

# Ancient Kingdoms

## Photography Tour

2013 / Nov 15-29  
2014 / Nov 14-28

The Kingdoms of Siam, Laos and the Khmer date back thousands of years, and we explore that history through the perspective of the lens. Bangkok is the bustling heart of Thailand and the starting point for our journey. We travel north to the ancient capital of Chiang Mai, the golden temples of Laos and then conclude our tour in Cambodia's majestic Angkor Wat region.

A photographic adventure designed by photographers, for photographers. Maximum group size of 8.

**PHOTOGRAPHY**

by Ewen Bell



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# A Few Highlights

Bangkok / Chiang Mai / Luang Prabang / Siem Reap

- Bangkok Flower Market
- Bangkok Buddha Market
- Introduction to Thai cuisine
- Temples of old Chiang Mai
- Parasol factory and paintings
- Golden Chedi at Doi Su Thep
- Elephants of Chiang Mai
- Local Market in Chiang Mai
- Mornign Alms in Luang Prabang
- Sunset on the Mekong
- Ethnic villages of H'Mong and Khamu
- Laos style cooking school
- Morning markets in town
- Boat ride along the Mekong
- Cave of the Pak Ou Buddhas
- Night Market in Luang Prabang
- Sunrise at Angkor Wat
- Quiet treasures of Angkor
- Tonle Sap Water Village
- Temples away from Angkor itself
- Local market outside Siem Reap
- Photographic guidance from Ewen
- All meals and fees included
- Group size limited to just 8 people





# The Itinerary

## Day 1 | Thailand | Bangkok

We rendezvous in Bangkok for the start of the tour with a group meeting at our hotel and then some fine dining with Thai cuisine in the city. We introduce the tour style and objectives, open the discussion on photographic ideas and techniques, and lay out the details for the journey ahead.

## Day 2 | Thailand | Bangkok

We start our photographic exploration with a stroll through the flower market. The idea is to spend some time getting familiar with a few photographic ideas and learn something of Bangkok as well. Before the day is out we'll explore some of the water ways in a khlong boat, sample some street food and head into the Buddha Market. There's a little time left spare in the afternoon to cool off and download photos.

## Day 3 | Thailand | Chiang Mai

In the afternoon we catch a flight to the north of Thailand but we have time to visit Wat Arun and chase some Tuk Tuks before that. Later in the evening we arrive in Chiang Mai where we will explore the Lanna Kingdom and their unique cultural treasures.

## Day 4 | Thailand | Chiang Mai

We start early to get familiar with some of my favourite temples in the city of Chiang Mai. There are lots of them because this is a deeply spiritual city from ancient times, and inside the city walls are dozens of golden chedi, elegant statues and saffron-robed monks. Chiang Mai is great for "Monk Chat" sessions too. After lunch we visit my favourite temple in Thailand, Doi Su Thep, situated on a hill overlooking the city.

## Day 5 | Thailand | Chiang Mai

Elephants are what makes this part of Asia unique and we go and meet some of them in the jungles to witness their skill and cooperation with man. Asian elephants are domesticated but also spend part of their lives wild. A good mahout earns respect from his elephant, and we photograph these animals in a semi-natural environment typical of how they once spent their day while working in the logging industry.

## Day 6 | Laos | Luang Prabang

Leaving the Lanna Kingdom behind we fly over the Mekong to discover the Kingdom of Laos. The modern country of Laos still retains many historical ties to their ancient past, and Luang Prabang is the heart of that connection with an impressive collection of beautiful temples. It's also rich in colonial heritage dating back to the French colonial past.

## Day 7 | Laos | Luang Prabang

Every morning in Luang Prabang is an opportunity to photograph the monks as they walk around town collecting alms. This special tradition takes place daily in the residential parts of town but starts very early. Later in the day we join local photographer Paul Wager to head into the countryside and explore ethnic villages. The H'Mong and Khamu people are distinct from the Lao and we go in search of their communities as they begin harvesting the rice.

# The Itinerary

## Day 8 | Laos | Luang Prabang

Today we visit the main market in town and then head out into the country side for a cooking class. A local chef operates one of the loveliest cooking schools in Asia, which provides delicious food and ample inspiration to photograph. Everybody cooks on this outing, but not everybody remembers to take photos. The choice is yours and the setting provides excellent conditions for practicing your food photography.

## Day 9 | Laos | Luang Prabang

Our final day in town is planned around a morning trip to visit the Pak Ou caves where thousands of Buddha statues watch the Mekong flow past. It's a chance to relax on the river as we head up and back, plus we can visit a town on the way for some local rice wine called Lao Lao. This will be our last day to shoot the Mekong sunsets or wait for monks at sunrise as they collect alms.

## Day 10 | Cambodia | Siem Reap

Leaving the gold and saffron of the Lao kingdom we head to Cambodia and immerse ourselves in the stone and jungles of the various Khmer kingdoms of Angkor. There are hundreds of temples scattered through the forests here, some carefully restored and other left collapsed and in chaos so we can appreciate the true age of these structures.

## Day 11 | Cambodia | Siem Reap

We start the day very very very early and hope for a beautiful sunrise. Our location will be the reflection pools at Angkor Wat, where the only thing outnumbering the photographers is the mosquitos. We arrive early to ensure we get a get spot and wait for the day to begin. If desired you will be able to repeat the sunrise on every day during our visit. Today we spend time at a handful of my favourite temples, with a break in the middle to cool down by the pool.

## Day 12 | Cambodia | Siem Reap

With hundreds of temples available to visit we chase a few more today, heading further away from the busy patches of Angkor in search of quiet places to photograph the architecture without tourists. It is indeed possible. I have special places where I like to shoot sunrise and sunset, other than the obvious ones you will have heard about. We also make stops for markets and villages as we have our own transport and plenty of time to adjust the schedule.

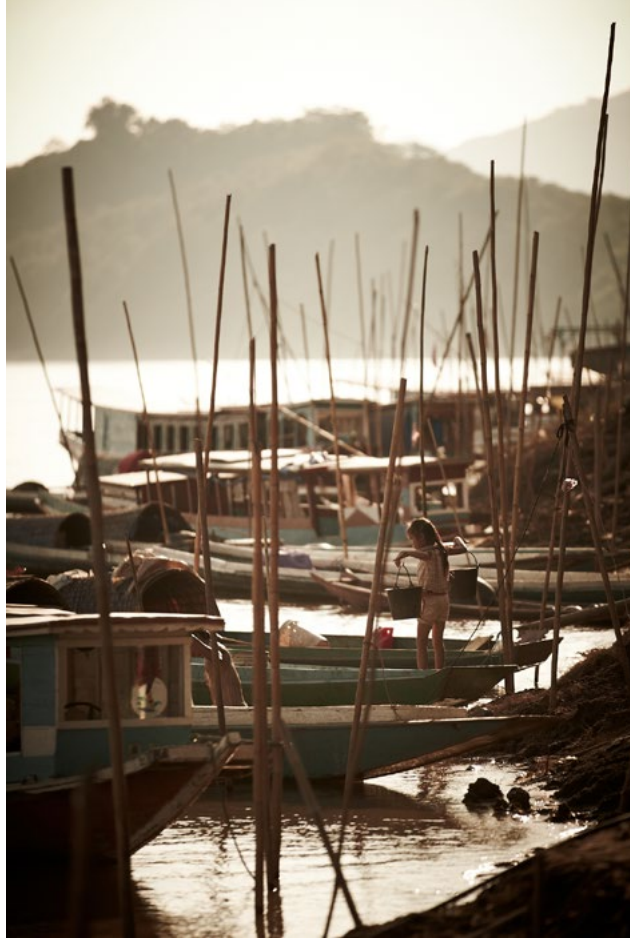
## Day 13 | Cambodia | Siem Reap

The ancient kingdoms of the Khmer were truly innovative, not just in the massive stone structures of the temples but their ability to cope with the rise and fall of the Tonle Sap. This massive lake fills to ten times it's size in the wet, and then drains back out for the rest of the year. Villages near Siem Reap have learned to adjust, some my living on floating homes, others by erecting stilts that put houses into the tree-tops. We visit the lake and the community before returning to Siem Reap for our final group dinner.

## Day 14 | Departure

The next morning marks the end of the tour, with a scheduled hotel check-out and a flight back to Bangkok. You can extend your time in Siem Reap in case you want to allow more time to chase the temples, or just make plans for a connecting flight out of Bangkok in the evening.







# Learn and Explore

Anyone who loves photography can join this tour.

Skills and experience is not a prerequisite. Enthusiam is essential. There is ample one on one time so that your questions can be answered, your photos can be reviewed and your expression can be encouraged. With such a small group size we can ensure everybody gets the encouragement and guidance they desire.

If you're a confident photographer or already work at a professional level, then this journey will simply assist with getting great shots. We encourage everyone on tour to share ideas, to discuss their experiences and learn from each other as well.

Partners are also welcome on these photo tours, but they may need to exercise a little patience with the desires of photographers to make the most of special moments. My photography tours put the photographers first :)



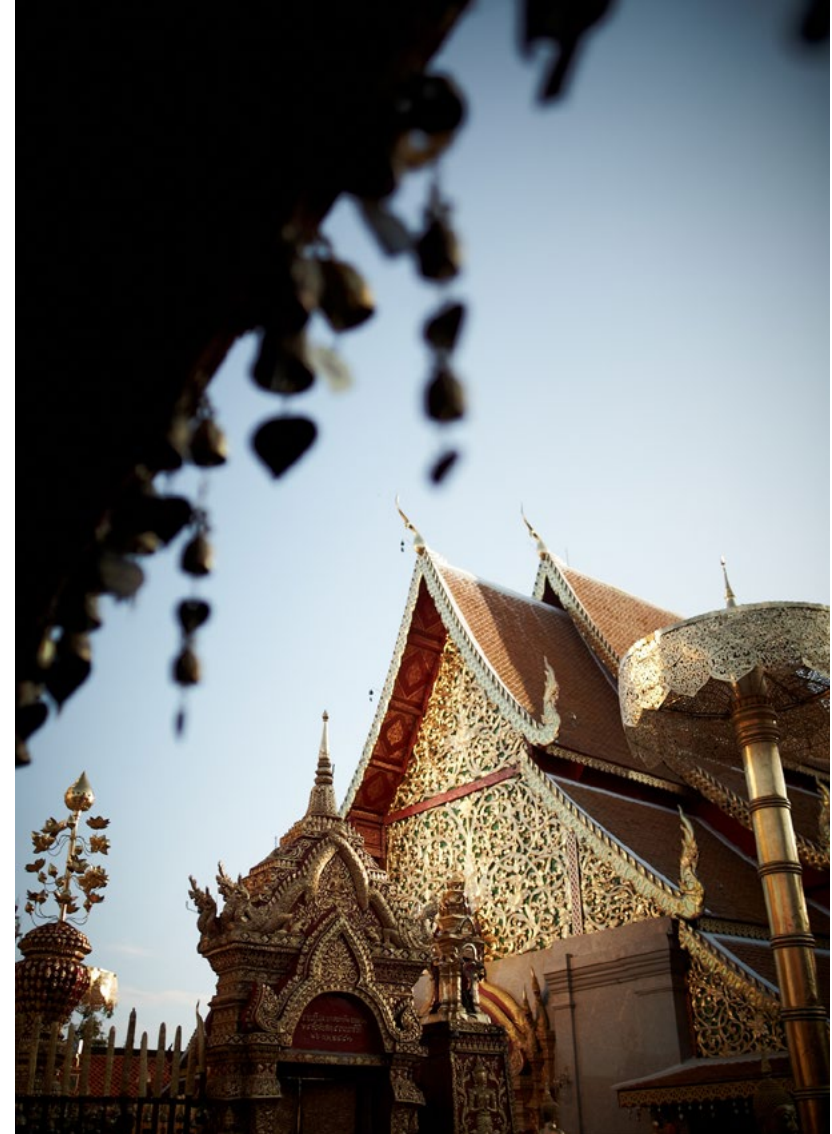
# Photographic Tuition

Not only are these tours designed to deliver exceptional photographic opportunities, but you get the professional photographer included too. Ewen Bell has been running these tours since 2005, working hard to make them even better with each year of experience.

Because the tours are limited to very small groups of just 8 people, Ewen has time to help you with one-on-one advice. For two weeks you have a personal expert to offer ideas and answer questions. Even better, you're travelling in a group of like-minded people, resulting in a total photographic immersion.

Every detail of the craft is open to discussion. Ewen's style is to emphasise the creative potential of photography without getting mired in the technical. He will push you to be in control of the camera, to make the images your own, but for the sake of creativity and expression.

These tours are designed to help you learn to take better photos, and go home with some incredible experiences. Ewen will be there every step of the way to offer support as you need it.









## 8 is Great!

Ewen Bell restricts all of his photographic tours to just 8 people. With good reason.

“I never want to run a photography tour with more than 8 people, let alone 12 or 16. Smaller groups mean less drama, more fun and are infinitely more rewarding. My first responsibility is to ensure every person on my tour gets plenty of my time and advice, plus to ensure we don’t ruin a lovely location by dragging a horde of photographers about. Small isn’t just good, it’s great!”







# Your Escort

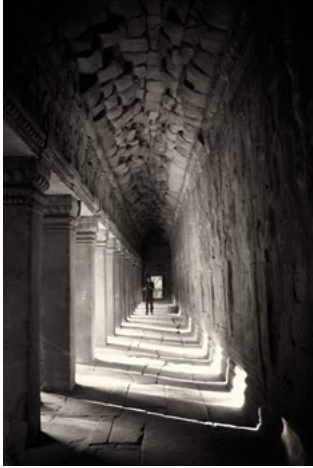
For the duration of the tour your photographic instructor and escort will be Ewen Bell. His work is published all over the world in travel brochures, the travel media and photography magazines. Ewen's depth of experience with photography tours is impressive, with over 25 journeys completed in recent years across Asia, Australia and Antarctica.

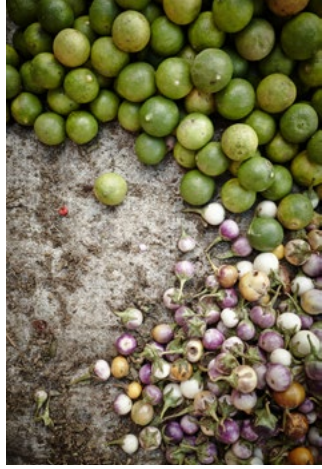
*"The food, the people and the Buddhist cultures have kept me coming back for a decade. Thailand is so luxurious for travellers, and Cambodia offers such exceptional old temples. But Laos is my favourite. Everyone who visits Laos says the same :)"*

It wouldn't be a great photo tour without a great photographer. But don't take our word for it, visit his website and see for yourself.

[www.ewenbell.com](http://www.ewenbell.com)







# Camera Gear

We recommend the use of Digital SLR cameras for this journey, but you are not restricted from using any type of camera you may have, including conventional film SLRs and compact cameras. We will have access to power for recharging batteries on every evening of the trip, but it's never a bad idea to have a couple of spare batteries for your camera body.

We also recommend that you carry a wide angle lens for general use and landscape opportunities, as we emphasize techniques for portraits and culture. A tripod is not required for this trip, but will be useful for shooting Angkor Wat sunrise.

A good quality day pack will be an essential part of the packing list. The traditional type of 'over-the-shoulder' camera bag is not very suitable for travel photography, a day-pack style bag is better. The Lowe Pro Flipside 300 or 400 are highly recommended.

Finally, we do encourage you bring a laptop. We'll have lots of opportunity to share and review images during the journey, plus your laptop can serve as a valuable backup or storage device to make room for more photographs each day. Affordable and light Ultrabooks or the Macbook Air are powerful enough to edit RAW files, review your work and record important details from the journey.





# Art and Creativity

The camera is like a paintbrush, and in the hands of different people it will produce very different images.

Ewen Bell specialises in teaching people about the creative potential of photography, to go beyond the technical issues of a camera and start taking creative control. Expression is at the heart of great photography, sharing your perspective, your view, your experience. Travelling with a photo tour like this one will offer lots of inspiration, but travelling with an instructor like Ewen will give you new ways to express your experience.

A few basic principles underpin the art of travel photography. Go Slow. Get Closer. Look for the Light. Join Ewen for two weeks of photographic adventure and find out for yourself how much inspiration can flow from three very simple ideas.









# Who Travels With Us

Our photographic journeys appeal to both the young and old, the experienced and novice. Most tours are made up of people aged 25 to 65, and occasionally older or younger still. It doesn't matter what your skills and interest in photography are, you will enjoy sharing a creative and immersive experience with like minded people.

You can read feedback from Ewen's past travellers on photography tours by visiting [www.ewenbell.com](http://www.ewenbell.com)



# The Fine Print

## Dates

2013: November 15-29

2014: November 14-28

## Price

US\$4900

Single room option: \$880

## Group Size

Maximum of 8 people

The itinerary information may vary slightly for your specific departure, as we continuously research and develop each trip. Inclement weather or other factors outside our control may also necessitate minor alterations.

## Accommodation

A great selection of 4 star hotels with great locations and lovely character. Overall this is one of our most comfortable journeys. All accommodation is on a twin-share basis unless you select to pay the single supplement.

## Difficulty Rating

Walking is the key to engagement, usually covering short distances but travelling slowly. There are no demanding treks on this tour, anyone in good health can travel with us.

## Inclusions

The instructing photographer and a local guide are included for this tour. Most meals during the tour, all entry fees to temples & monuments, and tipping of local guides. Visa entry for Cambodia and Laos is also included.

## Not included

- Flight to and from Bangkok
- Gratuities and items of personal nature
- Beverages, Laundry, Phone and Internet Charges
- Your Camera!





# Make A Booking

## How to Book

Simply visit the website for Grasshopper Adventures and complete the online booking form to reserve a place. Once payment of the deposit has been received your place on the trip is confirmed.

[www.grasshopperadventures.com](http://www.grasshopperadventures.com)

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