

THAILAND & VIETNAM TOUR + LOY KRATHONG FESTIVAL



Travel with Getaway Guru® Larry Gelwix • October 30 - November 15, 2025

We invite you to join Larry Gelwix, The Getaway Guru to embark on an unforgettable journey through Thailand and Vietnam during the vibrant Loy Krathong Festival. This hand-designed tour begins our adventure in bustling Bangkok, where ancient temples and modern skyscrapers coexist in harmony. We will explore the historic ruins of Ayutthaya, a UNESCO World Heritage site, before heading north to Chiang Mai, renowned for its rich cultural traditions. In the tranquil mountain town of Chiang Dao, experience the natural beauty and serene landscapes that set the stage for Thailand's famed festival of lights, Loy Krathong, where floating lanterns illuminate the skies and waterways. Our tour brilliantly combines Thailand with Vietnam. This tour promises an enriching blend of history, culture, and natural beauty, all during one of Southeast Asia's most celebrated festivals.

Date	Daily Schedule
10/30 - Thu	USA - Bangkok, Thailand. Cross the International Date Line and "lose" a day.
11/01 - Sat	Arrive in Bangkok, Thailand
11/02 - Sun	Bangkok: Highlights of the City of Angels
11/03 - Mon	Bangkok
11/04 - Tue	Bangkok – Ayutthaya World Heritage – Phitsanulok
11/05 - Wed	Phitsanulok – Sukhothai World Heritage & the Loy Krathong Festival
11/06 - Thu	Phitsanulok – Chiang Mai
11/07 - Fri	Chiang Mai, Wat Doi Suthep
11/08 - Sat	Chiang Dao
11/09 - Sun	Chiang Mai
11/10 - Mon	Chiang Mai, Thailand – Hanoi, Vietnam
11/11 - Tue	Hanoi
11/12 - Wed	Hanoi – Halong Bay
11/13 - Thu	Ha Long Bay
11/14 - Fri	Halong Bay – Hanoi – Ho Chi Minh City/Saigon
11/15 - Sat	Saigon – Cu Chi
11/16 - Sun	Saigon – USA

Price from **\$3,995**
per person/double occupancy
17 Days/16 Nights)

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QR code for
a full detailed
itinerary!



Your Tour Host:



Larry Gelwix is probably best known as the “Getaway Guru®” and host of the “Travel Show” radio broadcast on several radio stations. The weekly two-hour radio show highlights the best travel deals, lowest airline and cruise fares, and takes call-in questions from listeners. His professional travel career includes CEO of an airline, member of car rental, airline, and cruise line national advisory boards, co-owner and Executive Vice President of Morris Travel, and published travel writer of books and travel-related articles. Larry and his wife Cathy and I have five children and reside in Salt Lake.

What is included:

- Land tour as outlined in brochure
- Deluxe & First Class hotel accommodations
- Comprehensive sightseeing and excursions as per itinerary
- Airfare Chiang Mai to Hanoi
- Airfare Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon)
- Tours and admissions as outlined in brochure
- All meals as listed in brochure (B: breakfast BR: brunch L: lunch D: dinner)
- All group airport/hotel transfers with luggage
- All group ground transportation as outlined in brochure
- Services of local English speaking guides in Thailand and Vietnam
- Services of a professional Morris Columbus Travel host
- All current Thailand and Vietnam taxes and fees (subject to change)
- All prices are current and subject to change due to foreign currency exchange fluctuation and other causes. If land prices increase 5% or less, this amount will be added to your tour cost and all terms, conditions, and cancellation policies remain. If the land price increases more than 5%, you may accept the new price or cancel without penalty within seven days of notification. Inasmuch as we travel in November 2025, airfares are estimates and subject to change. Your deposit and/or payments constitute your agreement to prices, cancellation policies, terms and conditions.

What is not included:

- International airfare from your home city to Bangkok (BKK) and home from Ho Chi Minh City/Saigon (SGN). Your Morris Columbus Travel advisor will provide assistance with your international group airfare.
- Anything not specifically listed as included
- Tips and gratuities to local tour guides, bus drivers, porters, restaurant servers for included meals. Tips/gratuities totaling \$147 per person will be added to your tour cost and distributed to all appropriate persons in Thailand and Vietnam.
- Anything of purely a personal nature
- Vietnam visa. Your Morris Columbus Travel advisor will provide you information and assistance re: Vietnam tourist visa.

Payment, Deposit, Cancellation, & Refund:

Deposit: \$500 per person.

Final Payment: June 1, 2025

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Tour ID #9225J30 • Tour Manager: Kim Meyer, phone#: (801) 483-6315, email: kmeyer@morrismurdock.com

Day 1: Thursday, October 30, 2025

USA to Bangkok, Thailand

Evening departure and fly across the Pacific crossing the International Date Line and “lose” a day (Sorry, if October 31 is your birthday!) **Meals: In-flight**

Day 2: Saturday, November 1, 2025

Arrive Bangkok

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.

Meals: Dinner

Day 3: Sunday, November 2, 2025

Bangkok: Highlights of the City of Angels

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, 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. 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 1,600 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. **Meals: Breakfast, Lunch**



Day 4: Monday, November 3, 2025

Bangkok

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 available include jungle bicycling, cooking classes, Weekend Market, and more for you to enjoy!

Meals: Breakfast

Day 5: Tuesday, November 4, 2025

Bangkok – Ayutthaya World Heritage – Phitsanulok

Check out of the hotel. Today, begin stepping back in time to experience the grandeur of the ancient Siamese Kingdom. After breakfast, depart from Bangkok by motorcoach for a pleasant 50-mile drive through the rice fields of Thailand's vast central plains to Ayutthaya, formerly the capital of Thailand from 1350 to the 18th century, and the Bang Pa-In Royal Summer Palace, established in the 17th Century as a summer retreat for the Kings of Ayutthaya. Bang Pa-In holds an eclectic collection of buildings in a variety of architectural styles. Aisawan Thippaya-at Pavilion, built in the middle of a pond, is one of the most photographed architectural treasures of the Kingdom. Other remarkable buildings include an elaborate Chinese-style palace, a Royal Observatory, and a number of residential mansions for Queens and Royal Consorts. Stroll around the immaculate park-like compound, and if you have time, pay a short visit to the adjacent island temple, Wat Niwet Thammapravat, via a "monk-powered" cable car over the river channel. The highly unusual Gothic chapel was built in 1878, complete with stained glass windows reminiscent of a Christian church. Continue a short distance away to an island formed by the confluence of the Chao Phraya, Pasak, and Lopburi Rivers – the ancient capital city of Ayutthaya was larger and more prosperous than London or Paris in its time. In addition to being the seat of power for over four centuries (1350-1767), it was also a thriving commercial center, with European ships and Chinese junks sailing up the Chao Phraya to trade.

Visit some of the most significant ancient temples in Ayutthaya Historical Park, including Wat Mahathat and Wat Phra Si Sanphet, and the ruins of the Royal Palace, which served as the inspiration for King Rama I when he began building his new capital in Bangkok. The magnificent ruins of Wat Chai Watthanaram, dating from Ayutthaya's "Golden Era" (around 1630), was constructed by King Prasart Thong, who was born a commoner but became very powerful and eventually took the throne. One of the ways in which he attempted to gain the respect and allegiance of the nobility and the public was to invest heavily in art, religion, and culture. This temple, on the riverfront site of his mother's home, contains an imposing Khmer-style prang as tall as a 9-story building, surrounded by eight smaller stupas linked by a long gallery decorated with bas relief depictions of the Buddha's life. The foundation of what was once the congregation hall containing two seated Buddha images is in front, flanked by two bell-shaped pagodas, believed to have been built to enshrine the remains of the King's mother. Also along the river is a chedi built to commemorate a famous Siamese Queen – Suriyothai – who, according to legend, sacrificed herself during battle in order to save her husband, the King, from certain death at the hands of Burmese attackers. The monument was built on



the site of her funeral and cremation. We continue our journey heading north to Phitsanulok – the “town that teak built”. Situated on the boundary of Thailand’s central plains and the mountainous north, Phitsanulok has long been an important hub of commerce, communication, and transportation, and was the center for the timber trade before commercial logging was banned in the Kingdom. After checking in to your hotel and freshening up, depart for dinner at a local restaurant. **Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

Day 6: Wednesday, November 5, 2025

Phitsanulok – Sukhothai World Heritage & the Loy Krathong Festival

This morning, visit some local places of interest including Wat Mahathat, site of one of the most impressive Buddha images in the country – Phra Phutta Chinnarat. Visit the Sergeant Major Thaweek Folk Art Museum, containing a private collection of items used in daily rural and farming life. Across the street, the Buranathai Buddha Image Foundry will give you a glimpse into how these revered statues are cast. Small brass temple bells – Thai wind chimes - cast at the foundry make a wonderful souvenir. Lunch at a local floating restaurant. Return to the hotel to relax and refresh.

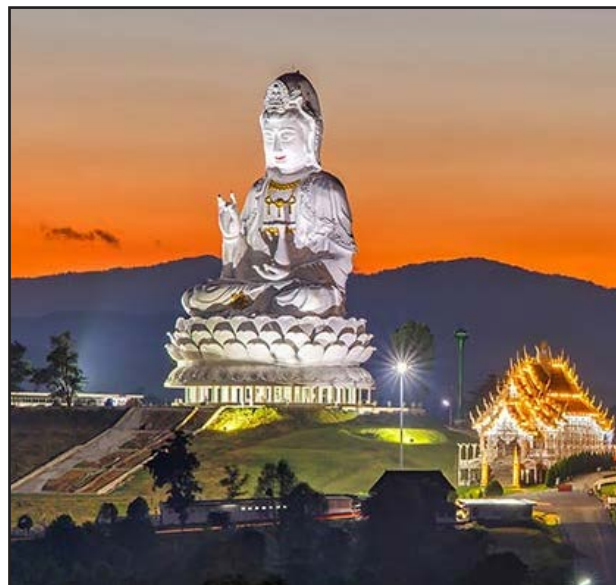
Later this afternoon depart the hotel and transfer to Sukhothai, stopping for dinner along the way. Enter the Historical Park to join the local population in a special celebration of Loy Krathong – one of the most beautiful and romantic annual Thai festivals. According to tradition, this practice originated in Sukhothai, so it’s only fitting that one of the most elaborate celebrations should take place there. Some say the festival was designed to show gratitude to the River Goddess, while others believe it pays homage to the Lord Buddha’s footprint, but in any case, on the evening of the full moon of the twelfth lunar month, people throughout the Kingdom will flock to the rivers or any convenient body of water to make a wish and float a “krathong,” a banana leaf “boat” containing a candle, a stick of incense, a coin, and flowers, into the darkness. A symbol of atonement, your sins and transgressions of the past year drift silently away. Lovers float a krathong together, and if they are meant for each other, the candle will remain lit – if it blows out...well, it may be time to find someone else! In other areas, particularly in the north, a variation known as “Yi Peng” is seen – homemade hot air “balloons” made of paper and powered by flaming candles are lofted into the night sky, sometimes in great numbers and reaching spectacular heights. Make a wish and float your own krathong on one of the ancient canals. Then watch an impressive Sound and Light Show set among the ancient ruins. The show features a re-enactment of the history of Sukhothai, with King Ramkamhaeng taking care of the people, defending the nation as a great warrior, and promoting religion and culture – all in a truly spectacular historical setting. Following the show, return to Phitsanulok and your hotel. **Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**



Day 7: Thursday, November 6, 2025

Phitsanulok – Chiang Mai

After breakfast, depart for Chiang Mai by motorcoach. Lunch at a local restaurant along the way. Once the capital of the ancient Lanna Kingdom, the city of Chiang Mai is over seven centuries old, and is surrounded by massive walls, five gates, and a moat. The northern region of the country features distinctive cuisine, unique 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 hilltribe villages – a dramatic contrast to the flat central plains. On arrival, check in and freshen up. Have dinner this evening at a riverside restaurant to watch and enjoy the ongoing Loy Krathong celebrations. **Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**



Day 8: Friday, November 7, 2025

Chiang Mai, Wat Doi Suthep

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. It is also known as the “Gold Temple.” 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 to silks to food to jewelry to fine examples of traditional Thai workmanship and handicrafts. This will “blow you away!” Our hotel is perfectly located in the center of everything. **Meals: Breakfast, Lunch**

Day 9: Saturday, November 8, 2025

Chiang Dao

Following breakfast we venture into the mountains surrounding Chiang Mai. Our first stop is the 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. **Meals: Breakfast, Lunch**



Day 10: Sunday, November 9, 2025

Chiang Mai

Enjoy a relaxing free day in Chiang Mai, the jewel of northern Thailand. Two half-day optional activities are available, viz., a Thai cooking class and a guided bicycle ride in the back roads of Chiang Mai. Our hotel is perfectly located with lots of shops, restaurants, and a shopping mall across the street. This evening enjoy the world famous Chiang Mai Night Market Bazaar.

Meals: Breakfast



Day 11: Monday, November 10, 2025

Chiang Mai, Thailand – Hanoi, Vietnam

After breakfast, transfer to the Chiang Mai International Airport for our flight to Hanoi, Vietnam. After clearing Vietnam Immigration and Customs, we met our local hosts and transfer to our hotel. The balance of the day is free to explore on your own.

Meals: Breakfast

Day 12: Tuesday, November 11, 2025

Hanoi

Highlights of our Hanoi city tour include the “Van Mieu” Temple of Literature, founded in 1076, by Emperor Ly Thanh Tong to honor academicians and persons of literary accomplishment. Our next visit is the French Quarter, known for its stunning colonial architecture. We pass by the beautiful Hoan Kiem Lake on our way to the city’s fascinating museums. After a break for lunch at a local restaurant, we make our way to Hanoi’s Old Quarter and walk through “old town” and the oldest continuously developed area of Vietnam. This is a hidden Hanoi where much of the city exists down to a single passageway that may open to a secret pagoda or a unique historical gem. We navigate our way past markets and vendors, craftsmen, and hawkers in this hive of activity which is the heart and soul of Hanoi. Our last stop is at one of Hanoi’s best kept secrets, a hidden café with stunning views over the picturesque Hoan Kiem Lake. **Meals: Breakfast, Lunch**



Day 13: Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Hanoi – Halong Bay

After breakfast we drive to Halong Bay, considered Vietnam's 8th Wonder of the World. The bay is home to 3,000 spectacular limestone outcroppings, cliffs, arches, and coves forming a "Dragon's Tail" across the bay. Traditional sailing junks and local fishing boats glide across the water. Our adventure starts as we board our boat and sail to Ba Trai Dao ("Three Peach Beaches") or depending on weather Tra Bau in Lin Ha Bay, a natural frontier between the provinces of Ha Long and Hai Phong. This secret hideaway has beaches, caves, coves, plus the spectacular beauty of more than 400 islands. You are welcome to try easy kayaking, swimming, or simply relaxing on our live aboard ship. Activities include Afternoon Tea and cooking classes. Enjoy sunset and evening views in an intimate and romantic setting on the top deck.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 14: Thursday, November 13, 2025

Ha Long Bay

We transfer by day boat from our ship to Viet Hai village. Take a bicycle ride or an electric car through a rainforest tunnel that leads to a local village. Visit a traditional house deep in a national park and observe the lifestyle of the local people. Optional visit to Tien Duc Cave located in the heart of Cat Ba National Park. Following lunch in Viet Hai village visit the Cat Ba Archipelago and then to the Ba Trai Dao beaches. Mid- afternoon return to your ship and stateroom. **Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**



Day 15: Friday, November 14, 2025

Halong Bay – Hanoi – Ho Chi Minh City/Saigon

This morning after breakfast we enter a bamboo forest to explore the Dark and Bright Cave to highlight the sparkling stalactites. We say farewell to our Ha Long Bay ship and enjoy brunch on our way back to the marina. We transfer to the Hanoi Airport for our afternoon flight to Ho Chi Minh City aka Saigon. Upon arrival at Saigon, we transfer to our hotel. The evening is free for you to enjoy the sights, sounds, shopping, and dining in Saigon.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 16: Saturday, November 15, 2025

Saigon – Cu Chi

Synonymous with the Vietnam War, the underground network of passages and tunnels at Cu Chi is a fascinating day trip out of the city. Work on the tunnels began during the war against the French in the 1940s and over the next 25 years as the conflict with America escalated, the tunnels were improved and expanded to create

an underground city of meeting areas, storerooms, medical facilities, and living quarters. The tunnels extended for more than 200 km and stretched from Saigon to the Cambodia border. Preserved as a memorial park, two sections of the Cu Chi tunnels are open to the public in Ben Dinh. We enjoy lunch at a local restaurant then return to the city. Our first stop this afternoon is the Reunification Palace, formerly the "Vietnam White House" and site where North and South Vietnam were reunited. A short distance away is Notre Dame Cathedral, a Saigon landmark, and across the street from the city's iconic French colonial era post office complete with artwork and murals. We continue on to the War Memorial Museum which memorializes the Vietnam War conflict of the United States and Vietnam. It is a sobering and thought provoking visit, but an important of the history of both countries. Our last stop today is the unforgettable Jade Emperor Pagoda. The Taoist temple is one of the most atmospheric places of worship in the city. We return to the hotel or you can be dropped off at the famous Ben Thanh market, the city's best shopping area where you can find anything and everything. Farewell dinner at a restaurant tonight. **Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**



After breakfast, transfer to the Ho Chi Minh International Airport for your return flights home. Crossing the International Dateline you gain back your "lost" day and arrive home this same day.

Day 17: Sunday, November 16, 2025

Saigon – USA

After breakfast, transfer to the Ho Chi Minh International Airport for your return flights home. Crossing the International Dateline you gain back your "lost" day and arrive home this same day.

Introductory Terms and Conditions

(Full Terms & Conditions available on our website and included with each booking)

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