

A photograph of several ancient Thai stupas (pagodas) at sunset. The structures are made of weathered brick and stone, with intricate carvings. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The sky is filled with soft, orange and yellow clouds. The entire scene is reflected in a calm body of water in the foreground, creating a mirror image of the structures and the sky.

PRINCETON  
**JOURNEYS**

Kingdoms of Southeast Asia:

# Thailand and Laos

February 11-23, 2027

*Featuring Dora C.Y. Ching \*11,  
Executive Director, Tang Center for East Asian Art*

# Itinerary

## February 11. Depart U.S.

Depart the U.S. on an overnight flight to Bangkok, arriving February 12. *Note: Flight times vary by gateway city; some flights might depart on February 10.*

## February 12. Bangkok, Thailand.

Arrive Bangkok International Airport with individual VIP service, followed by a private transfer to the elegant Peninsula Bangkok. Set along the banks of the Chao Phraya River, the hotel is renowned for its refined atmosphere and one of the city's most exceptional swimming pools.

*The Peninsula Bangkok (Meals Aloft)*

## February 13. Bangkok.

Today's full day tour of Bangkok begins with a visit to Wat Rakhong, the "Temple of the Bell," for an introduction to Thai Buddhist traditions and spirituality. From there, step into one of Bangkok's most

iconic experiences: a long-tail boat journey along the Chao Phraya River and its branching canals, called klongs. Glide past stilted homes, shrines, and riverside gardens to witness a quieter, more traditional side of the city. A stop at a local family home provides insight into real Bangkok life.

After a group lunch, the program continues at Wat Pho, one of Thailand's most revered temple complexes. Witness the extraordinary Reclining Buddha, an immense, gold-leafed figure stretching 150 feet in length. In addition to its sacred heritage, Wat Pho served as the first center for public education in Thailand and many temple walls are decorated with stone inscriptions on philosophy, medicine, and literature.

This evening, gather for a welcome reception and dinner.

*The Peninsula Bangkok (B, L, D)*



*B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner*

## February 14. Bangkok.

Travel beyond the city this morning to visit the Taling Chan Floating Market, a semi-rural market offering a glimpse into life along Bangkok's waterways. Here, traditional wooden boats line the canals as vendors prepare fresh local dishes and sell regional specialties, providing a vivid window into Thailand's enduring river-based traditions.

Following lunch, stroll through Talad Noi, one of Bangkok's oldest Chinese communities. In this colorful neighborhood, family-run shophouses dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century or earlier stand next to vibrant street art offering a contemporary counterpoint to the historic setting. Dinner this evening is at leisure.

*The Peninsula Bangkok (B, L)*

## February 15. Bangkok/Ayutthaya.

Depart Bangkok for Ayutthaya Historical Park, the former capital of the Kingdom of Siam and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Ayutthaya flourished from the 14th to the 18th century as one of Asia's great trading and cultural centers before its destruction in 1767. Explore the evocative temple ruins that define the site's landscape and enjoy lunch aboard a traditional restored teak riverboat, once used to transport rice along the Chao Phraya River. Return to Bangkok in the late afternoon and enjoy dinner at the hotel.

*The Peninsula Bangkok (B, L, D)*

## February 16. Chiang Mai.

Take a short flight to Chiang Mai, the largest city in northern Thailand. Founded in 1296 as the capital of the Lanna Kingdom, Chiang Mai blends centuries-old Buddhist heritage with a modern creative economy and a relaxed mountain setting. Tour the Old City, encircled by ancient walls and moats and home to some of Thailand's most revered temples, including Wat Phra Singh and Wat Chedi Luang. Check into Chala Number 6, a boutique hotel that offers immediate access to the city's most significant cultural landmarks.

*Chala Number 6 (B, L, D)*





### **February 17. Chiang Mai.**

Begin the day with an optional early morning excursion to hear the ritual chanting of Buddhist monks at Doi Suthep temple.

Mid-morning, embark on an exploration of Thai culinary traditions: Learn about the fresh herbs and spices that serve as the foundations of Thai cuisine at the local market, then try your hand at preparing a selection of classic dishes at a hands-on cooking experience. Following lunch, the afternoon is at leisure, with an optional opportunity to explore Chiang Mai's celebrated gallery scene.

*Chala Number 6 (B, L)*

### **February 18. Chiang Mai.**

In Thailand, elephants have long held cultural, historical, and spiritual significance. Revered as symbols of strength, wisdom, and good fortune, they also figure prominently in Buddhist and Hindu traditions, where they are associated with sacred narratives and venerated figures.

During a half day visit to an ethical elephant sanctuary, enjoy the rare opportunity to observe these remarkable animals in a natural, unhurried setting that prioritizes their well-being and dignity.

This evening, stroll through the vibrant lanes of

the Chiang Mai Night Market where rows of stalls offer an enticing array of handcrafted goods, textiles, ceramics, and regional specialties.

*Chala Number 6 (B, L, D)*

### **February 19. Luang Prabang, Laos.**

After a morning lecture, take a short flight to the spiritual heart of the Kingdom of Laos, Luang Prabang. Celebrated for its well-preserved blend of traditional Lao and French colonial architecture, Luang Prabang was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1995. Check into the Sofitel Luang Prabang, a five-star hotel housed in the former governor's residence.

*Sofitel Luang Prabang (B, L, D)*

## February 20. Luang Prabang.

This morning, journey along the Mekong River to Ock Pop Tok Living Crafts Centre. At this renowned cultural center, ancient weaving traditions are preserved and practiced with care. Observe master artisans at work creating intricate silk textiles on traditional looms, using natural dyes and time-honored techniques that reflect the richness of Lao heritage.



Continuing by riverboat, travel upstream to the revered Pak Ou Caves, where thousands of Buddha statues have been placed over centuries by pilgrims. These sacred limestone caves offer a powerful look at the spiritual life of the region.

Enjoy lunch aboard the riverboat and take in the gentle rhythms of the Mekong. Return to Luang Prabang in the afternoon with dinner at leisure.

*Sofitel Luang Prabang (B, L)*

## February 21. Luang Prabang.

Begin the day at dawn with the ritual of tak bat, an alms-giving ceremony at the center of daily life in Luang Prabang. In the soft light of early morning, saffron-robed monks move silently through the streets as local residents offer food in a gesture of humility and devotion.

Later this morning, visit Laos Buffalo Dairy, an innovative social enterprise that supports local farmers while producing artisanal dairy products. During a guided visit, learn about the project's mission and operations, followed by a farm-to-table lunch featuring fresh, locally sourced ingredients.



Early this evening, visit a private home for a traditional Baci ceremony—one of Laos's most meaningful cultural rituals. Rooted in spiritual belief, the ceremony calls back and blesses the khwan, or protective spirits, to restore harmony and well-being.

*Sofitel Luang Prabang (B, L, D)*

## February 22. Luang Prabang.

This morning set out on foot to explore the timeless charm of Luang Prabang. Visit the city's most celebrated temples, wander along quiet lanes lined with intimate cafés and small galleries, and take a short hike up Mount Phousi for sweeping views over the town and the confluence of the Mekong and Nam Khan rivers.

Gather this evening for a special night at the Royal Palace Museum, with exclusive after-hours access. Then proceed to Heuan Chan Heritage House, an elegant pre-colonial aristocratic residence, to toast and celebrate the conclusion of the journey.

*Sofitel Luang Prabang (B, D)*

## February 23. Luang Prabang.

Transfer to the airport for flights home.

*(B)*

*This is an exclusive program for Princeton University. Itinerary is subject to change.*

# Rates & Registration

### Tour Pricing:

- \$9,500 per person, double occupancy
- \$12,080 single occupancy

### Reserve your place online at:

<https://journeys.princeton.edu/booking/start/27-02-18-AUA/tour>

A deposit of \$2,000 is required at the time of registration. Final payment is due 120 days prior to departure.

Please contact the Princeton Journeys team at 609-258-8686 or [journeys@princeton.edu](mailto:journeys@princeton.edu) with questions.



# Terms & Conditions

**Program Rates Include:** All accommodations as listed in itinerary; Domestic flights between Bangkok and Chiang Mai in economy class; International flights between Chiang Mai and Luang Prabang in economy class; 11 Breakfasts, 9 lunches, 7 dinners; Sparkling water, still water, and soft drinks with lunches, plus beer/house wine with dinners; All sightseeing and entrance fees; Gratuities to guides, drivers, porters and wait staff; Laos visa fee; Services of an Authentic Asia tour manager and Princeton Journeys host; Lectures by Princeton study leader.

**Program Rates Do Not Include:** All U.S. domestic and international airfare into Bangkok and out of Luang Prabang; Trip cancellation/baggage insurance; Excess baggage fees; Items of purely personal nature and those not expressly mentioned as included.

## **Cancellation Policy:**

The tour deposit of \$2,000 is non-refundable. The final invoice will be sent 120 days prior to departure and is due upon receipt. Cancellations shall not be effective until they are received in writing and confirmed by Princeton Journeys.

The following cancellation fees will apply:

- If a written request is received within 120 – 75 days prior to departure: 50% of the trip price will be refunded.
- If a written request is received within 75 – 60 days prior to departure: 25% of the trip price will be refunded.
- If a written request is received within less than 60 days prior to departure no refund shall be issued.
- No refund shall be issued after the tour has commenced, or for leaving the tour early. No refunds shall be issued for missed meals, sightseeing or any unused services.

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