Abercrombie & Kent



INDOCHINA ADVENTURE

Immerse yourself in the rich cultural and timeless traditions of Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos on this in-depth three country journey.

Tailor-Made Journeys, Suggested Itineraries

Asia, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia

13 days from AU$11,380 pp

Private

Journey Overview

Immerse yourself in the timeless traditions of Southeast Asia on this in-depth journey through three intriguing nations. Absorb Vietnam's poignant war history, its breathtaking landscapes, diverse cultures and spiced-up cuisine. Discover the untouched magic of UNESCO-listed Luang Prabang, with its saffron-robed monks, rich textile traditions and age-old farming practices. Finish in Siem Reap, where the ancient, root-clad temples of Angkor Wat will make your draw drop.

Journey Highlights

- Skim along the Saigon River on a private luxury speedboat to the Cu Chi tunnels, for an unrivalled insight into life during the Vietnam War
- Venture out into the Mekong Delta to the canals of Ben Tre; enjoy local encounters on foot, by bike and aboard a traditional sampan boat, spending time in the company of villagers
- Cruise around the 300-odd karst islands and limestone rocks of Lan Ha Bay, and go kayaking in their pristine waters
- Rise before dawn in the ancient city of Luang Prabang, to watch saffron-clad monks taking part in the ritual of Tak Bat
- Embark on a gastronomic adventure through Siem Reap, led by one of Cambodia's top chefs
- Explore Angkor Wat at sunrise with your own private archaeologist, followed by a champagne breakfast



Itinerary

Arrive Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Welcome to Saigon! Arrive to a warm A&K welcome and a fast-tracked arrival service. Enjoy private transfer to your hotel. This evening is at leisure.

Hotel des Art Saigon

Day 2: Ho Chi Minh City

Skim along the Saigon River on a private luxury speedboat, passing mangroves and palm trees, to a small community famous for its wartime landmark — the Cu Chi tunnels. An unrivalled insight into life during the Vietnam War awaits. This incredible network of narrow tunnels was originally built during the French colonisation and used extensively throughout the war. Take a guided exploration of the complex network, discovering underground storage rooms, make-shift hospitals and sleeping quarters.

After a delicious local lunch, uncover the essence of Ho Chi Minh City from past to present, starting at the Reunification Palace, where the official handover of power took place during the Fall of Saigon in 1975. Then visit your choice of either the History Museum or the War Remnants Museum. The History Museum houses a collection of artefacts illustrating the evolution of Vietnamese culture, while the War Remnants Museum contains a sobering display of wartime photographs and relics. Later, get in touch with southern Vietnam’s spiritual side at a colourful Cao Dai temple. Learn about this interesting religious sect which has its roots in Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Hinduism, Vietnamese spiritism, Christianity and Islam.

Hotel des Art Saigon | Meals: BL

Day 3: Ho Chi Minh City

Venture out into the Mekong Delta to Ben Tre, a province famous for its coconut production and tranquil rivers and canals. Take a xe loi (rickshaw) through the village and past picturesque emerald rice fields. Experience life on the water with a scenic boat ride through shaded canals before stopping at a brick factory to witness the centuries-old tradition of brick-making by hand.

The day continues with more unique local encounters on foot, by bike and aboard a traditional sampan boat, spending time in the company of villagers whose livelihood includes rice paper and coconut liquor manufacturing, fishing and fruit farming. Experience firsthand the endearing slow pace and charming appeal of their rural existence, savouring local delicacies over lunch at a riverside restaurant, before returning to the bustling city streets. This evening is yours to enjoy at leisure.

Hotel des Art Saigon | Meals: BL

Day 4: Ho Chi Minh City – Hanoi

Transfer to the airport for your flight north to the Vietnamese capital, Hanoi, and your iconic luxury hotel.

Taste the delights of Hanoi while you explore the city's cultural landmarks. Discover the intriguing story of Ngoc Son temple which sits serenely in the middle of Hoan Kiem Lake. Then sample iconic street food, including the best pho in town. Explore the exotic maze of fruits and vegetables at Hang Be market and see a temple dedicated to merchants of silver. Try banh cuon (steamed rice rolls) and later experience the exciting vibe at the 'International Crossroad', a lively intersection where the city's residents and travellers meet for a refreshing bia hoi (locally brewed beer).

After checking into the Sofitel, embark on a gastronomic adventure to discover Hanoi's vibrant culinary scene. Wander through the backstreets of the city to see a myriad of street vendors whose freshly prepared delicacies fill the air with enticing aromas. Eat as the locals do, sitting on low stools among the hustle and bustle, sampling a wide variety of street foods with delicious bia hoi (fresh, locally brewed beer).

This evening is yours to enjoy at leisure.

Hotel de l'Opera Hanoi | Meals: BL

Day 5: Hanoi

Spend your morning discovering the many sides to this enthralling city, beginning with revered revolutionary leader Ho Chi Minh's mausoleum and stilted house. Set beside an elegant carp-filled pond, the house is surrounded by a charming garden with banyan, frangipani, poinciana and milkweed trees. Continue on to the One Pillar Pagoda, a unique 11th century structure dedicated to King Ly Thai To's son. Finish the morning at Hoa Lo Prison to discover why it became known as the 'Hanoi Hilton' during the Vietnam War.

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before continuing to the atmospheric halls and courtyards of the Temple of Literature, Vietnam's first university. Here Vietnam's royal family and elite society were educated for almost 700 years. Take a cyclo (bicycle rickshaw) into the Old Quarter to explore its network of narrow, 15th century streets. Each street bears a name that reflects the business once conducted there, such as Silk Street, Rice Street, Paper Street and Jeweller's Street. Then take a stroll beside the beautiful Hoan Kiem Lake and visit the temple in the lake known as Ngoc Son.

This evening is yours to enjoy at leisure.

Hotel de l'Opera Hanoi | Meals: BL

Day 6: Hanoi – Lan Ha Bay

Leave the city behind as you journey though World Heritage-listed Halong Bay on an overnight cruise to breathtaking Lan Ha Bay. Board your boutique wooden junk boat and enjoy lunch as you drift over emerald waters past towering limestone outcrops, some more than 100 metres high. Venture south into the maze of Lan Ha Bay, stepping ashore on the island of Cat Ba and cycling through a wonderland of lush greenery to the remote village of Viet Hai (or taking an electric car, if you prefer). Here, meet the islanders and learn about their daily life. Later, step off the boat again to explore the interesting limestone formations at Dark and Bright Caves. Explore the area by bamboo boat or kayak. Then continue to Tra Bau where you can enjoy swimming in the pristine ocean waters.

Back on board, try your hand at preparing traditional dishes with a cooking demonstration and class. After a day of adventure, take your place on the terrace deck and watch the sun sink behind the bay's myriad islands. Savour the cool sea breeze and the warm glow of twilight as the boat anchors for the night. Enjoy alfresco dining on board followed by an evening at leisure. Try your hand at squid fishing, stargaze from the sundeck or perhaps treat yourself to a rejuvenating massage (additional charge).

Ginger Cruise | Meals: BLD

Day 7: Lan Ha Bay – Luang Prabang, Laos

Rise early for a Tai Chi class on the deck, or simply admire the first rays touching the water. After breakfast, hop on a small bamboo boat rowed by locals, or paddle yourself in a kayak through an endless sea of islands. Back on board, enjoy breakfast with spectacular views as you drift back to port. Transfer to the airport for the return flight to Hanoi, and your connecting flight on to Luang Prabang, Laos. Enjoy a warm A&K welcome and private transfer to your luxury accommodation. Your evening is at leisure.

Rosewood Luang Prabang | Meals: B

Days 8: Luang Prabang

Discover UNESCO-designated Luang Prabang, starting with a visit to the Royal Palace Museum, showcasing the city's ancient culture and history. Meander along the quiet laneways to the beautiful Huan Chuan Heritage House, a traditional house and museum with connections to the Royal Palace.

Head up the peninsula to see the country's most historic and enchanting temple, Wat Xiengthong. Continue to Wat Khili and browse its fascinating archive of historical Buddhist photography.

Learn about Laos's silk weaving tradition at Ock Pop Tock, an artisan enterprise that specialises in silk dying and handmade fabrics. Meet one of the founders of the enterprise for a fascinating presentation into the origins of silk, the weaving process and the meaning its many traditional motifs. Next, take part in a hands-on demonstration of silk dying and the various weaving techniques. Walk through the weaving area to observe the skilled artisans at work and ask any questions you may have during candid conversations.

This evening, you'll have the opportunity to take part in a traditional goodwill Baci ceremony, before an evening at leisure.

Rosewood Luang Prabang | Meals: B

Day 9: Luang Prabang

Drive out to the incredibly beautiful vista of Kuang Si Waterfall, a three-tiered cascade known for its brilliant turquoise pools and streams. Wander along the scenic forest trail to see the main falls or cool off with a refreshing swim in one of the shimmering pools.

Then, spend an interactive morning at Laos Buffalo Dairy, a social enterprise supporting underprivileged farmers with a commercial dairy and production facility. Meet the dairy manager who will lead you on a tour of the farm and teach you about their age-old methods. Get up close with the friendly buffalos, helping to wash and feed the calves. Then, sample the farm's delicious, fresh produce with a cheese tasting platter. Your afternoon is at leisure.

This evening, join the locals for a round of the local game petanque before a delicious Laotian BBQ dinner.

Rosewood Luang Prabang | Meals: BD

Day 10: Luang Prabang – Siem Reap, Cambodia

Rise before dawn to take your position on the street for the silent morning ritual of Tak Bat, the giving of alms to the daily procession of saffron-clad monks, a wonderful insight into the local Buddhist culture. Visit the local market before returning to your hotel for breakfast.

Enjoy private transfer to the airport for your flight to Siem Reap. Arrive to a warm A&K welcome and private transfer to your luxury accommodation. This evening, a gourmet experience awaits. Travel by tuk tuk to the finest kitchens in Siem Reap led by the country's top chefs. Start with a cocktail at an intimate lounge that harks back to the speakeasies of the 1920s. Whet your tastebuds with appetisers at a traditional house and garden serving sophisticated Khmer cuisine followed by mains at an authentic home-style eatery. Complete your meal with dessert at a contemporary venue dishing up Cambodia's culinary heritage with a twist.

Phum Baitang, Siem Reap | Meals: BD

Day 11: Siem Reap

Rise early this morning and join a professional archaeologist for an exclusive tour of legendary Angkor Wat. One of the final vestiges of the Khmer Empire, Angkor Wat is both a UNESCO World Heritage site and the largest religious monument in the world. The magnificent temple was built during the reign of King Suryavarman II in the early 12th century, and images of Hindu mythology decorate the five famous towers. Experience the dramatic sunrise as the first rays of the day touch this majestic icon. Your archaeologist will then take you on an hour-long tour of the beautifully decorated temple.

Afterwards, toast the day with a champagne picnic breakfast on the banks of the ancient reservoir at Srah Srang Baray. Next, climb through the snake-like roots that engulf the temple of Ta Prohm to discover an intriguing history, marvelling at towers etched with bodhisattva faces and bas-reliefs. Your afternoon is at leisure.

This evening, return to Angkor and drift along the moat of the ancient walled city in a traditional Khmer gondola, sipping sundowners. Soak up the peace and quiet. Perhaps stroll to Prasat Chrung temple for magical views at twilight.

Phum Baitang, Siem Reap | Meals: B

Day 12: Siem Reap

Today's exploration takes you to the former capital of the great Khmer Empire, Angkor Thom, travelling by your choice of vehicle or bicycle. Embark on your guided discovery at the glorious Bayon in the heart of the ancient city. Take in the 37 stone faces of this elaborate temple built for King Jayavarman VII. Wander through the perfectly square, walled city and stop awhile at the sanctuary of Baphuon. See where kings once worshipped at Phimeanakas Temple and marvel at the impressive Terrace of the Elephants. The Terrace of the Leper King, with its fascinating sculptures, promises the perfect finale.

This afternoon is yours to enjoy at leisure. Perhaps embark on an excursion to Siem Reap's outer villages (additional cost) and visit the exquisitely preserved Banteay Srei temple, nicknamed the 'Citadel of Women' due to its pink sandstone façade. Continue to a local family home to learn about the Cambodia Clean Water Project, an Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy (AKP) initiative installing wells to provide much-needed clean water. Meet one of the recipient families to see firsthand how this project is changing lives, one well at a time. If you would like to find out more, or to get involved, visit **www.akphilanthropy.org**

This evening, witness a mesmerising and exhilarating performance of theatre, dance, contortion and acrobatics, coordinated by a not-for-profit organisation offering disadvantaged youth the opportunity to develop careers in the arts.

Phum Baitang, Siem Reap | Meals: B

Day 13: Depart Siem Reap

Today your Indochina adventure has come to an end. Transfer to the airport for your onward flight.

Meals: B

Map


CHINA
Hanoi
Lan Ha Bay
Luang Prabang
GULF OF
TONKIN
LAOS
THAILAND
VIETNAM
Siem Reap
CAMBODIA
SOUTH
CHINA SEA
Ho Chi
Minh City
ARRIVE/DEPART
AIR
BOAT

Accommodation

Hotel des Art Saigon



Hotel des Arts Saigon is as much a 5-star boutique hotel as it is an art museum. The owner’s personal collection of paintings and antiques are proudly showcased throughout the building, bringing an added element of old-world charm and style to the modern building.

Hotel des Arts Saigon’s rooftop swimming pool is the perfect place to take in the views of the city below, whilst sipping a refreshing cocktail at the rooftop bar. A vibrant restaurant, a lounge-bar and a relaxed art-café all offer up a variety of culinary delights, handcrafted drinks and late night snacks to suit any pallet.

Les Spa des Artistes boasts 6 treatment rooms offering guests a perfect retreat from the fast pace of the city outside.

Why we like it

- Rooftop pool and bar serving tailor-made cocktails
- Located 2 minutes from the town centre, shops, bar and restaurants
- Social Club located on 23rd floor serving handcrafted drinks and food

Hotel de l’Opera Hanoi



Located in the heart of the enchanting city, known for its serene lakes and scenic boulevards, is L’Hotel de l'Opera Hanoi – MGallery. As the name suggests, the 107-room boutique hotel is within walking distance of the famous Hanoi Opera House, along with the city’s Old Quarter and Hoan Kiem Lake.

The drama of ‘a night at the opera’ is captured in the rich décor of each guest room and suite. Stay in the sophisticated L’Opera Suite and enjoy views across the Vietnamese capital from the spacious lounge. The beds deliver a sense of elevation with an extra layer of mattress for the perfect night’s sleep. Suite benefits include breakfast, a complimentary drink at La Fée Verte and a late checkout. Each of the deluxe rooms provide warm, homely touches with wooden floors and fine linens.

Hanoi is known for its exquisite cuisine, and this is reflected within the hotel’s two French-inspired restaurants. Café Lautrec, named after the 19th-century painter Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, offers à la carte and buffet dining. Dishes on the menu include wok fried *Nha Trang* seafood in spicy sauce and Hanoian *Pho*. Satine offers classic Vietnamese cuisine with many local favourites and is dramatically set within the eight-storey atrium.

The signature bar La Fée Verte, or the ‘Green Fairy’, is a nod to the decadence of a bygone era where absinthe was the drink of choice among Parisian artists. Today, you can choose from cocktails, aged spirits and imported wines.

After a day exploring, you can relax in Hanoi’s only heated semi-outdoor swimming pool found on the third floor. From the warm waters you can enjoy views of the vibrant Trang Tien Street known for its bookshops and

ice-cream. A well-equipped fitness centre, with TechnoGym, cardio and strength-training equipment is adjacent.

Why we like it

- Located in the heart of the city within walking distance of Hanoi Opera House and Hoan Kiem Lake
- Encapsulates the best of Hanoi with outstanding features of French colonial architecture and operatic interior
- Two French-inspired restaurants with fusion of international cuisine and Vietnamese dishes
- Absinthe cocktails served in the signature bar, La Fée Verte
- Heated swimming pool and gym
- **Our top tip:** relax in Hanoi’s only heated semi-outdoor swimming pool and enjoy views of the opera house and vibrant Trang Tien Street

Ginger Cruise



The gracious Ginger is Heritage Line’s newest vessel cruising Lan Ha Bay, a tranquil part of the famous Halong Bay in Vietnam. With just 12 large suites, Ginger exudes a private atmosphere on board, making it feel almost like you have the whole vessel to yourself. There are two Regent Suites in the highest room category, four Signature Suites and six Junior Suites. Each room is naturally light-flooded, with a well-sized balcony, warm timber floors, marble bathrooms and distinguished design themes that marry the long-lasting traditions of Northern Vietnam with contemporary accents.

Begin your day with a private balcony breakfast as the boat sails through a mystical landscape of karsts and islands. After an adventure-filled day onshore, recline in your spacious room, head out to the pool deck for sundowners, or choose from the cultural menu of activities, including hands-on cooking classes, tai chi, kayaking and more. There’s also a vast spa occupying the whole stern of the ship, with three treatment rooms all offering views of the bay. Later, take your place at the restaurant to watch the chefs prepare your feast of Vietnamese or Western cuisine, before finding a spot in the indoor bar for a digestif – the perfect end to your day.

Why we like it

- Exclusive atmosphere with only 12 suites
- All suites are light-filled with a spacious balcony
- Vast spa with treatment rooms overlooking the tranquil bay

Rosewood Luang Prabang



Hidden in the lush jungle on the outskirts of Luang Prabang, Rosewood Luang Prabang has an idyllic setting with a river running through the heart of the resort.

A grand colonial-styled residence houses the public areas while 23 spacious accommodations, spread across both banks of the river, include deluxe rooms, specialty suites, riverside and pool villas, and luxury tents. Bill Bensley designed interiors demonstrate his signature colonial-chic style while Lao tradition is sensitively woven throughout using indigenous materials and locally inspired artworks.

Meals at The Great House use only fresh local ingredients, some of which are harvested from the onsite organic garden, supporting the local community through a 'farm-to-the table' dining concept that emphasises locally sourced and seasonal foods. The Elephant Bridge Bar — a nod to the area's wild past — is the perfect spot to enjoy classic cocktails and traditional Laotian bar snacks.

Sense, A Rosewood Spa® offers a variety of luxury treatments and signature holistic offerings paired with natural, sustainably sourced ingredients. The riverside pool is also a perfect place to relax after a day’s touring.

Why we like it

- Bill Bensley designed colonial-chic interiors in riverside accommodation options
- A contemporary farm-to-table dining concept
- Holistic spa offerings using sustainably sourced ingredients
- Complimentary sunset cruise, weaving heritage tour or tour MandaLao Elephant

Sanctuary

Phum Baitang Siem Reap



The charming Phum Baitang – which means ‘the green village’ – is a 5-star luxury resort spectacularly located within eight acres of lush gardens, lemongrass meadows and rice paddies near Siem Reap, Cambodia. The second property from Zannier Hotels, this elegant retreat is a gateway to the Angkor World Heritage Site and numerous natural and cultural wonders.

As its name suggests, Phum Baitang is modelled on a Cambodian village, featuring wooden villas reminiscent of local farm houses. There are 25 villas and 20 pool villas, all superbly designed with elegant, handmade wooden furniture, stone sinks and bathtubs, and antique carved headboards.

While away your afternoon on a day-bed and enjoy the serenity of your private terrace in the shade of a frangipani tree. Later, take your seat at one of the two bars – one is located in the original 100-year-old farmhouse. Here, you can lounge on a rattan wing chair as you sip your aperitif. There are two restaurants, one located beside a sensational 50-metre infinity pool. On the menu, discover the best of Southeast Asian cuisine, such as Khmer curries, Thai *tom yum* soup and fresh Vietnamese spring rolls, complimented by an extensive wine list including Roger Zannier's own vintages from his estates in the South of France and Portugal's Douro Valley. The hotel also features a beautiful spa, designed as a tribute to Angkor's temples, and the perfect antidote to the hustle of Siem Reap.

Why we like it

- Ideally located for those seeking rural tranquillity just 15 minutes from the Angkor ruins
- The hotel has its own fleet of tuk-tuks and cars

- A perfect balance of rustic experience, privacy and genuine luxury
- Angkor-era design elements in the beautiful spa

Abercrombie & Kent

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