Thai Unika — Unique experiences

ITINERARY

Gastronomy in Thailand & Indochina 19D18N

DAY	ITINERARY IN BRIEF
Day 1	Day 1: Bangkok arrival
Day 2	Day 2: Bangkok city tour - Join-in Street food tour by Tuk Tuk (B/D)
Day 3	Day 3: Bangkok – Ayutthaya- Bangkok (B)
Day 4	Day 4: Bangkok – Flight to Chiang Mai city tour- Doi Suthep (B)
Day 5	Day 5: Chiang Mai – Elephant Jungle Sanctuary (B, L) Join-in
Day 6	Day 6: Chiang Mai – Cooking Class (Join-in) (B, L)
Day 7	Day 7: Chiang Mai- Flight to Luang Prabang via Bangkok (B) No guide in Chiang Mai
Day 8	Day 8: Luang Prabang city tour (B)
Day 9	Day 9: Luang Prabang - Pak Ou Caves - Kuang Si Waterfalls (B)
Day 10	Day 10: Luang Prabang- Flight to Hanoi (B)

DAY	ITINERARY IN BRIEF
Day 11	Day 11: Hanoi city tour (B)
Day 12	Day 12: Hanoi – Ha Long Bay (B/L/D) Only English speaking guide on boat
Day 13	Day 13: Ha Long Bay – Flight to Hue (B, L) Only English speaking guide on boat
Day 14	Day 14: Hue city tour - Hoian (B)
Day 15	Day 15: Join-in Cooking class - Hoian City tour (B/L)
Day 16	Day 16: Hoian – Da Nang – Flight to Saigon City tour (B) No guide in Hoian
Day 17	Day 17: Ho Chi Minh - Cai Be - An Binh Island - Vinh Long - Can Tho (B, L)
Day 18	Day 18: Can Tho – Cai Rang Floating Market – Saigon (B)
Day 19	Day 19: Saigon Depart (B) No guide

ITINERARY DETAIL

Day 1 — Day 1: Bangkok arrival

Warmly welcome you on arrival at Bangkok Suvarnabhumi International Airport. We will pick you up with a comfortable vehicle to the center of Bangkok to check-in your hotel, then take your time to have a rest after a long flight.

Accommodation : At the hotel in Bangkok

Meals: None

Day 2 — Day 2: Bangkok city tour - Join-in Street food tour by Tuk Tuk (B/D)

Today, we will take the whole day to explore Bangkok – the city of golden temples.

The first destination is the **Grand Palace.** *This huge architecture complex is over 2 sq. kilometers, including 3 main sites: Royal Palace, Royal Office and pagodas (Wat) built in the 1770s. Nowadays, the Grand Palace is no longer home of Thailand Royal, most of the national significant events take place there.* Wat Phra Kaew *is the most out-standing architecture in the complex, built in 1785 when King Rama I moved the capital to Bangkok. The pagoda is famous not only for its beauty of unique Thailand Buddhism architecture but also for the sacred jade Buddha statue.*

Nearby the Grand Palace is Wat Pho - *the oldest and biggest pagoda in Bangkok with more than 1000 Buddha statues and the huge one sit-back Buddha in gold. This pagoda is also famous for being a birthplace of traditional Thai massage, since there is a traditional medicine school established in 1982, educating the arts of Thai massage.*

After having lunch, We will **board a boat** to pay a visit along the **Chao Phraya River**, watching the life of local people close by. On route, we stop at **Wat Arun,** *known as the most beautiful pagoda in Bangkok not only for its location on the Chao Phraya's river bank but also for the different architecture from other pagodas. The pagoda was decorated with glass pieces and Chinese ceramic, in a complicated style.*

Return to the hotel and you are free to explore Bangkok by night.

At 18:00PM we start a night food tour. Bangkok is considered as the heaven of **street food** that makes you want to be immersed into its variety. **The street food tour by tuktuk** offers you a fun but safe experience to taste. Lead by an English speaking guide, we come to the best local vendors to try pork satay, ginger soup and sesame dumplings. Of course the guide will explain and introduce you to them. En route, we observe the view of the city by night and also have an opportunity to visit some attractions such as **Phra Sumen Fort, Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, and Chinatown** – our finish point then you transfer back to the hotel.

Accommodation : At the hotel in Bangkok

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 3 — Day 3: Bangkok – Ayutthaya- Bangkok (B)

Having breakfast at 8h30, we will transfer to pay a visit in some sites of **Ayutthaya Historical Park,** situated in the old city of Ayutthaya. The city was constructed by Ramathibodi I in 1350 and was the capital of Thailand until it was destroyed by Burmese – Myanmar army in 1767. Being a ruin with many temples which characterize this handicraft type of architecture built with red bricks, the park was recognized as World's Heritage Site by UNESCO.

- **Wat Phu Khao Thong** is a massive pagoda towering in the middle of paddy fields and can be seen from afar. Built by King Ramesuan in 1395, the pagoda is unique with the combination of 2 architectural styles: Thai – style and Mon – style. There is a high golden plated chedi on the top, which makes the pagoda outstanding.

- **Wat Phra Sri Sanphet** was the most important temple of Ayutthaya and situated within the Ayutthaya Grand Palace grounds. It served as a model for the Temple of the Emerald Buddha in Bangkok. The highlight of Wat Phra Sri Sanphet is 3 towers standing high together in Ceylonese style, has the same architecture with Wat Phra Kaew in Bangkok.

- **Vihara Phra Mongkhon Bophit** is the pagoda in which the bronze Buddha statue in the attitude of subduing Mara is situated. This is one of the biggest Buddha statue in Thailand. It was considered to be built during the Ayuttaya period of King Srongta, who transferred the location from the east side to the west and has been the location since then. After that he ordered to build a dome on top.

- **Wat Lokaya Sutha** is considered as the sacred place for pilgrims since it's famous for the reclining Buddha statue, which is the statue of the Blessed Buddha intact compared to other monuments in the entire Ayutthaya ruins. It is also the most important relics in most of those in Wat Lokaya Sutha. Thai people believe that if they paste the golden leaf onto Buddha statues, they will be protected by Buddha.

Heading back to Bangkok. En route, we visit the **Royal Summer Palace in Bang Pa-in district.**

Situated about 60 km northern away from Bangkok, this palace is called Royal Summer Palace since it is a favorite resort of royal. The first palace had been built in mid-early of the 17th century, then was the ruins and be forgotten when Burman occupied Ayutthaya. It was not until the rule of King Rama IV – did the palace rebuild. King Rama IV was the first Siamese king came to Europe and was sharply impressed by the architecture there. Therefore, the whole architecture of the palace is in the way of 19th century European style.

Return to Bangkok and the rest time of day is on your own.

Accommodation : At the hotel in Bangkok

Meals: Breakfast

Day 4 — Day 4: Bangkok – Flight to Chiang Mai city tour- Doi Suthep (B)

In the early morning, our English Speaking Guide and driver will take you to the airport for the flight to Chiang Mai. Upon arrival in Chiang Mai, you will be welcomed at the airport and transferred to your hotel to take a rest before start to visit city in the afternoon.

We are beginning today with a walking tour to the old town. You will see the most beautiful temples of Chiang Mai including of Wat Phra Singh temple, Wat Phan Tao, Wat Chedi Luang

Wat Phra Singh is one of the most sacred temples in Chiang Mai with Lanna style architecture. And it is well-known for the name ”The temple of the Lion Buddha”.

We then continue to **Wat Phrathat Doi Suthep** on the **Doi Suthep hill**. The mountain’s temple is one of the most historically and spiritually significant places in Thailand. We drive up the scenic mountainous terrains and pass by lush landscapes on your way to the base of the complex. We then climb up for more than 300 staircase. Here get your chance to admire the picturesque panorama views of Chiang Mai City.

Overnight at hotel in Chiang Mai.

Accommodation: At the hotel in Chiang Mai

Meals: Breakfast

Day 5 — Day 5: Chiang Mai – Elephant Jungle Sanctuary (B, L) Join-in

08:00-08:30 AM Pick up from your hotel or accommodation

08:30 Drive approximately 1.5 hours South of Chiang Mai through rolling hills, forest, and local farming areas.

10:30 Arrive at the Sanctuary. Meet your guide and walk for 10-15 minutes through the Jungle to the Elephant Jungle Sanctuary. Change into traditional Karen clothing. Enjoy an introductory lesson about elephant anatomy, history, and behavior.

11:00 Meet the elephants. Feed, interact, and play with the elephants in a natural environment as you learn about their behavior and history. Take photos with the elephants.

12:00 Enjoy a lunch of traditional Thai food and fresh fruit.

13:00 Learn how to make herbal medicine balls, feed the Elephants and then walk with the elephants to the river. Bathe and brush the elephants.

14:00 Join the elephants for a therapeutic mud spa. Swim in the river and take photos with the elephants.

15:00 Change clothes and say good bye to the elephants

15:30 Leave the Elephant Jungle Sanctuary and drive approximately 1.5 hours to Chiang Mai.

17:00-17:30 Drop off at your hotel or accommodation.

Accommodation : At the hotel in Chiang Mai

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 6 — Day 6: Chiang Mai – Cooking Class (Join-in) (B, L)

Visit the main **local Thai market** out of the city center

Explaining and learning about herbs and ingredients at **our organic farm**

Cooking jasmine **rice**

Pound and make a **curry paste** from scratch.

You will make your own curry paste, each person will have their own individual mortar.

You can decide how spicy or non-spicy you would like to make your own curry paste

Choose and make one curry paste, one curry, one soup, stir-fry in wok, noodle dish and sweet dessert

You will learn to make every dish completely by yourself from start to finish and will be able to season to your own taste!

Accommodation: At the hotel in Chiang Mai

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 7 — Day 7: Chiang Mai- Flight to Luang Prabang via Bangkok (B) No guide in Chiang Mai

Morning after breakfast transfer to the airport for your flight to the airport for your flight to Luang Prabang. Upon arrival pick up and transfer you to your hotel for your overnight

Accommodation: At the hotel in Bangkok

Meals: Breakfast

Day 8 — Day 8: Luang Prabang city tour (B)

An optional early start gives you the fantastic opportunity to participate in the daily morning alms giving ritual to saffron clad monks. This tradition is unique to Laos, being the only Buddhist nation still preserving this procession. Stop and visit fresh local markets and back to hotel for breakfast.

This morning, depart to visit **Wat Visoun**, the site of impressive Thad Makmo stupa. The rounded dome is stylistically more Sinhalese than Lao The Continue to visit **Wat Aham**. Then, visit to the most photographed temple, **Wat Xiengthong**. Located at the end of peninsular closed to the confluence of Mekong and Khan River.

This afternoon, continue to former **Royal Palace**, now the National Museum. Visit **Wat Mai**, a temple renowned for its golden bas-relief. During Pimai, the Lao New Year, the Prabang normally housed in the Royal Palace Museum is brought and put on public display in this temple. Meals on your own. Overnight in hotel

Accommodation: At the hotel in Luang Prabang

Meals: Breakfast

Day 9 — Day 9: Luang Prabang - Pak Ou Caves - Kuang Si Waterfalls (B)

This morning, transfer to the pier where you board a traditional long trail boat, for a relaxing cruise upstream on the mighty **Mekong River**. Enjoy stunning mountain scenery and witness the simple rural lifestyles. You will reach **Pak Ou** caves at the confluence of the Mekong and Nam Ou Rivers. In these 2 caves are displayed hundreds of sacred centuries-old Buddha images which are the object of pilgrimages during the Lao New Year festivities around mid-April. Cruise back Luang Prabang. Stop and visit **Ban Xangkhong**, a weaving village, where you can jump into wooden looms with local expert for practical and experience.

This afternoon, driving through green rice paddies and farms. On your arrival at the **Kuang Si waterfall**, enjoy your short walking on trails of falls to visit the bear rescued centre. Enjoy spectacular views and surrounding of orchids inside the park and falls cascade over many calcified tiers and down several hundred feet into a series of cool, turquoise pools. Return to Luang Prabang.

Meals on your own. Overnight in hotel.
Accommodation: At the hotel in Luang Prabang
Meals: Breakfast

Day 10 — Day 10: Luang Prabang- Flight to Hanoi (B)

You have free time until we arrive to pick up and transfer you to the airport for your flight to Hanoi. Upon arrival pick up and transfer you to your hotel for your overnight

Accommodation: At the hotel in Hanoi

Meals: Breakfast

Day 11 — Day 11: Hanoi city tour (B)

Today, we enjoy a full day city tour starting with the **Ho Chi Minh Complex.** This famous site contains **the mausoleum** of the nation's founder Ho Chi Minh (Close on Monday, Friday & November), **the Presidential Palace**and the **Ho Chi Minh's house on stilts**. Close to this complex is the **One Pillar Pagoda**, whose origins date back to the foundation of the city. We follow this with the **Temple of Literature**, which is well known as the first university of Vietnam. Have lunch at a local restaurant. In the afternoon, visit the impressive **Ethnology Museum**, dedicated to Vietnam's 54 ethnic groups, several of which we will see on our forthcoming trekking**.** The evening takes us to the old theater for a **1-hour water puppet show**, a unique Vietnam traditional art. **Overnight at the hotel in Hanoi**

Accommodation : At the hotel in Hanoi

Meals: Breakfast

Day 12 — Day 12: Hanoi – Ha Long Bay (B/L/D) Only English speaking guide on boat

Breakfast at the hotel and then start a 3-hour drive through the **Red River Delta** to **Ha Long City.** Comfort stop en route for photos and coffee before arriving to Ha Long City. We then transfer to a refurbished **wooden sailing junk** for a cruise through the limestone cliffs and emerald waters of Ha Long Bay to enjoy a fantastic view of the picturesque scenery blending with the sky and some 3,000 limestone this World Heritage Site. While being on board, we will be served a sumptuous fresh, local seafood lunch followed by swimming and exploring some of the limestone caves in this area. Try the feeling of witnessing the sunset on a boat is really great. Dinner on board. The captain then will anchor for the night nearby a remote island. In the evening, there is the option for night fishing or just sit out on the deck and relax under the stars. **Overnight on Junk.**

Accommodation : On Ha Long Bay Boat

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 13 — Day 13: Ha Long Bay – Flight to Hue (B, L) Only English speaking guide on boat

Waking up surrounded by the tranquil beauty of the bay, we have time for an early morning dip with joys and emotions for watching sunrise on sea followed by breakfast. The cruise continues to move around the bay for us to discover more secluded areas, we then take kayaking and swimming in the stunning bay. The junk will be near us at all times serving as a backup vessel for those that require it. At around midday we will return to the main harbor before transferring to our awaiting vehicle for a 3-hour journey to Hanoi and then to the airport for your flight to Hue. Upon arrival pick up and transfer you to your hotel for check-in

Accommodation : At the hotel in Hue

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 14 — Day 14: Hue city tour - Hoian (B)

In the morning, we have the breakfast at your hotel, we start our city tour to visit the Citadel and Imperial Purple city, imposing Thien Mu pagoda and board the trip from here for a cruise on Perfume River, stop to visit the Hon chen temple. We then disembark the board for a visit to Tuduc royal tomb.
Afternoon before leaving Hue, we continue visiting Dong Ba Market to enjoy the specialty of Hue city. Transfer to Hoian, check in the hotel. Overnight at the hotel in Hoian.

Accommodation: At the hotel in Hoian
Meals: Breakfast

Day 15 — Day 15: Join-in Cooking class - Hoian City tour (B/L)

We start the day (8.15am) with a welcome drink at Hai Scout Café – our meeting point.

- Visit Hoi An's colourful main market, and experience its amazing sights, sounds and aromas. We will have the opportunity to
- interact with the local sellers, to see and taste the wonderful variety of foods on display.
- We board the Red Bridge boat for a leisurely cruise (25 minutes) along the Hoi An River to the Red Bridge Cooking School. This is a chance to view local river life, so make sure your camera is handy.
- On arrival, we explore the cooking school's herb and vegetable garden, before learning about some of Hoi An's and Vietnam's best-known dishes. The cooking lesson runs for about 2 hours – each dish is first demonstrated by the Red Bridge chef's, before we prepare the same dish ourselves.

Included in the class is a brief introduction to Vietnamese food carving (plate decoration).
After the lesson, we sit down and eat exactly what we have cooked.
Recipes (our food contains no MSG):
*Vegetarians (and other dietary requirements) are provided with replacement ingredients.
1. Making fresh Rice paper
2. Fresh Rice Paper Rolls of Shrimp
3. Crispy Hoi An Pancakes with Shrimp, Herbs & a Peanut Sauce
4. Seafood Salad with Tra Que Herbs
5. Mi Quang Chicken Noodles
6. Food Decoration – Tomato Rose & Vietnamese Cucumber Hand Fan
* Lunch includes the above dishes as well as:
BBQ Lemongrass Beef (not included in the demonstration)
• Finish at approximately 12.30pm – transfer back to central Hoi An arriving approximately 1.00pm.

Then we will walk to visit Hoi An town with ancient merchants' houses, a Phuc Kien temple, the 400-year-old Japanese Covered Bridge, and the colorful riverside markets, workshops where artisans make Hoi An's famous lanterns. Guests learn how the lanterns are made then have a chance to create their own lanterns, from designing the frame to gluing the cloth.
Accommodation : At the hotel in Hoian
Meals: Breakfast, lunch

Day 16 — Day 16: Hoian – Da Nang – Flight to Saigon City tour (B) No guide in Hoian

After breakfast you will be transferred to Da Nang airport for your flight to Saigon. Afternoon, we take a half day of city tour to visit all the famous sites of this bustling city. The first destination is the **Reunification Palace**, which was the former residence of the President of South Vietnam until end of April 1975, followed by some French colonial structures including the **Notre Dame Cathedral**. Apart from the religious meaning, the even more special captivating point of this Cathedral is its special neo-Romanesque style of architecture. Next, it is on to **the Old Saigon Post Office**. After visiting the **Jade Emperor Pagoda**, we continue our trip to the bustling **Ben Thanh Market**, which is firstly well-known as the place for real Vietnamese food. There are a number of vendors and food stalls in the market food section that offer guests many freshly delicious dishes. You also can find any goods for daily use as well as a variety of eye-catching local handicrafts, souvenirs here. **Overnight at the hotel in HCM city.**

Accommodation : At the hotel in Saigon

Meals: Breakfast

Day 17 — Day 17: Ho Chi Minh - Cai Be - An Binh Island - Vinh Long - Can Tho (B, L)

After breakfast, our driver and tour guide will pick up at your hotel and then move 2 hours to Cai Be.
The program will start with a quick visit of Cai Be. We can walk around the orchard & enjoy some fruits when listening to the traditional music at local garden.
Then, the rowing boat will take you deeper into the countryside on smaller canals to enjoy the peaceful time.
Back to our boat to go across one of the longest rivers in the world, Mekong River, to come to An Bình Island. Travel on the handmade canal to Ut Trinh home & have optional lunch.

After the lunch, we can walk in the local village to visit the local workshop to see how to make rice paper, coconut candy, pop-rice... Enjoy some sweets with a cup of hot tea.
Optional biking can be made for a leisure! It will be so amazing to bike on village paths to see the local daily life: orchard, school, church, pagoda, traditional houses...

Visit the brick kilns where you can see how the local people create beautiful potteries from clay. The cruise will end at VinhLong city! Then you are transfered to Can Tho for overnight.

Accommodation: At the hotel in Can Tho

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 18 — Day 18: Can Tho – Cai Rang Floating Market – Saigon (B)

At the early morning, you are transferred to the boat pier for **taking a boat trip on Mekong River** to visit **Cai Rang floating market.** The best time for visiting this market is from sunrise when you have a chance to witness how it is bustling. The waterway becomes a maze of hundreds of boats packed with mango, bananas, papaya, pineapple, and even smuggled goods like cigarettes. Continue to visit the **coconut lined channels**, "**Monkey" bridge** and **fruit orchard**. And after that transfer back to Saigon for your overnight.

Accommodation: At the hotel in Saigon

Meals: Breakfast

Day 19 — Day 19: Saigon Depart (B) No guide

You have free time until we arrive to pick up and transfer you to the airport for your flight home.

Accommodation: NA

Meals: Breakfast

ACCOMMODATION

DESTINATION	HOTEL	ROOM
Bangkok	True Siam Rangnam Hotel	Superior
Chiang Mai	M Hotel Chiang Mai	Superior
Luang Prabang	Villa Chitdara	Deluxe
Hanoi	Chalcedony Hotel	Deluxe city view
Halong Bay	RENEA CRUISE	Deluxe
Hoi An	Rose Garden	Superior
Sai Gon	Sanouva Hotel Saigon	Premium Deluxe
Can Tho	Anh Dao Mekong 2	Superior
Hue	HUE SERENE PALACE HOTEL	Junior
Bangkok	ARTE HOTEL	Deluxe
Chiang Mai	Bodhi Serene	Deluxe
Luang Prabang	Souphatra Hotel	Deluxe Pool View
Hanoi	Hanoi Pearl Hotel	Deluxe city view
Halong Bay	Mila Cruise	Junior with balcony
Hoi An	Laluna Hoian Riverside Hotel & Spa	Superior
Sai Gon	Eden Star Saigon	Premiun Deluxe
Can Tho	Can Tho Ecolodge	Junior Deluxe
Hue	Eldora Hue	Deluxe city view
Bangkok	Eastin Grand Sathorn Bangkok	Superior
—	—	Lanna Deluxe
Luang Prabang	Satri House	Junior Suite
Hanoi	GM PREMIUM HOTEL HANOI	Executive City view
Halong Bay	Ambassador Cruise	Deluxe
Hue	Indochine Palace	Palace Deluxe
Sai Gon	LA SIESTA PREMIUM SAIGON	Deluxe
Can Tho	Victoria Can Tho	Superior
Hoi An	Allegro Hoi An	Junior Suite

Trip notes

INCLUDED	EXCLUDED
• Accommodation in twin/double room with daily breakfast at the below indicated room types (see hotel category list below) (check-in and check-out around noontime) • 2Days/1Night cruise on board a cruise in Ha Long Bay (double/twin cabin on shared boat). • Services of a driver and private air-conditioned vehicle during all tours and transfers • Experienced English-speaking guide during all tours and transfers • Entrance fees for all visits as mentioned in the itinerary • Meals (B/L/D) (Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner) as indicated in the program • 02 bottles of mineral water per person per day on bus - on days of transfer and sightseeing only	• Early check-in or late check-out • International & Domestic flight tickets • Meals (other than mentioned in the program) • Additional transfer required due to any emergency situation • Visa - as per country requirements • Tips • Travel insurance (we highly recommend that you purchase adequate insurance) • Airport transfer surcharge for guide between 10:00 pm to 6:30 am is 15 USD/way.