



ADVENTURE

Perfect pairings: coast and culture in Southeast Asia

Get the best of both worlds – see the sights and veg out in the sand – with these two-city trips in Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia and Vietnam.



Allison
February 22, 2018
DiLiegro

Exploring ancient temples, bouncing along in the back of a tuk tuk, eating street food to the scent of exhaust fumes – Southeast Asia can be a

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all that adventure can be downright exhausting. No one wants to spend *all* their time expanding their cultural horizons, after all...

Here's our tip: nothing gets you temple-hopping with gusto like the prospect of a few days of coconut-sipping on a sandy beach (perhaps punctuating your lounge time with the occasional Thai massage). With that in mind, here's a handful of two-part trips that let you soak up some culture and then turn your attention to the serious business of basking in sunshine.

Bangkok & Koh Samui

The lovably chaotic [Thai capital](#) is the perennial entrée to Southeast Asia, where days can be spent touring temples, eating curry and sweating profusely. Luckily, an air-conditioned villa awaits at [The Siam](#) when the midday sun gets too strong. This art deco hideaway is all about inspiring aesthetics, with leafy corridors, an impressive antiques collection, and an idyllic riverfront location.

When it's time to get back to nature, hop on a short flight to Koh Samui and check in at [Six Senses Samui](#), a romantic castaway retreat that's just the right level of rustic. The best villas have a shaded terrace and private pool, staggering views and a personal butler, so your only concern should be your next spa appointment.



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The atrium view at the Siam (left) and the retreat deck at Six Senses Samui (right)

Uluwatu & Ubud

Bali is laid back compared to the other Southeast

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its close to the airport, too, wash away the jet lag at the [Alila Villas Uluwatu](#), a cliffside perch where the waves crash 100 metres below. Villas are sleek and spacious, with endless views of the Indian Ocean.

Once you're revitalised, drive into the lush, misty forest outside [Ubud](#), Bali's cultural capital. The rooms at [Como Shambhala Estate](#) are like sumptuous private homes with dark woods, canopied beds and enviable antiques. The spa is a destination in itself, but fear not: no one is trying to talk you into a juice cleanse. Take it as far as you wish, whether that's an in-villa massage after temple touring or a personalised Ayurvedic journey.



The spa at Como Shambhala Estate

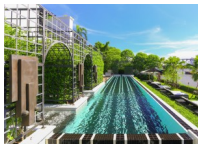
Siem Reap & Song Saa

You must see the temples of Angkor in this lifetime, and there's no being flip about it. Angkor is a

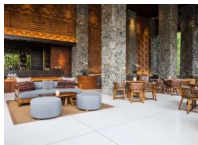
Hotels trending in So



PHUM BAITANG
Siem Reap, Car



THE SIAM
Bangkok, Thail



ALILA UBUD
Bali, Indonesia



ZABORIN
Niseko, Japan



COMO POINT
Phuket, Thailan

Of [Stem Reap](#), on the other hand, is a little less alluring, so we suggest you venture into the rice paddies – head straight on past the water buffalo – and check into [Phum Baitang](#). The villas are chic with rustic woods, cool linens and freestanding stone baths.

From there, fly to Sihanoukville and board a boat to [Song Saa Private Island](#). The thatched-roof overwater villas have four-poster beds, private pools and outdoor bathtubs. Yes, it's lavish, but if you're feeling overindulgent, rest assured that the eco-friendly resort is all about sustainability. The hotel's affiliated Song Saa Foundation oversees a number of environmental projects, including a marine conservation programme and a coral nursery, in addition to medical missions and education initiatives in the local community.

Ho Chi Minh City & Con Dao

[Ho Chi Minh City](#)

is a foodie's dream



Iced coffee break in Ho Chi Minh City

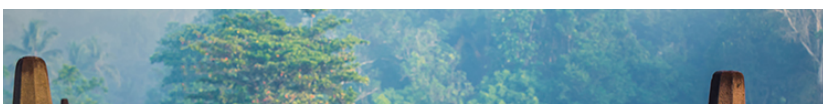
And it's a good thing you're alert, because you'll need to ford a river of motorbikes every time you cross the street. For that reason, we love staying at the [An Lam Retreats Saigon River](#), set on the Saigon River just 15 minutes from the city centre by speedboat.

But for truly postcard-material waterfront, follow up your stay in Ho Chi Minh City with a short flight to Vietnam's best beach, Con Dao. There, check into an oversized, barefoot-chic villa at [Six Senses Con Dao](#). You can have breakfast on the terrace, snorkel in the sea, lounge by your private pool and dip down to the bar just in time for sunset.

Borobudur & Moyo Island

Set on the Indonesian island of Java, Borobudur is among Southeast Asia's most awesome sights. The ninth-century structure is still the largest Buddhist temple in the world, and watching the sunrise from the top is pure, unforgettable magic. The icing on the cake? [Amanjiwo](#) is just a few kilometres away, and this bolthole – built entirely with locally quarried coral-beige limestone – is pretty magical, too. After your temple visit, sidle up to the hotel's black marble bar for a cocktail and a performance by a local Javanese dancer.

After a few peaceful nights, a bopping Balinese beach club would be a rude shock to the system. Instead, take a seaplane to remote Moyo Island and check in at [Amanwana](#). The safari-style beachfront tents will have you feeling like the explorers who rediscovered Borobudur. Except here, you'll have a king-size bed, hardwood floors, air conditioning and a chef to prepare any meal you wish. It's all about balance, isn't it?





Buddha statue at Borobudur on the Indonesian island of Java

Featured image is Angkor Wat in Siem Reap, Cambodia; photo via Getty

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