Exotic Thailand & Cambodia:
Angkor Wat, Thai Gardens & Culture
December 2 – 13, 2013

The temples of Angkor Wat and the gardens of northern Thailand highlight our tour to Cambodia and Thailand this coming December. We are returning to two sites which have been on the Arboretum’s list of favorite places for several years. Join Peter Olin as he leads you to the temples of the Khmer Empire in Cambodia and the exotic gardens of Thailand.

We start in Thailand and visit both Chiang Mai in the north, and Bangkok in the south of this most interesting country. In Chiang Mai, we’ll visit the Queen Sirikit Gardens as well as the special gardens built for the celebration of the King’ of Thailand’s 80th birthday. In our 2006 tour to Thailand on the occasion of this special botanical exhibition, many considered our tour to the Queen’s gardens as a highlight as much as the actual exposition itself. The garden has a wide collection of plant species, 12 exhibition greenhouses, garden and nature trails, and educational and research activities.

While we’re in the mountains of northern Thailand visiting the Queen’s gardens, we’ll stop at an elephant camp nearby, where you’ll see how this magnificent animal has been used by rural Thai families for work and transportation. Our stop here includes an opportunity to ride the elephant as well – this is a fascinating stop on our tour, and one you’re sure to love. We’ll also visit some of the more interesting temples in the city and surrounding areas around Chiang Mai.

In Bangkok, we’ll stay in the heart of the city, on the Chao Phraya river in downtown Bangkok. We’ll tour the Grand Palace one day and visit the Daemnon Saduak Floating Market on another. We will visit the Botanical Garden at Nong Nooch on a full day excursion into the Thai countryside, where we will also experience many aspects of Thai culture, from boxing and sword fighting to graceful Thai dancing.

We’ll also see where the silk trade gained its momentum in Thailand with a visit to the Jim Thompson House and Museum in Bangkok. We’re going to be in Thailand on the birthday of the king, and on almost all of our past tours to Thailand, we’ve had the opportunity to observe this celebration.

The people of the Kingdom of Thailand love their king, and honor him on his birthday by decorating the city in the royal color – yellow – and shooting off fireworks in the evening of his special day, and at an appointed hour throughout the country, people come outdoors wherever they are to sing Happy Birthday to their revered king.

In Cambodia, we’ll view the spectacular ruins of the Khmer Empire built between the 9th and 13th centuries by a succession of Khmer kings. These temples are some of the most astonishing architectural treasures in the world.

Angkor Wat is the crowning jewel of Khmer architecture, the national symbol and highlight of any visit to Cambodia, along with the temples at Ta Prohm and Pre Rup. The largest, best preserved, and most religiously significant of the Angkor temples, Angkor Wat is impressive by its sheer scale and beautifully proportioned layout, with the temples spread over 120 square miles. Before leaving Cambodia we’ll take a cruise on Tonle Sap Lake, to see the floating villages that thrive on the lake. In addition, we’ll visit the old market at Psah Chah, destroyed by the Khmer Rouge in 1975 and reopened in 1996, along with the Angkor National Museum, with artifacts and sculptures from the Angkorian period.

This remarkable tour features ten nights of deluxe hotels along with breakfasts and lunches daily, two evening meals, and all flights within Asia included! What an incredible journey this promises to be – exploring the best of Cambodia and Thailand – a journey that you’ll remember forever.

LAND ONLY TOUR PRICE: $3,795*

*Prices are per person, based on double occupancy. Single supplement $995 extra.
This is a Land Only Price: trans-Pacific Airfare is not included.
TOUR ITINERARY

Monday, December 2  flights to Bangkok
Fly to Bangkok, crossing the International Date Line, and losing one day, arriving on Tuesday evening.

Tuesday, December 3  Bangkok
Upon arrival in Bangkok, we clear immigration and customs, and transfer to our airport hotel for overnight.

Wednesday, December 4  Bangkok/Chiang Mai
In the morning, we return to the airport for our flight to Chiang Mai. Upon arrival there, we will take a guided city and temple tour. First we visit Wat Phra That Doi Suthep; in the hillside surrounding Chiang Mai, first established in 1383, one of the most sacred temples in the north, with its challenging flight of steps which are flanked by Naga Serpents. We’ll also visit two temples located in the city proper. Wat Chedi Luang, the site of a formerly massive pagoda that was unfortunately destroyed in the great earthquake of 1545. We visit Wat Phra Singh, the lovely Lai Kam chapel which houses the revered Phra Singh Buddha image. Afterwards we check into our hotel. Tonight your evening dinner is on your own.

Thursday, Dec. 5  Chiang Mai
Our full day tour begins with a visit to the Mae Sa Elephant Camp, to see how the elephants in this camp have been trained to do work. You’ll ride an elephant through the jungle, and at the end of the journey you’ll see the variety of hill tribe villages nearby. After our lunch here, we’ll learn about hill tribe life, including the White Karen, Lahu, Palong and Padong (Kayang or Longneck Karen) tribes. Then we visit the Queen Sirikit Garden. The garden was the first true botanical garden in the country, combining research and educational facilities at the garden with the ability to provide the public with the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of Thai flora. Following this visit, we return to Chiang Mai, stopping on our way back to visit an orchid and butterfly farm. This evening dinner is on your own, and afterwards you’ll be able to enjoy the King’s Birthday celebrations in town.

Friday, Dec. 6  Chiang Mai
Today in Chiang Mai we first visit Wat Ton Kwan, a temple that is an example of Lanna architecture, restored in 1989, with the original décor conserved as much as possible. We’ll visit Ratchaphruek Royal Flora Garden, where in 2006 we first visited to see the King’s Birthday International Flower Exhibition, where nearly 4 million visitors attended this three month expo. At the conclusion of the 2006 Expo, the 200-acre gardens were re-opened to visitors, with smaller floral shows occurring during the year. Lunch is included, and afterwards, you’ll have time to visit some of the industry in and around Chiang Mai, to include both silk and teak showrooms, major industries in this area of Thailand. This evening we’ll enjoy a Northern Thai dinner show, featuring the delicious gourmet “Khan Toke Food”, the symbol of Northern Thai cuisine. Along with the meal we’ll see a variety of graceful Chiang Mai traditional dancers, including hill tribe dancers, performing their colorful, original traditional dances.

Saturday, Dec. 7  Chiang Mai/Siem Reap
Today we fly from Chiang Mai to Siem Reap, Cambodia, site of the temples of Angkor Wat. We change planes in Bangkok en route, and on our way to Siem Reap, lunch is served on board our flight. Upon arrival in Siem Reap, we begin our tour of Khmer temples – East Mebon, Ta Prohm and Pre Rup. These temples date from the 10th century. Ta Prohm is one of the most popular attractions, as it has not been cleared out of the jungle, and is presented just as it was discovered by European explorers.

Sunday, Dec. 8  Siem Reap
We travel to Tonle Sap Lake this morning, where we’ll view the floating village on the lake. You’ll observe the life on the lake as well as view life on the shore nearby. We’ll enjoy lunch during our tour, and continuing after lunch, we’ll visit the Angkor National Museum, located on the main road to Angkor. The museum displays artefacts and sculptures from the Angkorian period. We’ll also visit Psah Chah, an old market in the middle of the town destroyed by the Khmer Rouge in 1975 and reopened in 1996: food stalls and souvenir shops abound here. We return to our hotel in the afternoon, where the balance of the day is at leisure. Dinner is on your own tonight.

Monday, Dec. 9  Angkor Wat
Today we’ll spend the day exploring Angkor, the complex of temples that are situated close to Siem Reap. Angkor Wat is the crown jewel of Khmer culture, the largest, best preserved, and most religiously significant of the Angkor temples. It is impressive to visitors both by its sheer scale and beautifully proportioned layout, as well as the delicate artistry of its carvings. This full-day excursion will include a visit to the fortified city of Angkor Thom, enclosed by a wall and wide moats. This city includes many of Angkor’s most popular sights. Enter by the monumental South Gate over a causeway lined on either side by statues of demons and gods, each carrying a giant naga. Continue to the Terrace of the Elephants and the Terrace of the Leper Kings, former spaces for public ceremonies. Visit the ruined Baphuon, Royal Enclosure and Phimeanakas before continuing to the mysterious Bayon Temple, one of the most popular and compelling in Angkor. Explore the galleries of beautifully preserved bas reliefs and ascend narrow stairs to reach the central sanctuary, where you see giant stone faces smiling enigmatically down at you from every angle. Lunch is included in our day of touring. In the late afternoon, we’ll return to our hotel for overnight. Dinner is on your own tonight.

Chiang Mai
Today in Chiang Mai we first visit Wat Ton Kwan, a temple that is an example of Lanna architecture, restored in 1989, with the original décor conserved as much as possible. We’ll visit Ratchaphruek Royal Flora Garden, where in 2006 we first visited to see the King’s Birthday International Flower Exhibition, where nearly 4 million visitors attended this three month expo. At the conclusion of the 2006 Expo, the 200-acre gardens were re-opened to visitors, with smaller floral shows occurring during the year. Lunch is included, and afterwards, you’ll have time to visit some of the industry in and around Chiang Mai, to include both silk and teak showrooms, major industries in this area of Thailand. This evening we’ll enjoy a Northern Thai dinner show, featuring the delicious gourmet “Khan Toke Food”, the symbol of Northern Thai cuisine. Along with the meal we’ll see a variety of graceful Chiang Mai traditional dancers, including hill tribe dancers, performing their colorful, original traditional dances.

Siem Reap
Today we fly from Chiang Mai to Siem Reap, Cambodia, site of the temples of Angkor Wat. We change planes in Bangkok en route, and on our way to Siem Reap, lunch is served on board our flight. Upon arrival in Siem Reap, we begin our tour of Khmer temples – East Mebon, Ta Prohm and Pre Rup. These temples date from the 10th century. Ta Prohm is one of the most popular attractions, as it has not been cleared out of the jungle, and is presented just as it was discovered by European explorers.
Tuesday, December 10

Bangkok sightseeing

This morning we fly to Bangkok, where we check in at our hotel located in the heart of Bangkok on the Chao Phraya River. After freshening up at the hotel, we have a city tour including a visit to the Grand Palace and the Emerald Buddha Temple. The Grand Palace has no equal and is the must see for every visitor to Bangkok. Elegantly situated close to the banks of the Chao Phraya River, the Grand Palace is the perfect example of an ancient Siamese court. Within the compound is the Temple of the Emerald Buddha – Wat Pra Kaew. The Emerald Buddha is believed to have supernatural powers and is dressed in robes according to the season by the King of Thailand himself. We return to our hotel afterwards, where the balance of the day is at leisure. This is a great time to enjoy a Thai massage, or to go to a tailor shop, where you can get beautiful silk dresses or men’s suits tailor-made and ready for you by the time you leave Bangkok. Dinner is on your own tonight in Bangkok. B L

Wednesday, December 11

After breakfast today we have a full day tour to Nong Nooch Village in Chonburi province, about 90 minutes south of Bangkok. For those who like a touch of beauty and culture, Nong Nooch is ideal. This tour features over 500 acres of landscaped gardens. A Thai village is set on the ground, along with a natural lake and waterfall. At the village you can also see displays of Thai boxing, sword fighting and the most beautiful dancing with amazing Thai costumes. We return to Bangkok in the late afternoon, where the balance of the day is at leisure. B L

Thursday, December 12.

Our tour today is outside of Bangkok, to discover the way Bangkok used to be, as we travel to the Damnoen Saduak Floating Market about 60 miles away from Bangkok. An exhilarating ride on a narrow long-tailed speedboat through the marshes passes riverside villages and fruit plantations takes you to the Floating Market, with its many colors, flavors and exotic fragrances. On the ride there will be a good opportunity to photograph the rural life along the canal banks before arriving at the market. Following our visit here, we continue to Nakorn Pathom, regarded as the oldest city in Thailand. Here is located the Phra Pathom Chedi, which is the largest pagoda in Southeast Asia. The golden tiled dome of the Chedi towers nearly 400 feet into the sky. Lunch is included on our tour at a local restaurant, where we dine on local Thai specialties from the countryside. We return to Bangkok in the afternoon, where we have a visit to the beautiful Thai style house and the Museum of Jim Thompson, who was instrumental in making Thai silk known to the entire world. Our last night in Bangkok is highlighted by a farewell dinner at a local Thai restaurant. B L D

Friday, December 13

Flights home

An early morning transfer to the airport is arranged for our return flights home. We recross the International Date Line, and arrive home on Friday in Minneapolis. B

Note: B = Breakfast; L = Lunch; D = Dinner

This outstanding value includes the following:
- 10 nights’ deluxe hotel accommodation on tour
- Breakfast buffet daily
- Lunch daily
- Evening Khantoke Dinner/Show in Chiang Mai
- Farewell Dinner in Bangkok
- Sightseeing as indicated in the itinerary
- Taxes and service charges
- All Inter-Asian flights as described in itinerary
- Deluxe ground transportation in A/C vehicle
- Tax-deductible $100 donation to the Arboretum
- Led by Peter Olin from the Arboretum, with local tour guides on site in Cambodia and Thailand

Not included in the tour
- Trans-Pacific airfare to/from Bangkok
- Gratuities to drivers and guides
- Items of a personal nature-- laundry, telephone, etc.
- Visa required for Cambodia

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Deposit due with booking: $500 per person
Final payment due: August 15, 2013

Land Tour Cost:
$3,795 per person, double occupancy
$995 per person, single supplement

NOTE: A visa is required for entry into Cambodia. Contact Glad to Travel for details on acquiring the visa.

Cancellation fees are as follows:
95+ days prior to departure $250.00 per person
94 – 60 days prior $500.00 per person
59 – 30 days prior $1,000.00 per person
Within 30 days of departure NO REFUND

CANCELLATION NOTICE - All cancellations must be in writing and are effective upon receipt in our office.

Trip cancellation insurance is recommended. Contact Glad to Travel for details

A note about airfare: This tour pricing does not include airfare. However, with a minimum number of participants desiring group airfare, Glad To Travel can request group air. If you are interested, please inform Jim, and with enough requests, we will investigate this option. If you desire to make your own air arrangements, you are free to do so. Glad To Travel is at your disposal to help you with this if you wish.
OUR HOTELS

DUSIT D2 HOTEL – Chiang Mai
The Dusit D2 Hotel is located in the heart of Chiang Mai, just off the famous Chang Klan Road. The 131-room boutique hotel has the bustling night bazaar, restaurants and entertainment at its doorstep. Guests are welcomed by a warm, chic interior that represents contemporary Thai design, with accommodations decorated to provide sanctuaries of comfort, privacy and delight. With an outdoor pool, health club and spa, there’s much to offer guests who wish to relax and enjoy their stay. There is complimentary high-speed internet access throughout the hotel. Comfortable modern rooms feature air-conditioning, complimentary bottled water, hair dryer, bathrobe, slippers, tea and coffee making facilities, mini-bar, flat-screen TV, DVD player and in-room safe.

SOKHALAY ANGKOR HOTEL & RESORT – Siem Reap
Surrounded by a charming lily ponds designed in the manner of Angkor’s Baray, settled in lush and green gardens, the Sokhalay Angkor Hotel and Resort welcomes you in the most exotic and peaceful atmosphere. At the heart of this outstanding setting, the wide lagoon pool will refresh your feelings, and The Green, the in-house restaurant, will stimulate your senses with its fine selection of Khmer and international dishes.

Gracefully set in the lush tropical gardens of the hotel are 35 villas with 125 rooms and suites, furnished with the finest selections of wood, marble, Cambodian silk and cotton. All have en-suite bathrooms, balconies and sweeping views of the pool, gardens and the nearby vistas. Enjoy a daily serving of fresh tropical fruits and a fine selection of fresh blooms.

This deluxe 5 star resort offers upscale leisure travelers a high standard of service and Khmer hospitality with free Wi-fi, all day dining and the Sunnaline Spa that will help complete your wonderful stay.

Our deluxe Rooms are spacious in size, elegantly appointed, with hand crafted wooden floor, high quality bed linen and stylish contemporary furniture. The latest technology of a high-speed wireless internet connections and LCD flat-screen televisions that sport comprehensive cable television coverage. Bathrooms are well appointed in cool design with separate shower and bathtub with luxury toiletries.

ROYAL ORCHID SHERATON HOTEL – Bangkok
The Royal Orchid Sheraton Hotel, Bangkok, is a 5-star luxury hotel in the Silom district, Bangkok. Enjoying an enviable location on the magnificent Chao Phraya River, the hotel is within easy access of the best that Bangkok has to offer. Some of the room amenities available include air conditioning with individual climate control, direct dial telephone, TV/Cable channels, in-room safe, iron/ironing board, hairdryer, in room coffee maker, 24-hour room service and in room electronic safes, to name a few.

The hotel features several bar/lounges on premises, as well as several restaurants, both inside and outside, with excellent views of the river and skyline of Bangkok.

At the Angkor Temples

Dusit D2 Hotel

Royal Orchid Sheraton Hotel – Bangkok

Sokhalay Angkor Hotel & Resort – Siem Reap