

Day 1, Wednesday, February 4, 2026

I woke up around 7:00 a.m. and went for a bike ride up to Alameda Ridge and then to McDonald. Later, I saw an email from Jay about the release form for our upcoming Vietnam trip. Apparently, his form wasn't in their records. I had submitted mine back in November, and they were able to locate my release forms. Sorting that out delayed my flight preparations, so I didn't leave the house until about 10:45 AM. I walked to the Max station and took the train to the Portland international airport (PDX). I arrived at PDX around noon, checked in for my flight (I only had carry-on luggage) and made it to my boarding gate without any issues. Security was quick and much easier than in the past, no need to remove my shoes or anything from luggage (with new security machines laptops, cell phones and liquids bag can now stay in your suitcase). I just had to empty my pockets and take off my belt. My flight from Portland (PDX) to Los Angeles (LAX) departed around 3:00 PM and landed at about 5:30 PM, leaving me with a little over a five-hour layover. Once at LAX, I found it surprisingly easy to get from the domestic terminal to the international terminal. At LAX in the past, I had to leave security, walk over to the international terminal, and go through screening again, but now you can change terminals without exiting the secure area. It's much more convenient than it used to be. I wasn't able to get the Wi-Fi working at LAX. My flight from Los Angeles to Taipei (TPE) departed around 10:50 PM and was approximately a 14 hours flight. (Daily bike miles 0 miles; Total trip bike miles 0 miles)

Day 2, Thursday, February 5, 2026

On my flight from Los Angeles, California (LAX) to Taipei, Taiwan (TPE), I crossed the International Date Line while flying over the Pacific Ocean. When boarding the plane, a man was sitting in my assigned seat, so I took his instead. He was grateful to be seated next to his travel companions and even arranged for me to receive an extra dinner and gave me some gum. A genuinely kind guy. (Daily bike miles 0 miles; Total trip bike miles 0 miles)

Day 3, Friday, February 6, 2026

This day was a continuation of the one before. My overnight flight from Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) to Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport (TPE) lasted 14 hours and 40 minutes and crossed the International Date Line. I watched a couple of movies and managed to sleep for about eight hours. I landed in Taiwan around 5:30 a.m. and headed to find my gate for my connecting flight to Ho Chi Minh City. While scanning the departure monitors, Jay found me. We spent some time walking around the airport and grabbed coffee at Starbucks before boarding. My flight to Tan Son Nhat International Airport (SGN) was scheduled to depart at 7:50 a.m. but left shortly after 8:00 a.m. Upon arrival, the customs line was enormous and moved painfully slowly. Jay had landed about 20 minutes earlier on a different flight, and I couldn't understand why I didn't see him in line. I turned off airplane mode on my phone and sent him a text, then enabled data and tried WhatsApp. After about 30 minutes, I realized my messages hadn't sent. Once I connected to airport Wi-Fi, the messages finally delivered. Jay had replied that he was about to leave the airport. Luckily, I reached

him in time, and he waited for me. He had cleared customs quickly and couldn't figure out what had happened to me. He arrived around 9:45 a.m., and I finally made it out close to 11:00 a.m. After reuniting, we took a taxi into town to our hotel. It was too early to check in, but we left our luggage and headed out for a walk. Surprisingly, I wasn't tired despite the long journey and felt no jet lag. Before leaving Portland, I had created a self-guided walking tour of Ho Chi Minh City based on top sights near our hotel. I loaded the route into my GPS, and Jay saved the points on his phone as well. Within a quarter mile of the hotel, we were standing in front of Independence Palace. Our plan was to view places from the outside and return the next day if we wanted to explore further. We took photos through the gates and continued on to Notre-Dame Cathedral Basilica of Saigon, which was under restoration, so we photographed it from the exterior. Throughout our walk, thousands of motor scooters streamed past us, sometimes carrying as many as four people on a single bike. A few days later, we even spotted one with five riders. Next, we visited the Saigon Central Post Office, stepping inside briefly before moving on. Along the sidewalks, vendors cooked and sold food and various goods. We stopped for photos at Ho Chi Minh City Hall, then peeked into the lobby of the Rex Hotel Saigon. We passed by the Saigon Opera House, but a performance was underway, so we couldn't go inside. The heat and humidity were intense, so when we reached the Hotel Continental Saigon, we stepped into the air-conditioned lobby to cool down. Afterward, we searched for Nguyen Hue Walking Street. My GPS indicated we were there, but it didn't resemble the photos I had seen online. I kept looking without success, and Jay started losing confidence in my navigation skills. We then headed toward the Bitexco Financial Tower, which I could clearly see. It turned out to be right beside the walking street, which was partially under renovation, so my GPS hadn't been wrong after all. We went up to the Skydeck, where we enjoyed spectacular views of the city skyline and the Saigon River. Later, we wandered into an area decorated for New Year celebrations, filled with people dressed elegantly, many women wearing beautiful silk dresses. We walked through Ben Thanh Market, browsing the shops and street food stalls, before finally returning to the hotel to check in. Jay took a shower while I attempted to find Bui Vien Street for dinner and nightlife. The crowds were overwhelming, and although I was close, my GPS wasn't precise enough to pinpoint the exact location of the street entertainment. As darkness fell, I headed back to the hotel and settled in for the night. (Daily bike miles 0 miles; Total trip bike miles 0 miles)

Day 4, Saturday, February 7, 2026

We woke up around 6:30 AM and enjoyed the breakfast included at our hotel. Afterward, we walked about 0.2 miles to the tour center for our trip to the Cu Chi Tunnels. The tour group boarded a bus and first stopped at a lacquer painting factory, where artisans were creating high-quality metallic art murals using eggshells and other intricate techniques. They explained the process before guiding us into the showroom to see the finished pieces. We then reboarded the bus and continued on to the Cu Chi Tunnels. The tour began with a short walk to a small, covered hole in the ground. Our guide demonstrated how people squeezed into it. I decided to try it myself. It was extremely difficult because the opening was so narrow, I had to extend my arms straight above my head while lowering myself into the hole, holding the hatch cover. Getting out required the same motion, lifting myself up while holding the

cover overhead. The entrance was too tight to enter with my arms by my sides. Next, we had the opportunity to go into the tunnels themselves. There were two sections visitors could enter, both so low that you had to crawl on your hands and knees. The second section was supposed to be lower than the first, though it seemed about the same to me. Our guide said only about 25% of tourists attempt the second tunnel and some people don't make it all the way through, but I did! During the tour we also saw examples of booby traps, a tank, wheeled artillery guns, and a large B-52 bomb crater. There were displays showing where booby traps were manufactured, and there was also a firing range where visitors can shoot Vietnam War era weapons such as AK-47s, M16s, and machine guns like the M60 in a designated outdoor shooting range. The ammunition was quite expensive, so we decided not to try it. The guide also explained that more than two million people were exposed to Agent Orange, and that its health effects have impacted three generations. They also told us that Vietnam was the 3rd largest manufacturing country in the world (China is the largest and India is the second largest manufacturing country). After the tour, we went to lunch at a great restaurant, although it took a long time for them to process the bill. The bus ride took about two hours to travel the 30 miles from Ho Chi Minh City to the Cu Chi Tunnels and another two hours to return, because of the heavy traffic in the city of about 10 million people. Once we got back to town, we walked around and I bought a shirt at Ben Thanh Market. Later we found Bui Vien Street, which is lined with restaurants, bars, and shops and is known as the high-energy nightlife hub of Ho Chi Minh City. The street was lively, full of lights and people. I had a great salmon dinner at one of the restaurants there before we walked back to the hotel. Along the way we passed several massage parlors where young women tried to invite people inside. They all appeared to be legitimate massage businesses (you could see people through the windows laying down getting massages). Back at the hotel, we checked out the rooftop bar at the Silverland Yen Hotel, where we were staying. After that, we returned to our room, and I went to sleep around midnight. (Daily bike miles 0 miles; Total trip bike miles 0 miles)

Day 5, Sunday, February 8, 2026

We woke up around 6:00 AM and had breakfast, then walked to the Jade Emperor Pagoda. From there, we strolled along the Thi Nhieu Canal and eventually started heading back toward our hotel. Along the way back, we came across an area filled with Lunar New Year decorations, with many people dressed up and enjoying the festivities. We continued back through Ben Thanh Market and then returned to the hotel. We had expected to meet our tour guide in the lobby at 1:00 PM, based on part of the information in our itinerary. However, while the guide listed 1:00 PM at the top, the daily schedule showed 5:00 PM. We asked the hotel to call the tour company, and talking to the tour company they confirmed that the meeting time was actually 5:00 PM. With some extra time, I walked over to Bui Vien Street and took video of the many motor scooters passing by, while Jay went back to our hotel room. Around 5:00 PM, I returned to the hotel and found Jay in the lobby, where we met the rest of our cycling tour group. We had stayed at the same hotel where the tour officially began the night before. The tour guide then drove us to another location where our rental bikes were waiting, and we were fitted for them. Our bike guide's name was Ngan Dahn, and he rode with us throughout the tour until we

reached Cambodia. We also had a support van and driver; typically, we would cycle part of each day and spend part of the day being transported with our bikes in the van. At the hotel lobby meeting we also met the other two riders on the trip, Ken and Moira, who were from Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada. After returning from picking up our bikes, I walked around the area for a bit and then went back to the hotel. At 7:00 PM we met our tour guide again in the hotel lobby for dinner. After dinner we returned to the hotel and settled in for the night. (Daily bike miles 0 miles; Total trip bike miles 0 miles)

Day 6, Monday, February 9, 2026

I woke up around 6:00 AM and had breakfast at the hotel, which was included with our stay. After breakfast, we loaded into a van and drove out of Ho Chi Minh City to begin our cycling tour. During the drive, our guide shared some interesting history about Vietnam. He told us that Vietnam's ST25 rice variety had been named the best rice in the world three times (in 2019, 2023, and 2025). He also mentioned that Ho Chi Minh City is home to the 17th tallest building in the world, the Vincom Landmark 81. We reached the outskirts of My Tho where the team unloaded our bikes, and we began cycling. After riding for a while, we stopped for coffee, and I had a mango smoothie. From there we continued along cement paths with very little scooter traffic, riding through rice paddies and farmland. Along the way we passed duck farms and saw a woman drying rice plants on the cement path. Our guide (Ngan) was very friendly with the local people and often stopped to ask what they were doing. They happily explained their work, and Ngan translated their responses into English so we could understand their conversations. Along the trail we also saw several kinds of fruit growing, including papaya, dragon fruit, and coconut. We stopped at our first pagoda, Buu Lam Pagoda. Someone there kindly invited us inside to eat, but we had to continue with our ride. We cycled through small villages where people were selling fruit and running small shops along the roadside. We reached a road lined with palm trees and passed through several more villages. At one point we crossed the Phà Tân Trụ ferry, a large flatbed ferry that carefully maneuvered through floating plants in the water. Later we stopped for coffee at Bau Thy Coffee Shop, which had pit toilets. The shop was interesting because it had shaded shelters with hammocks where people could lie down and rest from the humid heat. We sat in one of the shelters while others relaxed in hammocks nearby. After cycling a little farther, we stopped for lunch at a restaurant in a medium-sized village. Then we continued riding into what our guide called "coconut country." We came to a place where several people were manually preparing coconuts for export markets. From there we took a very small ferry with a wooden floor, just large enough for bicycles and foot traffic and not capable of carrying automobiles. We continued along roads lined with small coconut-processing workshops. We briefly stopped at the Dong Khoi National Special Monument, the site where the first uprising of the Dong Khoi movement took place in 1960. Later, our guide (Ngan) stopped to talk with a woman who was peeling coconuts. She told him that she earned about \$14 for every thousand coconuts she peeled. She used a knife-like blade fixed into the ground, placing each coconut onto it and used her body weight to strip off the shell. She was clearly very strong and hardworking, and it probably takes her an entire day to earn that \$14.

We continued riding through small villages near the coconut-processing areas. At one stop we saw a machine that twisted fibers from coconut husks into rope. We also learned how coconut leaves are used to make thatched roofs for huts. Eventually we stopped for a snack, and then the van picked us up and took us to our hotel. After arriving, I walked around the hotel grounds before enjoying a multi-course dinner. At the restaurant there was a man making rice wine, and we sampled several servings of his wine. I did not think the wine was very taste. After a long day, we went to sleep around 11:00 PM. (Daily bike miles 33.1 miles; Total trip bike miles 33.1 miles)

Day 7, Tuesday, February 10, 2026

I woke up around 6:30 AM and had breakfast. Our hotel organized a cooking class where they taught us how to make rice pancakes. First, they demonstrated the process, and then we got to make our own rice pancakes to eat for breakfast. The lodge sat beside a beautiful, calm stream on a lovely property, a peaceful retreat from the busy crowds of Vietnam. We began the day with a shuttle ride and then started cycling. Our route took us to Wat Somrong-ek, known for its statues of ladies, then around Di Tích Ao Bà Om, a lake filled with lily pads, and on to Chùa Khmer Chùa Âm, a wat featuring three-headed elephant statues. Along the way we passed a chimney that our guide, Ngan, explained was used as a crematorium for burning bodies before burial. We continued cycling to Sambo Rithisak Pagoda, recognizable by its long line of statues.

Next, we rode by a school that appeared to be on recess, and the children enthusiastically greeted us as we visited. A little farther on, Ngan stopped at a small home where a woman was weaving baskets in her yard beside a couple of cows. We were able to peek into her modest house. We stopped at another pagoda and then rode along narrow roads lined with palm trees and across cement paths cutting through rice paddies. Eventually we came across a small muddy pond where a man stood in the water up to his head, surrounded by hundreds of fish. Using a large net, he was catching fish, an unusual but effective fishing method. Throughout the day, children along the road eagerly gave us high fives as we passed. At one point Ngan (our guide) showed us a "Monkey bridge." It was a narrow bridge made from a single six-inch log with a simple stick handrail. To cross it, you had to walk sideways along the log while holding the stick rail. We tried walking partway across the monkey bridge. It was a clever, low-cost bridge designed for one person at a time with nothing to carry. After visiting another pagoda, the van picked us up and drove us to our hotel in Can Tho. Once we arrived, we checked in and took a short walk along the waterfront. Later we met for dinner and then walked around a bit more. I tried to get on Facebook but couldn't get online for the second day in a row. Poor internet service in some hotels. I finally went to sleep around 11:00 PM. (Daily bike miles 37.4 miles; Total trip bike miles 70.5 miles)

Day 8, Wednesday, February 11, 2026

I woke up around 6:00 AM and took a shower, then went to breakfast before meeting our tour guide at 7:30 AM. After that, we walked to the dock to start our floating market tour. At the dock, a man was selling small turtles, which I suspected might have been

part of an illegal wildlife trade. We boarded a small tour boat with just our five bike tour people. We headed down the Hau River toward the floating market. The boat ride was great. Along the way we passed boats with makeshift houses built on them, and the river surface was partially covered in free-floating plants. We also saw several small boats powered by large V8 engines connected to long-tailed propeller shafts. This design works well in shallow, weed-choked water because the operators can lift the propeller out of the water when maneuvering through vegetation or low water. At one point, a small boat pulled up alongside us. The man on board had a machine to make freshly squeeze orange juice, and a few of us bought some to drink. Next, we visited Sau Hoai's rice noodle factory to see how rice noodles are made. They also prepared their signature hủ tiếu pizza (noodle pizza - that's what they called it, although it looked more like a crumbled cracker pie). Afterward, we went downstairs in the factory where I bought a couple of souvenirs.

The floating market itself was interesting. It wasn't really set up for individual consumers but functioned more as a bulk supply market, with large boats loaded with fruit and vegetables. After the market, the boat dropped us off at An Binh Market, which sold fruit, fish, and other items for everyday shoppers. The market had unrefrigerated meat hanging for sale, which didn't seem very sanitary. Our tour van picked us up there and drove about 13 miles to where we began our cycling portion of the day. We spent most of the ride following canals. There were lots of fruit trees (mango, jackfruit, and others) and many makeshift homes along the canal banks. We also saw small fishing and transport boats on the canal. Many locals cheered us on as we cycled down the narrow roads, and kids kept giving us high fives. It was a really fun ride.

Along the way we saw fishing areas and buildings used for swift bird nesting. We stopped for coffee at Nha Boi Coffee Shop, which was next to a factory where they build wooden furniture. Vietnam produces very elegant furniture. After the break, we continued cycling through villages and stopped at Nhà Thờ Thới Lai Church, where children greeted us on bicycles. We took some great photos with them. Continuing along the canal, we came to a spot with a large metal lift connected to the shore. A big net in the water held many fish. The owner demonstrated how it worked by raising the lift, which pulled up the net so the fish could be transferred to other nets for processing. Along the route we also saw single roosters kept in cages. They were separated to make them more aggressive for illegal cockfighting. We eventually stopped for lunch at Song Hau Farm, which also had a frog farm. Later we crossed a canal using a very small ferry man powered boat (essentially a paddle boat). We also passed a farm growing yellow pumpkins. In total, we cycled about 34 miles along the canals before the van picked us up and drove us another 45 miles to our hotel. After arriving, we had dinner and took a short walk around the area. (Daily bike miles 34 miles; Total trip bike miles 104.5 miles)

Day 9, Thursday, February 12, 2026

I woke up around 6:00 AM and had breakfast at the hotel. After packing up, we loaded the van. A local vendor had rolled up with a small cart selling items, and a young girl was singing karaoke nearby. So, Jay went across the street to practice his karaoke. We then drove about 10 minutes before unloading the bikes to begin our ride. Along the trail we saw people fishing in a large pond using nets.

We also passed farmers spraying fields with chemicals that they carried in backpack sprayers. There were several large duck farms along the canals, and we again saw the tall concrete buildings used for farming swift nests. In one field, we noticed a large agricultural drone that was about eight feet in diameter with eight propellers that was being used for crop-dusting. We stopped at Tra Su National Reserve, a protected forest and bird sanctuary. While there, we took a couple of boat rides through the waterways. We saw some beautiful birds, although it was difficult to get photos because the stops were short. I did manage to spot kingfishers, egrets, and painted storks. We also visited a bee farm and climbed the 25-meter observation tower at the reserve. From the top, we had a great view looking down over the forest and the buildings in the bird sanctuary. Afterward, we stopped for lunch, where I saw one of the coolest birds of the trip, a hoopoe. Following lunch, we cycled through rice paddies dotted with palm trees and flocks of egrets. We also passed peanut farms and saw people making palm sugar. The sap is collected high in the palm trees and then boiled over an open fire until it thickens into palm sugar. Toward the end of the day's ride, I was giving kids high fives as we passed. When I looked up, everyone ahead of me had suddenly come to a complete stop. I hit my brakes hard and the bike bounced slightly. I didn't fall, but I injured my rotator cuff, and it still hurts a month later. I'm not sure how long it will take to heal, though I've been doing rotator cuff stretches recently. Our final stop on the bikes was the memorial to the Ba Chúc massacre, where more than 3,000 people were killed between April 18 and April 30, 1978. The memorial included a building containing many of the victims' skulls. After visiting the site, the crew loaded our bikes into the van and drove us to the hotel. The hotel had a great view of the river. I walked around the area for a bit and then went to sleep around 11:00 PM. (Daily bike miles 38 miles; Total trip bike miles 142.5 miles)

Day 10, Friday, February 13, 2026

I woke up around 6:00 AM and had the included breakfast at the hotel. It wasn't very good, and I had an upset stomach and barely slept the night before. We walked around the market in Ha Tien for a while and then returned to the hotel to depart. Our Vietnam guide and driver took us to the Cambodian border, where we said our goodbyes. From there, we walked with our luggage through the process of getting our Cambodian visas and officially entering the country.

We were supposed to meet our Cambodian guide, Sophat Phal (who went by the nickname "Tree") right after exiting Vietnam and entering Cambodia. However, when we reached the Cambodia side of the border area, none of us seemed to know where to find our guide. Ken sent him a message on WhatsApp, and he said he was still waiting at the border for us. We walked back and eventually found him on his way to look for us. None of us had seen him when we exited customs, and he blamed us for not finding him. I'm not sure how he could have missed us, we were the only foreigners walking across the border at that time and it was not crowded. Once we met our Cambodian guide, he took us to the vans carrying our bikes. The team helped us adjust our new rental bikes. In Cambodia, we had two guide vans: one for transporting us, driven by someone whose name sounded like Lie, and another for carrying the bikes and our luggage when needed, driven by someone whose name sounded like Juhn.

After the bikes were ready, we started cycling toward Kep. It was a very pleasant ride along the calm ocean harbor. We stopped for a break near a rickety old bridge that looked like it could collapse at any moment. After the break, we continued riding into the town of Kep, where we stopped for lunch. My stomach still wasn't feeling well, so I only had a small lunch, just a single spring roll. After lunch, we headed to the hotel. The beach was more than a mile away, but after settling into the hotel, we walked down to the beach. Later that night, I went to sleep around 11:00 PM. (Daily bike miles 16.2 miles; Total trip bike miles 158.7 miles)

Day 11, Saturday, February 14, 2026

I woke up around 6:00 AM and had breakfast. We left the hotel around 8:00 AM. My stomach had been feeling very bad. We started the day cycling to a pepper farm, where we were given a tour and learned about the process of harvesting pepper from the vines. We tried a fresh pepper ball, which was quite spicy. The pepper plants grow on vertical supports made from sticks and stacked bricks, and the clusters looked somewhat like hops. After that, we cycled to a pagoda where we stopped for some snacks. From there, we continued riding past many mango farms. We also visited a site with a large reclining Buddha statue. Later, our bikes were loaded into the van, and we drove to lunch. At the restaurant, there were cages with guinea pigs. I think they were mainly there for children to pet. After lunch, we were driven to our lodging at Meas Homestay. The accommodations were on a woman's property where she had built several small cabins with about six guest rooms. The location was quite remote, far from any towns, so there wasn't much to do once we arrived. At the end of the road, there was a place where people were weaving blankets. It also served as a training center where others could learn the weaving craft. We went to visit the weaving factory, but it was already closed for the day. We had dinner at the lodge and went to sleep around 11:00 PM. (Daily bike miles 32 miles; Total trip bike miles 190.7 miles)

Day 12, Sunday, February 15, 2026

I woke up around 6:00 AM and walked around the grounds. I tried to post something on Facebook, but it didn't work. The pond had beautiful water lily flowers, cows were grazing in the pasture, and cats were everywhere. Our host, Linda, prepared a great breakfast for us, and then we started cycling. We rode along some wonderful low-traffic dirt roads that passed through rice paddies, small towns, scenic lakes, and farms. At one lake, we saw people pushing a boat through the water collecting water lilies to transplant into another lake. They were barefoot, standing in knee-deep water, loading the boat by hand with water lilies. They would bring the plants to shore and pile them along the road, where they would later be loaded onto a scooter truck and taken to another lake. At one bridge, we noticed counterfeit U.S. dollar bills scattered on the ground. I saw these fake bills a few times during this trip. Having them in the United States would have been considered a serious crime. As we continued, the roads gradually became more paved. We passed many homes built on stilts. Most appeared well built, probably by the home owner. A few of the homes were more construction-grade. We stopped for a snack at a wat in Trapeang Veang Village, Cambodia. Then we continued cycling through villages where we often saw one or two cows in front of homes, usually tied up with a rope collar.

Later we stopped at Phnom Chisor Temple, which required a climb of about 400 steps to reach the temple on Chisor Mountain. At the top of the stairs, we reached an older section of the temple. It was constructed in the early 11th century by King Suryavarman, making it older than the 12th-century temples at Angkor Wat. After that, we visited the Killing Fields at Choeung Ek Genocidal Center. It was a painful place to hear the story of how more than two million Cambodians were killed between 1975 and 1979. The site contains several mass graves where 8,895 bodies were unearthed after the massacres. Next, we were shuttled to our hotel in Phnom Penh and checked in to our rooms. It was a great hotel with a view of the city, a nice pool on the 12th floor, and a bar on the top floor. We spent a couple of hours walking around town. That evening, we were shuttled to a fancy waterfront restaurant, the Titanic Restaurant (Bopha Phnom Penh) on the Tonlé Sap River. After dinner, we walked along the crowded Chakomuk walking street. A woman was following us, and at first, I thought she might be trying to sell something. It turned out she was our guide's wife. Once I realized that, I felt more comfortable talking with her. During the day, Chakomuk walking street has traffic, but at night the road is closed and thousands of people gather there. The street is lined with shopping stalls and food carts. We even joined a line dance in the middle of the street. Eventually we were shuttled back to the hotel, where I worked on some computer tasks until midnight. (Daily bike miles 29.3 miles; Total trip bike miles 220 miles)

Day 13, Monday, February 16, 2026

I woke up around 6:30 AM, had breakfast at about 7:30 AM, and met our guide for a private city tour around 8:30 AM. We started by walking along the main street, Preah Norodom Boulevard, to see the Independence Monument. From there, we continued to Botumvatey Pagoda, an area where monks live. Nearby, we met some of our guide's friends and stopped to have tea with them. Next, we visited the Royal Palace and toured its beautiful grounds and pagodas. There were many impressive displays, including the Silver Pagoda, which houses gold and jeweled Buddha statues. Highlights included the Emerald Buddha and the Maitreya Buddha, which is decorated with more than 9,000 diamonds. The floor of the Silver Pagoda is made up of more than 5,000 silver tiles. After visiting the palace, we climbed the stairs at the Wat Phnom historic site, considered the birthplace of Phnom Penh. While we were there, we saw Chinese dances and musicians practicing in preparation for the Lunar New Year. We then continued to the National Museum, which houses many artifacts from the Pre-Angkorian, Angkorian, and Post-Angkorian periods. During the tour, we also learned several interesting facts about Cambodia:

1. Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, sits at a scenic confluence of three major rivers known as the Chattomukh, or "Four Faces." These are the Mekong River, the Tonlé Sap River, and the Bassac River.
2. The S-21 prison held more than 14,000 prisoners. Only 12 are believed to have survived. Some prisoners died there from mistreatment, but most were sent to Choeung Ek for execution.
3. The Cambodian flag's colors each have meaning: red represents bravery, blue represents liberty, cooperation, and brotherhood (King), and white represents religion.

After our city tour, we returned to the hotel. I walked over to Central Market, where I bought a nice pair of shorts at a cheap price, though I couldn't find a shirt or mask that I liked. On the way back toward the hotel, I saw some people burning counterfeit U.S. \$100 bills. It was interesting because I had seen these fake bills a few times while in Cambodia. They weren't perfect, but they looked surprisingly similar to real USA \$100 bills. When I got back to the hotel, I found Jay and Ken. The three of us walked to Orussey Market to check it out. We didn't end up seeing much of it, and I thought the Central Market was far more interesting. Afterward, we headed to a nightlife area and stopped for a beer at a quiet bar called Sandy. It was very quiet, only the bartender, Ken, Jay, and I were there. Later we returned to the hotel, where I worked on my journal. (Daily bike miles 0 miles; Total trip bike miles 220 miles)

Day 14, Tuesday, February 17, 2026

I woke up around 6:00 AM and went to breakfast at about 7:15 AM. Afterward we got ready for the day and met the group in the hotel lobby at 8:00 AM. The shuttle took us a short distance, where the others had gooseneck extensions added to their rental bikes. I'm not sure if they had requested them beforehand or if they all asked for them at the same time. I was never asked if I wanted one. It might have been nice to have one, but I didn't have any issues with my setup, so I didn't ask for one. We soon started cycling and quickly passed through an area filled with condos worth \$300K+ USD. Our guide told us this was the wealthy neighborhood. It looked appealing in some ways, but it seemed to lack culture and things to do. Our guide mentioned there were good coffee shops there. There were no houses with yards, which I would have preferred. The condos looked more like luxury apartments. Our guide told us the large condos in premium location cost over a million USD each. After a couple of miles, the road became rougher and we were back in the normal, poorer and much more interesting areas. As in other places we had ridden, kids along the road happily greeted us with enthusiastic "Hello!" as we passed. In the wealthy area the people were either at the coffee shops or in their condos. We stopped for a break, and the guide asked me, "What's on your right?" I looked at the wall beside me but couldn't read the writing on it. He asked again, and this time I realized he was making a joke. He was actually said "Wat on your right." Behind the wall with the writing was a pagoda and several wats. Along the route we saw several wooden houses on stilts, the kind you often see in jungle movie settings. Children continued smiling and waving as we rode by. In some places cows were walking along the side of the road, and at one point we cycled past groups of monks walking quietly along the roadside. We visited Wat Samvora Seikou (One Hundred Wat Chre). We also saw many heavily loaded scooters being used like small trucks, often even pulling trailers. At one point we reached a section of road that had collapsed due to a washout. We were able to get our bikes through the washout, but the support vehicles couldn't pass. They eventually found another route and met us farther down the road. Later we stopped at a small store and noticed a rack filled with one-liter Coke bottles containing gasoline. That's how people on motor scooters buy fuel when they're out in remote areas. We didn't see many gas stations. In some places, gasoline was sold out of 55-gallon drums fitted with simple fuel spouts. After finishing the ride, the crew loaded our bikes into the van and drove us to lunch. Afterward we visited a market where we tried several unusual foods. The sold tarantulas, crickets, grub worms, and several other insects cooked to eat.

They also had baby quail cooked inside the eggshell and several other market foods to eat. I tasted the tarantula, grub worm, cricket, and the incubated quail in the egg shell. We then continued into town and checked into our hotel. Later we had a beer at the rooftop bar, which had a great view of the town, and then went to dinner. After dinner I walked around town with Moira. When we returned, I worked on my journal until nearly midnight before finally going to sleep. (Daily bike miles 40.7 miles; Total trip bike miles 260.7 miles)

Day 15, Wednesday, February 18, 2026

I woke up around 6:00 AM and had breakfast at the hotel, which was included with our stay. We started cycling around 8:00 AM and first visited the rickety Kaoh Pan Island Bamboo Bridge in Kampong Cham. It was pretty cool, completely made from split bamboo woven together. They take the bridge down during the wet season so it doesn't get washed away. Even though it's strong, it feels like you might break through the bamboo as you cross it. After that we rode through Kampong Cham and followed the Mekong River toward Wat Hanchey. Along the way we came across a party set up right in the middle of the trail. We had to get off our bikes and walk them around the tables and chairs, but the people at the party were very friendly. Not far past the party we passed a small trailside school where several children had gathered on the path. Many of them wanted to say hello and were excited to be in photos with us. People in Cambodia are very fun and welcoming. We continued along a great narrow path with very little traffic that followed the Mekong River. Along the way we saw all sorts of farmed crops, including pomelo, bilimbi, pineapple, rubber trees, tapioca (cassava), and cashew trees. We also passed many old wooden houses on stilts that looked like the kinds of houses you see in Asian movies.

It was a short but steep ride up to Wat Hanchey, an 8th-century hilltop pagoda. It might have been the biggest hill we climbed during the entire trip, though it still wasn't much of a hill. The pagoda was great, with lots of fruit statues, views of the valley and nearby wats, and even some policewomen riding motor scooters. Afterward we cycled back down the hill through farmland on a quiet road that passed through forests of cashew and rubber trees. We also saw pineapple plantations and more tapioca (cassava) plants. Eventually the road became bumpy and dusty for a while. At that point Moira and Ken took the van shuttle, while the rest of us (Jay, Ted, and our guide) kept riding until we reached the spot where we loaded the bikes into the vans. From there we were shuttled to a very nice place for lunch. The grounds had a large swimming pool, gardens, and dining tables separated by ponds. After lunch we visited Ka Kos village, where people were carving stone sculptures. Then we were driven to our hotel in Kompong Thom. Later I went for a long walk along the road, though there wasn't much to see in that direction, just a few cows, a small village, a yoga class, and some people playing volleyball. I returned to the hotel where I found Jay and we took a short walk toward town. I realized I should have gone that direction earlier, it was much more interesting, with cool lights and lively markets. After that we returned to the hotel, where I worked on my journal until about midnight before finally going to sleep. (Daily bike miles 32.6 miles; Total trip bike miles 293.3 miles)

Day 16, Thursday, February 19, 2026

I woke up around 6:00 AM and had the included breakfast at 6:50 AM, then finished getting ready for the day. We left the hotel around 7:30 AM and began cycling. Early on we had some issues with the e-bikes, so we started slowly. It took about 45 minutes to get everything working properly, as the e-bikes had occasional problems. My standard bike never had problem. Everyone else except the guide had e-bikes. Once we were moving, we cycled through town and continued along rural roads, passing children, farm buildings with swifts nesting inside, and wooden houses. At one wooden house on stilts, we stopped to watch a woman sorting rice. She used a hand sifter to separate the premium rice from the rest. Continuing on, we came across a large hole in a field where people were sifting through the mud to extract catfish. Later we stopped for a snack at a smoothie shop. While we were there, a man arrived on a Kubota walking tractor, and we learned how the engines are used for many purposes, including as generators. We even took photos sitting on the walking tractor with the Kubota engine.

Further along we reached a pond that had just been drained. People were walking through the mud collecting fish to eat. After that we stopped at a farm where they were producing brown sugar from palm sap. Trees had bottles attached to collect the sap, which was then cooked down until it became a thick brown paste. They used a hand-operated churn to help create the paste. Next, we visited the archaeological site of the Prasat Sambor Prei Kuk temple complex. We sat down for a snack, and about 100 monkeys gathered in the surrounding trees, watching us and waiting to see if they might get some of our food. They didn't come too close, and we managed to get some great photos. None of the monkeys got our food, and afterward the guide packed everything back into the van. We then walked along the road to explore the 7th-century ruins, seeing temples dating from around 600 to 700 AD. After that we were taken to lunch at a restaurant where each dining area was set in a small straw-covered structure on stilts with its own table. Later we visited the Spean Praptos bridge, a 12th-century Angkorian-era bridge that appears on the back of the 5,000 Cambodian riel note. From there we were shuttled to our hotel in Siem Reap. We said goodbye to our original Cambodian bike guide and one of the support van drivers and tipped them for their help. That evening we walked around a bit before going to sleep around midnight. (Daily bike miles 31.2 miles; Total trip bike miles 324.5 miles)

Day 17, Friday, February 20, 2026

I woke up around 6:00 AM and went to breakfast at about 6:45 AM. Afterward, we got ready and met the group at 7:30 AM to leave for cycling, although we didn't actually start riding until about 8:05 AM. That day we had a local Angkor Wat guide riding with us on a bike, and we kept the same bikes we had been using previously. It turned into another day with e-bike issues. They couldn't get Jay's e-bike working, so we eventually left without the electric assist functioning on Jay's bike. Interestingly, he said it suddenly started working shortly after they gave up and we began riding. Jay thought the issue might have been related to the Bluetooth connection with the phone-based controllers. The guides often switched controllers from one bike to another whenever something stopped

working. We rode along some really nice trails through the woods, passing cows along the way. Our first stop was the main three-tiered Angkor Wat temple, which is surrounded by a large moat. One wall featured bas-relief carvings depicting the story of the Samudra Manthan. We walked through several areas of the main Angkor Wat complex. One section had a very steep staircase that we climbed. We spent quite a bit of time exploring this part of Angkor Wat. It was extremely crowded. When it was time to leave, there was a long line to go down the steep stairs, one set was used to enter and another to exit, creating a real bottleneck. We walked around the area for a while before finally returning to our bikes. Our next stop was Ta Prohm temple, known for the large trees growing through the ruins. This area has been left mostly unrestored. The massive roots of strangler fig and silk-cotton trees were intertwined with the stone structures, creating a dramatic scene. After visiting Ta Prohm temple, we rode bikes to our final stop at Bayon temple, which is famous for the many large faces carved into the towers. There were also bas-relief carvings on the walls here that told various stories. From there, we began cycling back to the hotel but made one last stop at the South Gate of Angkor Thom, where we took photos on the moat bridge. After returning to the hotel, we turned in our bikes and tipped both our one-day temple guide and the support vehicle guide. We took a short break and then headed to Pub Street for a beer. That evening we went to dinner at a restaurant featuring Cambodian Apsara dances performed on a Hollywood-style stage. They also put on an energetic show that included non-contact kickboxing. Afterward, we returned to the hotel and filled out our Thailand arrival cards. I then cleaned some clothes and worked on a few things until late. (Daily bike miles 22.4 miles; Total trip bike miles 346.9 miles)

Day 18, Saturday, February 21, 2026

I woke up around 6:00 AM and went to breakfast at about 7:30 AM. After breakfast, we headed out for a shopping walk. We started at Pub Street, which was very quiet at that time of the morning. Then we went to the Market. Jay was looking for a backpack, while I wasn't quite sure what I wanted. Eventually we split up, Jay continued looking for his backpack, and I ended up buying a couple T-shirts before heading back to the hotel. Our plan for the day was to return to the hotel by 1 PM and go to visit a couple of museums from there. The hotel had arranged a taxi for us. The taxi driver first drove us to the War Museum and waited there while we looked around, then took us to the National Museum afterward. The War Museum was interesting, though there wasn't a lot to see besides rusted tanks and other military vehicles. One section focused on the land mines that still exist throughout Cambodia. It explained how mines can be detected by trained dogs and even rats, as well as by specialized machines. There were once millions of mines in the country. Tourist areas are generally cleared, but it's still not recommended to wander far off established paths because of the risk of unexploded mines.

After the War Museum, we met our taxi driver again and he drove us to the National Museum. The national museum had several stone sculptures and historical artifacts. When we finished seeing the national museum, we walked back to the hotel. Once back at the hotel I went for a swim. Ken and Moira were at the swimming pool. Ken told me they had visited the place where the mine-detecting rats are trained. It sounded really interesting, but I didn't have enough time to go since it wasn't close to the hotel. I do

wish I had been able to see it. Ken also mentioned that he had gone to the Artisans Angkor Living Museum and that it was within walking distance of the hotel. After changing out of my swim trunks, I told Jay I was heading to the Artisans Angkor Living Museum. He was busy, so I walked over by myself. The “living museum” was actually more of a training center. During the Khmer Rouge years, many Cambodian artists were killed, and this center was created to train new artists in traditional methods. They had several workshops where visitors could watch artisans at work, including silk weaving, silver statue molding, stone carving, wood carving, and lacquer work. At the end there was a gift shop where you could buy the artwork created there. The grounds were beautifully maintained, with ponds, statues, and well-groomed plants. After leaving the Artisans Angkor living museum, I went shopping again and bought a button-up shirt and a Cambodia baseball cap. That evening we met Ken and Moira for dinner at a Mexican restaurant. Later I worked on my computer until about midnight before going to sleep. (Daily bike miles 0 miles; Total trip bike miles 346.9 miles)

Day 19, Sunday, February 22, 2026

I woke up around 6:00 AM, and Jay called the front desk to confirm whether breakfast was included with our room. They said it was, which surprised me because I thought I remembered not paying for breakfast. We went ahead and had the included breakfast, but when we checked out later, they tried to charge us for our last night in our room. The first 2 night were part of our cycling tour and the 3rd night I paid for separately using Orbitz before leaving Portland. I told them that as best I could (I used English, since I do not know the Cambodian language) when we first checked in. They said we never paid, luckily, I had my receipt printed up and they were able to confirm that I had already paid, so they removed the charge. I’m still not completely sure whether breakfast was actually supposed to be included. After checking out, we took a taxi with Ken and Moira to the airport. From there we flew to Bangkok and took a bus to a stop near our hotel. When we arrived, it was too early to check in, so we left our luggage at the hotel and headed out to walk around the city. For most of the day we followed a route I had already mapped out on my GPS. Before leaving Portland, I had researched the places I wanted to see in Bangkok and created a GPS track with waypoints marking each location. Our first stop was the Democracy Monument, where we took a photo before continuing on. The early part of the walk we passed several newer buildings, and then we headed toward the Rattanakosin Wat area, where we photographed the Loha Prasat temple. That day we only planned to look at places from the outside. If something interested us, we would come back the next day to explore it more thoroughly. Next, we stopped to take photos of the front of the Ministry of Defense. After that we walked past the Grand Palace and decided we would return there the following day. We looked for a coffee shop nearby but couldn’t find one we liked near the palace. At that point Jay decided to head back to the hotel while I continued along my GPS walking route. I took photos of the outside of Wat Arun, Wat Pho, and the King Vajiravudh (Rama VI) Museum before reaching the Flower Market. I spent some time wandering through the flower market, which was very interesting. There were many beautiful flower arrangements as well as large quantities of flowers being sold in bulk. After leaving the flower market, I continued walking and crossed the Chao Phraya River on a bridge. From there I took a photo of Wat Prayurawongsawas Worawihan from the outside. I then visited Wat

Kalayanamit Woramahawihan and walked around the grounds, which was free to enter. Next, I went to the outside area of Wat Arun and briefly considered paying to go inside but ultimately decided not to. Instead, I took the ferry back across the Chao Phraya River for about \$0.50 USD and arrived at terminal N8 (Tha Tien), near the Grand Palace. By that point I had essentially completed my entire walking route.

I then started walking back to the hotel and thought I could find it without using my GPS. I ended up a little off track and eventually had to pull out the GPS to locate the hotel. When I got back, I stopped by the front desk to get our room key and found Jay in our room. Later we went out to dinner near the hotel. Jay said he didn't want to see any more Buddhas or pagodas, so I'm not sure exactly what he wants to see in Bangkok. After dinner we walked around the Khao San Road area, which was very close to the hotel. There was a lot going on there. It's a walking street filled with vendors selling all kinds of items, along with many food stalls and restaurants.

We returned to the hotel, and I worked on my computer for a while. Around 9:00 PM I decided to go back out to buy some water. By then the activity on Khao San Road had doubled. The street was packed with people, and many of the bars had women dancing on tables to attract customers. I probably should have taken more photos that night. I eventually returned to the hotel, worked a bit more on my computer, and went to sleep around midnight. (Daily bike miles 0 miles; Total trip bike miles 346.9 miles)

Day 20, Monday, February 23, 2026

I woke up around 6:30 AM and we had breakfast at McDonald's. Afterward, we walked to the Grand Palace and paid to enter the grounds. There were many impressive statues and temples throughout the palace complex. At one point, a group of young military boys approached us with a list of questions, which Jay happily answered. Then military man had Jay answer a list of questions in English, and the interview lasted about 20 minutes. While walking around the palace, we saw what looked like a changing of the guard. A group of guards marched in, and at one of the exit gates one guard faced the one already posted there. They performed a formal back-and-forth march before the new guard took over the entrance, while the previous guard marched away. After leaving the palace, we took a tuk-tuk to the arts area on Charoen Krung 32 Alley. The walls were covered with colorful paintings and professional-style murals done with spray paint (looked like fine graffiti). There were also several small art galleries, including one with multiple bronze statues. We visited a section called Warehouse 30 that had an interesting antique store. There were other shops which only had a few art items in each shop. Next, we walked to Central Park. When we first arrived, we saw some very large black water monitor lizards swimming in the park moat. They moved through the water like crocodiles but looked like giant lizards with long, pointed tongues. Once inside the park, Jay took a break in the shade while I did a short walk. I had planned to walk around the park when Jay was ready, but in hindsight I should have quickly gone around the large park while he was resting. When Jay finished his break, he wanted to head to the market instead. The park looked fairly typical, and I didn't want to deal with figuring out my way back to the hotel alone, so I went with him.

We then went to the Dusit Central Park mall, which had an underground food court. It was clean, air-conditioned, and very similar to a typical mall food court in the United States. To get a smoothie, we first had to get a voucher from a machine, then buy the item, and afterward return to the machine to receive our change. The machine wouldn't accept 50-baht bills, so I paid with a 100-baht bill and received the remaining change after buying the smoothie.

After lunch, we took a tuk-tuk back to our Bangkok hotel. Later, I walked down to the river and found a reasonably priced hop-on, hop-off river boat. I went back to tell Jay about it, but he wasn't interested, and it was getting late anyway. Instead, we went out for dinner near the hotel on Khao San Road. We walked around for a while and then returned to the hotel for the night. (Daily bike miles 0 miles; Total trip bike miles 346.9 miles)

Day 21, Tuesday, February 24, 2026

I woke up around 6:00 AM and took a taxi from the hotel to the airport. The night before, the hotel's tour company had told us the ride would cost 1,000 baht. We wanted to reserve the taxi then, but we didn't have enough baht in cash. They wouldn't accept U.S. dollars or credit cards. They said we could charge it to the room, but we would have to wait until morning. In the morning, the hotel (not the tour company) called a taxi for us. The ride ended up costing only 500 baht (half the price the tour company had quoted). Also, I had paid a 1,000-baht deposit for the room when we checked into the hotel, which I had forgotten about. I was given back my deposit and then had enough cash to pay for the taxi. The taxi took us to the airport, where we checked in for our flight. After going through security, we still had a couple of hours before boarding, so we walked around the airport for a while. Then we flew to Seoul, South Korea, where we had about a three-hour layover. I walked around the airport with Jay for a bit, but he wanted to stop at a coffee shop. Since I knew I would be sitting on a plane for a long time, I skipped the coffee shop and continued walking around the airport. Next, we had a 10-hour flight to Seattle. The flight went fine, although I was awake for most of it. In Seattle, we had a 4½-hour layover. I walked all around that airport as well and still had time to work on my journal for more than an hour. The flight to Portland went quickly. After arriving, I took the MAX train home and then biked to the Lucky Lab to see if any of my Ramblers friends were there. I didn't arrive until after 9:00 PM and didn't see anyone I knew. They usually show up a little after 8:00 PM, but the place was empty. I wasn't sure if they hadn't come that night or if they had already left. It seemed a little early for them to have left, so I assumed they hadn't gone. Later in the week, Paul told me he had been there but had already left by 9:00 PM. After stopping by the Lucky Lab, I biked home and tried to sleep, but I couldn't. It must have been the jet lag. Normally I adjust in a single night, but this time it took about a week to get back to my normal sleep schedule. (Daily bike miles 0 miles; Total trip bike miles 346.9 miles)