

# Contents

## List of Maps

vii

### What's New in Southeast Asia

1

#### 1 The Best of Southeast Asia

9

- |  |    |  |    |
|--|----|--|----|
| 1 The Most Unforgettable Travel Experiences . . . . .                            | 9  | 7 The Best Festivals & Celebrations . . .    | 18 |
| 2 The Best Towns & Villages . . . . .  | 13 | 8 The Best Resorts & Luxury Hotels . . .     | 18 |
| 3 The Best Beaches . . . . .   | 14 | 9 The Best Hotel Bargains . . . . .          | 20 |
| 4 The Best Outdoor Adventures . . . . .  | 14 | 10 The Best Local Dining Experiences . .     | 21 |
| 5 The Most Intriguing Temples, Shrines, Palaces & Archaeological Sites . . . . . | 15 | 11 The Best Markets . . . . .                | 21 |
| 6 The Best Museums . . . . .   | 17 | <i>Everything Has a Price: Hagglng</i> . . . | 22 |
|  |    | 12 The Best Shopping Bargains . . . . .      | 22 |
|  |    | 13 The Hottest Nightlife . . . . .           | 23 |

#### 2 Introducing Southeast Asia

24

- |   |    |  |    |
|---|----|--|----|
| 1 The Region Today . . . . .                          | 24 | <i>Buddha &amp; Buddhism in Southeast Asia</i> . . . . . | 30 |
| <i>Myanmar (Burma): To Go or Not to Go?</i> . . . . . | 28 | <i>The Biggest Cultural No-Nos</i> . . . . .             | 34 |
| 2 A Southeast Asian Cultural Primer . . . . .         | 29 |  |    |

#### 3 Planning Your Trip to Southeast Asia

35

- |  |    |   |    |
|--|----|---|----|
| 1 Visitor Information . . . . .                                      | 35 | <i>Frommers.com: The Complete Travel Resource</i> . . . . . | 51 |
| <i>Destination Southeast Asia: Pre-Departure Checklist</i> . . . . . | 35 | 9 The 21st-Century Traveler . . . . .                       | 51 |
| 2 Entry Requirements & Customs . . . . .                             | 36 | <i>Online Traveler's Toolbox</i> . . . . .                  | 53 |
| 3 Money . . . . .  | 38 | 10 Getting There . . . . .                                  | 53 |
| 4 When to Go . . . . .   | 41 | <i>Getting Through the Airport</i> . . . . .                | 54 |
| 5 Travel Insurance . . . . .   | 41 | 11 Packages for the Independent Traveler . . . . .          | 57 |
| 6 Health & Safety . . . . .  | 43 | <i>Ask Before You Go</i> . . . . .                          | 57 |
| 7 Specialized Travel Resources . . . . .                             | 46 | 12 Escorted General-Interest Tours . . . . .                | 58 |
| 8 Planning Your Trip Online . . . . .                                | 50 | 13 Special-Interest Trips . . . . .                         | 59 |

14 Getting Around Southeast Asia . . . . .	61	17 Suggested Itineraries . . . . .	65
15 Tips on Accommodations . . . . .	62	18 Recommended Books & Films . . . . .	66
16 Tips on Dining . . . . .	64	<i>Fast Facts: Southeast Asia</i> . . . . .	68

**4 Thailand** **73**

by Jason Armbrecht

1 Getting to Know Thailand . . . . .	73	14 Koh Tao . . . . .	165
2 The Best of Thailand in 2 Weeks . . . . .	81	15 The Far South & on to Malaysia . . . . .	166
3 Planning Your Trip to Thailand . . . . .	82	16 An Introduction to the Southern Peninsula: West Coast & Islands . . . . .	167
<i>Telephone Dialing at a Glance</i> . . . . .	87	17 Phuket . . . . .	169
<i>Fast Facts: Thailand</i> . . . . .	88	<i>Fast Facts: Phuket</i> . . . . .	173
4 Bangkok . . . . .	91	18 Krabi (Ao Nang, Railay & Khlong Mouang Beaches) . . . . .	191
<i>Fast Facts: Bangkok</i> . . . . .	96	19 Koh Phi Phi . . . . .	194
<i>Dinner &amp; Lunch Cruises on the Chao Phraya</i> . . . . .	109	20 Koh Lanta . . . . .	196
<i>The Bangkok Sex Scene</i> . . . . .	125	21 An Introduction to Central Thailand . . . . .	197
5 An Introduction to the Eastern Seaboard . . . . .	128	22 Sukhothai & Si Satchanalai . . . . .	197
6 Pattaya . . . . .	128	23 An Introduction to Northern Thailand . . . . .	199
7 Ban Phe & Ko Samet . . . . .	136	24 Chiang Mai . . . . .	201
8 Trat & Ko Chang . . . . .	137	<i>Fast Facts: Chiang Mai</i> . . . . .	204
9 An Introduction to the Southern Peninsula: East Coast & Islands . . . . .	139	<i>The Mae Hong Son Loop</i> . . . . .	219
10 Hua Hin & Cha-Am . . . . .	141	25 Chiang Rai . . . . .	220
11 Surat Thani . . . . .	147	26 Chiang Saen & the Golden Triangle . . . . .	223
12 Koh Samui . . . . .	148		
13 Koh Pha Ngan . . . . .	163		

**5 Laos** **226**

by Jason Armbrecht

1 Getting to Know Laos . . . . .	227	<i>Fast Facts: Vientiane</i> . . . . .	246
2 The Best of Laos in 1 Week . . . . .	232	5 Vang Vieng . . . . .	256
3 Planning Your Trip to Laos . . . . .	233	6 Luang Prabang . . . . .	258
<i>Telephone Dialing at a Glance</i> . . . . .	239	<i>Fast Facts: Luang Prabang</i> . . . . .	261
<i>Fast Facts: Laos</i> . . . . .	241	<i>Taking Refuge: Making Friends at the Temple</i> . . . . .	271
4 Vientiane . . . . .	243		

7 Luang Namtha & the Far North . . . . .	273	<i>Fast Facts: Phonsavan</i> . . . . .	276
<i>Fast Facts: Luang Namtha</i> . . . . .	274	9 The Far South: Pakse & Champasak Provinces . . . . .	277
8 Xieng Khouang Province: Phonsavan & the Plain of Jars . . . . .	275		

## 6 Vietnam 280

by Brian Calvert

1 Getting to Know Vietnam . . . . .	281	8 Danang & China Beach . . . . .	339
<i>Responsible Tourism</i> . . . . .	284	<i>Fast Facts: Danang</i> . . . . .	340
2 The Best of Vietnam in 2 Weeks . . . . .	288	9 Hoi An . . . . .	342
3 Planning Your Trip to Vietnam . . . . .	290	<i>Fast Facts: Hoi An</i> . . . . .	344
<i>Telephone Dialing at a Glance</i> . . . . .	295	10 An Introduction to South-Central Vietnam . . . . .	356
<i>Fast Facts: Vietnam</i> . . . . .	296	11 Nha Trang . . . . .	356
4 Hanoi . . . . .	299	<i>Fast Facts: Nha Trang</i> . . . . .	359
<i>Fast Facts: Hanoi</i> . . . . .	303	12 Dalat . . . . .	366
<i>The Best Authentic Local Fare</i> . . . . .	310	<i>Fast Facts: Dalat</i> . . . . .	368
<i>Have You Tried the Snake?</i> . . . . .	314	13 Phan Thiet Town & Mui Ne Beach . . . . .	376
<i>Flying Dragons &amp; Thieving Turtles: Hanoi's Founding</i> . . . . .	319	14 Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) . . . . .	381
5 Sapa & the Far North . . . . .	324	<i>Fast Facts: Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon)</i> . . . . .	385
6 An Introduction to the Central Coast . . . . .	328	<i>Zen &amp; the Art of Pho</i> . . . . .	398
<i>Who Are the Cham?</i> . . . . .	328	15 The Mekong Delta . . . . .	404
7 Hue . . . . .	329		
<i>Fast Facts: Hue</i> . . . . .	330		

## 7 Cambodia 405

by Brian Calvert

1 Getting to Know Cambodia . . . . .	406	4 Phnom Penh . . . . .	418
2 The Best of Cambodia in 1 Week . . . . .	410	<i>Fast Facts: Phnom Penh</i> . . . . .	421
3 Planning Your Trip to Cambodia . . . . .	411	5 Siem Reap & Angkor Wat . . . . .	434
<i>Some Important Safety Tips</i> . . . . .	414	<i>Fast Facts: Siem Reap</i> . . . . .	436
<i>Telephone Dialing at a Glance</i> . . . . .	416	<i>The Magic Hours at Angkor Wat</i> . . . . .	444
<i>Fast Facts: Cambodia</i> . . . . .	417		

**8 Singapore** 447

by Jennifer Eveland

1 Getting to Know Singapore . . . . .	447	<i>The Best of Singapore's Spas</i> . . . . .	478
2 The Best of Singapore in 1 Week . . . . .	452	5 Where to Dine . . . . .	482
3 Planning Your Trip to Singapore . .	453	6 What to See & Do . . . . .	498
<i>Telephone Dialing at a Glance</i> . . .	460	7 Outdoor Activities . . . . .	524
<i>Fast Facts: Singapore</i> . . . . .	462	8 Shopping . . . . .	526
4 Where to Stay . . . . .	465	9 Singapore After Dark . . . . .	531

**9 Malaysia** 538

by Jennifer Eveland

1 Getting to Know Malaysia . . . . .	538	4 Kuala Lumpur . . . . .	553
2 The Best of Malaysia in 2 Weeks . . . . .	542	<i>Fast Facts: Kuala Lumpur</i> . . . . .	556
3 Planning Your Trip to Malaysia . .	543	5 Malacca . . . . .	568
<i>Telephone Dialing at a Glance</i> . . .	549	6 Penang . . . . .	574
<i>Fast Facts: Malaysia</i> . . . . .	551	7 Langkawi . . . . .	584
		8 East Malaysia: Borneo . . . . .	589

**10 Bali (Indonesia)** 603

by Jen Lin-Liu

1 Getting to Know Bali . . . . .	604	6 Nusa Dua . . . . .	625
2 The Best of Bali in 2 Weeks . . . . .	609	7 Ubud . . . . .	629
3 Planning Your Trip to Bali . . . . .	610	<i>Fast Facts: Ubud</i> . . . . .	630
<i>Telephone Dialing at a Glance</i> . . .	614	<i>Scaling the Heights:</i>	
<i>Fast Facts: Bali</i> . . . . .	615	<i>Bali's Volcanoes</i> . . . . .	641
4 Kuta . . . . .	616	8 Candi Dasa . . . . .	641
<i>Fast Facts: Kuta</i> . . . . .	617	<i>Fast Facts: Candi Dasa</i> . . . . .	642
5 Jimbaran Bay . . . . .	624		

**Index** 646

# List of Maps

- Southeast Asia 10
- Thailand 75
- Bangkok Metro Lines 95
- Where to Stay & Dine  
in Bangkok 100
- Exploring Bangkok 116
- The East Coast Beaches 129
- Pattaya 130
- The Southern Peninsula:  
East Coast 140
- Koh Samui 149
- The Southern Peninsula:  
West Coast 168
- Phuket 170
- Northern Thailand 200
- Where to Stay & Dine  
in Chiang Mai 203
- Exploring Cultural Chiang Mai 215
- Laos 229
- Vientiane 244
- Luang Prabang 259
- Vietnam 283
- Hanoi 300
- Hanoi: The Old City 317
- Hue 331
- Hoi An 343
- Nha Trang 357
- Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) 382
- Cambodia 407
- Phnom Penh 419
- Siem Reap 435
- Singapore 449
- Urban Singapore Neighborhoods 454
- MRT Transit Map 461
- Where to Stay in Urban Singapore 466
- Where to Dine in Urban  
Singapore 484
- Urban Singapore Attractions 500
- Sentosa Island 521
- Peninsular Malaysia 539
- East Malaysia 541
- Kuala Lumpur 555
- Malacca 569
- Penang Island 575
- Georgetown 577
- Langkawi 585
- East Malaysia's National Parks 591
- Kuching 593
- Kota Kinabalu 599
- Bali 606