



Fables of the Hills

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Experience a new style of journey from the Eastern & Oriental Express. A tour of six nights and seven days taking you north from Singapore through the beautiful Cameron highlands to Bangkok.

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The equatorial sun streams down on the carriages of the Eastern & Oriental Express, resplendent in their green and cream livery.

Starting from modern Singapore, they are poised to make a journey back in time.

The journey leads to all that's best and most compelling in Asia: the romance and colonial heritage of Malaysia's mist-shrouded Cameron Highlands, the evocative Bridge over the River Kwai and the fabulously-varied architecture of cities such as Kuala Lumpur, Kuala Kangsar and Georgetown on the island of Penang.



Historian Hugh Cope introduces the infamous World War II Thailand-Burma railway, and the centre that he co-founded to record this region's past; Peranakan cooks reveal the spices that make Penang a food lover's dream; and an expert on Malaysia recounts the story behind the disappearance of Jim Thompson, creator of the modern Thai silk industry. Explore these dense jungles on a guided hike and form a theory of your own.

While guests will find this northbound route a voyage of discovery, it goes beyond the chance to admire breathtaking landscapes such as Bukit Merah lake, or to learn about the distinct cultures along the way. It is also a rare opportunity to take part in local activities and to do something excitingly new.

The stay in the Cameron Highlands, for instance, includes a tasting of teas or strawberries grown here in the hills, while a stop beyond Thailand's dramatic Tham Kasae viaduct enables guests to ride elephants at a working tuskers' camp.

This unique journey also offers special insights into the lives of local people: talk with experts at Surat Thani's Monkey Training Camp and learn how they teach these skilful creatures to harvest coconuts from tall trees; discover fascinating aspects of Georgetown history and culture from the babas and nyonyas who actually live it or visit The School of Hard Knocks at Kuala Lumpur's 125-year old Royal Selangor pewter factory and create your own pewter dish using traditional tools and methods.

DAY ONE – Singapore

The gleaming green carriages of the Eastern & Oriental Express await you at Singapore's Keppel Road station. As you arrive you are welcomed by stewards in exquisite Thai uniforms with their hands pressed together in a gracious "wai"—a promise of the journey to come.

A cool drink is served as you settle into your luxurious cabin. The whistle blows and the train sets off through the city, over the causeway into Malaysia and out into the countryside beyond. Make your way to the Bar Car for a cocktail reception hosted by the Train Manager and the chance to meet other guests. Enjoy dinner in one of the opulent dining cars and listen to the resident pianist playing nostalgic melodies in the Bar Car.

DAY TWO – Kuala Lumpur & Overnight at Cameron Highlands

After breakfast, the E&O arrives at the impressive Mughal-style Kuala Lumpur Railway Station, built in 1885. Immerse yourself in the bustling capital of Malaysia through a choice of activities such as a city tour, heritage walking tour or a visit to the National Museum. Full details of available options are provided on board.

Return to the E&O at midday and depart Kuala Lumpur. Lunch will be served on board as the E&O climbs past rubber plantations towards Malaysia's verdant uplands. After arriving at Tapah Station, disembark the train for the coach transfer to the luxurious Cameron Highlands Resort.

Relax and enjoy the two hour scenic drive over the rolling hills and pass through dense jungle where you may spot settlements of the Orang Asli (indigenous people). Along the way, enjoy photo stops at tea plantations, strawberry farms and flower galleries.

Upon your arrival at the Cameron Highlands Resort, sip cocktails and savour dinner while enjoying the fabulous views from what is Malaysia's most celebrated hill retreat.

DAY THREE – Cameron Highlands

After a leisurely breakfast at the resort, choose from a wide variety of tours and activities available (full details will be provided). Spend the morning being pampered at the famed Spa Village or visit the Best of Highlands tea plantation for a guided walk through the fragrant tea gardens and a tour of the factory with the chance to sample a variety of aromatic brews. Other options include a trip to the Mardi Agro-technology Park to discover the array of fruits, vegetables and flowers grown in the Highlands and to sample an amazing ten different varieties of strawberries.

A lunch based on this wonderful produce will be served at the resort. You then travel to Ipoh to once again board the gleaming Eastern & Oriental Express. Relax with an aperitif in the Bar Car before enjoying a fabulous dinner as the train glides on through the night.

DAY FOUR – Kuala Kangsar & Penang

This morning brings a leisurely tour through the royal city of Kuala Kangsar, home to the Sultan of Perak. Cradled in a bend of the Perak River, this historic city is charming, serene and full of interest. Visit the Victorian-era Royal Museum (the former Royal Palaces) and the impressive Ubudiah Mosque. Return to the train for lunch as you travel across exquisite Bukit Merah Lake before heading to the western coast of Malaysia. Upon your arrival at Butterworth Station you will be transferred to the island of Penang where several excursions are available. Options include a tour of colonial Georgetown with its rich blend of Chinese, Malay and Indian cultures, or you may choose to visit the Peranakan Heritage Museum or the Tropical Spice Garden Gallery which showcases excellent displays on the origins of the spice trade and how spices are used today.

At sunset, gather at the E&O Hotel and sip cocktails on the seafront terrace before heading to your choice of specially-selected venue to experience some of the best dining in Penang, an island known for its exceptional, regional cooking. A selection of local and international cuisines is available, including a Malaysian "hawker center" experience. After dinner, return to the train to continue your journey.

DAY FIVE – Monkey Training College at Surat Thani

During the early hours of the morning, the train crosses into Thailand at Padang Besar. Relax and enjoy scenic views of southern Thailand, as the train passes paddy fields and golden temples. A sumptuous lunch will be served on board before the E&O arrives at Surat Thani.

This agricultural town is known for its many types of fruit and oysters. However, the highlight of this stop is a private tour of the Monkey Training College. Its skilful 'students' have traditionally been used in this region to help harvest coconuts. At this college they learn how to choose only ripe coconuts, and to bring them down without damaging them.

Following the tour, return to the train to depart from Surat Thani. Dinner tonight is served on board as the train continues its journey through the Thai countryside towards Bangkok.

DAY SIX – River Kwai & the Tham Kasae Viaduct

This morning the train arrives at the River Kwai Bridge where you disembark for a leisurely cruise along the dramatic gorge on a local river barge. You then have time to visit the Thailand-Burma Railway Museum and Don Rak War Cemetery.

After returning to the train in the late morning, lunch will be served as you depart from Kanchanaburi Station. The train crosses the historic bridge at the River Kwai and travels towards Wang Po where you continue along the famous trestles at the Tham Kasae viaduct – one of the railway's most scenic stretches.

After lunch, choose from a variety of tours including a visit to an elephant camp, where you will see the animals at work and even ride one. Or, join an excursion to the memorial at the Hell Fire Pass Museum, a moving tribute to this region's turbulent history.

For your final night aboard the Eastern & Oriental Express, join the Train Manager for a farewell cocktail reception followed by a glamorous dinner on board. You may wish to exchange addresses with fellow guests over a digestif in the open air Observation Car, and spot stars in the night sky overhead.

DAY SEVEN – Bangkok

Arrive at 09:30am and disembark in Bangkok as the on board team wave you goodbye and wish you a pleasant onward journey.

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