes, many of which are in smaller bas reliefs below the main war scenes, show details of fishermen, market scenes, festivals, cockfights, removing lice, hunting, women giving birth, and so on. There are also everyday scenes from the royal palace – princes and princesses, wrestlers and sword fighters. The [East Gallery](#), which is in an excellent state of preservation, features a military procession of Khmer troops, elephants, ox carts, horsemen and musicians. Parasol shield the commanders of the troops. The [South Gallery](#) is equally spectacular. The early panels depict the great naval battle that took place on the Tonle Sap in 1177, The Khmers have no head covering and short hair, while the Cham invaders wear strange hats which resemble long hair. The fighting is intense, with bodies falling from the boats and sometimes being taken by crocodiles. We then ascend narrow stairs to reach the [central sanctuary](#), where an amazing collection of [54 towers](#) decorated by [200 faces of Avolokitesvara](#), all smiling enigmatically down at us from every angle. **PJ de Beerski** wrote of them; “*godliness*

in the majesty and the size, mystery in the expression”. Leaving Angkor Thom, the next stop is [Preah Khan](#). “[the sacred sword](#)”, a 12th century temple built under Jayavarman VII. We explore its [myriad halls, pavilions, causeways, moats, and sculpted garudas and serpents](#) on the exterior walls. Later we visit [Banteay Kdei](#) – a massive Buddhist temple dating from the second half of the 12th century. It is surrounded by [four concentric walls](#), featuring [towered enclosures](#) and [shoulder hugging corridors](#) in a jungle setting. Continue on to [Banteay Srei](#); [the citadel of women](#) – a tiny enchanting temple built of fine red sandstone in the 10th century and dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva. The finely carved figures of male and female divinities are exquisitely executed in both style and proportion. This temple inspires through meticulous detail and represents the extraordinary example of Khmer sculpture. Today's highlight goes to the tour of [Ta Prohm](#), “[Ancestor of Brahma](#)”. Following an unusual archaeological decision, the jungle has been only partly cut back, so that the buildings are covered with the roots of huge banyan and kapok trees which rise high above the temple. Spectacular roots bind lintels and crack vaulted passageways, while parrots fly in the upper canopy and break the stillness with their sharp cries. It looks very much the same as most of the Angkor monuments did when European explorers first stumbled across them! Later we will also visit [Ta Keo](#), the first Angkorian monument built entirely of sandstone and dedicated to Lord Shiva. The summit of the [central tower](#) is 50 meters high and is surrounded by four lower towers. We will also tour [Chau Say Tevoda](#), a temple built during the 2nd quarter of 12th century dedicated to Lord Shiva and Vishnu, [Sras Srang](#) – “[The Pool of Ablutions](#)”, a centuries-old basin with a tiny island in the middle where only the stone base remains of what was once a wooden temple. Before dusk we will stroll in the bustling [market of Psah Chah](#), [interacting with the shopkeepers and observe authentic local life.....](#) B/L/D



Day17 Siem Reap - Bangkok

In the morning we continue our in-depth exploration of the magnificent Angkorian archeological ruins. See the [Roluos Group](#)



[Temples](#). The monuments mark the beginning of the classical art

some 11 centuries ago, when King Jayavarman II (802-850) made here a capital. “Hariharalaya”, means “the dwelling place of Hari –Hara”, a deity combining the attributes of both Vishnu and Shiva. We will visit [Lolei](#), built on an islet by Yasovanman I, the founder of the first city of Angkor. We enjoy the [sandstone carvings](#) in the niches of the temples and the [Sanskrit inscriptions on the doorposts](#). Then tour the tranquil and rarely visited [Preah Ko](#), “Sacred Bull” – dedicated to the defied ancestors of Indravarman I. We also stop at [Bakong](#), the largest and most interesting temple of Roluos Group which is still an active Buddhist monastery. In the afternoon we drive to the [Tonle Sap Lake \(the Great Lake\)](#). Located in the heart of Cambodia, this huge lake swells up to seven times its original size during the monsoon season. Its ecosystem is one of the richest and most diverse in the region. As part of **Orient Odyssey’s “People to People Contact”** program, we enjoy a [boat cruise](#) and explore [floating villages](#) situated at the edge of the lake, passing submerged forests and fishing farms. Visit a [floating school](#) and chat with teachers and students. [Observe authentic village life](#) by walking through the river side villages. Tonight, after the farewell dinner, we fly to Bangkok. **Bangkok Airway** flight PG910 will leave at 8:45 p.m., arriving in Bangkok at 9:40 p.m.. A local representative will greet and accompany us to the 4 star, deluxe, **Century Park Hotel Bangkok**. **B/L/D**



Day18 Bangkok – USA

Savor the memory of our **Grand Indochina Expedition**. We check-in for our homebound flight, arriving in USA on the same day. **B/F**

***Optional Extension**

Our programs are flexible! You can extend your stay in Bangkok, or enjoy an excursion to the “golden triangle” in Northern Thailand to explore ethnic tribes. You can also go to Phuket or island of Samui to relax

on the white sandy beach, or, connect this package with an expedition to Burma, or the mountain kingdom of Bhutan..... Please contact us for more information.

***International Flights**

Orient Odyssey features **Eva Air, Japan Airlines, China Airlines, Asiana Airlines** and / or **Northwest Airlines / Delta Airlines** as the international carrier for this package. Based on your departure cities and tour logistics, Orient Odyssey reserves the right to secure other major international carrier for your journey. Flight arrangements will be finalized at least 60 days before departure.

Sample international flight schedules are as follows. Schedules are subject to change.

From Los Angeles (LAX):

BR011	Los Angeles – Taipei	1515 / 2205
BR061	Taipei – Bangkok	2245 / 0135
BR212	Bangkok – Taipei	1235 / 1700
BR012	Taipei – Los Angeles	1820 / 1450

From San Francisco (SFO):

CI003	San Francisco – Taipei	0115 / 0605
CI833	Taipei – Bangkok	0935 / 1225
CI836	Bangkok – Taipei	1750 / 2225
CI004	Taipei – San Francisco	2325 / 1910

From New York (JFK):

JL007	New York – Tokyo	1000 / 1410
JL703	Tokyo – Bangkok	1600 / 2105
JL704	Bangkok – Tokyo	2330 / 0715
JL006	Tokyo – New York	1130 / 1015

***Note**

Fuel surcharges and taxes are subject to change. Due to lowered fuel cost, actual fuel surcharge might be less than quoted. Updated and accurate amount will be advised before the final payment due date. Tour cost is quoted based on current foreign exchange rate as of Dec 1, 2008. Price is guaranteed once full payment is received.

Kindly refer to General Terms & Conditions

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