IH: Ivan Henares

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Hello again BoilerMakers and welcome to another episode of Travel Asia brought to you by the Asian American and Asian Resource and Cultural Center of Purdue University! I am Ivan Henares from the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management and I will bring you around the different countries and regions of Asia in this series. For this episode we will be visiting Southeast Asia and I will be showing you photos of my trips! In particular the world heritage sites that I’ve seen when I visited all these countries.

The first country on the list is Brunei Darussalam! While Brunei does not have any world heritage sites, it has grand mosques as well as a historic settlement area called Kampong Ayer, which literally means “water village.” Kampong Ayer is a cluster of traditional stilt villages built on the Brunei River in the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan and it has been the principal settlement of Brunei and it’s said to have been inhabited for several centuries.

We now head on over to the kingdom of Cambodia! Cambodia has three world heritage sites and I visited two of them, Angkor, as well as the Temple of Preah Vihear! According to UNESCO, Angkor is one of the most important archaeological sites in Southeast Asia. It contains the magnificent of the different capitals of the Khmer Empire from the 9th to 15th centuries and of course the famous temples are Angkor Wat, Angkor Thom, and Bayon Temple. While Preah Vihear is a temple composed of a series of sanctuaries linked by a system of pavements and staircases over an 800 meter long axis and dates back to the first half of the 11th century.

Our next country is the biggest archipelago in the world, the Republic of Indonesia! Indonesia has 9 world heritage sites and I will be showing you photos of 3 of them. The cultural landscape of Bali province, Borobudur Temple, and Prambanan Temple. According to UNESCO, the cultural landscape of Bali consists of 5 ice terraces and their water temples. The temples are the focus of a cooperative water management system of canals and weirs, known as subak, that dates back to the 9th century. Included in the landscape is the 18th century Royal Water Temple of Pura Taman Ayun. Borobudur is a famous Buddhist temple, dating back to the 8th and 9th centuries and is located in
central Java. It was built in 3 tiers: a pyramidal base with 5 concentric square terraces, the trunk of a cone with 3 circular platforms and a top monumental stupa. And finally Prambanan Temple was built in the 10th century and it is the largest temple compound dedicated to Shiva in Indonesia.

We now fly over to Laos! Lao has 3 world heritage sites and I will be showing you photos of the town of Luang Prabang. Luang Prabang, according to UNESCO, is an outstanding example of the fusion of traditional architecture and Lao urban structures with those built by the European colonial authorities in the 19th and 20th centuries. Its unique, remarkably well-preserved townscape illustrates a key stage in the blending of these two distinct cultural traditions.

The next country on our list is Malaysia, truly Asia. Malaysia has 4 world heritage sites including Melaka and George Town, historic cities of the Straits of Malacca, as well as Kinabalu Park. According to UNESCO Melaka and George Town have developed over 500 years of trading and cultural exchanges between East and West in the Straits of Malacca. The influences of Asia and Europe have endowed the towns with a specific multicultural heritage that is both tangible and intangible. Both towns demonstrate the early stages of the country’s history originating in the 15th-century Malay sultanate and the Portuguese and Dutch periods beginning in the 16th century as well as the British era from the end of the 18th century. The towns constitute a unique architectural and cultural townscape without parallel anywhere in East and Southeast Asia. Kinabalu Park in the state of Sabah on the northern end of the island of Borneo, is dominated by Mount Kinabalu, 4,095 meters high, the highest mountain between the Himalayas and New Guinea.

We now visit the beautiful country of Myanmar. Myanmar, which is also known as Burma, has two world heritage sites one of which is Bagan. According to UNESCO, Bagan is a sacred landscape lying on a bend in the Irrawaddy River and features an exceptional range of Buddhist art and architecture. The seven components of the serial property include numerous temples, stupas, monasteries and places of pilgrimage as well as archaeological remains, frescoes and sculptures. The property bears spectacular testimony to the peak of Bagan civilization from the 11th to 13th centuries when the site was the capital of a regional empire.

We featured the next country in our first episode, the Philippines. The Philippines has 6 world heritage sites including the Baroque Churches of the Philippines, the Historic City of Vigan, the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras, as well as the Puerto-Princesa Subterranean River National Park which were all featured during our first episode.
We now head on over to the bustling and cosmopolitan city state of Singapore. Singapore has 1 world heritage site, the Singapore Botanic Gardens. According to UNESCO the site demonstrates the evolution of a British tropical colonial botanic garden that has become a modern world-class scientific institution used for both conservation and education. Of course, this island, city state used to be part of the Strait settlements such as George Town and Melaka. As a result it still has vestiges of that history including historic district areas of both ki Chinatown, Kampong Glam, and Little India characterized by predominantly 2 and 3 story shophouses ranging from the early shophouse style to the art deco shophouse style.

Next on our list is Kingdom of Thailand. Thailand has 5 world heritage sites and I will be showing you photos of 2 of them, Sukhothai and Ayutthaya. According to UNESCO, Sukhothai was the capital of the first Kingdom of Siam in the 13th and 14th centuries. It has a number of fine monuments, illustrating the beginnings of Thai architecture. The great civilization which evolved in the Kingdom of Sukhothai absorbed numerous influences and ancient local traditions. The rapid assimilation of all these elements forged what is known as the “Sukhothai style” while the Historic City of Ayutthaya was founded in 1350 and became the second Siamese capital after Sukhothai. It was destroyed by the Burmese in the 18th century. Its remains, characterized by the prang, or reliquary towers, and gigantic monasteries give an idea of its past splendour.

We now head on over to Vietnam. Vietnam has 7 world heritage sites and I visited 5 of them. One of them is the Complex of Hué monuments. According to UNESCO, Hué was established as the capital of unified Vietnam in 1802. It was the political, cultural, and religious center of the Nguyen dynasty until 1945. The Perfume River winds its way through the Capital City, the Imperial City, the Forbidden Purple City, and the Inner City, giving this unique feudal capital a setting of great natural beauty. Hoi An Ancient Town, according to UNESCO, is an exceptionally well-preserved example of a South-East Asian trading port dating from the 15th to the 19th century. Of course, there is the very famous Ha Long Bay in the Gulf of Tonkin, which according to UNESCO, includes some 1,600 islands and islets, forming a spectacular seascape of limestone pillars. I also got to visit the Central Sector of the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long in Hanoi as well as the My Son Sanctuary. The political and religious capital of the Champa Kingdom, it owes its spiritual origins to Indian Hinduism.

Last but not the least is the newest country of Southeast Asia, Timor-Leste. Although I haven’t visited Timor-Leste or East Timor, it’s definitely on my bucket list. I’m very excited to see the traditional houses known as Uma Lulik or the sacred houses, as well as architecture from their Portuguese colonial history.
There you have it BoilerMakers, we’ve just completed another episode of Travel Asia! If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions please email us at aaarcc@purdue.edu. Thank you very much and until the next episode, BoilerUp!