



13 Day Journey Thailand to Vietnam

DAY 1 Bangkok

On arrival in Bangkok you will be met and transferred to your hotel.

Accommodation: Pathumwan Princess Hotel

DAY 2 Kanchanaburi and the RV River Kwai

This morning we will meet our fellow travellers for the drive towards the River Kwai and a visit to Hellfire Pass. This notorious section of the Thai-Burma railway was the largest rock cutting undertaken, and gained its nickname 'Hellfire' at the sight of exhausted prisoners labouring through the night in shifts the Japanese called 'speedo'. The work area was illuminated by oil lamps, and many were to lose their lives here in unbearable working conditions. Hellfire Pass is supported by the Australian Government, and also by individuals and their families who survived the death railway. In tandem they have created a memorial to all who suffered and perished. We will take an extended visit along the well-maintained walking paths into the cutting and see the remnants of the rail line. We continue to the mooring point of our river boat at Daowa Dung Bridge. Here we meet our cruise ship the RV River Kwai, our home for the next three nights.

Accommodation: RV River Kwai

DAY 3 On board the RV River Kwai

The RV River Kwai is the first inland cruise ship to operate in Thailand. Built in colonial style, similar to that of the former Irrawaddy Flotilla Company in Burma, she has ten well-appointed teak wood cabins with private facilities. The dining area and lounge are located on the upper deck, shaded by a canvas awning, with uninterrupted views of the river from all sides. We will take a morning excursion to visit Hin Dad hot springs, which was accidentally discovered by the Japanese soldiers during the construction of the railway. This natural hot spring features two large pools and is thought by the local people to cure many ailments, including berri berri and arthritis. Our excursion continues to Pha Tad waterfall, considered to be the most beautiful falls in Kanchanaburi Province. We return to the RV River Kwai for lunch and an afternoon of cruising and relaxation. Traditional Thai massage is available on board.

Accommodation: RV River Kwai





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DAY 4 On board the RV River Kwai

This morning there is time to relax on board the RV River Kwai. After lunch we will visit (by private coach) Tham Krasae, and travel on the original Thai-Burma railway line to the station of Tha Kilen. The one hour trip traverses a spectacular wooden viaduct constructed by the Allied prisoners, considered at the time to be an 'engineering impossibility' as it hugs the cliff-face for 400 metres along the River Kwai. Despite predictions, it took the prisoners just seventeen days to complete. Here in the far south-west of Thailand we also find remnants of Khmer influence from the Angkor period some 800 years before. The extensive ruins of Prasat Muang Singh Temple are a great discovery, and indicate how extensive the Khmer empire was in its heyday from the late 10th century to its collapse in the 14th century. We return to our river boat.

Accommodation: RV River Kwai



DAY 5 Bangkok | Vietnam Danang

Our boat travels downstream towards Wat Tham where we disembark and say farewell to the crew of the RV River Kwai. We will visit the Bridge on the River Kwai, made famous by a Hollywood movie in 1957. The story was loosely based on the Thai-Burma Railway. Historical consensus suggests that the railway line was a failed concept from the beginning. Coming at an enormous cost in human life, it was barely used as the Allied forces gained momentum after 1944 and bombed the line regularly. The bridge has been rebuilt and remains as a testament to the courage and endurance of those who lived and died through its construction. We will transfer to the airport for the short flight to Danang in central Vietnam. On arrival we transfer to the InterContinental Danang Sun Peninsular Resort, designed by renowned landscape architect Bill Bensley, offering the perfect setting, looking east to the South China Sea.

Accommodation: InterContinental Danang Sun Peninsular Resort

DAY 6 Danang

Danang is a modern Vietnamese city is set by the Song Han River with long sandy beaches to the north and the south. In the last ten years the city has enjoyed unprecedented development and is well known amongst Vietnamese as both a holiday destination and a place to live. A full day of leisure to enjoy the many services that the hotel offers - you may indulge in the spa service, enjoy a range of water activities, food, swimming, or just relaxing with a good book. Dinner tonight is at the hotel.

Accommodation: InterContinental Danang Sun Peninsular Resort



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DAY 7 By Rail to Quy Nhon

We depart from Danang railway station in the morning and will reach the seaside town of Quy Nhon in Binh Dinh province after lunch. The rail network in Vietnam was built by the French over 100 years ago and remains an important transport link from north to south. Today we experience the railway in the stylish Vietage carriage from Danang to Quy Nhon - a wonderful indulgence which includes a three course dining experience (lunch) and wine, beer or soft drinks. This part of Vietnam was once the homeland of the Cham, an indigenous group thought to have originated from Sri Lanka who first settled in central Vietnam in the 2nd century. After years of conflict with the Vietnamese they were reduced to a minority, fortunately their splendid carvings and Hindu temples remain scattered throughout the province. On arrival at Quy Nhon rail station we will be transferred to our accommodation for the next two nights at Anantara Quy Nhon Villas. Dinner tonight is by the sea at our hotel.

Accommodation: Anantara Quy Nhon Villas – Ocean view pool villa



DAY 8 Quy Nhon

The beautiful surrounds of Anantara Villas offer ocean views from your room and a private swimming pool. This morning we will visit one of the nearby Cham towers and learn a little of its history while taking in stunning views of the coastal landscape. Much of Vietnam's coastline has pristine beaches, villages and bays, fed by large rivers that run east from the Truong Son mountain range. Seafood is bountiful and fishing has been a major enterprise for the locals for hundreds of years. Dinner tonight at our hotel.

Accommodation: Anantara Quy Nhon Villas - Ocean view pool villa

DAY 9 The Central Highlands

This morning we leave the coast of Vietnam and travel south-east into the highlands. Our destination is Dak Lak province, famous for its coffee and cacao industry. Vietnam has 54 ethnic minorities and many of them are found in the mountainous regions, practising animism, dressing in colourful costumes and cherishing traditions that have been their tribes' framework for hundreds of years. The drive is spectacular as we first meander through rice fields, then winding mountain passes, until we reach a plateau and our accommodation for two nights at Lak Tented Camp. Set by a lake and surrounded by mountains, Lak Tented Camp has been developed with a strong sense of environmental sustainability, and engagement with the local indigenous people. Tonight we stay comfortably in permanent tented rooms, tastefully furnished and with private facilities. Dinner tonight is in the Long House.

Accommodation: Lak Tented Camp



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DAY 10 Dak Lak Province

Dak Lak province borders Cambodia to the west, and during the American War it was strategic for all combatants. After the war, an illegal logging trade flourished as many looked for quick income from the surrounding environment. Fortunately, time and ultimately government intervention slowed the damage, and cash crops like coffee and cacao were introduced. This province is now well known for its chocolate. Today we will take an easy walk to view waterfalls, and visit villages of Ede and Tay people who are growing cacao and developing cottage industries. Life in this part of Vietnam has not been easy, so developing alternative sources of income, including tourism, is important. There are plenty of activities available at the resort, including kayaks, biking and walking. Dinner in the Long House this evening.

Accommodation: Lak Tented Camp



DAY 11 Can Tho and The Mekong Delta

We leave the central highlands of Vietnam and fly south into the heart of the Mekong Delta. The Mekong River is 4700 kilometres long and flows through five countries before it reaches Vietnam, and whilst only 250 kilometres of the river is in Vietnam, it is arguably the best part. The delta is very fertile, producing three rice crops per year along with a myriad of tropical fruits, providing a lifestyle for millions of Vietnamese. We will lodge near the provincial city of Can Tho at the Azerai Resort, located on an islet by the banks of the Hau River and only accessible by the resort shuttle boat. Dinner tonight under a thousand stars at the hotel.

Accommodation: Azerai Can Tho Resort

DAY 12 The Mekong Delta

From the resort we will explore the 'rice bowl' of Vietnam as it is known. In the nearby town of Sa Dec, we will visit the childhood home of French author, Marguerite Dumas, who penned her novel The Lover, drawing experiences from her time in Vietnam. Can Tho was the focus of major construction and movement of Vietnamese to the south during the reign of the second emperor of the Nguyen dynasty, Ming Mang (1820 to 1841), who built canals and encouraged trading. We will visit some wonderful old houses built in Vietnamese and French style that accommodated wealthy merchants, who, sensing an opportunity, made Can Tho their home. Dinner will be at our hotel this evening - our farewell to Vietnam.

Accommodation: Azerai Can Tho Resort

DAY 13 Departure

There is plenty of time to enjoy breakfast and resort facilities before we check out and drive towards Saigon's Tan Son Nhut Airport for your onward flight.