

JEWELS OF SE ASIA

16 DAY – VIETNAM, CAMBODIA & THAILAND Adventure

Group Leader: Susan Duval – Susan Duval Seminars

Feb 20 – March 7, 2021

Wrapped in rainforests, edged by golden sands, crowned by volcanoes and studded with ruins of lost civilizations, this is Southeast Asia as you've always imagined it. Fed by the waters of the Mekong and infused with a character and charm as meandering and timeless as the great river itself, the landscapes here provide the bewitching backdrop to this stunning South East Asia adventure. This small group, private tour will give you a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in the culture of one of the world's most fascinating regions as you travel from the magical temples of Angkor Wat, meeting Asian elephants, to a relaxing cruise on Halong Bay. Southeast Asian cuisine is a wonderful fusion of tastes and traditions. Sweet, sour, salty and spicy, it embraces everything from Indian spices and Chinese noodles to the elegant flair of French colonial.

Day 0 (Sat. Feb 20 2021) Arrive Ho Chi Minh City Vietnam: Upon arrival in HCM City Local agent will meet you and transfer you to GRAND HOTEL SAIGON for your next 3 nights' accommodations.

Accommodations: [Grand Hotel Saigon Deluxe Room](#)

Day 1 (Sun Feb 21) HCM City: This morning, travel outside the city to the Cu Chi Tunnels, the Vietcong built a 200km long network of tunnels connecting command posts, hospitals, shelter and weapon factories that were never discovered until after the war.

After lunch at a local restaurant, enjoy a walking tour Old Saigon. Visit a thriving local market to see how these bustling and vibrant markets play a major role in the daily lives of Vietnamese people. From here stroll through the colorful back alleyways lined with flower shops and breathe in the aromas of the freshly cut blooms. Pass through another street where mechanics specialize in restoring vintage Vespa scooters. Take in the scenes of local life as you wander these narrow lanes. Stop for a refreshing traditional iced coffee at the oldest coffee shop in Saigon, this old fashioned establishment has a colorful history stretching back over seven decades. Continue the walk through some other back lanes then go along to another famous street filled with shops selling locally-made guitars before returning to your hotel. Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, **Welcome Dinner**

Accommodations: Grand Hotel Saigon (Deluxe Room)

Day 2 (Mon Feb 22) HCM City (Ben Tre & Upper Mekong Delta): Immerse yourself fully in the local culture of the Mekong Delta with a day out to rustic Ben Tre. A journey of about two and a half hours will bring you to a peaceful area of lush orchards, green rice paddies and coconut fields. Hop on a Tuk Tuk for a ride along the shady paths to visit the home of local antique collector, Uncle Six. This friendly older man will welcome you into his home from where he also sells his ceramics. If you're feeling fit, Uncle Six will even show you how to climb the coconut trees using just your bare hands.

Continue exploring the area along rural pathways that wind their way alongside dense vegetation and small tributaries of the Mekong. Board a sampan (row boat) and cruise along the small canals under the shade of the coconut trees before changing your mode of transport to a motorized boat. After a delicious lunch of local specialties cooked by the host, visit some local workshops to see how rice paper and sticky coconut sweets are made. Return to your HCM City in the afternoon. Meals: Breakfast, Lunch Grand Hotel Saigon

Day 3 (Tues Feb 23) HCM City / Siem Reap Cambodia : Transfer for your flight to Siem Reap. Upon arrival, visit the Angkor National Museum for an orientation of the Angkor Temples before checking-in at LOTUS BLANC RESORT for your next 2 nights' accommodations. Tonight, you will enjoy a traditional Khmer Dinner
Meals: Breakfast, Khmer dinner Accommodations: [Lotus Blanc Resort Deluxe Room](#)

Day 4 (Wed Feb 24) Siem Reap: We start the morning with a visit to the magnificent ANGKOR WAT, the symbol of Cambodia. Dedicated to the Hindu god Vishnu by King Suryavarman II, who reigned between 1131 and 1150, Angkor Wat was constructed over a period of 30 years and illustrates some of the most beautiful examples of Khmer and Hindu art. Next visit, TA PROHM, the site of the hit movie Tomb Raiders one of the most popular attractions of Angkor as much of the jungle has not been cleared and it looks very much as most of the Angkor monuments would have appeared when European explorers first stumbled across them.

Later, visit the fortified city of ANGKOR THOM, covering an area of 10 square km enclosed by a wall and wide moats, the city includes many of Angkor's most popular sights. Here, enjoy a Water Blessing Ceremony performed by the monk from Tep Pranom pagoda at one of the ancient temples Angkor Thom. The water blessing is said to bring peace, good luck and happiness. Receive a personalized blessing of your own during this 1-hour water blessing experience at the Tep Pranom pagoda. Includes lunch at a local restaurant. Meals: Breakfast, Lunch Lotus Blanc Resort (Deluxe Room)

Day 5 (Thurs Feb 25) Siem Reap / Hoi An Vietnam: Morning visit to Banteay Srei Temple. Seemingly miniature in comparison to the other Angkor temples, Banteay Srei is considered to be the jewel of classical Khmer art built in pink sandstone. Transfer for your afternoon flight to Danang. Upon arrival, be met and transferred to LA SIESTA HOTEL in Hoi An for your next 2 nights' accommodations. Meals: Breakfast Accommodations: [La Siesta Hotel Deluxe Room](#)

Day 6 (Fri Feb 26) Hoi An: This morning, enjoy a walking tour of beautiful Hoi An. The exquisitely preserved merchant town of Hoi An was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999. Its colourful shop houses and temples reflect a diverse heritage, dating back to the 16th and 17th century, when it was a major port for Western, Chinese and Japanese traders. Today it is a thriving centre of traditional crafts and a shoppers' paradise, best explored on foot. Wander through the cobbled streets, past low tile-roofed buildings, the bustling central market and the small harbor where colourfully painted boats are moored. In the afternoon, board a local boat and cruise down the Thu Bon River, enjoying the unspoiled countryside and stopping to visit a pottery village and before returning to Hoi An harbor. Overnight in Hoi An. Meals: Breakfast, Lunch La Siesta Hotel

Day 7 (Sat Feb 27) Hoi An / Hanoi Vietnam: Transfer for your flight to Hanoi. Upon arrival, be met and transferred to THE ANN HOTEL HANOI. Take a brief rest at the hotel before embarking on a fascinating Night Foodies tour to experience some of the city's best street food stalls. Starting at the bustling Hom market, one of the biggest and most popular markets in Hanoi, your guide will take you to popular street food stalls where you can sample some of the city's signature dishes. Stop at a local coffee shop to taste this rich and flavourful drink then continue your culinary exploration with a stroll through the famed "36 Streets" that make up the Old Quarter of Hanoi. Join the locals and pull up a plastic stool at a pavement stall to try Vietnamese snacks and a cup of iced tea, followed by a sweet dessert of fresh fruit and condensed milk. End the tour with a cold draught beer at a sidewalk stall popular with locals. Meals: Breakfast, Dinner (Snack) Accommodations: [The Ann Hanoi Deluxe Room](#)

Day 8 (Sun Feb 28) Hanoi: Full day tour of Hanoi City. Although it is the modern-day capital of Vietnam, Hanoi still retains the mystery and charm of past centuries. Narrow lanes and traditional shop houses invite an exciting exploration by walking, while it's many beautiful public spaces - lakes, parks, tree-lined boulevards and monuments - give the city an air of elegance and harmony with nature unique among Asian capitals.

Your tour of Hanoi starts with the bustling Chau Long wet market located just off of Truc Bach Lake. Enjoy the walk through the narrow and busy passages with a crowd of vendors displaying all sorts of colourful produce and seafood. Continue to the Ho Chi Minh Complex his stilt house (and Mausoleum if time/conditions permit)

where he lived between 1958 and 1969. Visit the 11th century One Pillar Pagoda which was rebuilt after being destroyed by the French in 1954, and then to the Temple of Literature with its walled courtyards and graceful gateways. Founded in 1070 and dedicated to Confucius, this was also the site of Vietnam's first university.

After lunch, visit Hoa Lo Prison (a.k.a. “Hanoi Hilton”) where the late John McCain was held captive for 5 years followed by Hanoi’s famed Old Quarters. The Old Quarter holds over a thousand years of history and remains one of Vietnam's most lively and unusual places where one can buy anything from a herbal medicine to household items to silk pajamas. Overnight in Hanoi. Meals: Breakfast, Lunch The Ann Hanoi

Day 9 (Mon March 1) Hanoi / Halong Cruise: Depart Hanoi’s hustle and bustle for Halong Bay. Board the Bhaya Classic cruise enjoy lunch while cruising towards Southwest Halong bay. Discover Tien Ong Cave which is also an archaeological site covering an area of 1 square kilometer with stunning stalactites and stalagmites. Return to your cruise for a cooking demonstration with traditional Vietnamese food on the sundeck before dinner on board. Overnight on board. Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodations: [Bhaya Classic Cruise](#) (Deluxe Cabin)

Day 10 (Tue March 2) Halong Bay - Hanoi: This morning, enjoy a Tai Chi lesson on the sundeck. Rejuvenate your body and mind with the slow movement of Tai Chi and enjoy the dawn on the bay. Visit Cua Van floating village by traditional rowing boat or hop in a kayak and make your way back to the cruise. Enjoy brunch while the boat cruises back to Tuan Chau marina port. Upon disembarkation, transfer to Hanoi. Meals: Breakfast, Brunch Accommodations: The Ann Hanoi (Deluxe Room)

Day 11 (Wed March 3) Hanoi / Chiang Mai Thailand: Morning at leisure to relax till being transferred to the Noi Bai airport for a departure flight to Chiang Mai. Upon arrival, be met and transferred to SIRIPANNA VILLA RESORT & SPA. Enjoy some time to relax and enjoy the resort’s facilities this afternoon.

This evening, embark on a culinary tour where you will sample the delights of Chiang Mai cuisine, including various mouthwatering local snacks, and the delicious Kao Soi – a delicious coconut curry noodle dish that is unique to Chiang Mai. Once you have eaten, it’s time to work off your dinner as we head for a wander around the night market to pick up some gifts for family and friends. Meals: Breakfast, Dinner (Snack)
Accommodations: [Siripanna Resort and Spa Deluxe Lanna room](#)

Day 12 (Thur March 4) Chiang Mai (Temples & Monk Chat): This morning, drive through different parts of the city, passing old City walls, gates and city moat and Tapae, Chiang Mai’s main street Explore the old city visit city with stop at Wat Chiang Man (AD 1297) Wat Chedi Luang (AD 1411), where the Emerald Buddha was once enshrined; Wat Pra Singh (AD 1345), housing a very sacred 1,500 year old Buddha image. Later visit Doi Suthep , the most revered temple in the northern area. You will take the cable car to go up all the way. From the top you will get a magnificent view over the Chiang Mai valley. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before returning to your resort for some time at leisure.

This evening, visit Wat Suan Dok for a Monk Chat Session. This is an initiative by the temple in order to have monks talk with foreigners, to give them more of an insight into their religion; it is an open forum, and a fascinating way to find more about Thai Buddhist religion and culture. Return to your hotel.
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch Siripanna Villa Resort & Spa

Day 13 (Fri March 5) Chiang Mai (Elephants): After breakfast, proceed to Elephant Jungle Sanctuary 12:00 Pick up from your hotel. Drive approximately 1.5 hours South of Chiang Mai to Elephant Jungle Sanctuary. Upon arrival learn about the elephants and change into traditional clothing provided.

Meet the elephants. Feed, interact, and play with the elephants in a natural environment as you learn about their behavior and history and take photos with the elephants.

Have a Mud Spa with the elephants then walk with them to a river and have fun bathing and scrubbing the mud off them. Afterward, enjoy local snacks and then say goodbye to the elephants. Drive back to Chiang Mai to your hotel. Meals: Breakfast, Lunch Siripanna Villa Resort & Spa

Day 14 (Sat March 6) Chiang Mai / Bangkok Thailand (B,D)

Morning transfer for your flight to Bangkok. Upon landing at Bangkok airport, you'll be welcomed then escorted to visit some highlights of Bangkok. The Temple of the Golden Buddha, the temple is famous for its 900-years old five-and-a-half-ton solid gold image, then continue to visit Wat Arun, perhaps better known as the Temple of the Dawn. It is one of the best known landmarks and one of the most published images of Bangkok. After that, visit to Wat Po, the largest and oldest temple in Bangkok, as well as the largest single Buddha image: the Reclining Buddha (Phra Buddhasaiyas), also known as Wat Phra Chetuphon or The Temple of the Reclining Buddha. The temple is also known as the birthplace of traditional Thai massage Reclining Buddha. Return to the hotel and enjoy some leisure time before dinner. Meals: Breakfast . **Farewell Dinner**

Dance Show Cruise on Chaophraya River

Accommodations: [Aetas Lumpini Hotel Bangkok](#) Deluxe Room

Day 15 (Sun March 7) Return Home:

Transfer to Bangkok Airport for your departure flight home. Meals: Breakfast

Tour Cost: \$3,450.00 PP in shared room
Single Supplement: \$1,010.00

Inclusions:

- Accommodation 15 nights at selected hotels or similar
- Private main group transfer
- Regional Country English Speaking Guide
- Private Transportation
- Entrance Fees to all sites noted in the itinerary
- Boat trip in Mekong Delta and Deluxe Halong Bay Cruise
- Elephant Sanctuary Encounter
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary: B = Breakfast, L = Lunch & D = Dinner
- Domestic flight tickets: Danang – Hanoi, Chiang Mai- Bangkok
- Gov't tax and service charge
- Luggage handling and drinking water

Exclusions:

- International flights
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- personal expenses
- Visa to Vietnam, Cambodia
- Tips / gratuities
- Alcoholic beverages / soda or bottled water with meals