

February 6, 2024

Dear Bill & Bonnie,

Thank you for choosing Exploriant! We are delighted to have the opportunity to serve you on your 2024 Southeast Asia adventure! Please find your final itinerary for your trip. We're excited to have you on board with us!

TOUR SUMMARY

19 Day / 17 Night Custom Vietnam, Laos & Thailand Deluxe Package

- Roundtrip Business Class Air via Cathay Pacific from JFK
- Economy Class Intra-Asia flights per itinerary
- 2 nights at The Park Hyatt Saigon (Garden View Room)
- 1 night at The Azerai Resort Can Tho (River Room)
- 3 nights at La Siesta Resort in Hoi An (Executive Suite, Club Wing)
- 2 nights at Sofitel Legend Metropole in Hanoi (Premium Room, Opera Wing)
- 1 night at Nham Village Resort in Ninh Binh (Lua House)
- 1 night on board the Premium Orchid Cruise (Premium Terrace Suite)
- 2 nights at My Ban Lao Hotel in Luang Prabang (Pool View Suite)
- 1 night at La Grand Hotel Pakbeng (Mekong Villa)
- 2 nights at Le Meriden Resort in Chiang Rai (Deluxe River View Room)
- 2 nights at Anantara Siam Hotel in Bangkok (Premier Room)
- Hotel Breakfasts Daily
- Other meals as specified per itinerary (Food Only)
- Private tour throughout: all transfers and sightseeing by private car, driver & professional guides (except Halong Cruise and associated excursions operated by Premium Orchid Cruise)

Additional Information

- Price is based on double + Single occupancy, 3 passengers traveling
- Price includes all entrance fees, hotel taxes & service charges, domestic air taxes
- Price excludes personal expenses, beverages during included lunches/dinners, gratuities to guides, drivers, cruise staff, and bell persons
- Visa requirements:
 - Vietnam (E-Visa): <https://evisa.xuatnhapcanh.gov.vn/trang-chu-ttdt> (\$25 per visa)
 - Laos: may be obtained on arrival (\$35 per visa)

TOUR ITINERARY

Day	Activity Summary
Feb. 22	<p>Depart USA: Morning departure from JFK via CATHAY PACIFIC AIRWAYS for Ho Chi Minh City, connecting in Hong Kong.</p> <p>Meals: In-flight Accommodations: N/A</p>
Feb. 23	<p>Arrive Ho Chi Minh City: Upon evening arrival in HCM City, be met and transferred to THE PARK HYATT SAIGON for your next 2 nights' accommodations.</p> <p>Note: Your program includes Fast Track Service which expedites the arrival process. A representative will meet you at the immigration area with a signboard having your name on it. He/she will assist you with immigration formalities at the priority line, followed by baggage claim and escort to your guide/driver.</p> <p>Meals: In-flight Accommodations: The Park Hyatt Saigon (Garden View Room)</p>
Feb. 24	<p>HCM City: This morning, take an off-the-tourist path on a walking tour of Old Saigon. Visit a thriving local market to see how these markets play a major role in the daily lives of Vietnamese people. Stroll through the colourful back alleyways of flower shops and mechanics specialized in restoring vintage Vespa scooters, and locally made guitars. As you immerse in Saigon's local life, stop for a cup of Vietnamese iced coffee at the oldest coffee shop in Saigon, this old fashioned establishment has a colourful history stretching back over seven decades.</p> <p>Next, visit some of the highlights of the city starting with the former Presidential Palace. This landmark gained its place in history as the first North Vietnamese tanks passed by, signifying the end of the Vietnam War. Take a walk along Book Street, passing by the Notre Dame Cathedral (outside only due to renovation) and the colonial-era Post Office, featuring classic Gothic, Renaissance, and French colonial designs. Next, drive to the Fine Arts Museum boasts a beautiful collection of ancient and modern art and sculptures. Stop by the colorful Ben Thanh market for some street food sampling and souvenir hunting before heading back to your hotel. Balance of the afternoon at leisure to relax and explore the vibrant surrounding area. (B,L,D)</p> <p>Later this afternoon, enjoy drink at a rooftop bar overlooking the city before heading out for dinner at one of Vietnam's most celebrated Master Chefs featuring Vietnamese Fusion cuisine. (B,D)</p> <p>Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner Accommodations: The Park Hyatt Saigon (Garden View Room)</p>
Feb. 25	<p>HCM City / Mekong River Cruise / Can Tho: Today leave Saigon's hustle and bustle for Cai Be, a small town in the upper Mekong Delta with an elegant Neo-Romanesque Cathedral at the town center recalling the presence of the French colonialists back in the 19th century. Board your privately chartered Cai Be Princess for a cruise down the Mekong River. Observe river life along the banks before making our first stop at Tan Phong islet.</p> <p>Here, enjoy a sampan ride and a short walk through the villages and fruit gardens, stopping at local cottage industries where families have kept traditional works for generations, such as rice paper, roof panels from water coconut fronts, and homewares from water hyacinths. Continue cruising south until we reach Le Longanier Restaurant, an exquisite colonial-style villa set in a lush tropical garden by the river and surrounded by fruit trees, where lunch will be served. Proceed by road to Can Tho and check-in at the AZERA CAN THO. (B,L)</p> <p>Tip: This evening, venture out to Can Tho Town that boasts a vibrant, yet quaint atmosphere set along the river with several roof-top bars/restaurants and a colorful night market. Note: the resort charges a small fee (approx. \$4 per</p>

	<p>person roundtrip) for boat transfer to/from town.</p> <p>Meals: Breakfast, Lunch Accommodations: The Azerai Can Tho (River Room)</p>
Feb. 26	<p>Can Tho / Hoi An: In the early morning, embark on the Azerai wooden boat for a 45-minute river cruise along the Hau River, passing Ninh Kieu Quay, fishing villages before reaching the Cai Rang floating market, the biggest and most bustling of the Mekong Delta markets and the largest in Southeast Asia. Cai Rang attracts fruit and vegetable vendors from all over the region where trading takes place. Here, buyers on smaller boats weave between the large barges selling the day's produce. Watch vendors haggle and trade and even a chance to sample some local fruits of the region.</p> <p>Return to your resort for breakfast and time at leisure to enjoy the natural surroundings before heading to the airport for your early afternoon flight to Danang. Upon arrival, be met and transferred to beautiful Hoi An. Check-in at LA SIESTA RESORT for your next 3 nights' accommodations. (B)</p> <p>Meals: Breakfast Accommodations: La Siesta Hoi An (Executive Suite, Club Wing)</p>
Feb. 27	<p>Hoi An: Hoi An (Countryside Excursion): Start the day with a short drive through the beautiful landscapes around Hoi An. This is an ideal chance to observe rural Vietnamese life firsthand: water buffalo ploughing muddy rice fields, ducks waddling along narrow paths and farmers tending their crops. The possibilities to capture some memorable moments are endless.</p> <p>Then board a local boat, enjoy fruit & cake with a cup of tea/ café as we cruise to the mouth of the river where it meets the Cua Dai Sea. Here, we'll join a local fishermen for some folk music and a chance to try your hand at fishing using traditional fishing techniques. Learn to paddle the strange and unique Vietnamese bamboo basket boats, and make origami creations (grasshopper, birds, ring, sunglass ,bracelet, etc.) from reeds of palm leaves. Explore the village's tranquil waterways before getting back on board where a simple lunch will be served. Return to your resort and enjoy the balance of the afternoon at leisure to relax, eat and shop beautiful Hoi An Town. (B,L)</p> <p>Meals: Breakfast, Lunch Accommodations: La Siesta Hoi An (Executive Suite, Club Wing)</p>
Feb. 28	<p>Hoi An: Full day free at leisure to relax, enjoy the beach and explore beautiful Hoi An on your own. Later this afternoon, head to the Hoi An Lune Center for the Teh Dar Show, a 60-minute Bamboo Circus production that ventures into the enchanting world of Vietnamese highlanders. Wild animal hunts, moonlit romance, jungle's tales of death and reincarnation, are all recreated with stunning bamboo cirque, daring acrobatics, and hypnotizing melody from exotic tribal instruments. Return to your hotel afterwards. (B)</p> <p>Note: Show begins at 6pm. Passengers are to make own way to/from Hoi An Lune Center, located a short walk from Old Town or 10-minute taxi ride from your hotel.</p> <p>Meals: Breakfast Accommodations: La Siesta Hoi An (Executive Suite, Club Wing)</p>
Feb. 29	<p>Hoi An / Hanoi: Transfer for your late morning flight to Hanoi. Upon arrival, be met and commence sightseeing of Hanoi. Explore the Westlake area and the surroundings. You will observe the contrast between traditional residential quarters versus the new architecture in the developing areas. Stop by a much less-visited pagoda where daily worship is still practiced and enjoy the ambiance and culture of this religious site. Mingle with locals at a coffee shop to watch daily life passing by. Then drive further to the war memorial - Huu Tiep Lake. It features a US B-52 bomber that was shot down in 1972 during the Vietnam War. Walk back to the main road and continue your trip toward Hoang Hoa Tham Street. This area is full of bonsais, flowers and pet shops. Chance to enjoy the hustling and</p>

	<p>bustling vibe between the buyers and sellers.</p> <p>Continue to the iconic Hoan Kiem Lake area, which transforms early evening into a haven for exercise, romantic walks and people watching, join the locals for a stroll to a nearby rooftop bar. Enjoy a stroll around the neighborhood before checking-in at the beautiful SOFITEL LEGEND METROPOLE for your next 2 nights' accommodations. (B)</p> <p>Meals: Breakfast Accommodations: Sofitel Legend Metropole Hotel (Premium Room, Opera Wing)</p>
Mar. 01	<p>Hanoi: Morning tour of Hanoi City. A city of lakes, parks and colonial mansions, Hanoi retains much of its historical charm and, with an eclectic mix of Asian tempo and French refinement, tantalizing foods and a great place to observe typical Vietnamese life.</p> <p>Our visits today include the 11th century Temple of Literature Vietnam's first university; One Pillar Pagoda, an iconic Buddhist temple known for its unique architectural design featuring a single pillar rising from a lotus pond; Visit Hoa Lo Prison (a.k.a. 'Hanoi Hilton'), where the late John McCain spent 5 years in captivity during the Vietnam War (or if you prefer, Fine Arts Museum or Women's Museum), followed by a stroll through the city's Old Quarter that boasts a labyrinth of quaint streets and alleyways lined with shops of all trades. Enjoy a cup of traditional Vietnamese Egg Coffee as you observe local Hanoian life.</p> <p>Later visit the small house of a celebrated musician, liken to a miniature museum of traditional Vietnamese musical instruments. Meet and engage in a casual talk with the humble musician who has built hundreds of musical instruments from different ethnic groups. Here, you'll have a chance enjoy his stories and performance of traditional Vietnamese melodies. Lunch is served at a local restaurant.</p> <p>Later this afternoon, enjoy a complimentary Metropole Path of History & Bomb Shelter Tour exclusive to hotel guests hosted by an historian. This bomb shelter protected guests including famous visitors like Joan Baez and Jane Fonda from air raids during the American War (1964 – 1973). After the war the bunker was closed and sealed until a chance rediscovery by the hotel engineering department during the renovation of the Bamboo Bar in 2011. (B,L)</p> <p>Note: Metropole Bomb Shelter Tour starts at 6pm and on join basis with other hotel guests.</p> <p>Meals: Breakfast, Lunch Accommodations: Sofitel Legend Metropole Hotel (Premium Room, Opera Wing)</p>
Mar. 02	<p>Hanoi / Ninh Binh: Today, get off the beaten path to the much lesser-known area of Ninh Binh, home an UNESCO World Heritage Site that encompasses Tam Coc-Trang An scenic landscape. Considered as the Halong Bay on land, Ninh Binh is surrounded by limestone karsts landscape reflected in the river. Upon arrival at Tho Ha village, take time to appreciate the region's rice fields and agriculture life. Engage in a casual talk with the local farmer to get an insight into his family and lifestyle. Then roll up your sleeves, put in your boots, and take part in the fun daily life activities with local fishermen/farmers. Chance to catch crab and mudfish using traditional rattan tools and plant rice right on the fields. It's time for lunch at a rustic yet traditional restaurant. Hands-on in a simple cooking demo with the chef before having lunch with Ninh Binh specialties.</p> <p>Later this afternoon, get on a rowing boat trip to the Galaxy Cave recently discovered in 2007 due to its small size gateway & its hidden location in the rained forest on Tuong mountain. The cave is beautifully untouched with natural formations of stalagmites & stalactites in shimmering colors – giving you the feeling of being lost in a real paradise on earth. There is a diverse range and amazing shapes of stalactites and stalagmites situated in both dry and wet caves. Continue your river trip to your hotel in Tam Coc through the most stunning sceneries along the riverbanks while watching tranquil sunset reflecting in the idyllic river. Check-in at NHAM VILLAGE RESORT for your overnight accommodations. (B,L)</p> <p>Meals: Breakfast, Lunch</p>

	Accommodations: Nham Villa Resort (Lua House)
Mar. 03	<p>Ninh Binh / Halong Bay: Morning transfer by road to Halong Bay (approx. 4 hours) and board the ORCHID PREMIUM CRUISE for an unforgettable cruise around Halong and Lan Ha Bay. Visit Dark and Bright Caves, the ideal place for you to get up and close to Ha Long Bay by bamboo boat or kayak, before continuing to Lan Ha Bay where you can jump into the bay for a refreshing dip. Lunch and dinner are served on board. (B,L,D)</p> <p>Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner Accommodations: Orchid Premium Cruise (Premium Terrace Suite)</p>
Mar. 04	<p>Halong Bay / Hanoi / Luang Prabang: This morning, join a Tai Chi session on the sundeck while tea, coffee and assorted pastries are served. Enjoy kayaking activities followed by brunch on board before disembarking your cruise at around 11:30am. Stop at Hai Phong famed for its temples, pagodas, mausoleums and shrines for a brief tour before transferring to Hanoi Airport for your evening flight to Luang Prabang. Upon arrival, be met and transferred to MY BAN LAO RESORT for your next 2 nights' accommodations. (B)</p> <p>Meals: Brunch Accommodations: My Ban Lao Resort (Pool View Suite)</p>
Mar. 05	<p>Luang Prabang (Kuangsi Waterfalls): Today's program features a tour of UNESCO Luang Prabang and its famed Kuangsi Waterfalls. Surrounded by thickly forested mountains and situated at the confluence of the Khan and Mekong Rivers, Luang Prabang has a tranquil, old world charm rarely found in Asia today and is perhaps the best-preserved traditional city in South East Asia.</p> <p>For those up for an early morning start (i.e. 05:30am), relish the opportunity to one of the most memorable sights this heritage town – The 'Tak Bat'. At dawn hundreds of saffron robed monks move silently through the streets to collect alms (offerings of food). Take a stroll with your local guide through the colorful, open-air Morning Market where local make their daily meal runs. Enjoy a cup of Lao Coffee at a local coffee shop before returning to your hotel for breakfast.</p> <p>Later in the morning, we'll hit some of the "must-sees" around town. Visit Wat Phonxay where you will have opportunity to meet senior monk for a Monk Blessing Ceremony that is believed to cleanse bad spirits from the past and bring good luck to you. Afterwards, visit the National Museum (formerly the Royal Palace) that boasts a collection of personal artifacts of the former Laotian Royal Family. Next up is Wat Xieng Thong. Often said to be Luang Prabang's most beautiful, this temple is characterized by its several roofs sweeping low to the ground and the impressive "tree of life" mosaic. If you're up for some morning exercise, climb the 350 steps of Phou Sii Hill that stands right in the center of this small city to enjoy commanding views of the area.</p> <p>After lunch at a local restaurant, head to Kuang Sii Waterfalls nestled in the Laotian countryside, visiting Buffalo Daily Farm and "Bear Rescue Centre" enroute. At Kuangsi Falls, enjoy a refreshing dip or simply admire these cascades over the many calcified tiers and down several hundred feet into a series of cool, turquoise pools. Return to Luang Prabang in the afternoon. (B,L)</p> <p>Meals: Breakfast, Lunch Accommodations: My Ban Lao Resort (Pool View Suite)</p>
Mar. 06	<p>Luang Prabang / Mekong River Cruise / Pakbeng: Morning transfer to the pier and board a privately chartered cruise upstream for Pakbeng. This portion of the Mekong is very remote, which sometimes allows glimpses of wildlife in the extensive forests. There are occasional stops at local hill tribe villages to meet people and observe life on the riverside. Stop to visit Pak Ou Buddha Caves. These caves have been home to many thousands of Buddha images that were placed here by local people since 16th century when King Setthathirat found the caves and declared them a holy spot. Enjoy the lovely scenery along both sides of the Mekong as you enjoy a picnic lunch on board. Upon arrival in Pakbeng, check-in at LE GRAND PAKBENG RESORT for your overnight accommodations. (B,L)</p>

	<p>Meals: Breakfast, Lunch Accommodations: Le Grand Pakbeng (Mekong Villa)</p>
Mar. 07	<p>Pakbeng / Mekong River Cruise / Chiang Rai: Continue cruising upstream for Thailand. Today's journey of about 120 kms is on an extremely lovely stretch of the river through remote, wild, and varied mountain scenery that frames the Mekong River. Enjoy lunch on board along with local village visits before arriving Houei Xai where we'll cross the border into Thailand. Continue by road by private car and check-in at LE MERIDIEN CHIANG RAI for your next 2 nights' accommodations. (B,L)</p> <p>Meals: Breakfast, Lunch Accommodations: Le Meridien Chiang Rai (Deluxe River View Room)</p>
Mar. 08	<p>Chiang Rai: This morning, enjoy a half day tour around Chiang Rai, a city in northern Thailand known for its unique and beautiful temples and countryside charm. Highlights today features the city's famed three colored temples: white, black and blue:</p> <p>The White Temple, or Wat Rong Khun, is a contemporary Buddhist temple known for its striking and intricate white exterior adorned with intricate mirror decorations. It was designed by the Thai artist Chalermchai Kositpipat and is known for its unique blend of traditional Buddhist symbolism and modern artistic elements.</p> <p>The Blue Temple, or Wat Rong Suea Ten, is another modern temple in Chiang Rai. It gets its name from the blue coloring used both in its architecture and interior decorations. The temple is a relatively recent addition to Chiang Rai's collection of temples and is known for its stunning blue interior with intricate paintings and a large, ornate blue statue of Buddha.</p> <p>Finally, there is Baan Dam, or the "Black House" (a.k.a. Black Temple). It is one of the strangest and most interesting landmarks in Northern Thailand. There's nothing else like it. More like an art museum and studio than a temple, its construction is a blend of traditional Thai architecture with a contemporary and unorthodox flair. Inside, it is covered in art and installations made of taxidermied animals, and is world's largest collection of animal remains made into furniture and art installations.</p> <p>Return to your resort and enjoy the balance of the afternoon at leisure. (B)</p> <p>Meals: Breakfast Accommodations: Le Meridien Chiang Rai (Deluxe River View Room)</p>
Mar. 09	<p>Chiang Rai / Bangkok: Morning transfer for your flight to Bangkok. Upon arrival, be met and transferred to ANANTARA SIAM HOTEL. Afternoon at leisure to eat, shop and explore the vibrant area surrounding your hotel. This evening, enjoy a guide and car at disposal for dinner and exploration around town based on your interests. (B)</p> <p>Ideas on places to visit with your guide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ratchada Train Market: Vibrant night market filled with street food stands and craft vendors ➤ Asiatique: vibrant riverside dining and entertainment area ➤ Drinks or dinner at Centara Grand Hotel's Red Sky Roof Top Bar ➤ Chinatown & Flower Market ➤ Siam Square: shopping / dining district popular amongst young Thais ➤ Potpong: Red Light District & Night Market <p>Meals: Breakfast Accommodations: Anantara Siam Hotel (Premier Room)</p>

<p>Mar. 10</p>	<p>Bangkok: This morning, enjoy a tour of Bangkok's must-sees. Visits include the Grand Palace and its Wat Phra Kaew (Temple of Emerald Buddha), Wat Pho (Reclining Buddha) and Wat Trimit (Golden Buddha) and Wat Arun (Temple of Dawn). Afternoon free at leisure to eat, shop and explore Bangkok on your own. (B)</p> <p>Places to visit while on your own</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ King Power Mahanakorn Skywalk: Observatory with glass walkway with panoramic views of the city ➤ Chatuchak Weekend Market: huge "Flea market" popular amongst locals and tourists alike <p>Meals: Breakfast Accommodations: Anantara Siam Hotel (Premier Room)</p>
<p>Mar. 11</p>	<p>Return Home: Full day free at leisure until your afternoon transfer to the airport for your evening flight home, connecting in Hong Kong. Arrive JFK the next morning. (B)</p> <p>Note:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Optional tours (Floating Market, Ayutthaya Ruins, Countryside excursion, etc.) are available upon request 2. Normal hotel checkout time is 12 noon. Passengers may utilize hotel facilities and store baggage with hotel bell staff until departure. <p>Meals: Breakfast Accommodations: N/A</p> <p>****END OF PROGRAM****</p>

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