

Orient Odyssey – *Journeys beyond the ordinary™*

# 18 Day **Grand Indochina Expedition**

## *Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia*

The ultimate journey exploring the part of the world bustling with ethnic diversity and color  
exploding with unique tribes, customs and fascinating history

Not to mention the remarkable landscape: lush green rice fields, surging waterfalls, sandy beaches  
And the magnificent **Angkor Wat**, written by Rose Macaulay in her “*Pleasures of Ruins*”:

**“.....calling you silently, irresistibly, day and night”**

- **Luang Prabang** – The enchanting town of many magnificent temples, the cruise on Mekong to explore cave carvings
- **Vientiane** – The treasure filled royal palace now a National Museum, the bustling market & gleaming golden stupa
- **Hanoi** – Temple of Literature, One Pillar Pagoda, Hoan Kiem Lake, a stroll in the bustling Old Quarters & more
- **Halong Bay** – Magnificent voyage onboard traditional wooden junks, enjoy the beautiful landscape and caves
- **Hue** – Vietnam’s ancient capital with imperial citadel, Thien Mu Pagoda, and fleets of serene royal burial grounds
- **Hai Van Pass** – The spectacular sea to sky scenic drive with stops at fishing villages, mountains and the beaches
- **Da Nang** – Explore the exquisite carvings at Cham Museum. Visit the interesting temples at the Marble Mountain
- **Hoi An** – A well preserved 16<sup>th</sup> century bustling port with traditional buildings, serene beaches, and cobble stone paths
- **Saigon** – The metropolis of Vietnam with full energy, the grand mixture of East and West, old and new
- **Siem Reap** – The magnificent Angkor Wat & its surrounding ruins, cruise to floating villages at Tonle Sap lake



### *Special Highlights- We cut no corners!*

Visits to multiple UNESCO World Heritage and Culture Sites, and Southeast Asia’s best museums  
Upgraded luxurious 4 and 5 star hotels and boutique properties exclusively for 2015 / 2016 tour season

Fascinating culture, gorgeous temples, spectacular ruins, lush tropical scenery, and vibrant cities

Unique “**People to People Contacts®**” experiences throughout the journey

Interact with locals to obtain true insights of daily life, random stops at villages, farmer’s home and markets

Inclusive culture experiences – the Water Puppet Show, the stroll in the bustling Old Quarters, cruise on the Halong Bay, the Perfume River and the Mekong, visits to the floating community in Cambodia.....

### *Enjoy our signature **True All Inclusive®** value*

There are no last minute surprises, or hidden costs.....

This tour is all inclusive - all listed sightseeing, shows, and daily meals are included

#### **Tour Cost Includes:**

1. Guided comprehensive sightseeing, admission and culture shows as per specified
2. Luxury accommodations - luxurious 5 star, or local best 4 star hotel room and surcharges
3. Professional certified English speaking guide handpicked by our operation office
4. Daily meals, special local flavor dishes, and banquets as per specified
5. Domestic transportation via flight, train, bus, water craft and cruise ships as per specified
6. Round trip transfers and luggage handling

#### **Tour Cost Does Not Include:**

1. International airfare between USA & Asia
2. Tipping, Travel Insurance, Visa fee and handling for Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia
3. Any misc. charge with personal natures that are not mentioned in the itinerary

Call **Orient Odyssey** **1-800-637-5778**

1385 Gulf Road, Suite 203, Point Roberts, WA 98281, E-mail: [info@orientodyssey.com](mailto:info@orientodyssey.com) Web: [www.orientodyssey.com](http://www.orientodyssey.com)

# Orient Odyssey – Journeys beyond the ordinary™

**Tour Name:** Grand Indochina Expedition – Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia  
**Tour Code:** GIE – 2015 / 2016

## Unsurpassed Flexibility.....

- Join the following suggested departures or choose your own date – prices are the same!

## Personalize Your Journey.....

- Add another town, cut the tour short, book a special excursion, or delete meals so you can dine on own pace and budget.....we work with our guests to customize each and every departures!

## Premium Quality and Optimum Personal Attentions.....

- All **Orient Odyssey** journeys feature optimum personal attentions, with an English guide, a driver and a vehicle serving you (yes, you only!) exclusively throughout the trip. No more wasted time waiting around for others!

## Travel with Friends and Family Together and Save BIG.....

- Additional generous discounts are available for as little as 3 passengers traveling together.....

## SUGGESTED GUARANTEED DEPARTURES

Or choose your own departure date – any date throughout the year!

Tour Code	Arrival Date	Exit Date	Land Cost	Single Supplement
	Day 2 - Arrive Bangkok	Day 18 – Bangkok	(not include int'l air) Day 2-18 Bangkok-Bangkok	
0115GIE	Jan 16, 2015	Feb 1, 2015	\$4988	\$1198
0129GIE	Jan 30, 2015	Feb 15, 2015	\$4988	\$1198
0305GIE	Mar 6, 2015	Mar 22, 2015	\$4988	\$1198
0402GIE	Apr 3, 2015	Apr 19, 2015	\$4988	\$1198
0514GIE	May 15, 2015	May 31, 2015	\$4988	\$1198
0625GIE	Jun 26, 2015	Jul 22, 2015	\$4988	\$1198
0709GIE	Jul 10, 2015	Jul 26, 2015	\$4988	\$1198
0917GIE	Sep 18, 2015	Oct 4, 2015	\$4988	\$1198
1001GIE	Oct 2, 2015	Oct 18, 2015	\$4988	\$1198
1105GIE	Nov 6, 2015	Nov 22, 2015	\$4988	\$1198
1119GIE	Nov 20, 2015	Dec 6, 2015	\$4988	\$1198
0107GIE	Jan 8, 2016	Jan 24, 2016	\$4988	\$1198
0218GIE	Feb 19, 2016	Mar 6, 2016	\$4988	\$1198
0303GIE	Mar 4, 2016	Mar 20, 2016	\$4988	\$1198

## Important Remarks:

1. Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia domestic and air ticket tax of \$188 per person is extra.
2. Sample special low season fares for your round trip international flight **USA – Bangkok – USA** are as follows:  
 From Los Angeles: \$285 + tax / fuel surcharge / fees \$506.30 = total about \$ 791.30 per person  
 From San Francisco: \$455 + tax / fuel surcharge / fees \$370.50 = total about \$ 825.50 per person  
 From New York: \$333 + tax / fuel surcharge / fees \$522.15 = total about \$ 855.15 per person  
 Fares are subject to availability and seasonality. Prices may change without notice. Lower rates might be available due to local sales.
3. Prices quoted are in US currency, based on per person double occupancy. Payment can be made by check, money order, or credit cards – we accept Visa, Master, and Discover card.

Orient Odyssey ▪ 1385 Gulf Road, Suite 203 ▪ Point Roberts, WA 98281 ▪ Phone: 1.800.637.5778  
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# 18 Day Grand Indochina Expedition

## Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia

Tour Code: GIE – 2015 / 2016

Operated by Orient Odyssey



B-Breakfast, L-Lunch, D-Dinner, F-In flight snacks & meals,  
SL / SD-Special local flavor meal or banquet

### Day 01 USA – Bangkok

Depart from Los Angeles, New York, or any other major US gateways. Enjoy in-flight meals and services. Move watch one day ahead as you fly cross the international dateline. F

### Day 02 Arrive in Bangkok

Your flight will land in Bangkok Suvarnabhumi International Airport. After immigration and customs, VIP private transfer service will greet and take you to the 5 star, luxurious, [Chatrium Hotel Riverside Bangkok](#), with a prime downtown location facing the bustling Chao Phraya River. Enjoy a restful night and get ready for tomorrow's flight to Vientiane. F

### Day 03 Bangkok – Luang Prabang, Laos

After breakfast, VIP private transfer service takes us to the airport to check-in for [Lao Airlines](#) flight QV634, leaving at 10:15 a.m., arriving in Luang Prabang at 11:55 a.m.. After immigration and customs, the local representative will greet and escort us to the 4.5 star, luxury boutique, [Le Sen Boutique Hotel](#), one of the best and the newest luxury properties in town. Welcome to Luang Prabang, a small, dream like UNESCO World Heritage Site, a tonic for the soul, at the confluence of Nam Khan and Mekong River. From 1353 to 1545, it

was the capital of the Lan Xang Kingdom. Later **King Phothisarath** (1520 – 1548) moved the official capital to Vientiane, but Luang Prabang remained as the royal heart and the seat of monarchical power 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, makes it one of the Asia's most intriguing and magical places to



visit - thick with the perfume of pearly frangipanis, and the unmistakable enticing flavors of high-quality Asian and European cuisines; the greens of the giant shade trees contrast with the burnt saffron robes and bare-foot silence of countless Buddhist monks and novices collecting alms. The gleaming temples, French-era palaces, lovely villas, and the multi-ethnic peoples who live here project a romantic and relaxed feel that can captivate even the most jaded travelers. Our exploration today begins at Wat Visun, the oldest active temple in town dating back to 1512, famous for the watermelon-shaped stupa and its impressive collection of antique gilded wooden Buddhas from the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. We then visit Wat Aham, and the crowning jewel of Luang Prabang – Wat Xieng Thong, the “Golden City Monastery”. The later, which epitomizes in low sweeping roofs - the classic Luang Prabang style of temple architecture, was built in 1560 and patronized by the monarchy right till 1975. Inside the main sanctuary, eight thick supporting pillars, richly



stenciled in gold, guide the eye to the golden Buddha images at the rear, and upwards to the roof which is covered in “*dhamma*” wheels. Outside the hall there is an elaborate mosaic of the “*Tree of Life*” set against a deep red



background. The splendid gold and deep red color throughout give this temple a captivatingly regal atmosphere. Adjacent to it stands the Red

Chapel, dubbed by the French “*La Chapelle Rouge*”, containing a unique reclining Buddha figure that was once displayed at the Paris exhibition in 1931. Close to the east gate we can find the royal funeral chapel, housing an impressive 40 ft high royal funeral carriage – the exquisite exterior gilt panels of the front verandah has designs recounting the scenes from semi-erotic episode of Hindu Ramayana and the Buddha’s penultimate incarnation. For remaining of the day, we enjoy our leisurely stroll down the main street, observing the bustling local life, maybe stop randomly at more temples along the way: Wat Sibounheuang, Wat Si Mounghoun, Wat Sop and Wat Sene. After dinner we will retire for a restful night. Those who are energetic can head to the vibrant night market at their own leisure, bargaining for the ethnic minority art works, paper lanterns, hill-tribe jewelries and textiles. **B/F/D**

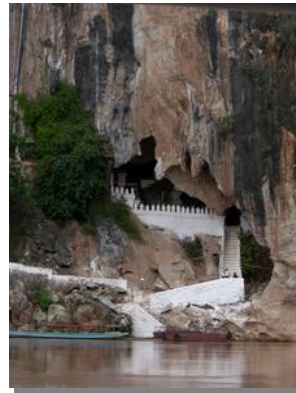
#### Day 04 Luang Prabang

This morning we rise early to observe the famous ritual of morning alms giving - every day at dawn, locals prepare ubiquitous sticky rice and other offerings to the saffron clad monks with



their black alms bowls. Return to our hotel for breakfast and a fresh up, we head out again - this time to the pier to board a wooden long tail boat. The serene, scenic cruise on the Mekong River

sails pass villages, rice fields and verdant hills, reaching Pak Ou village at the mouth of the Nam Ou River at around noon. Enjoy lunch at a river front restaurant, followed by **Orient Odyssey’s** exclusive “**People to People Contact®**” experience and enjoy a leisurely walk through this quiet, unspoiled village, peek into villagers’



daily activity, and a true insight of the country’s rural life. Ferry cross the river, we reach the Caves of a Thousand Buddhas of Pak Ou. There are two caves, one upper, one lower, both hollowed out of massive limestone cliffs, are said to have been

discovered by **King Setthathirat** in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and have been venerated ever since. Both are full of gilded Buddha of all shapes and sizes. Tham Ting - the lower one, is easily accessible with natural lights. The upper one - Tham Phum, must be reached by some steep stairs and will require a flashlight to explore. In the afternoon during our return boat voyage an interesting stop at the village of Ban Xan Hai is planned. We will take a look at how “lao-lao”, a popular local rice whisky is made. Upon return to Luang Prabang, we explore Mount Phousi at dusk, hike the 328 steps to the top for an unforgettable view of sunset over the temples, the town, the river and the market below. **B/L/D**



#### Day 05 Luang Prabang – Vientiane

Our day starts with a visit to the wildly colorful, bustling, morning market! The unforgettable stroll take us through baskets after piles after stalls of rice, eggs, tea, ducks, pig and fish, both alive and dead, noodles, soup, jasmine, orchids,



marigolds which are woven into garlands for temple offerings, and food to go, wrapped in banana leaves. The next stop is the National Museum,

the former Royal Palace: a graceful turn-of-the-century building combining both traditional Lao and French beaux-arts motifs once served as a royal residence. Peek into the country's turbulent history, we stroll through the ornate gilded and brocaded reception rooms and halls, passing the Throne of the Lan Xang Kingdom and other wonderful historical artifacts and treasures, looking at the precious Pra Bang, a 32 inch tall image in the attitude of **Abhayamudra**, or "*dispelling fear*" – made of pure gold that weights between 95 – 120 lbs, and was given by the Khmers to **King Fa Ngum** in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. We end our exploration of Luang Prabang at the famous 18<sup>th</sup> century Wat Mai, known for its

beautiful five tiered roof on the ordination hall - within its compound one can also see two long racing boats,

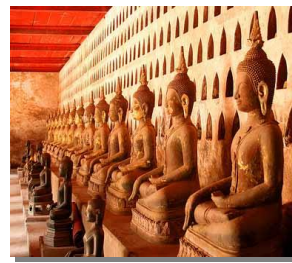


each holding up to 50 rowers, and both are kept in their own shelter and are ready to be used during Lao New Year in April and the Water Festival in October. The early evening flight takes us to Vientiane - **Lao Airlines'** QV104 will depart at 6:35 p.m., reaching Vietiane at 7:20 p.m.. Welcome to the capital of Laos, the romantic "*Sandalwood City*". Located on the Mekong riverbanks amidst a fertile alluvial plains, "*Wieng Chan*", as it was called in old times, still feels like a sleepy town with a relaxed charm. Its tree lined boulevards, interesting wats and colorful markets, all retained a hint of the French colonial past. After settle in at the 4.5 star, luxury boutique, **Salana Boutique Hotel**, we enjoy a restful evening, or explore the city street at our own pace. Our guide and the hotel staff will be glad to assist you with directions – you might enjoy a stroll on the Mekong riverbank where locals out socializing, children playing along the mudflats of the river, and vendors selling local artworks. **B/L/F**

#### **Day 06 Vientiane – Hanoi, Vietnam**

The highlight of today is a visit to the gleaming golden spire of Pha That Luang, "*the Great Sacred Reliquary*". The impressive Buddhist shrine is a national symbol of Lao sovereignty. Next we tour Haw Pha Kaew, a museum converted from a former royal temple built in 1565 with ornately carved doors and delicate figures. Across from the street is the delightful Wat Si Saket, with small niches carved in its

interior walls holding more than 2,000 silver and ceramic Buddha images. We will also enjoy a stop at Patuxai, a large monument in the style of the Arc de Triomphe in Paris.



Time allows, we may climb all the way to the top for a panoramic view of the city. Next we explore the antiquity of Wat Si Muang, home of the "*lak muang*", or the city pillar, a site



of Vientiane's guardian spirits. The program ends at the famous Talaat Sao, or the "*morning market*" - actually opens all day long, it is a busy, bustling place where one can bargain for traditional Lao Fabrics and everything else. Bid our farewell to Laos, as we check-in for **Lao Airlines'** flight QV311, leaving at 2:40 p.m., reaching Hanoi at 3:50 p.m.. After immigration and customs, the local representative will greet and accompany us to the 5 star, luxurious, **Crowne Plaza West Hanoi**. Welcome to Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam, a beautiful 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/F**



#### **Day07 Hanoi**



After breakfast, we head to the One Pillar Pagoda built by **Emperor Ly Thai Tong** in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The



unique wooden structure stands on a single stone pillar, resembling a lotus blossom. Next we study the excellent example

of traditional Vietnamese architecture and stroll through peaceful series of walled courtyards and graceful gaeways at the Temple of Literature, founded in 1070, initially 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 steles, survivors of the original 117, all resting on the backs of stone tortoises. The steles are inscribed with the names of those who succeeded in the 82 examination sessions held between 1492 and 1779. Also on today's agenda is a visit 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. We jog 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 set out to the Hoan Kiem Lake, the "*Lake of the Restored Sword*", with a tortoise pagoda standing on an islet. During the scenic drive around the city, picture

stops are planned at the magnificent 1911 Opera House and the St Joseph Cathedral, a neo-Gothic piece finished in 1886 with square towers, elaborate altar and stained glass windows. At Museum of Ethnology we learn the astonishing



ethnic diversity with art and artifacts from 54 different ethnic groups that inhabit the country. **Orient Odyssey's** unique "**People to People Contact®**" feature leads us to the experience of discovering the old quarter of Hanoi on foot, strolling through busy streets and markets, taking the close-up views of bustling local's daily about. The district is often referred to as "*the 36 streets*", where through over 600 years of history, each narrow lane or street being named after the merchandises traditionally sold there. Dinner is followed by a traditional Water Puppet Show – a fascinating and delightful spectacle accompanied by the traditional music. **B/L/D**

#### **Day08 Halong Bay Excursion**

The scenic drive leads us through the lush paddy fields and bustling village towns of the Red River Delta to the beautiful Halong Bay, dotted with well over 3,000 limestone islands and islets. It is an enchanted, timeless world created by bizarre rock sculptures jutting dramatically from the sea, and the numerous grottoes. The sails of



the junks and sampans gliding on the bay add mystic to the beauty of the scene. United Nation had declared here as the "*World Heritage Site of*

*Outstanding Natural Beauty*". Halong, can be literally translated as "*where the dragon descends into the sea*". Legends said 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 one other version, 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 water from the ocean. 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. We reach the harbor after the scenic two hour coach journey, and board a traditional wooden fishing junk for a 4 hours' scenic cruise

that sails pass countless limestone islets and beautiful grottos. Enjoy a sumptuous seafood lunch onboard as we glide through the emerald clear water amidst , craggy limestone cliffs. The vessel will stop at an



island where we go on shore to explore the massive underground cave, then continue the serene journey, cruising by the picture-perfect floating villages, fisherman casting their nets and interesting pearl fisheries, taking in the rhythms of the peaceful life on the bay. In the history, Halong has also been the setting of many famous battles against invasions from the north - it is believed that the countless sharp bamboo stakes that **General Tran Hung Dao** planted in Song Bach Dang in an effort to destroy **Kublai Khan**'s invasion fleet were still stored in many of the caves here..... Disembark at around 4:30 p.m., we enjoy the scenic drive back to Hanoi for dinner and a restful night. **B/L/D**

### **Day 09 Hanoi - Hue**

Early risers can stroll the awakening street of the capital and explore the markets, observing the daily life at own pace.....We will head to the airport and depart on **Vietnam Airlines** flight VN1541, leaving at 8:00 a.m., reaching Hue at 9:00 a.m.. Check-in at the 5 star, luxurious, **Imperial 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 10<sup>th</sup> Nguyen lord proclaimed himself **Emperor Gia Long** and founded the Nguyen Dynasty, which would last for another 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, gives this city a lovely, unique atmosphere of tranquility. We begin our program in the afternoon with a visit to the impressive 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 fortified gates, each topped with a formidable



watch-tower. 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 in the Vietnam - American War, but the ruins that remain can still provide visitors a fascinating glimpse into the court life of the Nguyen dynasty. Our first sight is the striking Flag Tower at the entrance where a giant Vietnamese flag waves



proudly. We then enter the imposing Ngo Mon Gate, the main entrance of the Imperial Enclosure,

walking through the central passageway and its yellow doors, and the bridge that across the lotus pond, once



reserved for the Emperor's exclusive use. Here we stand in the courtyard of Thai Hoa Palace, the magnificently decorated reception hall with an ornate roof of huge timbers supported by 80 carved and lacquered columns. We also explore the myriad Hall of the Mandarins, the Nine Dynastic Urns and the ruins of the Purple Forbidden City. Before days' end, **Orient Odyssey's "People to People Contact"**



experience calls for a stroll through the bustling Don Ba Market – most famous for the prettiest conical hats in the country.

The opportunity to mingle with the busy local daily life in close range, is always priceless. **B/F/D**

#### Day 10 Hue

A scenic boat trip on the Perfume River takes us to the Thien Mu

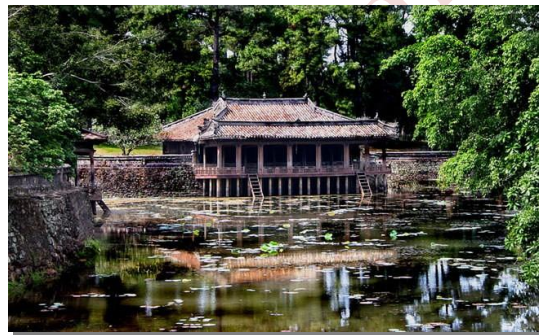


Pagoda, the "*Celestial Lady Pagoda*" as it is called by the locals. Situated on the hill overlooking the river, the pagoda was built

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 – its sound can be heard nearly 10 miles away. From here the famous 66 year-old monk **Thich Quang Duc** drove to Saigon on Jun 11, 1963 where he died by self-immolation on a street corner to protest **President Diem's** repressive policies. Today in the small garage of the pagoda, visitors can still see the little Austin car he used to drive himself there. We board our dragon boat again, and continue the voyage on the river, to the Imperial Tomb of Emperor Minh Mang, a majestic complex of courtyards, pavilions and temples in a beautiful natural setting, where we marvel at its



beautiful architecture, imposing military statues and elaborate decorations. After lunch, we drive to explore the tombs of Emperors Tu Duc and Khai Dinh. The imperial tomb of **Tu Duc**, who reigned from 1847 to 1883, the longest of any Nguyen emperors, is indeed a royal palace in miniature that harmonizes beautifully with the natural surroundings of groves of frangipani and pine trees. The elegant tomb was designed by the emperor himself, and was an ongoing construction project throughout his life time. We will enjoy a slow stroll through park like settings,



soaking up the tranquil atmosphere, wandering among the gracefully proportioned pavilions set among the forested hills, courtyards and lotus ponds. Emperor **Tu Duc** actually spent many of his leisure hours here, using the site as a retreat for meditation, reading and theatre performances!



Here he wrote poetry, no doubt inspired by the beauty of his surroundings, fished, and enjoyed the fragrance of the lotus. While “different” is hardly enough the word to describe our next stop - [the 20<sup>th</sup> century tomb of Emperor Khai Dinh](#), incorporating 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 square, lined with stone statues of elephants, horses, civil and military mandarins. Once inside, the contrast is more 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 themes of animals, tress, and flowers, providing an unforgettable visual feast. [B/L/D](#)

#### **Day 11 Hue – Da Nang – Hoi An**

After breakfast, [we set out on a scenic car ride](#) climbing the dramatic Hai Van Pass, also called “*the Pass of Ocean Clouds*”. The journey crosses over a spur of the Truong Son (Annamite) Mountain Range that juts into the South China Sea, with the breathtaking sceneries along the route. **Jeremy Clarkson**, host of the BBC motor program *Top Gear*, called the passage “*a deserted ribbon of perfection, one of the best coast roads in the world*”. [On route, our first stop is the lovely Lang Co Fishing Village](#) where the stretch of white sandy beach curves outwards between a clear blue lagoon and the South China



Sea. Before long, we will reach Da Nang, Vietnam’s fourth largest city, which also marks the northern limit of the country’s tropical zone that boasts a pleasant year-round climate. Here [we explore the famous Cham Museum](#), first

established in 1915 by the Ecole Francaise d’Extreme Orient, it is now home to some 300 priceless Cham sculptures dating to the 4<sup>th</sup> century. [We will also visit and enjoy a stroll on the famous China Beach](#). Stretching for 18 miles, with “*pink*” sands and roaring waves, it was



the famous landing spot of American soldiers during the Vietnam War. [An exploration of the famed cave temples of the Marble Mountain is also on the agenda](#) - a cluster of five marble and limestone hills rising sharply from the surrounding rice fields, riddled with caves and shrines, each represents one of the five elements of the universe: Kim (metal), Thuy (water), Moc (wood), Hoa (fire), and Tho (earth). After flyers of stairs, we will investigate the largest and the most famous hill - Thuy Son, with many of its natural caves in which Buddhist sanctuaries were established centuries ago. Early evening we end our road journey in Hoi An. Overnight at the 4.5 star, luxurious, [Hoi An Riverside Resort and Spa](#). [B/L/D](#)

#### **Day12 Hoi An**



The charming old town of Hoi An, now a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site, was once an important and flourishing ancient trading port and the meeting place of East and West, a world class center of cultural exchange. Hoi An appeared in western travelogues in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries as Faifo. Chinese, Japanese, French, English, Spanish, Portuguese and other traders all established their communities here. The old wooden houses, bridges and temples that remain are the reminiscent of the century old Vietnam. Today, it is a graceful, picturesque,

back water town with hump-backed bridges and shops bursting with silks, paintings, embroidered goods and lacquer ware. We will enjoy an interesting walking tour of this fascinating village town seemingly frozen in the river of time, marvel at the distinctive low tiled roof houses and the busy central market selling everything from vegetables, live stocks to daily household items. Stroll along the Tran Phu Street we reach the uniquely shaped Japanese Covered Bridge, constructed in 1593 by

Japanese community to provide a link to the Chinese quarters across the stream, with a useful roof to shelter from rain and sun.



We explore one of the many family chapels - built by prominent merchants as centers for ancestor worship. We visit the private houses, some of which are occupied by the same family for up to eight generations! Take the opportunity to interact with family members, inspect the centuries old engraved panels of exquisite figures. We will also stop randomly at Chinese



style pagoda, Assembly Hall, and the famed Sa Huynh Museum, displaying interesting artifacts from the early period of Hoi An's history. **Orient Odyssey's** exclusive **"People to People Contact"** experience will wrap up the day as we board a traditional wooden fishing boat, cruising down the Thu Bon River to a pottery and woodcarving village, where we observe the life of peasants, boat builders and craftsman before returning to the small Hoi An Harbor with hundreds of colorfully painted fishing boats are moored. Enjoy the remaining of the day at own leisure..... Hoi An is a shopper's paradise.



Endless small stores and art galleries team both sides of the cobble stone path. Travelers hunt for bargains for paintings, silk fabric, clothing, ceramics, lanterns, chopsticks, lacquer ware, teapots, embroidered tablecloths, and napkins..... **B/L/D**

### **Day 13 Hoi An – Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City)**

Rising early, the morning drive takes us to the airport in Da Nang. Check-in for **Vietnam Airlines** flight VN1091, departing at 9:40 a.m., reaching our destination at 10:55 a.m.. Welcome to Saigon - also called as "Ho Chi Minh City". This is 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, while inside quiet temple courtyards worshippers still pray amidst clouds of incense. Within this teeming metropolis are 300 years of timeless traditions and the beauty of an ancient culture.



Our exploration starts 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 picture stops along the way - first



at the red-brick Catholic Cathedral of Notre-Dame, then at the 19<sup>th</sup> century Empire-style Post Office, and the next door "Hotel de Ville" now the City Hall, with its distinctive gingerbread façade, and of course the Grand Opera House - built around the turn of the century to house the lower division of the National Assembly at the time, it is now the municipal theatre and Saigon Concert Hall. We visit the important historical landmark: the Reunification Palace, formerly the



Presidential Palace for the South Vietnamese government. On April 30, 1975, a Vietcong tank stormed its modern compound, signifying the fall of South Vietnam. From the balcony of the palace we can see where this historical moment occurred. We will also examine through the



halls, meeting rooms, offices, presidential living quarters, and even underground communication bunkers. Our next stop is at the harrowing War Remnants Museum, revealing the bloody fights by the Vietnamese against the French and Americans. In the afternoon we head to the west of the city to District 5, a sprawling, densely packed Chinese neighborhood (Chinatown) called “*Cholon*”, meaning “*big market*”, where we will visit the Jade Emperor Pagoda, one of the oldest and the most interesting pagodas in the city; the Thien Hau Pagoda, built by the Cantonese congregations



and dedicated to the heavenly goddess, stroll in the colorful Binh Tay Market, the vast wholesale market selling every kind of good from dried foods to T shirts to electronics. Our day ends at the bustling Ben Thanh Market, where vendors display a vast array of goods and handicrafts, appealing to every taste. We will overnight at the 5 star, luxurious, Hotel Equatorial. B/L/D

#### **Day 14 Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City)**

Nowhere is better than Saigon to enjoy a free day to rest, shop or explore at own pace, or to soak up the ambience of this great metropolis in the Orient. If preferred, you can also consult with

our guide to pre-arrange any of the following recommended excursions at extra cost. Some of them might involve couple of hour’s scenic drive from Saigon. B

#### ❖ **Cuchi Tunnels**

The 150 miles of tunnels which make up an impressive underground network are



evidence of the tremendous ingenuity and resourcefulness that are characteristic of the Vietnamese. It was from here that the North Vietnamese waged their guerrilla warfare. We will see secret trapdoors, underground kitchens, living areas and meeting rooms. The more adventurous may go down to 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 will observe from the upper balconies the daily noon time ceremony at the Great Temple, see worshippers garbed in colorful robes flocking to participate in the prayer sessions.

#### ❖ **Mekong Delta and Mytho Village**



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



#### Day 15 Saigon – Siem Reap, Cambodia

Bid farewell to Vietnam, we embark on our flight to Siem Reap, Cambodia for the optimum highlight of our journey - the Khmer temples of Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom. [Vietnam Airlines](#) flight VN3825 will depart at 12:00 p.m. reaching Siem Reap, Cambodia at 1:00 p.m.. After immigration and customs, the local representative will greet and accompany us to the 5 star, luxurious, [Sokha Angkor Resort and Spa](#). The ancient capital of the Khmer kingdom is the cultural and spiritual heartland of Cambodia.



The ruins existing today, although monumental in scale, still offers intimate glimpses into lives lived in a distant past. During 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century, Khmer Empire reached its golden age. Elaborate monuments were built, along with a massive sophisticated system of irrigation canals, solidifying the strength of the Empire. The city was abandoned in 1431 after the defeat by the Thai armies. Siem Reap was then taken over by

Theravada Buddhists and became an important pilgrimage site. In 1858, a French naturalist and explorer **Henri Mouhot** stumbled upon Angkor in the jungle. His message popularizes the Angkor in the west like no others before: *“One of these temples – a rival to that of Solomon, and erected by some ancient Michaelangelo – might take an honourable place beside our most beautiful buildings. It is grander than anything left to us by Greece or Rome...”* He also wrote, *“At Ongcor (Angkor), there are...ruins of such grandeur...that, at the first view, one is filled with profound admiration, and cannot but ask what has become of this powerful race, so civilized, so enlightened, the authors of these gigantic works?”*..... Today the “lost city” of Asia can indeed once again be seen in all its glory. On this journey we will spend several of our days exploring in a leisurely fashion the fantastic temples, gates, ruins, and stone carvings.

Our exploration begins at the fortified royal city of Angkor Thom,

built in 1,100, covering an area little less than 4 square miles. It is encircled by a 320 ft wide moat, enclosed by a wall and five monumental gates. Inside lie many of Angkor’s most popular sights. Entering the imposing South Gate after a causeway lined on both side by multiple statues of demons and gods, all carrying a giant naga (snake), we first reach the the Elephant Terrace, a base for the Kings’ grand audience hall, the site of public ceremonies, where on both end of the retaining



wall we can see the famous lines of elephants. Not far is the Terrace of the Leper King, a platform with a nude statue - one of Angkor’s many unanswered mysteries. We further investigate the ruined Baphuon, the Royal





Enclosure and Phimeanakas - the "Celestial Palace". The most striking experience of the day will no doubt be a visit to the

stunning Bayon Temple, one of the most popular and compelling sites in Angkor. Its exterior gallery walls contain some of the most extensive and best bas-reliefs, depicting 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, markets, festivals, cockfights, removing lice, hunting, women giving birth..... One can also find intriguing 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, musicians, and parasol shielding the commanders of the troops..... The South Gallery is equally impressive. The early panels depict the great naval battle that took place on the Tonle Sap Lake in 1177. The fighting is intense, with bodies falling from the boats and sometimes being taken by crocodiles. We now ascend the narrow stairs to the central sanctuary. Suddenly appearing before us is an amazing collection of 54 towers, decorated by 200 faces of **Avalokitesvara** – *"the Bodhisattva of Compassion"*, all smiling enigmatically down at us from every angle! **PJ de Beerski** once wrote about them in his 1920's book: *"godliness in the majesty and the size, mystery in the expression"*. French Architect and Archeologist **Maurice Glaize** also wrote that *"Wherever one wonders"* the faces of **Avalokitesvara** follow and dominate with their multiple presences. Angkor's ruins are 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. Today at dusk, we will do just that -



watch the sunset over the Cambodian countryside from the upper terraces of an ancient Angkorian Temple. B/F/D

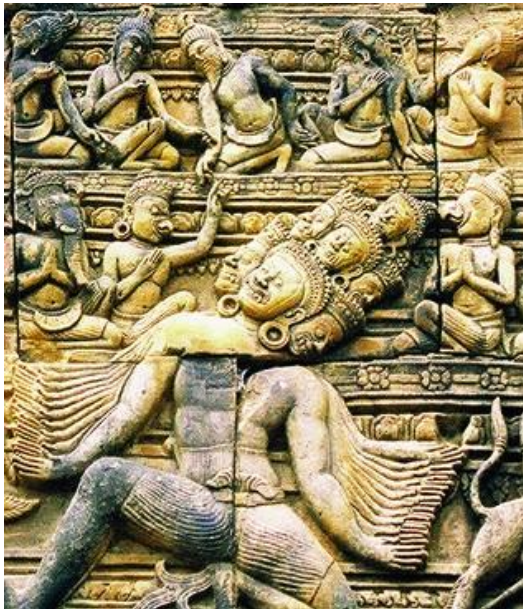
### Day 16 Siem Reap

Today we devote the entire morning to Angkor Wat, the crowning jewel of Khmer architecture, the national symbol of Cambodia, and the optimum highlight of any visits to Southeast Asia. The largest, best preserved and most religiously significant of the Angkor temples, Angkor Wat impresses visitors with her sheer scale, beautifully proportioned layout, and the delicate artistry of its carvings. *"An epic poem,"* wrote by British Historian **Arnold Joseph Toynbee**, *"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 to the site we have to cross the vast



moat and walk on the broad causeway lined with naga balustrades. After entering the main building, we ascend through a series of galleries and courtyards, reaching the central sanctuary. Looking back from here, one would be awed at the unexpected amazing views of the causeway and the surrounding countryside. We then spend some time to study the intricate stone carvings that adorn nearly every surface, with some 1,700 Apsaras, or *"celestial dancers"* sculpted into the walls. The outer gallery runs the beautiful, longest continuous bas-relief in the world,

narrating stories from Hindu mythology which include scenes of battles, depictions of the



Ramayana, and the Churning of the Ocean of Milk. Angkor Wat, the 12<sup>th</sup> century masterpiece that covers 81 hectares, took more than 30 years to complete. It is one of UNESCO's most famous World Culture Heritage Site, and is considered by art historians the definitive example of classical Khmer art and architecture! This afternoon we explore Ta Prohm, "*Ancestor of Brahma*", also nicknamed "*Kingdom of Trees*". 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. Even today, it still looks very much the same as most of the Angkor monuments did when European explorers first stumbled upon them! Our exploration continues

on as we head to the beautiful Banteay Srei; the "*Citadel of Women*" – a tiny enchanting temple built of red sandstone in the 10<sup>th</sup> century dedicated to the Hindu God **Shiva**.

We will take time to study the exquisitely carved male and female figures in the niches with beautiful style and proportion, representing the extraordinary carving skills and superior artistic appealing of the Khmer sculpture. A true jewel in this remarkable city - in the words of **H. W. Ponder** in his *Cambodian Glory*: "*a fairy palace in the heart of an immense and mysterious forest.*" Before dusk we will enjoy the opportunity to stroll in the bustling market of Psah Chah, mingle with the shopkeepers and hunt for bargains..... **B/L/D**



#### **Day 17 Siem Reap - Bangkok**

After breakfast, we continue our in-depth exploration of the magnificent Angkorian archeological ruins.

Our first stop is Prasat Kravan, the Hindu temple built in 921 with five brick towers and spectacular bas-reliefs on the interior walls. Next we visit Banteay Kdei – a massive Buddhist temple dating back to 12<sup>th</sup> century,



surrounded by four concentric walls, featuring towered enclosures and shoulder hugging corridors in a jungle setting. Also explore



Sras Srang – "*The Pool of Ablutions*", a centuries-old basin with a tiny island in the middle, where now only the stone base remains of what was once a wooden temple. We tour Preah Khan, "*the sacred sword*", a 12<sup>th</sup>

century temple built under **King Jayavarman VII**. The World Monument Fund is currently



working on preserving this temple with its myriad halls, pavilions, causeways, moats, as well as sculpted garudas and serpents on the exterior walls. Next we head to Ta Keo, the first Angkorian monument built entirely of sandstone and dedicated to Lord **Shiva**. The summit of the central tower is 170 feet high and is surrounded by four lower towers. Our exploration of the ruins end at Thommanon and Chau Say Tevoda, a temple built during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 12<sup>th</sup> century dedicated to Lord **Shiva** and **Vishnu**. Shortly after lunch we begin our excursion on a drive to the Tonle Sap Lake, “the Great Lake”. Located in the heart of Cambodia, the huge body of water swells up to seven times of its original size during the monsoon season every year. Its ecosystem is one of the richest and the most diversified in the region. Through **Orient Odyssey**’s unique “**People to People Contact®**” experience, we explore Kampong Kleang, one of the most unspoiled floating communities on the lake by boat. Enjoy a cruise on the wooden sampan, we sail across the vast lake to the



floating villages, passing submerged forests and fish farms. If the timing is right we might even be able to visit a floating school so we can interact with teachers and students. Observe the authentic village life while we stroll by the simple huts. Our night flight on **Bangkok Airways** PG908, will leave at 7:30 p.m., reaching Bangkok at 8:25 p.m.. After immigration and customs, VIP private transfer will greet and take us to the 5 star, luxurious **Chatrium Hotel Riverside Bangkok** with prime downtown riverside location. The remaining of the day is free to rest, explore, shop, or checking out the culinary delight in the city at one’s own pace. Our luxury hotel offers complimentary shuttle boat services throughout the day to the nearest sky train station, which is the most efficient and economical way to get around in Bangkok. **B/L/F**

## Day 18 Bangkok – USA

After a grand delicious buffet breakfast, there might still be some free time for last minute packing, shopping or exploring. Savor the memory of the thrilling Grand Indochina Expedition while our VIP private transfer service takes you to the airport. Check-in for the homebound transpacific flight, and arrive back to USA on the same day (or the next day) depends on your international flight schedule. **B/F**

*Kindly refer to General Terms & Conditions*

### Featured luxury hotels and cruisers:

1. **Chatrium Hotel Riverside Bangkok** \*\*\*\*\*
2. **Le Sen Boutique Hotel** luxury boutique \*\*\*\*\*
3. **Salana Boutique Hotel** luxury boutique \*\*\*\*\*
4. **Crowne Plaza West Hanoi** \*\*\*\*\*
5. **Imperial Hotel Hue** \*\*\*\*\*
6. **Hoi An Riverside Resort and Spa** \*\*\*\*\*
7. **Hotel Equatorial Saigon** \*\*\*\*\*
8. **Sokha Angkor Resort and Spa** \*\*\*\*\*
9. **Chatrium Hotel Riverside Bangkok** \*\*\*\*\*

### Sample int'l flight schedule from Los Angeles:

KE18	Los Angeles – Seoul	1240 / 1750+1
KE659	Seoul – Bangkok	1915 / 2325
KE660	Bangkok – Seoul	1000 / 1735
KE61	Seoul – Los Angeles	2035 / 1615

### Sample int'l flight schedule from San Francisco:

BR17	San Francisco – Taipei	0140 / 0530+1
BR67	Taipei – Bangkok	0900 / 1135
BR68	Bangkok – Taipei	1625 / 2100
BR28	Taipei – San Francisco	2330 / 2020

### Sample int'l flight itinerary from New York:

OZ221	New York JFK – Seoul	1300 / 1730 + 1
OZ741	Seoul – Bangkok	1820 / 2210
OZ742	Bangkok – Seoul	2340 / 0650 + 1
OZ222	Seoul – New York JFK	1000 / 1040

- Special contract fares from other major US cities are available upon request.
- International and domestic flight schedules are subject to change without notice.

## Important Notice

- ❖ Itinerary is subject to change due to local condition and weather. Kindly refer to attached General Terms and Conditions. Living conditions and culture in Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia are different from those in North America and passengers should be aware and prepared.
- ❖ Never pack your passport, international air tickets, insurance documents, and medication into the check-in luggage. Please always keep those important documents with you.
- ❖ Domestic flight schedule might involve minor changes. Guides in each city will advise the most updated schedule and assist the group to check-in for each segment.

Any questions for logistics and sightseeing details, please feel free to call **Orient Odyssey** at

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