

THAILAND & LEGENDS OF SIAM

January 22 – February 1, 2020

Personally hosted and escorted by Larry Gelwix, the “Getaway Guru”

How does one describe “Legends of Siam?” Visions of ancient millennial temples, the timeless chants of Buddhist monks, flower markets, narrow canals and waterways, cuisine that bursts with flavor, shopping bargains galore, hill tribes clinging to traditional lifestyles, colorful costumes and festivals, floating down a jungle river in a long-tail boat stopping at remote villages, a real life setting that would be perfect for an Indiana Jones movie, and the “King and I,” all grace your imagination. This unique tour keeps a focus on the local people, traditional lifestyles and customs, food, and, of course, shopping. Participation is limited as we keep the group relatively small. You begin to realize this is no ordinary adventure. This is one of those extraordinary, life-changing experiences. This is an adventure for “travelers,” not for mere tourists. There is absolutely no comparable tour to this one!

Brief Itinerary Summary:

- Jan. 22** USA – Bangkok, evening departure
- Jan. 23** Cross International Date Line and “lose” a day (you “gain” it back on the way home)
- Jan. 24** Arrive in Bangkok, afternoon free, Chao Phraya River dinner cruise this evening
- Jan. 25** Bangkok city tour including Grand Palace, Wat Po, “klongs,” & other major sites
- Jan. 26** Free day open for independent activities
- Jan. 27** Bangkok – Chiang Rai, White Temple, shopping
- Jan. 28** Golden Triangle, Royal Family villa & gardens, Chiang Rai Night Market
- Jan. 29** Kok River by “long tail” boat to Chiang Mai with river stop at a remote native village
- Jan. 30** Wat Doi Suthep (“gold temple”), shopping, Chiang Mai Night Market
- Jan. 31** Elephant camp, orchid farm, and Chiang Dao Valley visit, shopping
- Feb. 01** Chiang Mai – USA, return flights home. Cross the IDL and arrive home same day.



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Detailed Itinerary:

Jan. 22 USA – Bangkok, Thailand Evening departure and fly west over the Pacific crossing the International Date Line and “lose” a day (Jan. 23, sorry if this is your birthday!)

Jan. 24 Arrive Bangkok (D) Airport welcome by local hosts. Transfer to our hotel, perfectly situated in downtown Bangkok in close proximity to city attractions, nightlife, shopping, and restaurants. Balance of the morning and afternoon free. This evening, after a restful afternoon, we enjoy a dinner cruise on the Chao Phraya River to witness the temples and monuments illuminated at night. This is an exciting and memorable introduction to Bangkok.

Jan. 25 Bangkok: Highlights of the City of Angels (B, L) After breakfast, we embark on an excursion to see the highlights of the city, passing through the narrow streets of **Chinatown** and past **Pak Klong Talad**, the colorful fresh flower market, to the historical roots of Bangkok. We continue on to one of the great **Wonders of the World**, the magnificent **Royal Grand Palace** and **Wat Phra Kaew**, a royal temple within the palace grounds, dating back to 1782 AD and the Chakri Dynasty. (In Thailand a *wat* is a Hindu or Buddhist temple and a source of spiritual enlightenment.) The main chapel houses the most revered religious icon in Thailand, the magnificent **Emerald Buddha**, cloaked in seasonal costumes of woven gold and jewels. We continue on a guided tour of the grounds, including the house occupied temporarily by Anna Leonowens, the English school teacher depicted in the 1951 Rodgers and Hammerstein Broadway musical, “**The King and I**,” starring Yul Brynner and more recently by Jodie Foster in “**Anna & The King**.”

One of the most impressive monuments along the river is **Wat Arun**, also known as the **Temple of Dawn**. We will enjoy lunch at one of Larry’s favorite Bangkok restaurants located right on the Chao Phraya riverfront. This is just a great meal! After lunch we depart in traditional Thai “long tail” boats and explore the city by water. Bangkok is the “Venice of the East” with more than 300 canals. We go where most tourists never go. We explore the residential canals (“klongs”) of the city where the common people live and work. It a sensory experience never to be forgotten.

Jan. 26 Bangkok (B) Today is a free day to explore the many exciting areas of the city. It is easy to get around town, especially via Bangkok's water and land taxis, Sky Train elevated rail system, and modern subway system. It is a perfect day for relaxing, shopping, and mixing with the locals. Optional tours are available to **jungle bicycling, cooking classes, Chatuchak Weekend Market** (with more than 15,000 vendors divided into 27 sections...it is mind boggling and fantastic! There's nothing like it elsewhere in the world)) and more for you to enjoy.

Jan. 27 Bangkok – Chiang Rai (B)

Morning flight to **Chiang Rai**. Our tour includes a visit to the famous **Wat Rong Khun**, better known to visitors as the “**White Temple**”. The temple is a contemporary, unconventional, art exhibit in the style of a Buddhist temple. The main building of the temple is reached by crossing a bridge over a small lake. In front of the bridge are outreaching hands symbolizing unrestrained desire. The bridge proclaims the way to happiness is by foregoing temptation, greed, and desire. After crossing the bridge, we arrive at the “**Gate of Heaven**”, guarded by two creatures representing Death and Rahu, who decides the fate of the dead. After visiting this temple, we continue on to additional sites of Chiang Rai.



Jan. 28 Chiang Rai & the Infamous Golden Triangle (B, L) After breakfast we depart for the ancient Lanna capital of **Chiangsaen** on the **Mekong River**. Continue to the newly opened world class **Hall of Opium Museum** (sorry, no samples!), an excellent state-of-the-art exhibition focused on the 5,000-year history of the drug and its profound effects on society. Lunch at exciting local restaurant tucked away in the jungle.

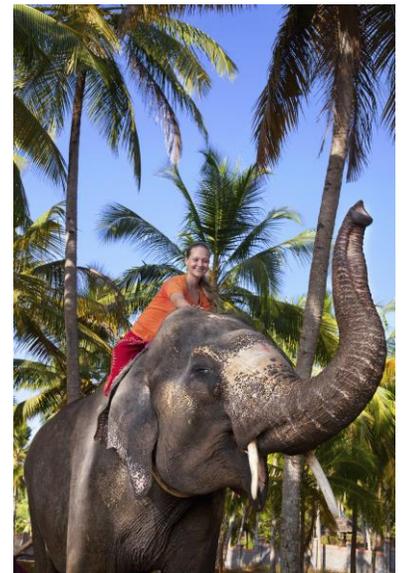
We continue onward to **Doi Tung Mountain**, the beautiful **Mae Fah Luang Botanical Gardens**, and the **Royal Villa**. A walking tour of the interior is possible if members of the Royal Family are not in residence. The gardens remind visitors of the Butchart Gardens in Victoria, BC. Chiang Rai has its own very popular night market just a block away from our hotel.



Jan. 29 Chiang Rai – Chiang Mai (B, L) We head northward through the increasingly hilly terrain. The surrounding mountains are actually the foothills of the **Himalayas**. Others drive to Chiang Mai. Not us! We board **long-tail boats** for an exciting 2-½ hour ride up the scenic **Kok River** en route to **Chiang Mai**, stopping at a **remote hill tribe village** along the way. We continue by motor coach into the lush Chiang Dao Valley for lunch at a resort hidden and tucked away in the middle of the jungle. After lunch we continue on through the jungle and mountains to Chiang Mai.

Once the capital of the ancient **Lanna Kingdom**, the city of **Chiang Mai** is more than 700 years old and you can see it everywhere with massive walls surrounding the city, five gates, and a moat. You will find the northern province distinctively different from Bangkok and central plains with unique cuisine, art and architecture, and a charming and friendly “laid back” lifestyle. Outside the city, rugged mountains covered with dense forests and jungle provide ample habitat for elephants, wild orchids, and **remote hill tribe villages**. Upon arrival in **Chiang Mai** we transfer to our hotel located near to the famous **Chiang Mai Night Bazaar**.

Jan. 30 Wat Doi Suthep (B, L) Today we explore the nearby national parks and forests and make our way to **Wat Doi Suthep**, a spectacular temple perched on the side of a mountain overlooking Chiang Mai and the **Ping River Valley**. (Wat Doi Suthep is the famous “gold temple.”) Our guide will relate the fascinating tale of how the temple site was selected and the superhuman effort that was involved in building the road leading up to it. You can climb the impressive 300-step *naga* staircase or use the funicular tram. This is a lively, working temple and a resident monk will give you a personal blessing if you like, then ring the temple bells three times for good luck. (**Note from Larry:** “Doi Suthep is my favorite *wat* [temple] in all of Thailand. It is a site not to be missed in your travels. Words cannot describe it!”) We descend from the mountain, through the valleys, and back into Chiang Mai for a tour including major landmarks, temples, and shopping within the old city walls.



Chiang Mai is the **handicraft** capital of the Kingdom. This afternoon we visit **Sankampaeng Road**, home of traditional handicraft workshops and factories. Silk, cotton, hard-carved wood in all shapes and size, lacquer ware, silversmiths, handmade paper and umbrellas to name just a few of the shopping opportunities. For lunch we visit a famous local restaurant for their Thai buffet featuring a delicious northern Thai specialty – *khao soy* – a savory chicken curry noodle soup, plus a wide variety of Thai and Western delicacies. The balance of the day is at leisure with plenty of shopping time. You will find “anything and everything” from inexpensive Thai souvenirs, silks and food to jewelry and fine examples of traditional Thai workmanship and handicrafts. This will “blow you away!” Our hotel is perfectly located in the center of everything.

Jan. 31 Chiang Dao (B, L) Following breakfast we venture into the mountains surrounding Chiang Mai. Our first stop is an **Elephant Camp** for an “up close and personal” demonstration of the strength, agility, and intelligence of these massive pachyderms, followed by an unforgettable **elephant safari** through the forest and along the river. We continue to venture deeper into the **Chiang Dao Valley**...literally in the middle of nowhere! We next visit the famous orchid and butterfly plantation. We return to Chiang Mai late afternoon with plenty of time for shopping.

Feb. 01 Chiang Mai – USA (B) After breakfast we transfer to the Phuket airport for our overseas flight back home. Crossing the International Date Line, we “gain” a day and arrive home this same day. (And if Feb. 01 is your birthday, you get to celebrate it twice!)

THAILAND & PHUKET

February 1-4, 2020

Jan. 22-Feb. 01: Thailand tour as outlined.

Feb. 01 Chiang Mai – Phuket (B) Late morning flight from Chiang Mai to the island of Phuket. We transfer from the airport to our resort. Phuket, the “Pearl of the South,” is widely known as the most beautiful of all the Thai islands. Phuket has a culture all of its own with a rich mixture of Thai and other Southeast Asia ethnicities. The island features the Andaman Sea and offers a varied terrain including powdery white sand beaches, limestone cliffs, forests, and tropical vegetation including microclimates throughout the island. Phuket is a bit of the Garden of Eden, South Pacific dreams, and Jurassic Park (without the dinosaurs). It really is a paradise never to be forgotten.

Feb. 02 Phuket (B) Today is a free day to enjoy the white sand beaches, blue ocean waters, gentle trade winds, rainforests, jungle, shopping, and wonderful dining. The food...oh my gosh, the food! You may want to just relax or take a short drive to lively Patong City with its many restaurants, shopping areas, and nightlife.

Feb. 03 Phang Nga Bay (B, D) Early this afternoon we head north to the **Phang Nga Bay**. A distinctive feature of Phang Nga Bay is the sheer limestone cliffs that jut vertically out of the emerald green water. James Bond Island and Koh Panniyi are just two of the more famous spots in this bay. A leisurely afternoon cruise takes us through the dramatic limestone islands. The interior of these islands is hollow and this is where the fun begins. Our large cruising boat will stop at several islands. In pairs we will board a kayak paddled by a local guide that will take us through a short exterior tunnel to the interior of the island which is hollow and open to the sky. Tropical birds and monkeys inhabit many of these islands. (Larry’s note, “The Phang Nga Bay sea kayak is absolutely, positively my favorite excursion in all of Thailand. The guide does the paddling, you just sit back and take in the experience. It is sensory overload.”) This excursion is perfect for people of all ages. We return to Phuket in our large boat at sunset and a light dinner served onboard. This is an experience not to be missed and will be talked about forever! (Actual tour times will be set according to the tides.)

Feb. 04 Phuket – USA (B) We transfer to the Phuket airport for our afternoon overseas flight back home. Crossing the International Date Line, we “gain” a day and arrive home this same day. (If Feb. 04 is your birthday, you get to celebrate twice!)

THAILAND & Legends of Siam

- \$1959 per person/double occupancy
- \$459 additional for single occupancy

PHUKET

- \$499 per person/double occupancy
- \$285 additional for single occupancy

What is Included?

- First Class hotel accommodations/best available
- Thailand airfare: Bangkok-Chiang Rai & Chiang Mai-Phuket. If you do not include the Phuket extension, you will fly back to the USA from Chiang Mai
- Comprehensive sightseeing as per itinerary
- Personally hosted by Larry Gelwix, the “Getaway Guru”
- Services of expert local guides
- Admissions & entrance fees as per itinerary
- Meals as listed: B: Breakfast, L: Lunch, D: Dinner
- Bottled water is provided with included lunches and dinners
- Airport & hotel luggage portage
- All group transfers and ground transportation as per itinerary
- All current & applicable Thailand hotel taxes and fees



COLUMBUS TRAVEL 800-373-3328

Larry Gelwix
“The Getaway Guru®”
Your personal host & tour guide

What is not included?

- International airfare from your home city.
- Anything not specifically listed as included
- Tips & gratuities to local tour guides & bus drivers
- Note: Your Columbus Travel professional agent will assist you with your discount international airfare and connecting flights

International Airfare from Los Angeles: (includes all taxes & fees)

- Airfare will be available March 2019
- Schedule will be from Los Angeles: Los Angeles – Bangkok // Phuket – Los Angeles

Deposit, Payment, & Cancellation Information:

- Thailand deposit: \$400 person
- Phuket: \$100 per person
- Balance due: September 5, 2019
- Land portion cancellation: All cancellations must be received in writing by Columbus Travel. For cancellations received on or before Sept. 5, 2019, there is no cancellation penalty/fee. For cancellations received Sept. 6, 2019 to December 1, 2019, a cancellation penalty/fee of \$500 per person plus any additional fees imposed by airlines, hotels, and tour companies. For cancellations received on or after December 1, 2019 or a no-show, there is no refund.
- Air cancellation: in most cases your airfare is non-refundable after purchase.
- Travel protection is highly recommended. Consult your Columbus Travel agent for details.

TRAVEL PROTECTION: Columbus Travel recommends that you purchase a Travelex travel protection plan to help protect you and your trip investment. Consider travel protection for:

- Trip Cancellation
- Trip Interruption
- Emergency Medical Expenses
- Emergency Evacuation/Repatriation of Remains
- Trip Delay
- Baggage & Personal Effects
- Baggage Delay and more

For a summary of plan details on benefits, coverages, limitations and exclusions, please refer to the applicable Description of Coverage. Travel Insurance is underwritten by Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance Company, Omaha NE; NAIC #222276

For a summary of plan details on benefits, coverage, limitations and exclusions, please refer to the applicable Description of Coverage. Travel Insurance is underwritten by Transamerica Casualty Insurance Company, Columbus, Ohio; NAIC #10952. 1308333

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Travel Services, Inc., d.b.a. Columbus Travel, ("Agent") gives notice that all services, reservations and arrangements for transportation, or cruise, or conveyance, or hotel or lodging, or meals or sightseeing services or any other activities made by Agent, are made by Agent as dual agent for the traveler, (Passenger) and for the air carriers, hotels, sightseeing companies, transportation companies, cruise lines and other companies (Suppliers) providing services for this program. As such, Agent shall not be liable for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reasons of defect in any vehicle or mode of transportation, through the acts, defaults, financial difficulty or bankruptcy or omissions of the Supplier or person engaged in carrying out the arrangements of the trip or otherwise in connection therewith. Agent is not liable for delays and/or cancellations of services and resultant expenses or loss caused by acts of God, sickness, quarantine, weather, strikes, war, terrorism, social or labor unrest, local laws, mechanical or construction difficulties, abnormal conditions or other situations, actions, omissions or conditions outside Agent's control. Agent is not liable for loss of, or damage to baggage or personal possessions. Agent and Supplier reserve the right to alter or cancel the itinerary or substitute services as conditions require or for the safety of Passenger.

As a matter of privacy, we do not disclose addresses or other personal information about other travelers in the group. We do all in our power to assure seats for passengers traveling together on aircraft are assigned together, but because airline seating assignments for groups are controlled by the air carrier, we cannot guarantee specific seat assignments. Passengers must be in good health and able to care for their own needs. Please contact us regarding any health concerns you may have or if you need to bring any specialized medical equipment such as wheelchairs, oxygen tanks, etc. so that we can determine if transportation services, hotels, and other suppliers can accommodate your equipment. If it is determined that your equipment can be accommodated, you or your traveling companion are fully responsible for it and must be able to lift, fold, push, and handle the equipment. Tour directors on the trip cannot be of assistance with such needs. We reserve the right to remove passengers from the group at their own expense if the care of or actions of a passenger become detrimental to the functioning of the tour. Payment of deposit(s) as outlined in this agreement shall be deemed consent to be bound by the terms and conditions of this agreement.



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