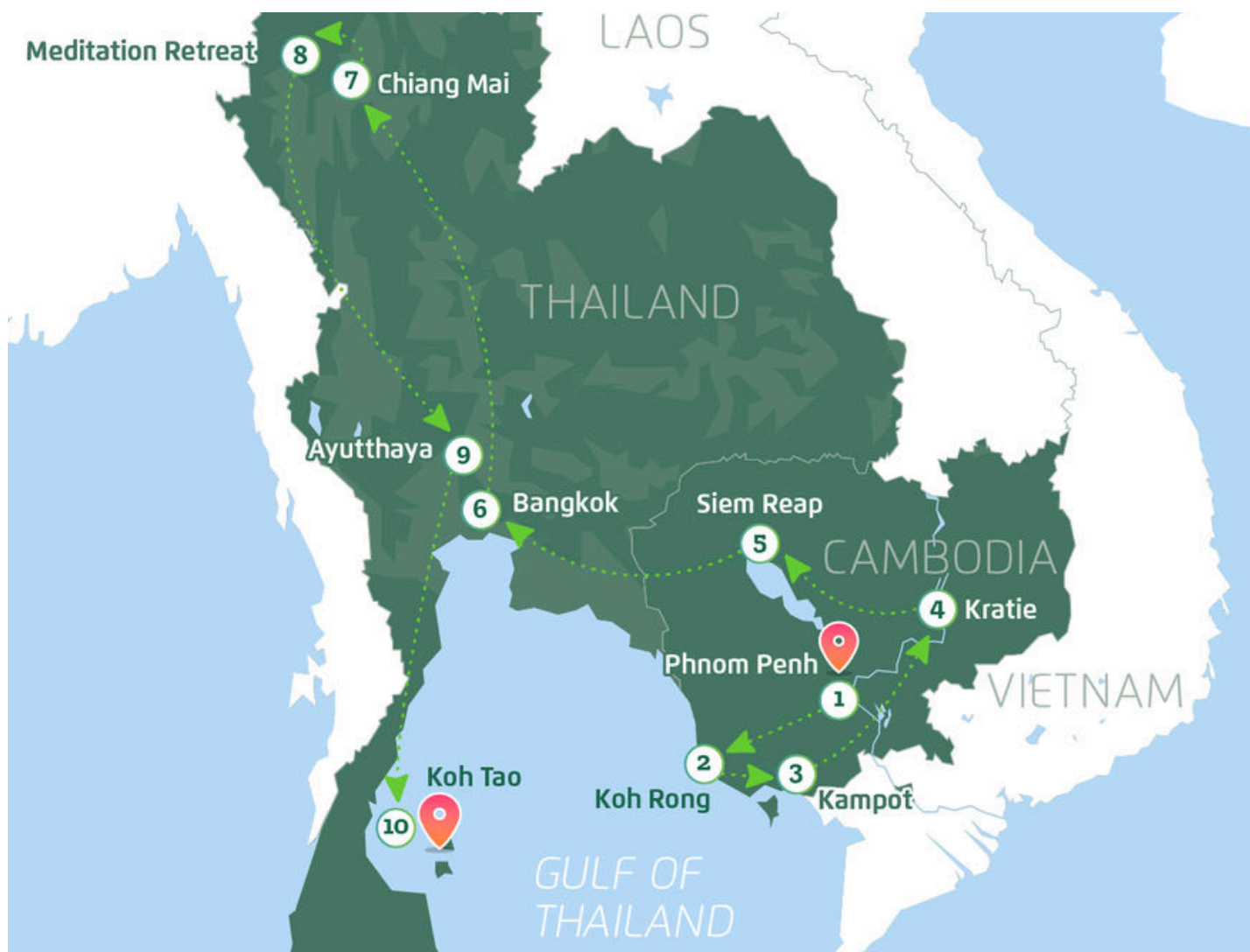




# GAP ADVENTURE: CAMBODIA & THAILAND (6 WEEKS)

ProjectsAbroad





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Embark on an extraordinary six-week journey through the heart of Southeast Asia. This immersive journey invites you to explore the delicate balance between ancient traditions and rapid modernisation, while discovering the vibrancy of two distinct cultures that have endured centuries of transformation.

Immerse yourself in local communities, contributing to conservation efforts while learning about sustainable practices. Discover the region's rich history, challenge yourself with adventurous activities, and embrace authentic cultural experiences.

This isn't a normal trip; it's a profound exploration of cultural resilience, environmental stewardship, and personal growth. You'll return home not only with unforgettable memories but also with a deeper understanding of Southeast Asian history, a nuanced appreciation for the delicate balance between tradition and progress, and the confidence to navigate an increasingly interconnected world. Prepare to unleash your inner explorer, expand your comfort zone, and complete a life-changing adventure!

# Week 1

## CAMBODIAN HERITAGE

- Support wildlife protection charities and prepare food for bears.
- Explore the tombs of Khmer Kings
- Learn about the Khmer Rouge Genocide
- Witness the impact of fast fashion

### DAYS 1-3 | PHNOM PENH

Join a cultural orientation of Cambodia's capital city where you'll get to know your fellow travellers and practice Khmer. Understand the recent history of Cambodia through tours of the Royal Palace, Killing Fields, and S-21 Genocide Museum.

Discover Cambodian traditions at a silk farm. Learn traditional weaving techniques, talk to human rights activists about sweatshop conditions, and visit ethical producers. Enjoy Cambodian cuisine with a cooking class, watching traditional Khmer Boxing matches in the evening and receive a water blessing from monks. You'll spend an evening meditating at a pagoda, too!

### DAY 4 | WILDLIFE RESCUE CENTER

Witness conservation efforts first-hand. See efforts to rescue and rehabilitate trafficked and endangered animals. This includes breeding programmes for Siamese crocodiles, Malayan sun bears, moon bears, and Asiatic black bears. You'll help to prepare food and hide enrichment treats for the bears in their large enclosures.

### DAY 5 | OUDONG

Visit a large working monastery. See how monks and nuns live on a typical day - visit their school, homes, and more.

Take steps up Odong Mountain to visit shrines and tombs of past Khmer Kings. This was the capital city until French colonisation. In the evening you'll enjoy a Korean BBQ and karaoke - a favourite pastime among Cambodians.





## Week 2

### COASTS AND ISLANDS

- Snorkel and relax on a tropical island
- Discover traditional farming practices
- Practice traditional dance and Khmer boxing

#### DAYS 6-8 | KOH RONG

Take a bus to the coastal city of Sihanoukville and then a speed boat to the remote tropical island of Koh Rong. The small island has dense jungle and quiet beaches.

Relax on white sand beaches and spend a day snorkelling around the island. At night you have a chance to see bioluminescent plankton sparkling in the warm water. You'll have a few days to rest and relax in this paradise.

#### DAYS 9-12 | KAMPOT & KEP

Take a bus to the sleepy riverside town of Kampot. Learn about traditional farming techniques at a Kampot pepper farm. Then, cycle to the coast to see salt fields and the tiring process to produce salt. Relax on a sunset river cruise to see fireflies at night.

Visit Kep seafood market and eat by the beach. See the various fishing practices in the area.

Take a day to relax or explore independently from Kampot.

#### DAY 13 | PHNOM PENH

Today focuses on learning traditional Khmer activities. Spend the morning practicing the basics of Khmer boxing. Later in the day, you'll learn traditional dance at the Royal Dance School where classes are often led by Cambodian princes and princesses.

## Week 3

### RIVER RAPIDS TO TEMPLE RUINS

- Kayak with Irrawaddy dolphins
- Sunrise at the world famous Angkor Wat
- Visit a floating village on the Tonle Sap Lake
- Watch traditional dance and PHARE Circus

#### DAYS 14-16 | KRATIE

Travel north to the remote town of Kratie. Cycle through farming villages and visit pagodas and temples.

Take a day trip kayaking along the Mekong River. You'll bounce over rapids, relax on river islands, and spot the Irrawaddy dolphins. Learn about this critically endangered species and efforts to try and prevent their extinction.

#### DAY 17-22 | SIEM REAP AND ANGKOR TEMPLES

Visit floating villages on the Tonle Sap Lake. Learn how communities live alongside nature, practice sustainable fishing, and how climate change is impacting lives as water levels become more unpredictable. In the evening, explore the PHARE social enterprise championing Cambodian art and culture among disadvantaged communities. Watch a performance by their award winning circus troop.

Spend two days exploring the temples of Angkor. Take a guided tour of Angkor Wat, Bayon Temple, and Ta Prohm. Learn about the Khmer Empire and explore the ruins of what was once the largest pre-industrial city on Earth. Angkor was at its peak between the 11th and 13th centuries. The second day will visit other vast temples and ruins in the jungle, but we will allow you to choose your own path through the ruins.

Visit the APOPO centre to see trained rats searching for landmines. Understand the legacy of war in the region. You'll also visit a cultural village to see traditional homes, and watch ancient apsara dance performances in the evening.



# Week 4

## JUNGLE SURVIVAL AND CITY LIGHTS

- Muay Thai boxing classes
- Hike and camp overnight in the jungle
- Learn jungle survival and navigation skills

### DAYS 23-24 | KULEN MOUNTAINS

Your final days in Cambodia will be spent hiking deep in the jungle. Explore hidden ruins far from tourist trails, meet rural villagers and monks, swim at waterfalls, and learn bush craft skills from professional trek leaders. The group will set up a camp, sleep in bivouac hammocks in the jungle, and learn how to live in such a wild environment.

### DAYS 25-28 | BANGKOK

Journey across the border by bus to enter Thailand and the bustling megacity of Bangkok!

Begin your journey by delving into the rich tapestry of Thai history and culture as you take a guided tour of the majestic Grand Palace and serene Wat Pho. Wander through vibrant markets, absorbing the sights, sounds, and aromas that make Bangkok a sensory feast. Then improve your culinary skills with a Thai cooking class.

Transform your experience from spectator to participant as you spend two mornings learning the ancient art of Muay Thai. These invigorating classes will not only introduce you to Thailand's national sport but also offer insights into the country's warrior spirit and physical discipline. With free time built into your schedule, you'll have the opportunity to further explore the city's hidden gems, famous nightlife, or reflect on your newfound knowledge.

As your Bangkok adventure ends, you'll board a sleeper train to travel north overnight to the Thai Highlands.

# Week 5

## ANCIENT WISDOM AND MODERN ADVENTURE

- Reflect with monks at a 3-day meditation retreat
- Wash and feed elephants
- Learn to cook Thai food

### DAYS 29-30 | CHIANG MAI

Discover ancient crafts and traditions in this mountainous and remote city. Your exploration begins with a captivating city tour — visiting the ornate Wat Phra Singh and the imposing Wat Chedi Luang.

Immerse yourself in Thai culinary arts with a farm visit and cooking class, then explore busy night markets.

You'll also get a full day to explore independently. Relax in cafes, explore temples, or explore the surrounding region.

### DAY 31 | ELEPHANT SANCTUARY

Deepen your connection with nature at an ethical elephant sanctuary. Gain insights into the challenges these majestic creatures face in Southeast Asia and watch them play and socialise from observation decks. You'll actively support dedicated conservationists by feeding and washing the elephants, too!

### DAYS 32-34 | MEDITATION RETREAT

The journey takes a contemplative turn as you retreat to a secluded forest monastery. Join workshops, talks, and lessons led by Buddhist monks, practicing meditation by waterfalls, rivers, and during forest walks. This spiritual break offers a profound opportunity for self-reflection and inner peace. Alternatively, you can easily reach the nearby village and explore the surrounding forest trails if you prefer.



# Week 6

## KOH TAO PARADISE CONSERVATION

- Explore UNESCO World Heritage ruins of Ayutthaya
- Support marine conservation work
- Snorkel and relax on a tropical island

### DAYS 35-36 | AYUTTHAYA

Take another night train south and explore the grand ruins of Ayutthaya. Ayutthaya replaced Sukhotai (originally part of the Khmer Empire) as the Siamese capital in 1351 and became one of the largest urban areas in the world during the 14th to 18th centuries. It took over the regional power vacuum left after the fall of Angkor in Cambodia and the end of the Khmer Empire. You'll learn about the conflicts between both empires and be able to compare the similarities and differences between Ayutthaya and Angkor.

### DAYS 37-42 | KOH TAO

Transition from the historical marvels of Ayutthaya to the natural wonders of Koh Tao, a paradise island in the Gulf of Thailand. Travel by bus and ferry to the remote island.

Your adventure takes on an environmental focus as you engage in vital marine conservation efforts. Support microplastic surveys, beach clean-ups, and coral watch programmes, contributing directly to the preservation of the island's delicate ecosystem. Snorkel in crystal-clear waters to see vibrant coral reefs and a wide range of marine life including sea turtles, friendly reef sharks, and majestic whale sharks.

Balance your conservation work with moments of relaxation and reflection, including a rejuvenating yoga class. Your final two days will be unscheduled so you can explore and relax on the island as you want. You'll be taken by ferry to Koh Samui on the final day for your departure.

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## WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- All activities and tours highlighted in the schedule
- Three meals per day and drinking water
- Accommodation - a mix of hostels, hotels, camping, and lodges
- All transport from Phnom Penh to Koh Samui - a mix of public and private coaches, trains, and boat rides
- Airport pickup and drop-off
- A minimum of two Programme Leaders with the group throughout the journey
- Visa support and advice

## PROGRAMME DESIGN

Five Gap Components provide the focus for the development of this programme. They ensure the perfect blend of adrenaline, exploration, and meaningful travel:

- Adventure
- Community
- Exploration
- People & Planet
- Transformation

We pride ourselves on our ability to deliver authentic, unforgettable experiences — with safety, support and the freedom to explore.

## HOW DO I BOOK?

Contact us to discuss dates and secure your place, or ask any questions: [info@projects-abroad.org](mailto:info@projects-abroad.org)

