
Day 7: Friday, March 09, 2012 - Bangkok & Ayutthaya**Kantary Hotel**

After breakfast this morning, drive north to the ancient city of Ayutthaya, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. King U-Thong founded the city in 1350 as the capital of his kingdom of Siam. By 1700, Ayutthaya had as many as a million inhabitants, making it one of the largest cities in the world at the time. But in 1767, the city was invaded and destroyed by the Burmese army. Magnificent ruins of the old city still remain, and some having been restored. Exciting archaeological excavations are still proceeding at many sites in the area.

Today's sightseeing tour takes you first to Bang Pa to view King Rama IV's summer palace, used occasionally by the king and queen to host receptions and banquets. The palace and its surrounding temples represent an appealing fusion of Thai, Chinese, and European architectural styles. Continue to Wat Yai Chaimongkol, a temple best known for its enormous statue of the Reclining Buddha.

Conclude the tour at Wat Chai Watanaram, a monastery commissioned by King Prasatthong in 1630 in honor of his mother. However, its striking resemblance to Cambodia's famous Angkor Wat has led some to believe that the king also built the wat to commemorate his victory over Cambodia. Included meals: breakfast.

Day 8: Saturday, March 10, 2012 - Ayutthaya, Kanchanaburi, & the River Kwai**River Kwai Resotel**

Set out on a drive this morning through the picturesque rice fields of Suphanburi to Kanchanaburi. Upon arrival, visit the historic bridge over the River Kwai, part of the infamous Death Railway built by the Japanese using Allied prisoners of war during World War II. At the museum, you'll learn more about life in the camps, the building of the bridge, and the more than 8,000 POWs who died during construction.

Take a train ride through the Kwai Noi gorge before continuing to your river resort. The rest of the afternoon is yours at leisure. We suggest a visit to the resort's spa for a Thai massage or steam bath, or a dip in the pool. Included meals: breakfast.

Day 9: Sunday, March 11, 2012 - Kanchanaburi & the River Kwai**River Kwai Resotel**

After a breakfast this morning, drive to the Hellfire Pass museum, a memorial complex dedicated to the men and women who died during the construction of the railway. Nighttime labor by torchlight on this particularly difficult section gave the pass its name. Briefly explore the area before embarking on a trek through the Memorial Walking Trail.

Enjoy the rest of the day at leisure for independent exploration.

Optional Tour: Join a relaxing optional tour that includes a visit to an elephant camp, complete with an elephant ride through the jungle and alongside the river. Afterwards, enjoy a bamboo raft ride down the river's gently flowing waters. Enjoy the rest of the day at leisure for independent exploration, or head to the river to help bathe the elephants (fee may apply). Included meals: breakfast.

Day 10: Monday, March 12, 2012 - Bangkok / USA

Enjoy breakfast and leisure time this morning before returning to Bangkok in the afternoon. Bid farewell to Thailand later today as you transfer to the airport to board your return flight to the USA via Taipei. Included meals: breakfast.