



Asian Odyssey Study Tour 2012

DRAFT ITINERARY

July 21 arrival in Siem Reap

Date	Activity	Overnight
DAY 1 Sat, Jul 21 (D)	*NOTE departures from some capitals may be on Friday, July 20 Depart Australian ports for Siem Reap (Cambodia). On arrival, we are transferred to our hotel for a well-earned rest and freshen up before dinner.	Siem Reap
DAY 2 Sun, Jul 22 (B,L,D)	A guided visit to some of the amazing sites of this world heritage area such as Angkor Thom, the Bayon, Elephant Terrace and the Jungle Temple. In the afternoon, visit the World Wonder, Angkor Wat temple and sunset view on the top of Phnom Bakheng hill.	Siem Reap
DAY 3 Mon, Jul 23 (B,L,D)	Morning flight to Phnom Penh. Short tour of city including the palace and the notorious Tuol Sleng re-education camp. Lunch, then transfer to the docks for speedboat ride down the mighty Mekong River. The Mekong is the lifeblood of both Cambodia and Vietnam and the major commercial route between the countries. It is also the best way to see the farms and the countryside. We will visit farms near the river on the way to the Vietnam border, before our arrival in Chau Doc.	Chau Doc
DAY 4 Tues, Jul 24 (B,L,D)	Departure by coach and travel through Vietnam's 'Rice Bowl', the Mekong Delta, and on to My Tho. Visit farms with Vietnamese researchers. We will also visit floating markets, honing our bartering skills, on the way to Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon).	Ho Chi Minh City
DAY 5 Wed, Jul 25 (B,L)	Short city tour in the morning (Presidential Palace, War Remnants Museum etc) and a visit to the famous Binh Thanh markets. Optional afternoon visit to the Cu Chi tunnels with a visit to a rubber plantation and factory near Cu Chi. Free evening.	Ho Chi Minh City
DAY 6 Thurs, Jul 26 (B,L,D)	Fly to Da Nang which is a major grain production area. Da Nang was also a strategic base during the war. The region has magnificent beaches and three World Heritage Listed sites on its doorstep. We visit China Beach and Marble Mountains on the way to the ancient port town of Hoi An – in time to put your order in to the '24 hour' tailor. Hoi An one of the most attractive towns in Vietnam.	Hoi An
DAY 7 Fri, Jul 27 (B,L,D)	Optional visit to My Son, the ruins of the powerful Champa kingdom, one of the most glorious civilisations of Southeast Asia. Then afternoon flight to Hanoi.	Hanoi
DAY 8 Sat, Jul 28 (B,L)	Short city tour of Hanoi, the cultural and political heart of Vietnam. There is plenty of hustle and bustle, but also a history of elegance from the French colonial era and well before. The food is divine, the people are friendly and the shopping is as good as it gets. Free time this afternoon to enjoy riverside puppet shows or other attractions.	Hanoi
DAY 9 Sun, Jul 29 (B,L,D)	We board our deluxe coach this morning to travel through the rice fields of the Red River Delta to beautiful Halong Bay, an area of romantic, rugged islands, caves and beaches. Cruise the bay and stay on board a luxury Vietnamese junk overnight.	Halong Bay
DAY 10 Mon, Jul 30 (B,L,D)	Head back to Hanoi, with a visit to an Australian grain research project on the way. In the evening we board our luxury train to Sa Pa, in the remote northwestern corner of Vietnam, and regional home to ancient Hill Tribes. Here we investigate terrace farming techniques where thousands of years of agricultural 'experience' have moulded the contemporary systems.	Luxury Train
DAY 11 Tues, Jul 31 (B,L,D)	Today we experience the terrace farming and village life around Sa Pa.	Sa Pa
Day 12 Wed, Aug 1 (B,L,D)	This morning we cross into China at the remote border post of Lao Chi and through the beautiful landscape of Yunnan province.	Near Gejiu

Date	Activity	Overnight
Day 13 Thur, Aug 2 (B,L,D)	Continue by charter coach through rugged terrain before arriving at the fertile farming region surrounding Kunming. Visit the world famous Stone Forest before continuing on to Kunming.	Kunming
Day 14 Fri, Aug 3 (B,L)	Guided city tour and farms visits around Kunming. Free evening.	Kunming
Day 15 Sat, Aug 4 (B,L,D)	This morning we have a direct and short flight to central China and the ancient walled-capital, Xian, home of the famous Terracotta Warriors and Horses. We enjoy a guided tour of this breathtaking site. We will also visit a local farm in this rich agricultural region. This evening we enjoy an evening tour of Xian – including the magnificent Xian City Wall – on our way to Xian's gastronomic specialty, a dumpling banquet.	Xian
Day 16 Sun, Aug 5 (B,L,D)	This morning we have a direct flight to Urumqi, China's most westerly industrial and agricultural outpost. We are in Xinjian Province which has a fascinating agricultural and political history complete with ancient silk traders and Russian incursions. This region is home to around a third of the nation's 35 million bale annual cotton crop as well as one of China's biggest irrigation construction projects. Xinjiang is also a major grain and sugar producing area with wheat, rice, millet and sorghum all grown in the region. In short, this area of Western China is one of the most significant agricultural production regions in the world. During our time in Xinjian we will meet with local agricultural officials and visit some of the modern, broadacre farms in the province. On arrival at Urumqi we have lunch and then board our charter coach and continue onto Turpan, two hours to the southeast. Our short journey takes us through spectacular countryside, Gobi desert and Uygur villages. Turpan is literally an oasis 154 metres below sea level – and one of the most amazing farm settlements on earth. Turpan was a vital re-supply point for the 'caravans' travelling the Silk Road.	Turpan
Day 17 Mon, Aug 6 (B,L,D)	The region is confronted by an extreme climate with virtually zero rainfall and huge evaporation. Snow melt from the surrounding Tian Shan Mountains feeds a 4000 km network of irrigation tunnels that have been burrowed by hand into the mountains. All this occurred several thousand years ago long before any excavators – or even dynamite – were on sale at the local co-op. We also visit the ancient city of Jiaohe (Yarkhoto). Corn, wheat and sorghum is grown in the region and we meet with local growers and inspect their unique irrigation system. Continue to Urumqi this afternoon.	Urumqi
Day 18 Tues, Aug 7 (B,L,D)	Today we journey through a vast farm area to visit a large cotton corporation and its farm and meet with the local agronomists. We also visit a large sheep farm today before a boat cruise on Tian Chi (Heaven Lake), cradled majestically in the lap of the Tian Shan Mountains. Scattered across the spruce covered slopes are the yurts (circular tents) of the indigenous Kazakh people.	Urumqi
Day 19 Wed, Aug 8 (B,L,D)	This morning we fly south to Chengdu. Famous for stunning scenery, fiery cuisine and pandas, Sichuan province is known as 'Heaven's Granary' and produces a large proportion of China's grain, cotton and sugar. Agricultural officials will take us for a tour of the Dujiangyan Irrigation Project which is over 2200 years old and now irrigates over 3 million hectares. There is an option tonight to attend the Sichuan Opera – which has very little singing but lots of fire breathing, acrobatics, traditional music and humour.	Chengdu
Day 20 Thur, Aug 9 (B,L,D)	This morning we visit the Giant Panda Breeding Research Base – the base, particularly at morning feeding time – is the best place to see a panda. Then we transfer to the airport for our 2 pm flight to Xining. In Xining we board our evening train to Tibet, one of the outstanding engineering feats of the modern world. It is the world's highest railway with 80% of the journey at altitudes above 13,000 feet. The train is pressurised and half the track in the new section from Golmud to Lhasa was laid directly on the permafrost. Spend the night in a 'soft sleeper' carriage, and wake up to the beautiful scenery of Qinghai Lake and the town of Golmud at almost 10,000 feet.	The Lhasa Express
Day 21 Fri, Aug 10 (B,L,D)	Sit back in luxury and enjoy a full day of magnificent scenery as the train climbs to the 'roof of the world'. Arrive in the Tibet capital of Lhasa just as the sun sets over the Himalayas.	Lhasa
Day 22 Sat, Aug 11 (B,L,D)	Tour of Lhasa and surrounding areas. Farewell dinner this evening.	Lhasa
Day 23 Sun, Aug 12 (B)	Morning flight back to Chengdu to connect with a flight to Singapore then home. Alternatively, you can take an optional add-on to other Chinese destinations such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guilin or the Three Gorges Dam. You might even want to continue your high altitude travelling onto Kathmandu from Tibet.	On plane

