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INDOCHINA



Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos

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TRIP CALL
800-462-2848 OR
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11 DAYS, 10 NIGHTS

Click [here](#) for departure dates and pricing details

IMPORTANT NOTE:

For this trip, you will need a valid passport, additional passport photos and a [Vietnam entry visa](#). Your Travel Planner will contain more information.

IN BUSINESS FOR
29 YEARS,
BACKROADS IS
RECOGNIZED YEAR IN
AND YEAR OUT AS
ONE OF THE WORLD'S
TOP 10 TRAVEL
COMPANIES BY
TRAVEL+LEISURE

The beauty of Indochina exists not only in the stunning Khmer carvings at Angkor Wat, but also in the smiles of young monks at a Lao village wat, in the sight of Vietnamese fishermen paddling on the South China Sea, or in an impromptu encounter with giggling school kids at a centuries-old pagoda—things that are easily missed unless you slow your pace to match the richness and diversity of your surroundings. In tandem with our team of extraordinary local guides and experts (from a Buddhist monk to an art historian), we bring to life the intertwined cultures of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, as well as the traditions, landscapes, political histories, languages and lifestyle that make each country unique. You'll delve into Indochina's deep and fascinating cultural roots, as well as its wildly dynamic and equally intriguing modern culture.

Day 1

Meet your Backroads Trip Leaders (the folks wearing Backroads shirts) at 12:30 p.m. in the lobby of the Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor, located in Siem Reap, Cambodia. **Please arrive wearing comfortable shoes for walking.** See "Arriving & Departing" for additional logistics information.

Guided Exploration of Bakong Temple

Shuttle to Rolous 1 Hour Round-trip

Guided Walk in Rolous

Welcome to Cambodia! During our lunch in Siem Reap, your Backroads Trip Leaders give a brief trip orientation and provide an introduction to the region's complex history and captivating mix of old and new. Once a sleepy village, Siem Reap has become a hotbed of hotel development as it struggles to accommodate the ever-increasing number of visitors to the Angkor ruins. An upside to this growth is that fine galleries and restaurants are now a pleasant supplement to old cafés and traditional markets.

Our destination after lunch is the small town of Rolous. After the crush of tourists in Siem Reap, Rolous will seem an entirely different world. This quiet town is bordered by temples—some ancient, some new—that are rarely visited. We focus on the large and impressive 9th-century Bakong Temple, built to symbolize the cosmic Mount Meru. We're joined here by Bunlay, expert local guide and longtime Backroads friend, who walks with us through the ruins and provides a bit of background on the Khmer and Angkor civilizations.

This evening Bunlay shifts the focus of conversation to modern Cambodia during a private cocktail reception in the garden of Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor, a hotel that's been on *Condé Nast Traveler's* Gold List every year since 2001. Later we get better acquainted over a delicious welcome dinner at one of the Grand's restaurants. *Lodging: Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor*



Our Accommodations: PREMIERE INNS

RAFFLES GRAND HOTEL D'ANGKOR

(2 nights) This exquisite hotel is just minutes from the main temple complex of Angkor Wat, and remains the classic choice in Siem Reap, featuring elegant furnishings and artwork, a full-service spa, expansive gardens and outstanding cuisine.

Siem Reap, Cambodia
phone: 855-(0)63-963-888
siemreap.raffles.com

THE NAM HAI

(2 nights) Set on a tranquil stretch of China Beach, this new luxury resort is praised by *Travel+Leisure* for having “three swimming pools, spacious grounds, and a stunning spa with sublime overwater relaxation rooms—plus great extras such as the luscious wool-and-cotton-blend bathrobes and outdoor showers.”

Hoi An, Vietnam
phone: 84-(0)510-940-0000
www.thenamhai.com

LA RESIDENCE HOTEL & SPA

(2 nights) Nestled on the banks of the Perfume River, this boutique hotel features stylishly decorated guest rooms, a saltwater pool, a tennis court and a spa.

Hué, Vietnam
phone: 84-(0)54-837-475
www.la-residence-hue.com

Continued on next page...

**EACH YEAR,
3 OUT OF 4 OF OUR
GUESTS HAVE
PREVIOUSLY
TRAVELED WITH US OR
BEEN REFERRED BY
SOMEONE WHO HAS**

Day 2

Shuttle to Angkor Wat 40 Minutes Round-trip

Guided Walk at Angkor Wat

Crafts School Visit

Shuttle to Banteay Srei & Bayon Ruins 1½ Hours Round-trip

Guided Walks at Banteay Srei & Angkor Thom Ruins

Beginning the day early, we arrive at the World Heritage site of Angkor to catch the sunrise and take advantage of some stellar photo ops. One of the human-made wonders of the world, Cambodia's monumental ancient capital (constructed by the Khmer between the 9th and 13th centuries) will leave you breathless with its lofty spires, giant carved images and beautiful bas-reliefs. We visit a few of the more popular icons of the area, as well as walk through some of the lesser-visited parts of each ruin. Strolling around the massive hallways of the ancient site, you'll find many small shrines still in use by the local people. Bunlay leads us through the temple grounds, reveals the idiosyncratic aspects of temple design and Buddhist mythology, and provides rich background on what might first appear to be simply rubble. You'll also have a chance to explore the massive temple complex on your own before we return to the Grand Hotel, with a stop at an active *wat* (temple) en route.

After brunch at the hotel, escape the midday heat with a swim in the pool, a catnap in your air-conditioned room or a visit to the spa. Or join your leaders on a walk through the local market and visit a crafts school established to preserve traditional Cambodian arts.

Later we shuttle to Banteay Srei, a red sandstone temple built during the mid-10th century when the Khmer empire was gaining power. Widely considered the finest example of classic Khmer carving, Banteay Srei feels like a fairyland, thanks to its small size and densely-embellished walls. Roam here for a while before we shuttle back to Siem Reap, stopping at the ancient capital of Angkor Thom to investigate the Bayon complex. Covering four square miles, this 50-tower temple is an awesome sight, with its immense Khmer carvings staring into the jungle from every direction. Each of its walls, like the pages of a book, tells a story in bas-relief. Tonight's dinner highlights the distinctive characteristics of Cambodian cuisine: not quite Thai, not quite Vietnamese or Chinese—and truly delicious. *Lodging: Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor*

Day 3

Ta Prohm Temple Visit

Shuttle to Airport & Fly to Danang 2 Hours, 20 Minutes

Shuttle to Hoi An 30 Minutes

Guided Walk in Hoi An Old Town

This morning consider traveling through Angkor's ruins just as historic kings and warriors once did: on the back of an elephant! Though this has lately become a slightly touristy activity at Angkor Wat, it's definitely a fun way to travel. Are you game? (The elephant trek is not included in the trip price.)

We continue building upon our incredible couple of days of discovery with a trip out to Ta Prohm Temple. Very little renovation has been done here and the jungle still covers many of the temple buildings—giving our walking tour a genuine feeling of exploration. In fact, the ambience here might even appear a little Hollywood—until you realize you're seeing Angkor ruins the way local villagers and early French explorers would have for hundreds of years. Huge fig and silk-cotton trees grow from the towers and corridors, offering some of the best “tree-in-temple” photo opportunities at Angkor. Ta Prohm was originally constructed as a Buddhist monastery and was enormously wealthy in its time, once boasting



Our Accommodations: PREMIERE INNS

...continued from last page

SOFITEL METROPOLE HOTEL

(2 nights) It's easy to see why this restored landmark—with its resplendent façade and elegant French-colonial ambiance—is a favorite of *Travel+Leisure*, *Condé Nast Traveler* and *National Geographic Traveler*, which calls it “the most storied and beloved of Hanoi institutions.”

Hanoi, Vietnam
phone: 84-(0)4-826-6919
www.sofitel.com

LA RESIDENCE PHOU VAO

(2 nights) This beautiful hotel—long considered the region's top resort—welcomes you with large open-plan guest rooms, private verandas, an exotic spa and an infinity pool with a stunning panorama over the city and misty valley below.

Luang Prabang, Laos
phone: 856-(0)71-212-194
www.residencephouvao.com

(according to an inscription found at the site) vast stores of jewels and gold and nearly 80,000 staff.

After lunch we fly to Vietnam, stopping briefly in Ho Chi Minh City before landing in Danang. Out of rural Cambodia, the dramatically different look, feel, smell and pace of our new surroundings is immediately apparent. After meeting Dragon, our Vietnamese guide who has worked with Backroads for many years, we shuttle along China Beach to the ancient trading town and World Heritage site of Hoi An, set on the banks of the Thu Bon River. An interesting contrast to the ruins in Siem Reap, Hoi An does not have the immense grandeur of Angkor Wat, but instead offers a compelling, more “digestible” mix of ancient cultures that feels vibrant and alive. It's said to be one of Vietnam's oldest towns, originally settled by Chinese, Japanese and Indian traders well over a thousand years ago. We gather for Vietnamese coffee at a riverside café before setting out on a stroll through narrow streets of town, exploring the exceptionally preserved merchant houses, pagodas and bridges, some of which back to the 15th century. Notice the houses embellished with lacquered boards and ornamental panels engraved with traditional Chinese characters. For the next two nights, we're guests at one of Vietnam's newest and most exclusive hotels, The Nam Hai, recently named one of the top 25 new hotels in the world. Enjoy the stylish rooms and a stroll on the resort's wonderful beach.

Lodging: The Nam Hai

Day 4

Shuttle to Au Lac Temple 1 Hour

Guided Walk at Au Lac Pagoda

Ferry to/from Cam Kim Island 50 Minutes Round-trip

Island Walk

Optional Afternoon Activities

Today promises an engaging balance of cultural exploration and good old-fashioned rest and relaxation. We first shuttle to Au Lac Pagoda for an introduction to Vietnamese Buddhism—dramatically different from that in Cambodia in form, practice and politicization. After meeting with the pagoda's caretakers, we board a small passenger ferry for a 20-minute trip to Cam Kim Island, home to an ages-old woodcarving tradition and a thriving arts and crafts industry. You guessed it—it's an ideal place to pick up a few local items.

When you're ready to head back to Hoi An, join the group to ferry across the Thu Bon River the local way—packed among baskets of fish, motor scooters, women wearing traditional *non la* conical hats and bearded old men smoking clay pipes. You're truly traveling in someone else's world, far from the typical tourist routine.

We think you'll enjoy your time in Hoi An. Do some shopping and exploring, have dinner on your own and treat yourself to what past guests have judged to be the best sorbet in Southeast Asia. Hoi An has become well known on Backroads trips as a great place to have quality shoes and clothing made inexpensively. If you'd like to bring home a custom-tailored shirt, skirt, coat, or something else, your Trip Leaders (who tend to spend a fair amount of time here) will introduce you to their favorite seamstresses. Or, if you'd like an escape from the stimuli of the city, retreat to our hotel's spa, cool off in the swimming pool or bask on the white sand of China Beach. *Lodging: The Nam Hai*



Top Reasons Why
you should take this trip

We provide the inside connections and knowledge you need to truly experience a place in the most authentic way.

You'll stay in the area's finest hotels, each carefully selected based on our rigorous quality standards.

You'll enjoy the best of the region's cuisine, as well as Backroads' trademark grand picnics.

Our Trip Leaders have undergone hundreds of hours of training and are the best in the industry.

**WHEN YOU SIGN UP
FOR A TRIP, YOU'LL
RECEIVE A
COMPREHENSIVE
TRAVEL PLANNER
WITH ALL THE
INFORMATION YOU
NEED TO PLAN
AND PREPARE**

Day 5

Shuttle to Hoa Chao

Guided Walk in Hoa Chao Village

Shuttle to Hué 3 Hours

Guided Walk in the Citadel

The day gets off to an enjoyable start with a guided walk through Hoa Chao, a small village well off the tourist map that seems to have leapt from the screen of a Hollywood Vietnam War-era film. Hoa Chao is a compelling spot to visit, not only because of its onetime role as a Vietcong stronghold, but also for its authentic character, friendly residents and gorgeous surroundings.

On our way to Hoa Chao, we pass through the outskirts of Danang, a small city that may provide vivid memories for many servicemen and women. If you were a soldier sent to fight in Vietnam, you quite likely arrived via the airstrip in Danang. As such, the area has rich and intriguing heritage, thanks in part to its intense exposure to American culture during the war and to the many Viet-Kieu (Vietnamese Americans) who have begun to return to Vietnam to visit the families they left behind in the 70s.

Later we continue on to Hué, famed imperial city of the Nguyen Dynasty. The shuttle to Hué offers stunning scenery, including striking karst formations rising from vibrant green rice fields. We head up and over Cloudy Pass, a forested mountain peninsula jutting dramatically into the East China Sea, and then through endless rice paddies as we enter Hué.

Upon arrival, we make our way into the Citadel, one of several World Heritage sites in Hué, which is often compared to the much larger Forbidden City in Beijing. From the 13th to the 17th century, Hué served as the capital of imperial Vietnam. The walls of the Citadel protected the imperial city from invaders and the rival armies of aspiring feudal lords. Much of the structure was destroyed during the Tet Offensive of the Vietnam War, but enough remains to provide an intriguing glimpse into its past. UNESCO has restored some of the adjacent complexes—such as the temple built for the Nguyen emperors, and the women's temple, honoring queens and princesses—to their original glory. Hué was the only large city below the demilitarized zone that fell to North Vietnamese troops for any significant amount of time. In short, there's a tremendous amount to explore, using the ruins of the Citadel as our opportunity to delve into both imperial history and culture, and the more explosive events of recent war.

In the late afternoon, we walk across the Perfume River to La Résidence Hôtel & Spa, our deluxe Art Deco hotel. Dinner tonight is an imperial-style meal at the home of Mr. Anh, a historian nationally known for his writings on Hué. *Lodging: La Résidence Hôtel & Spa*

Day 6

Dragon Boat Ride on the Perfume River

Walking Tour of Mausoleums

Start the day with a stroll through a peaceful garden village in Hué, stopping along the way to visit a home and an old communal house from the 1880s. You can also tour the Thien Mu Pagoda (Temple of the Heavenly Lady) before climbing aboard a traditional dragon boat for a sightseeing excursion on the Perfume River. As you glide along the river's edge, past pagodas and mausoleums constructed in a variety of Southeast Asian styles, you'll observe locals hard at work—fishing and sand dredging are major sources of employment here.

Back on shore, continue on foot past riverside villages and family temples to the tomb of Minh Mang, second emperor of the Nguyen Dynasty (1802–1945), which was Vietnam's last royal family. Seven of the thirteen various Nguyen kings have tombs, famously known as the Royal



Note

While the information presented here details this trip's planned routes, activities, accommodations, meeting and departing times, we are constantly seeking new opportunities to enhance this itinerary and your experience. Naturally, we will keep you up to date on any changes that may affect your arrival, departure or lodging.

Tombs of Hué. Each is considered an architectural wonder, showcasing the aesthetic taste of the respective ruler, ranging from classic Vietnamese to Art Deco. This unusual diversity of styles creates what some have described as “a grand Disneyland in a Vietnamese landscape.”

After touring the tomb, dig into a Vietnamese picnic and then shuttle to the mausoleum of Khai Dinh, a compound built in an unusual hybrid of Vietnamese and European new Gothic styles. The afternoon is yours to spend at your leisure—luxuriate at the hotel's spa, wander the city or join your Trip Leaders for a tai chi lesson on the banks of the Perfume River. Better yet, considering the ready pace of our travels, you may feel like it's time to throw up the white flag, retreat to the comfort of your room and indulge in a well-deserved nap! *Lodging: La Résidence Hôtel & Spa*

Day 7

Fly to Hanoi 1 Hour

Shuttle to Old Quarter 45 Minutes

Cyclo Tour of Old Quarter

Guided Tour of Ho Chi Minh's Residence

Walking Exploration of Ngoc Ha

This morning's flight brings us to Hanoi, often called the “Paris of the Orient,” thanks to its tree-lined boulevards, French-Colonial architecture and pleasant parks. Climb into a “cyclo” (bicycle rickshaw) for a tour of the Old Quarter, a labyrinth of narrow streets packed with shops, food stands and flower stalls. Most streets in the Old Quarter are dedicated to selling one type of product, so a cyclo ride through the area is like passing through a coffee-table book on cultural crafts. Expect to be thrust into the swirling pace, sounds, sights and smells of vibrant Vietnam.

Later Dragon leads us on a tour of the Ho Chi Minh Complex, “Uncle Ho's” home during his presidency and the site of his mausoleum. From here it's a short walk to the community of Ngoc Ha (Flower Village), a district of Hanoi where the alleyways are so narrow, scooters and bicycles replace cars as the vehicles of choice. For a unique off-the-beaten path experience, we visit the French-Colonial home of Mr. Trong, who gives us a personal perspective on Hanoi through the decades. You can also check out a Buddhist temple and stroll past a small pond commonly referred to as B-52 Lake—in its watery depths lie the landing gear and fuselage of an American B-52 shot down by the Vietnamese during the war.

Take time this afternoon to explore on your own. Go shopping, browse in the galleries, admire the architecture and enjoy a leisurely people-watching session at Café Au Lac, rumored to serve the best lattes in Asia. Navigating the streets of Hanoi amid the frenetic jumble of pedestrians, cyclos, scooters, bicycles and cars is a bit like learning a new sport or video game—except at first, there don't appear to be any rules! But with the help of your Backroads Trip Leaders, you'll soon see there *is* a logic to it all, and you'll quickly learn how to go with the flow and get around with ease. We reconvene in early evening for a private cocktail party at one of Hanoi's most prestigious art galleries, before dining at one of Hanoi's new boutique restaurants.

Lodging: Sofitel Metropole Hotel

**ASK FOR REFERENCES
FROM PAST GUESTS
WHO HAVE TAKEN THE
TRIP THAT INTERESTS
YOU**

Day 8

Shuttle to Tho Ha 1½ Hours Round-trip

Guided Walk through Tho Ha Village and Temples

Shuttling out of Hanoi, we cross the Red River and pass a cluster of urban villages and wide-open rice paddies before arriving in ancient Tho Ha. You'll sense a noticeably different atmosphere in this village, whose residents claim to be the descendants of Tibetan immigrants and place great importance on preserving their ancestral identity. You may feel as though you've stepped back into the Middle Ages as you wander Tho Ha's narrow cobbled pathways, said to be more than 400 years old. Pigs roam freely, and bands of local kids—when not herding pigs back into their messy pens—escort you around each bend. Chuong, the community's headman, joins us to provide an insider's perspective, showing us his house and guiding us through the village.

Continue walking to the neighboring hamlet of Lang Van (Village of Clouds), known for its production of cassava and rice wine. Circling back through the rice paddies, we stop to have lunch among the brilliant green fields. Well worth a visit are the Natural History Museum, with its engaging displays on Vietnam's ethnic diversity, and the Hanoi Hilton Museum, the prison-turned-tourist-attraction where American prisoners of war were once held.

Back at tonight's beautiful hotel, take a swim or spend time with a good page-turner in the comfort of your guest room. Dinner's on your own; consider trying the famed Spices Garden at our hotel or wander into the Old Quarter to explore its many options, from classic Vietnamese food to tasty street fare. Or hit one of Hanoi's continental "euro-cuisine" restaurants. *Lodging: Sofitel Metropole Hotel*

Day 9

Shopping at Morning Market with Local Chef

Cooking Class

Flight to Luang Prabang, Laos 1½ Hours

Following breakfast we're met by a local chef who takes us into one of the Old Quarter's markets for a fun introduction to regional produce. A visit to a traditional market is the fast track to discovering what makes a culture tick—its commerce and cuisine, the lively exchange between vendors and customers, the pace, the rush of colors and smells, the familiar sitting side-by-side with the exotic. In our opinion, there is no better way to immerse yourself in a country than exploring its markets. With an adventurous spirit and an open mind, a traveler reaches deeper by doing so. (Besides—it's the perfect chance to discover and sample some delicious treats.)

Early this evening, we fly to the ancient kingdom and World Heritage site of Luang Prabang, Laos, where we slip out of the 21st century and into a haven of old-world tranquility. There's something magical about this small city, surrounded by mountains, set at the junction of the Mekong and Khan Rivers and dotted with distinctive Theravada Buddhist temples. It's inhabited by an estimated 1,000 saffron-robed monks and novices, who wander through the mist on their early-morning alms rounds. Upon arrival we make our way to a *wat*, strolling along the mighty Mekong, gazing at the massive wooden riverboats (loaded with goods from China) that are often tied to the banks.

Our evening meal is at one of Backroads' favorite restaurants, L'Eléphant. If you'd like to partake in post-dinner exploring, head to the night market, which offers some fantastic locally made textiles—your Trip Leaders will gladly offer you a lift into town. *Lodging: La Résidence Phou Vao*

ORGANIZE A
BACKROADS PRIVATE
TRIP FOR YOUR
FAMILY, FRIENDS OR
COLLEAGUES FOR THE
TRIP OF A LIFETIME

Day 10

Explore Phon Sai

Free Time in Luang Prabang

As you've no doubt noticed by now, Luang Prabang is yet another one of our destinations with many faces: Ancient Lao capital city. Important Mekong River trading center. A cultural center for Buddhist study and the arts. A city long kept off the tourist map due to the nearby Golden Triangle drug trade. It's also home to the region's colorfully costumed ethnic minorities—the Mien, Yasu and Lisu—who frequently descend from the surrounding hills to purchase and trade basic goods. Perhaps you'll see some of these hilltribe people as we venture out of Luang Prabang on our way to the tiny undiscovered fishing village of Phon Sai. Here we stop to meet some local fishermen, who'll give you the chance to try casting a throw net. You can also test out your skills on the loom during our visit with Ting, a vivacious local weaver who runs a makeshift weaving school.

Back in Luang Prabang, grab some downtime at our luxurious hotel, which offers an infinity pool with incredible views, a top-rated spa and gorgeous open-plan guest rooms. Or join your leaders on a walk through the historic section, where you can personally meet a monk, receive a traditional blessing, explore his *wat* and learn a bit about Theravada Buddhism. Hungry yet? We'll take you to another favorite restaurant, Aspara, for our festive farewell feast. While the service has yet to match attentiveness you'd find at a Michelin-starred restaurant, we're in love with the Lao noodles! *Lodging: La Résidence Phou Vao*

Day 11

Offering of Alms

Fly to Bangkok, Thailand 1 Hour

For the residents of Luang Prabang, early morning is one of the most auspicious times of day—it's when the monks leave their temples to collect alms. Because monks cannot be paid, they are entirely dependent upon on the community for food. And by offering alms, the supporter gains merit, in effect “receiving good by doing good.” Even though it requires an early wakeup, you won't want to miss the opportunity participate in this morning charity ritual.

Later head to a nearby *wat* for a special Q&A session with an English-speaking monk, who's happy to chat about Buddhism and Laos. The temple also serves as a school for novice monks. Imagine 30 little monks in each classroom—although they're usually intent on practicing their chants and meditation, they're also kids, so the occasional bout of mischief shouldn't be all that surprising.

If time allows, we'll visit a local artisan or two before catching our late-afternoon flight to Bangkok. (This flight is included in the trip because of the difficulty in arranging seats on flights out of Luang Prabang.) From Bangkok, flights to various international destinations are convenient and numerous. Please see “Arriving & Departing” for end-of-trip logistics.

Arriving & Departing

Please note that meeting and departing times provided here were current at the time of printing, but are subject to change. PLEASE DO NOT BOOK YOUR FLIGHTS UNTIL YOU ARE CONFIRMED ON YOUR VACATION AND HAVE VERIFIED THE DETAILS OF ARRIVING & DEPARTING WITH YOUR TRIP CONSULTANT.

***** A valid passport, additional passport photos and a Vietnam entry visa are required for this trip. The “Essential Information” section of your Travel Planner (included in your Pre-Departure Packet after trip sign-up) contains more details.*****

MEETING TIME AND LOCATION

On the first day of the trip, meet your Backroads Trip Leaders (the folks wearing Backroads shirts) at **12:30 p.m.** in the lobby of the Raffles Grand Hotel d’Angkor, located in Siem Reap, Cambodia. (See “Where to Stay Before & After Your Trip” for details on this hotels and others.)

You can easily catch a taxi to the hotel, which is located approximately 4 miles from the airport. Expect to pay about \$5–\$10. The Grand also provides airport pickup for a small fee, if contacted in advance.

CONCLUSION OF THE TRIP

On the last day of the trip, we take a late-afternoon flight out of Luang Prabang to Bangkok, Thailand, arriving at approximately 5 p.m. If you plan to catch an international flight out of Bangkok on the last day, to be on the safe side, please schedule your flight for after 8 p.m.

FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS

This trip begins in Siem Reap, Cambodia and ends in Luang Prabang, Laos (with a flight to Bangkok, Thailand included in the Backroads trip). The “Essential Information” section of your Travel Planner will provide details on travel documents required for this trip.

Your flight to Cambodia will most likely route through a central hub city. If you fly from Bangkok (airport code: BKK) to Siem Reap, a few direct flights are available via Bangkok Airways and Siem Reap Airways. If flying from Singapore (SIN), you can catch a direct flight to Siem Reap on Silk Air. From Vietnam, you can take a direct flight on Vietnamese Airlines from Ho Chi Minh City (SGN). Carriers flying from North America to Southeast Asia include United Airlines (800-538-2929; www.united.com), Singapore Airlines (800-742-3333; www.singaporeair.com) and Cathay Pacific Airways (800-233-2742; www.cathaypacific.com).

Where to Stay Before & After Your Trip

Please refer to the Hotel Room Rate Guide in the sidebar for starting double-occupancy rates. Note that the chart reflects the Internet and/or Best Available rates, which were accurate at the time of printing, but **hotel rates are always subject to change.**

Of course, we also recommend extending your stay at any of the hotels we visit on this trip.

Hotel Room Rate Guide	
(U.S. dollars per night)	
Up to \$100	◆
\$101–200	◆◆
\$201–300	◆◆◆
\$301–500	◆◆◆◆
\$501 and up	◆◆◆◆◆

SIEM REAP

Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor (Our meeting location and first two nights' hotel)

This atmospheric landmark hotel offers the perfect introduction to authentic old Indochina. Set in the heart of town, it's luxurious without being stuffy and filled with modern comforts while maintaining a classic ambience. Guest rooms feature nice touches, such as four-poster beds, balconies with rattan furniture, porcelain bathrooms and antique details. There's a large and inviting courtyard pool, two tennis courts, an impressive spa and health club, a steam room, four restaurants and a nightly Apsara dance show. Vithei Charles de Gaulle, Khum Svay Dang Kum; Phone: 855-63-963-888; www.siemreap.affles.com; 131 rooms. Rates: ◆◆◆◆

Le Meridien Angkor

Le Meridien combines the intricate designs of Khmer-themed architecture with the luxury and comfort of modern amenities. After a day of exploring, refresh with a dip in the pool or pamper yourself at the spa. The hotel staff is glad to help you arrange tours and local excursions. Vithei Charles de Gaulle; Phone: 855-63-963-900; www.angkor.limeridien.com; 412 rooms. Rates: ◆◆

Hôtel de la Paix

This welcome retreat in the center of town features huge guestrooms and a host of high-tech amenities in each room. Just a short walking distance to Angkor Wat as well as the Old Market—a perfect place to find unique local handicrafts. Don't miss the hotel's spectacular spa. Sivutha Boulevard; Phone: 855-63-966-000; 121 rooms. Rates: ◆◆

Amansara

The definition of elegant minimalism, this petit hotel has only two-dozen suites, each with a lush private patio and lotus pond. Highlights of the resort include a beautiful small library, swimming and lap pools, and a wonderful new spa. Return to your room at dusk to find a freshly drawn bath laden with lotus flowers. The hotel also runs private tours to the temple city of Angkor Wat. Road to Angkor; www.amanresorts.com; Phone: 855-63-760-333; 24 suites. Rates: ◆◆◆◆◆

Angkor Village Resort

The architecture of the Angkor Village Resort is directly inspired by traditional Cambodian villages. Located halfway between the temples and Siem Reap city and near the river, its wooden bungalows nestled among tropical ponds and gardens offer peace and serenity. Guest rooms are furnished with local fabrics and wooden furniture, and decorated with traditional arts and crafts pieces. www.angkorvillage.com; Phone: 855-63-963-561; 40 rooms. Rates: ◆◆

Shinta Mani

The name Shinta Mani is derived from Sanskrit, meaning “the gem that provides everything one desires,” which is a perfect description for this intimate boutique hotel located in the city's historic French Quarter. Offering both elegant indoor dining and casual yet upscale terrace dining, it also features a spa with treatment rooms for singles or couples, including one with floral bath and steam room. Its successful Institute for Hospitality provides vocational training for at-risk youth. Oum Khum Street at 14th Street; 855-63-761-998; www.shintamani.com; 18 rooms. Rates: ◆

Hotel Room Rate Guide	
(U.S. dollars per night)	
Up to \$100	◆
\$101–200	◆◆
\$201–300	◆◆◆
\$301–500	◆◆◆◆
\$501 and up	◆◆◆◆◆

BANGKOK

The Sukhothai

A member of Leading Hotels of the World and featured on *Condé Nast Traveler's* Gold List, The Sukhothai—meaning “dawn of happiness”—takes both its name and its architectural inspiration from Sukhothai, the first capital of Siam, founded in 1238. Overflowing with exotic gardens, reflective pools, stone sculptures, vibrant Thai fabrics and teak furnishings, the hotel is situated in the prestigious South Sathorn Road neighborhood near Lumpini Park in the heart of Bangkok. Its spa offers a variety of beauty and massage treatments and in its sublime Celadon restaurant, authentic Thai cuisine is served on a pavilion floating above a magical water garden. 13/3 South Sathorn Road; Phone: 66-2-344-8888; www.sukhothai.com; 210 rooms. Rates: ◆◆◆◆

The Oriental Bangkok

Overlooking the Chao Phraya River, this illustrious hotel features luxuriously appointed rooms with Thai accents and one of the world's finest spas, earning international praise from *Condé Nast Traveler*, Andrew Harper and *Travel+Leisure*. Delivering the ultimate experience in relaxation and rejuvenation, the Oriental Spa transforms you with Thai herbal remedies, invigorating massages and soothing exotic oil treatments. Jet lag dissolved, savor the delectable cuisine at Le Normandie and explore this exciting gateway city. 48 Oriental Avenue; Phone: 66-2-659-9000; www.mandarin-oriental.com/bangkok; 393 rooms. Rates: ◆◆◆◆

Four Seasons Hotel Bangkok

A recipient of *Condé Nast Traveler's* Gold and *Travel+Leisure's* World's Best awards, the Four Seasons Hotel Bangkok is appreciated for its flawless service, sophisticated décor of Thai antiques and silks, state-of-the-art health club, elegant boutiques and variety of restaurants. The only hard part of staying here may be deciding between the Spice Market's tasty Thai dishes, Biscotti's casual Italian fare, or Shintaro's innovative Japanese cuisine and sushi. 155 Rajadamri Road; Phone: 66-2-250-1000; www.fourseasons.com; 340 rooms. Rates: ◆◆◆◆

The Peninsula Bangkok

Most who stays at the Peninsula falls in love with its unbeatable service and warm hospitality—hence it's high ratings on *Condé Nast Traveler's* Gold and *Travel+Leisure's* World's Best lists. But it's the three-tiered pool bordered by waterfalls, teak lounges, wood carved pavilions, outstanding views of the city and spacious Colonial-styled guest rooms that make you never want to leave. Plus, the restaurants are exceptional, offering everything from Cantonese cuisine to Pacific Rim specialties. 333 Charoennakorn; Phone: 66-2-861-2888; www.peninsula.com; 370 rooms. Rates: ◆◆◆◆

Novotel Suvarnabhumi Airport Hotel

This new hotel is just a short walk or shuttle from Bangkok's international airport. With four restaurants, two bars, a swimming pool, fitness center and health spa, this hotel provides every modern amenity to make your stay a pleasurable experience. Racha Taeva Bang Pli; Phone: 66-(0)2-131-1111; www.novotel.com; 612 rooms. Rates: ◆◆

SINGAPORE

The Fullerton

Featured by *Condé Nast Traveler* and *Travel+Leisure*, this Doric-columned luxury hotel sits in the heart of Singapore's financial and arts districts, near Orchard Road shopping. Built in 1928, the building hosts guests in spacious rooms with contemporary décor and amenities such as a pool, spa and six restaurants, including San Marco at the Lighthouse, where “top-notch Italian cuisine is served by top-notch waiters,” according to *Condé Nast*. 1 Fullerton Square; Phone: 65-6733-8388; www.fullertonhotel.com; 400 rooms. Rates: ◆◆◆◆

Hotel Room Rate Guide	
(U.S. dollars per night)	
Up to \$100	◆
\$101–200	◆◆
\$201–300	◆◆◆
\$301–500	◆◆◆◆
\$501 and up	◆◆◆◆◆

Ritz-Carlton Millenia

With 7 acres of gardens, landscaped with waterfalls, rocks, tropical plants and a swimming pool, this hotel may be just the oasis you seek. Another *Condé Nast Traveler* and *Travel+Leisure* pick, it's centrally located in Marina Center and features large guest rooms with spectacular views of the Singapore skyline or Marina Bay, a luxurious spa and a 4,200-piece contemporary art collection including works by Andy Warhol, Frank Stella and Dale Chihuly. Between its four restaurants, there's something for everyone. 7 Raffles Avenue; Phone: 65-6337-8888; www.ritzcarlton.com; 608 rooms. Rates: ◆◆◆◆

Grand Hyatt

This five-star hotel, right by Orchard Road and just a 30-minute drive from the airport, offers guests the same high-quality service and amenities they've come to expect from Hyatt. The modern minimalist rooms, designed with business travelers in mind, are warmed with touches of light-colored wood. If the comfy beds don't relax you, visit the spa or fitness center. You can even play squash or hit a round of golf balls. In the evening, choose from four restaurants serving Italian, Pan-Asian and International dishes, or hit its night club. 10 Scotts Road; Phone: 65-6-738-1234; www.hyatt.com; 663 rooms. Rates: ◆◆◆

Rasa Sentosa Resort

Escape the pulse of the city with a short taxi ride to this *Condé Nast Traveler* Gold List beach-front hotel. Located on Singapore's Sentosa Island, you'll be greeted by helpful efficient staff and welcomed into airy rooms decorated in warm tropical colors. Enjoy the verdant natural setting while walking on the Jungle Track, landscaped with local flora, or just sit by the pool and keep an eye out for the monkeys and peacocks that wander the grounds. 101 Siloso Road; Phone: 65-6-275-0100; www.shangri-la.com; 459 rooms. Rates: ◆◆

HO CHI MINH CITY (SAIGON)

Caravelle Hotel

Opposite the Opera House and overlooking Lam Son Square and the Saigon River, the Caravelle provides elegant accommodations in Art Nouveau style, with twinkling chandeliers, soothing colors and distinguished furnishings. To experience one of the hottest nightspots in town, you need not leave the building—the Saigon Saigon bar is the place to be seen. 19 Lam Son Square, District One; Phone: 84-8-823-4999; www.caravellehotel.com; 311 rooms. Rates: ◆◆◆

Park Hyatt Hotel

With a European flare harking back to colonial Indochina, this hotel is the quintessence of old-world luxury, complete with ceiling fans, ornate beds and louvered windows. Situated on Lam Son Square and facing the opera house, the hotel boasts one of the city's hottest restaurants, Square One, as well as an Italian counterpart, Opera. 2 Lam Son Square, District One; Phone: 84-8-824-1234; www.saigon.park.hyatt.com; 259 rooms. Rates: ◆◆◆

Hotel Sofitel Plaza Saigon

This high-rise hotel, centrally located in the business district and close to Notre Dame Cathedral and Reunification Palace, overflows with Art Deco ambience and Asian grace. Featuring a rooftop swimming pool with views of downtown, the Sofitel Plaza Saigon also offers a fitness center, two restaurants, a bar and a local handicraft shop (across the street). 17 Le Duan Boulevard, District One; Phone: 84-8-824-1555; www.sofitel.com; 290 rooms. Rates: ◆◆

Hotel Room Rate Guide	
(U.S. dollars per night)	
Up to \$100	◆
\$101–200	◆◆
\$201–300	◆◆◆
\$301–500	◆◆◆◆
\$501 and up	◆◆◆◆◆

Duxton Hotel Saigon

Located in the heart of the city, overlooking the Saigon River, the luxurious Duxton Hotel offers easy access to shopping, sightseeing and entertainment areas. Guest rooms are furnished with contemporary Vietnamese artwork and traditional fabrics and amenities include an outdoor swimming pool, sauna and gym. The Grill restaurant features authentic Vietnamese cuisine as well as Singaporean, Malaysian, Indonesian and Western favorites. 63 Nguyen Hue Boulevard, District One; Phone: 84-8-822-2999; www.duxton.com; 198 rooms. Rates: ◆◆

Omni Saigon Hotel

Arched doorways, grand staircases, palms and marble columns grace this glamorous hotel in the Phu Nhuan district. The comfort of guest rooms featuring pale color schemes and soft lighting may be hard to leave, but a meal at any of the hotel's restaurants is worth getting out for: at Lotus Court, master chefs from Hong Kong dazzle the palette, while at Nishimura, sushi, teppanyaki and other Japanese delicacies await. After dinner, have a drink and cut loose at Stars Karaoke, with over 4,000 songs to choose from. 253 Nguyen Van Troi Street, Phu Nhuan District; Phone: 84-8-844-9222; www.saigon.marcopolohotels.com; 240 rooms. Rates: ◆

We hope you've found this information useful, but nothing substitutes for speaking with one of our experienced Trip Consultants. Please call 800-462-2848 Monday-Sunday, between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. Pacific time.