



***2010 Discover Southeast Asia:
Volunteer, Immerse, & Explore in Thailand,
Cambodia, or Vietnam***

Location	Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka
Start Dates	All year round. Starts every 1 st Monday of the month. Minimum 2 weeks. Maximum 6 months. Please apply three months in advance of your start date.
Program Fees (in US\$)	Varies based on project and destination. Fees starting as low as US \$1276 (2 weeks). Discounts provided for long-term stays.
What's Included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer placement Pre-departure & Local Support Housing (basic & safe) Most meals Arrival pick-up & transfer Training orientation, assessment Comprehensive health insurance Optional cultural activities & trips
What's not Included	International airfare, Visa fees in applicable
Accommodations	Safe, comfortable, clean basic accommodations in volunteer housing or host family. Shared bathroom. 2-3 meals per day available with projects or homestay.

Cultural Embrace's "Discover Southeast Asia" program consists of an exciting way for you to customize your own way to explore beautiful Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Nepal, or Sri Lanka. A minimum of two weeks includes a week orientation to help you familiarize yourself with the culture, lifestyle, language, people, food, attitude, habits, and environment. Then choose to volunteer by teaching or tutoring English, assisting in an orphanage, building/construction projects, social welfare, and animal or land conservation; or decide to travel throughout the region to visit main attractions; or opt to enjoy a week on the beautiful beaches. All options are available for at least one week, so you can mix and match the different options so it will match your preferences and skills.

Projects & Activities Description

Volunteer Orientation

The orientation week and training are the first step for a successful stay in Southeast Asia. Therefore the first week is dedicated to familiarizing yourself with the country and meeting the other participants. You will also engage in the following activities: learning about the culture, team-building activities, language and cooking lessons and visiting local tourist places. You will also have time to meet the local people, taste the food and learn about the countries customs. During this period, everyone will also be informed in detail about the program chosen and the different projects.

Volunteer Projects and Cultural Excursions

Thailand Program

If you are interested in **volunteering** during your time in Thailand, *Cultural Embrace* can organize week-long projects for you to teach/tutor English, work on environmental/eco projects in the forest and hillside, provide assistance at local orphanages, or volunteer at hilltribe villages. During your **Cultural Excursion time** you may find that you want to experience Thailand's rich in history and culture by exploring Buddhism, Muay Thai boxing, or eco-tours. Or opt to go on a trek through the hilltribe villages or jungle, which will give you a first-hand look at how many Thai minorities live and how pristine and beautiful these areas are.

Cambodia Program

If you are interested in **volunteering** during your time in Cambodia, *Cultural Embrace* can organize week-long projects for you to teach/tutor English local students. This program consists of helping students, aged between 7-18 years old, at various schools. Accommodation is generally in home stays with carefully screened and selected local families or in a local hostel. **Central Cambodia Tour** Cambodia is a country of considerable contradictions. After going through a troublesome and violent past with extreme poverty, Cambodia still retains its undeniable charm and glory. During this week-long tour, we will visit the archeological and world famous sites of Angkor Wat, . We will also visit the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh, and a visit to the National museum. And let's not forget another highlight—tasting local Cambodian cuisine throughout the region! Accommodation in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh will be in basic local guesthouses located close to the city centre. This week-long adventure is available every third week of the month. **Beach** Our Beach week takes place in Sihanoukville, Cambodia's premier beach town. This is also the time for everyone to relax in the company of the other volunteers and a great way to reflect on your experience abroad.

Vietnam Program

Our Volunteer Vietnam Program is a fantastic opportunity to be a responsible traveler and make a positive contribution during your stay. You will be placed in a local school, where

you will have the possibility to give a positive input into the life of the Vietnamese children. Volunteers are invited to teach English in a creative way. During this week, you will have the chance to learn more about the cultural diversity in Vietnam. You will also visit a typical Vietnamese village and spend time inter-acting with the locals. This will be a unique experience that you will remember for the rest of your lifetime. **Cultural Excursions:** You will explore the most of the remote Vietnam! Visit the Sapa region and experience a homestay in a remote village and camp in the forest. You will also do an Environmental Trek through the jungle, with the chance to swim in a waterfall. Vietnam also has amazingly **beautiful beaches** and it is also home to one of the Worlds Heritage - Ha Long Bay! You will enjoy a day out on the boat, seeing the wonders of Ha Long Bay, swimming and relaxing. During the daytime everyone can do as they would like to: relaxing, reading, swimming or anything else you wish. This is also the time to be together with the other Active in Asia participants and to make an evaluation of the previous weeks. The itinerary will change accordingly to the season; in case of cold weather (October-March), the visit to Ha Long Bay will be shortened, and we will visit instead the Thanh Thuy Hot Mineral Water Mine, located in La Phu and Bao Yen communes, Thanh Thuy district. Hot mineral water contains sodium, calcium, etc, especially radon - a rare and precious kind of radon for the first time discovered in Vietnam, which is very good for health!

Indonesia Program

Cultural Embrace offers you the choice of teaching at schools, re-habilitation & follow up projects for earthquake victims, assisting in renovation & construction of small scale infrastructure at local communities, a cultural week exploring the beauty of Yogyakarta, Borobudur and Prambanan, or exploring the beach at Karimunjawa. If you have a specialty or special skill you wish to share with the local community, please let us know so that an individual volunteer placement can be arranged. Before you begin volunteering, you will enjoy an introduction week, which is the first step towards a successful stay in Indonesia. During this time you will take basic Indonesian lessons, learn social "do's & don'ts", practice team building activities, and explore local sightseeing, such as a traditional market, Ungaran Mountain and the ancient group temple of Gedong Songo (Nine Hindu Temples).

Nepal Program

The Volunteer in Nepal program is the best way for you to experience the most of what the spiritual and enchanted land of Nepal has to offer. The first week is dedicated to getting to know Nepal: you will learn about the Nepali culture, religion, music and basic Nepali language in the Institute for Language and Culture Studies, Katmandu. You will meet local people, taste the food and learn about the Nepalese customs. Following this you may choose to participate in volunteer projects including teaching at local schools and orphanages. You also have the option of enjoying a week of intensive meditation and yoga or 2 weeks of culture and trekking. During these two weeks you will enjoy trekking around the the Annapurna Base Camp (ABC), touring the Pokhara valley and do a Jungle Safari in the Royal Chitwan National Park. Your time in Nepal will be a great contribution

to the community and even short periods of time and effort can make a very positive impact.

Sri Lanka Program

Begin your adventure with an introduction week in the city of Kandy. Volunteers will have the opportunity to experience the following activities: practice the local language (Singhalese), community project work, customs & habits, yoga sessions, cooking and local sightseeing. Following this you will enjoy projects located in the Hill Country working with children and youth. These vary upon the need of the community at the time. You will wear many hats! Finally you have the option of 2 weeks of Cultural Activities and Trekking or a week at the beach. If you choose to trek, an experienced guide will lead you in the mountains of Nuwara Eliya, with visits to the reserve forests of the Hill Country (the Central Province of Sri Lanka), where a wide variety of wildlife species can be observed. The Itinerary will be adapted to the season. In the second week, we will learn about the Buddhism and philosophy at a temple. Participants will have a chance to live at the temple and have daily sessions about Buddhism, meditation and culture in Sri Lanka.

Program Requirements

- Volunteers must be at least the age of 18. Or, if younger than 18, you must have parental or guardian consent
- Minimum commitment of 2 weeks, maximum 6 months
- Enjoy working and serving others in an underprivileged and struggling environment
- Open to foreign cultures and living abroad.
- Responsible and dedicated to full-term of commitment.

2010 Schedule & Fees

Volunteer programs are offered for Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Nepal, and Sri Lanka all year round. Each program starts every 1st Monday of the month. A minimum stay is 2 weeks, and the maximum stay is 6 months. Pricing varies based on project & destination. Program fees start as low US\$1276 (2 weeks) and discounts are provided for long-term stays.

Country	Orientation & Volunteer (2 weeks)	Add a volunteer week	Add a Beach, Trek, or Cultural Week
Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal, or Sri Lanka	\$1276	\$263	\$450

**Prices listed in US Dollars*

***Please note-prices are subject to change according to world currency exchange rate*

How to Apply

- 1) Obtain Volunteer Program Information and Application Forms.
 - Download the forms on our website. - OR -
 - Fill out our easy online application request form and the forms will be mailed to you within 7-10 days. - OR -
 - Call 1-512-469-9089/1-888-214-8570 (US toll-free) to have the forms mailed to you in 7-10 days.
- 2) Read the instructions carefully and complete all forms.
- 3) Submit your completed application packet to:

CULTURAL EMBRACE
7201 Bill Hughes Road
Austin, TX 78745 USA

- Completed packet should include
 - Volunteer Application
 - Signed Volunteer Program Agreement
 - Copy of your passport - information page only
 - Copies of diploma or certificates related to field of interest (if applicable)
 - Resume/CV
 - Cover Letter explaining why you want to join this program, and provide a service in Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.
 - Two references: preferably professional references and/or character reference
 - Doctor's certificate verifying that you are in excellent mental and physical health
 - Copy of Police Clearance (obtainable from your community's local police station)
 - Two 1½" x 2" official passport style photos (with name printed on each photo's back)
 - One smiling full-length picture of yourself
 - \$200 Non-refundable application (credited towards your program fee)

Upon receipt of your application, a **Cultural Embrace** coordinator will contact you for a 20-30 minutes phone interview. Once we accept you in to our program, you will receive an invoice for the remainder of your program fee. In order for us to contact our local partners to start your placement process, we require at least 50% of your program fee.

We recommend submitting your application and program fee at least 12-16 weeks prior to your desired start date in order for us to organize and arrange your volunteer placement.

***Cultural Embrace** requires an expedited application fee for those applying 12 weeks or less before the desired date of departure. Applications received 8-12 weeks prior to desired departure date will be charged \$150. Applications received less than 8 weeks before the desired departure date will be charged \$250.

Frequently Asked Questions

1) *Why should I pay Cultural Embrace to volunteer?*

Cultural Embrace and our local partners specialize in arranging a guaranteed volunteer placement, housing and insurance prior to your departure. This will alleviate the troubles and stress of getting everything organized in a new country, so you will have more time and energy to spend on your volunteer project. Your time abroad will still be an independent and memorable one, but we are here to guide you to a safe, healthy and comfortable experience before, during, and after your adventure.

Fees vary according to project, destination, and length of stay. Most of the costs go toward operational project and field expenses, (ie: housing, food, transportation, supplies, etc) plus the administrative fees to cover office and local support (ie: legal, accounting, insurance, advertising, etc) and donations to the local project communities. **Cultural Embrace** does not add on any profits on their volunteer programs.

2) *What are the living conditions like?*

Accommodations vary with each project and location. In most cases you will either stay at a volunteer center with other participants or with a host family. The volunteer centers are beautiful eco-friendly facilities to house shared dorm rooms. Each bathroom has a shower and the water is always cool, which is nice and refreshing from the heat. All houses have a communal area where you can eat, relax and meet up with other participants.

Other project and cultural activities' accommodations vary, but expect basic standards. Some of the rural regions have poor living conditions (ie: straw and padded mattress, non-flushable toilets, limited running water, etc), but they still maintain a clean and safe environment. Host families are pre-screened, evaluated by previous participants, and carefully selected for the best match. Living with a host family gives you the opportunity to really be immersed in the culture.

3) *What are the meals like?*

Most food during your "Discover Southeast Asia" program is included. The food is delicious and tasty, often consisting of local rice and noodle dishes. Vegetarian and dietary meals may be met, however, if you have specific allergies, you may need to provide your own food. Please list any special dietary requirement on your application.

4) *What type of visa assistance does Cultural Embrace provide?*

A tourist visa can be used for this program, and many countries do not need anything to enter the country. Please check with your local consulate.

Please note, that any visa fees are the responsibility of the applicant. And, while **Cultural Embrace** can assist you during the process, ultimately it is your responsibility to ensure that you have obtained the appropriate visa for your volunteer experience. **Cultural**

Embrace has no control over the visa process and cannot guarantee that your visa application will be accepted.

5) *How long will it take to make my placement?*

We ask applicants to apply at least 12-16 weeks in advance of your desired start date. The placement may take less time than this, but we want to ensure that we have enough time to find a great placement for you! There are additional administrative fees if you apply less than 12 weeks in advanced, and we do not contact our local partners until we receive at least 50% of the program fee payment.

6) *What should I wear and bring to Southeast Asia?*

Depending on the time of year and location of your placement, you will need to dress accordingly. Since space is limited at volunteer sites, we ask that you keep your luggage to a minimum. We strongly recommend safety work boots with protective toe caps, and clothes that are loose and comfortable that will also fight out the harsh sun rays. Please note that shopping in Southeast Asia is a highlight for many participants, and clothes as well as other crafts are inexpensive and easily available. **Cultural Embrace** will provide you with more details in your **Cultural Embrace** pre-departure kit.

7) *Can I volunteer and/or live with a friend or partner?*

Yes, you can enroll in this program with other people, and we encourage it since it will enhance your experience and memories. Additionally, you will receive a discount for referring friends and family to join you on the same or other CE programs. Although you may state your preferences for shared housing, you will need to be flexible and respectful of local customs.

8) *When should I buy my plane ticket and does **Cultural Embrace** provide any resources to help with plane tickets?*

Plane tickets should not be purchased until after your placement has been confirmed. **Cultural Embrace** volunteers with consolidators and discount travel agencies that can help find cheaper tickets than those that are available to the general public.

9) *What do I do when I get to Southeast Asia?*

Cultural Embrace will provide you with a handbook prior to your departure with the names and contact information of your local representative, company, and other useful resources for your time in Southeast Asia. You will be picked up from the airport and transferred to your accommodation. Following this you will attend a week-long orientation on-site, with more specific details and training.

10) *What do I do if I have a problem or complaint within my volunteer placement?*

You must speak to your local bi-lingual volunteer coordinator or representative to give them an opportunity to explain or investigate the situation. If the complaint still exists, please let **Cultural Embrace** (Austin office) know so we can mediate on your behalf.

*11) Why should I pay to volunteer abroad, and where does my money go to with **Cultural Embrace**?*

Cultural Embrace and our local partners in Southeast Asia specialize in arranging a guaranteed volunteer placement, housing and insurance prior to your departure. This will alleviate the troubles and stress of getting everything organized in a new country, so you will have more time and energy to spend on your internship and living abroad. Your time abroad will still be an independent and memorable one, but we are here to guide you to a safe, healthy and comfortable experience before, during, and after your adventure.

Your program fee includes your customized volunteer placement, comfortable, clean, and safe accommodations with all meals, comprehensive international traveler's health insurance, orientation, training, cultural activities and excursions, and all of the administrative and logistical costs to set up your placement in the States and Southeast Asia. **Cultural Embrace** also pro-rates the expenses for marketing, advertising, and site visits/communication among all of our programs within our fees.

For any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at info@culturalembrace.com or you can call us at 1-512-469-9089 or 1-888-214-8570 (US/Canada toll-free)

*Discover the Similarities. . .
Share the Differences. . .*