

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,
Princeton University*

alumni.princeton.edu/journeys

Dear Princetonian,

Join Princeton Journeys study leader favorite **Dora C. Y. Ching *11** and immerse yourself in the colors, artistry, and stunning sacred sites of Thailand and Laos. This custom designed, Princeton-exclusive journey from Bangkok to Chiang Mai and Luang Prabang features special-access visits, engagement with local community members, and off-the-beaten-path excursions.

Begin in Bangkok, known for its spectacular Buddhist temples. Marvel at Thailand's largest reclining Buddha at Wat Pho and venture to UNESCO-designated Ayutthaya, former capital of the Kingdom of Siam. Discover Bangkok's waterways by long-tail boat and during a cruise along the Chao Praya River, and weave through the stalls of a vibrant floating market.

Continue to Chiang Mai, set in mountainous northern Thailand, and explore its moated Old City and thriving art scene. Spend the morning at an elephant sanctuary observing these culturally significant creatures in a natural environment, and learn about the distinctive flavors of Thai cuisine in an immersive cooking class.

The journey ends in Luang Prabang, where you will step inside the sacred Pak Ou Caves, a centuries-old pilgrimage site, and visit a family home to participate in a traditional Baci ceremony. On your farewell evening, gain exclusive access to the Royal Palace Museum after closing time for a special guided visit.

Reserve your place today and experience this unique part of the world in the way only Princeton Journeys can make possible.

With kind regards,



Bridget St. Clair

Director, Alumni Education and Travel, Princeton University

Our Study Leader



Photo: John Blazejewski

Dora C. Y. Ching *11

Dora C. Y. Ching *11 is a specialist in Chinese art history and executive director of the P.Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Center for East Asian Art at Princeton. Her research interests include portraiture, Buddhist art and Chinese calligraphy. In 2021, she finished a multiyear research project that culminated in the publication of "Visualizing Dunhuang: The Lo Archive Photographs of the Mogao and Yulin Caves," a nine-volume set on Buddhist caves in northwest China that won the

Bei Shan Tang Catalogue Prize in 2023. At the Tang Center for East Asian Art, in addition to leading numerous academic projects, she has also been deeply engaged in book editing and publication, with nearly 20 books to her credit as co-editor or managing editor. She also occasionally teaches at Princeton, most recently last semester when she taught the seminar "Portraiture in China." She has served as a Princeton Journeys study leader on trips throughout East and Southeast Asia and looks forward to traveling with Princeton Journeys to Thailand and Laos. She has an A.B. from Harvard University and earned her Ph.D. in the Department of Art and Archaeology at Princeton.

alumni.princeton.edu/journeys



Itinerary

DAY 1. FEBRUARY 11 **DEPART U.S.**

Depart the U.S. on an overnight flight to Bangkok, arriving Feb. 12.

Note: Flight times vary by gateway city; some flights might depart on Feb. 10.

DAY 2. FEBRUARY 12 **BANGKOK**

Arrive at 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)

DAY 3. FEBRUARY 13 **BANGKOK**

Today's full-day tour of Bangkok begins with a visit to Wat Rakhang, 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)

DAY 4. FEBRUARY 14 **BANGKOK**

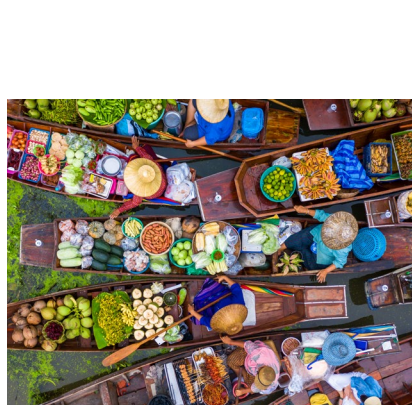
Travel beyond the city this morning to visit the Taling Chan Floating Market, a semi-rural market offering a glimpse into life along Bangkok's waterways. Here, traditional wooden boats line the canals as vendors prepare fresh local dishes and sell regional specialties, providing a vivid window into Thailand's 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 19th 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)



(B) Breakfast / (L) Lunch / (D) Dinner



DAY 5. 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, enriched by a deeper understanding of Thailand's royal and cultural heritage. Dinner will be served at the hotel.

THE PENINSULA BANGKOK (B, L, D)

DAY 6. 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)

DAY 7. FEBRUARY 17 **CHIANG MAI**

Begin the day with an optional early morning excursion to hear the centuries-old 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)

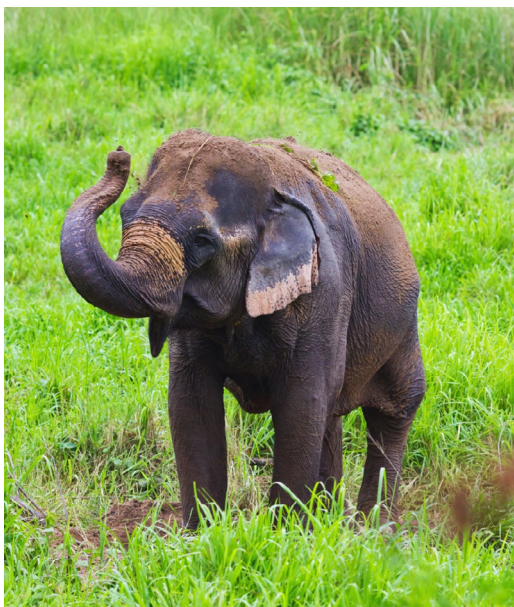
DAY 8. FEBRUARY 18 **CHIANG MAI**

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)





DAY 9. FEBRUARY 19 **LUANG PRABANG**

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)

DAY 10. 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)

DAY 11. FEBRUARY 21 **LUANG PRABANG**

Begin the day at dawn with the ancient ritual of tak bat, the alms-giving ceremony that remains 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)

DAY 12. FEBRUARY 22 **LUANG PRABANG**

This morning, set out on foot to explore the timeless charm of Luang Prabang. Visit the city's most revered 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)

**DAY 13. 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.



PROGRAM RATES

\$9,500 double occupancy
\$12,080 Single Occupancy
Deposit: \$2,000



▶ Reserve your place online

Program Rates Include All accommodations as listed; 4 nights Peninsula Hotel, Deluxe Room, Bangkok; 3 nights Chala Number 6 Hotel, Deluxe Room, Chiang Mai; 4 nights Sofitel Hotel, Garden Suite, Luang Prabang; domestic flights between Bangkok and Chiang Mai in economy class; international flights between Chang Mai and Luang Prabang in economy class; 11 breakfasts, 9 lunches, 7 dinners; sparkling water, still water and soft drinks with lunch; sparkling water, still water, soft drinks and beer/house wine with dinner (2 glasses per person; all sightseeing and entrance fees; gratuities to guides, drivers, porters and wait staff; Laos visa fee; service of an Authentic Asia tour manager and Princeton Journeys host; lectures by a Princeton study leader in private room with AV setup.

Not Included Are 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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KINGDOMS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA: Thailand and Laos

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Register online at alumni.princeton.edu/journeys or fill in the form below and mail to: Princeton Journeys, P.O. Box 5256, Princeton, NJ 08543. Personal checks should be made out to Authentic Asia. For more information, contact Princeton Journeys at journeys@princeton.edu or 609.258.8686.

PAYMENT

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ (\$2,000 per person, made out to Authentic Asia), to reserve _____ places on Thailand and Laos

OR

Please charge my deposit to:

Visa MasterCard American Express Discover

CREDIT CARD NUMBER

EXP. DATE

CARDHOLDER SIGNATURE

SECURITY CODE

I/we understand that final payment is due Oct. 14, 2026, 120 days prior to departure. Registrations after Oct. 14: Full payment is due.

TITLE

NAME #1 (AS ON PASSPORT)

DOB

EMAIL

PRINCETON AFFILIATION

TITLE

NAME #2 (AS ON PASSPORT)

DOB

EMAIL

PRINCETON AFFILIATION

STREET ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

PHONE

ACCOMMODATIONS

Bed preference in hotel (not guaranteed): Two beds One bed

I/we have read the tour information and agree to the terms and conditions therein.

SIGNATURE

DATE

SIGNATURE

DATE



KINGDOMS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA: Thailand and Laos

TAKE a long-tail boat journey along the Chao Phraya River and its branching canals, gliding past stilted homes, shrines and riverside gardens.

EXPLORE the temple ruins of Ayutthaya, UNESCO-designated former capital of the Kingdom of Siam.

WANDER the walled Old City of Chiang Mai, home to some of Thailand's most revered temples, and spend time with elephants at an ethical sanctuary.

INDULGE in a hands-on cooking class.

VISIT the revered Pak Ou Caves, where thousands of Buddha statues have been placed over centuries by pilgrims.

LET Princeton Journeys take you behind the scenes: Step into family homes, witness local spiritual traditions and gain after-hours access to Luang Prabang's Royal Palace Museum.

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