

Exotissimo Calendar 2010

Please notice that the dates may change

JANUARY

- **Udon World, Tungsri Muang, Udon Thani (Thailand)**

Jan 15 - 18

Udon Thani town celebrates its 117th birthday with a world music festival, **15 to 18 January**. It might not have made the headlines but it certainly promises to be a bonus for visitors who are currently exploring the historical and natural attractions of the Northeast.

- **Pager Wesi, (Indonesia)**

Jan

It celebrates Sang Yang as the creator of the universe. Lavish ceremonies take place across Bali twice a year in which people make offerings to the Supreme God to stave off evil spirits. Driving out the bad spirits during the New Year festival is one of the great spectacles of Bali's religious life. Balinese religion is a syncretism of animist folk beliefs and Hinduism. Good spirits are thought to live in the mountains, while bad demons inhabit the sea's depths, forests and desolate beaches.

EXO RECOMMENDS: travelers should be informed that January is the rainy season.

- **MAHAMUNI PAGODA FESTIVAL, Mandalay, (Myanmar)**

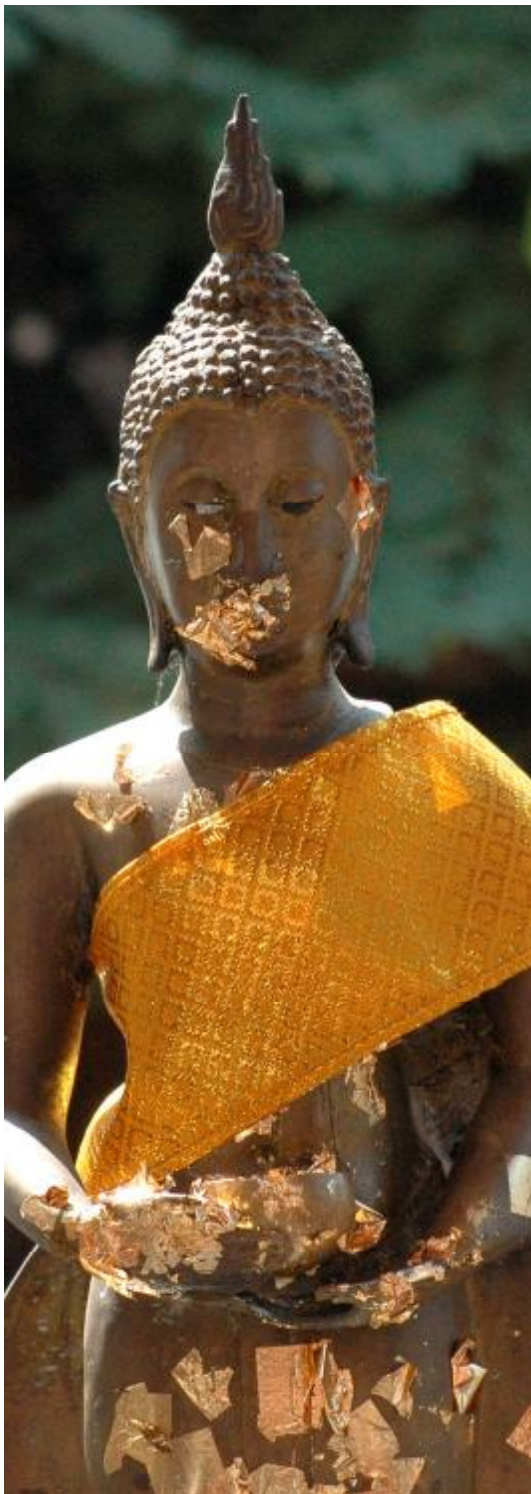
Jan. 22 - Feb. 06

This festival usually lasts for 14 days. A variety of incense sticks are burnt for the Myanmar Buddha image on the full moon day. During this festival thousand of people from all over the country make the pilgrimage to the Mahamuni Pagoda. The temple is always the center of activities. Evening entertainment such as Zats (a variety of dance, song and plays), performances with caricatures of current situations and popular movies shown in open air.

** What you can experience: It's a good spot to visit, to get close interaction with local community as well as to learn local culture. Furthermore, it's a good festival for the families with children.*

FEBRUARY





- **Chiang Mai Flower Festival, Nong Buak Hat Park, (Thailand)**

Feb 5 - 7

A highlight of the festival is the grand parade that attracts sponsoring companies and organizations that beautify floats with elaborate flower decorations, presenting an eco-tourism message or just simply stealing the hearts of spectators with their vivid colors and beauty.

- **Wat Phou Festival (Champassak) (Laos)**

Feb, 10-15

The annual Wat Phou Festival is held in the full moon of the 3rd month of lunar calendar, in the grounds of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Wat Phu in Champasak Town. Festivities include elephant racing and performances of Lao traditional music and dance. Lively entertainments in the evenings also follow this event.

EXO RECOMMENDS: Don't miss the tropical scenery at the 4,000 island region.

- **LUNAR NEW YEAR (TET), (Vietnam)**

Feb 14

Chinese Lunar New Year, is the most important Festival of Vietnamese people. Although officially a three-day affair, festivities may continue for a week with every effort made to indulge in eating, drinking, and enjoyable social activities. It is also a time for family reunions, and for paying respect to ancestors and the elders. Gifts of food are made to friends, neighbors and relatives in the days before Tet.

EXO RECOMMENDS: Before it's very lively with all the preparations, but Tet and after Tet are quiet, so most of restaurants and other shops are closed

- **PINDAYA CAVE FESTIVAL, Pindaya (Myanmar)**

Feb. 27 - Mar. 01

During the festival at the Shwe Oo Min Pagoda Cave in Pindaya thousands of devotees throng the cave to pay homage to the pagoda. You will find hundreds of small stalls selling delicious local foods, Shan handicrafts, all kinds of cheroots (Myanmar cigars), Shan umbrellas, etc. Tribes from all over Shan State join this festivity in their colorful costumes.

** What you can experience: Good place to visit in the early morning, Pa Oh, Taung Yo and Shan people visiting the pagoda is attracting to every visitors. Good for families with children*



MARCH

- **King's Cup Elephant Polo Tournament, Chiang Rai (Thailand)**

March

The tournament was introduced to Thailand in 2001 by Anantara Resorts and is a charitable event that raises money for the country's National Elephant Institute in Lamphang, northern Thailand.

- **The Java Jazz Festival, Kemayoran, JIExpo Jakarta 10620 (Indonesia)**

March 5 - 7

This festival is one of the best and largest jazz festivals in the world, so if you love Jazz music, it's the place to be. Famous international artist will play, like Toni Braxton, John Legend.

- **SHWEMAWDAW PAGODA FESTIVAL in Bago, Myanmar**

March 23- April 3

There are evening entertainments such as Zats: (a variety of dances, songs, short and long plays), Anyeints (a performance of a few hour in which a number of "jokers" caricature current situations and or person strung together by a traditional dancer, popular movies shown in open air.

- *What you can experience: interesting to visit Myanmar during this period to learn on tradition and culture as it's the most famous Pagoda in the country.*

- **Da Nang, International Firework Competition Da Nang, (Vietnam)**

March 27 & 28


The international contest will attract more than 30,000 visitors with impressive firework displays by professional teams from all over the world. This event will be held under the theme the "Legend of Han River" with the participation of teams from the US, Japan, France, Portugal and the host Da Nang. In addition to fireworks display, spectators will have a chance to enjoy music and dance performances and lantern floats.

EXO RECOMMENDS: March/April is the best period for a sea break at Hoian near Danang.

APRIL

- **Songkran, Boun Pi Mai, Chaul Chnam Thmey, Thingyan (Thailand, Laos, Cambodia)**

April 13



Mid-April is usually a merry time in mainland Southeast Asia with traditional New Year celebrations taking place in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar. Prepare to get wet (and sometimes powdery) when walking the streets of these countries during this period as throwing buckets of water on passersby is part of the celebration.

- **THINGYAN WATER FESTIVAL (Throughout Myanmar)**

April 12 - 16

The Burmese New Year will be celebrated in April and everybody joins in the fun of dousing each other with water. Youths go out for the enjoyment, while elder people take retreat in monasteries and pagodas to perform meritorious deeds. One cannot avoid of getting very wet because every one throws water at everybody.

** What you can experience: Good time to visit Myanmar during this time, but everything is closed (restaurants, shops, markets, Museum, etc...)*

- **Boun Pimai, New Year, (Laos)**

April 13 - 15

The Laos New Year is a combination of merriment and meditation. Similar to festivals at this time of year in other Southeast Asian countries, Boun Pimai is celebrated with parades, dancing, singing and enthusiastic water throwing. The religious aspects of the festival are most apparent in Luang Prabang, where Buddha statues are worshiped with water pouring ceremonies. Temple compounds are further decorated with small sand Stupas, offered as merit towards good fortune and health.

EXO RECOMMENDS: You should book a hotel at least 2 months in advance because everything is full at this time.

- **Wanlai, variations on the Songkran theme , Pattaya, (Thailand)**

April 15 - 18

Pattaya and its neighboring resorts in Chonburi province celebrate Songkran a week later than the rest of the country, which gives the festival's hardcore followers a second round of fun. In Pattaya, the festival is officially called Wanlai and starts in Naklua a village community at the northern tip of the resort and continues in unabated enthusiasm, all week from the Naklua tip to the Jomtien toe. However, the more traditional elements of the festival are best witnessed in Naklua, 18 April, when residents turn out for a parade of Buddha images and an image bathing ceremony.

- **IRF 2010 AustralAsian Continental Rafting Championships, Dieng Plateu, (Indonesia)**

April 22 - 26



The event will be held in two rivers; Serayu River in Wonosobo - Banjarnegara Regency of Central Java (-3+ rapids, with Time Trial & Slalom Race) and Progo River in Magelang Regency of Central Java (4 rapids). All race locations are situated in distinctive tourist Destination area.

- **HUNG TEMPLE FESTIVAL, Hy Lang Commune, Phu Tho Province, (Vietnam)**

April 23

Every year, this national festival is held to worship the Hung Kings, who were instrumental in founding the nation. The festival lasts for 3 days and not only attracts visitors from all over and allows visitors to participate in special traditional cultural activities, but it is also a sacred trip back in time to the origins of the Vietnamese culture. People usually show their love and pride of their homeland and ancestral land.

MAY

- **Yasothon Bun Bangfai Rocket Festival, Thaen Park, Mueang District, Yasothon, (Thailand)**

May 5 - 9

While the rocket owners pack as much as 25 kg of black powder into plastic or bamboo pipes to give their homemade missiles take off, the blueprints for this exceptionally noisy festival are traced in the mystical skies ruled by gods. Approaching rain clouds signal the start of the rice planting season, but according to northeastern folklore the first raindrops fall only when the gods are in the mood for love.

- **The Galungan Ceremony, (Indonesia)**

May 12

One of Bali's major festivals celebrates the return of Balinese gods and deified ancestors to Bali. For ten days, Balinese families will entertain and welcome with prayers and offerings, along with ceremonies to cleanse and balance the inner and outer energy on the island. Galungan lasts for 10 days and features, among other things, barongs dancing from temple to temple in each village. The festival symbolizes the victory of good over evil.

EXO RECOMMENDS: good season in Indonesia not too touristic.

- **Visakha Bu-saa, (Buddha's Birthday), (Laos)**

May, on the full moon

This is the main Buddhist festival of the year and falls on the full moon in May. It's the day on which the Buddha was born, died and achieved Enlightenment, so the celebrations are massive. Families visit the



local wat (temple) to pray, and services continue all night and well into the morning. In addition to the processions there are puppet shows and dancing with everyone dressed up in their very best clothes for the occasion.

JUNE

- **CHIN LONE FESTIVAL, Mahamuni / Mandalay (Myanmar)**

May 13 - June 27

Chin Lone (Cane Ball) tournament held in Mandalay. It is used to held in Mahamuni Pagoda compound almost a month for every day and night. Cane ball players from all over the country come from Mandalay to enjoy this festival. We can enjoy seeing several ways of playing Chin Lone and racing by either team or individual together with local / folk music played while entertaining the audience.

- **Hua Hin Jazz Festival, Hua Hin Beach, Prachuap Khiri Khan, (Thailand)**

June 12 - 14

Annual jazz festival draws top bands from region for the 8th time. Music lovers, from Bangkok and neighboring countries head south from Bangkok down Highway 4 to the small upscale resort of Hua Hin where they can enjoy a music festival that delivers the best jazz and blue bands from around Asia. Entrance to all performances is free

- **Kasada Festival, (Indonesia)**

June

The Festival is held at the volcano Mount Bromo, one of Java's most revered sites. Ritual prayers and traditional performances are held before the crowds make their way across a naturally formed sand sea to the crater. At the foot of the volcano, offerings - fruit vegetables, fowl, even a bull on occasion - are consecrated by the priest to the God of Bromo, the Betoro Bromo. The Tenggerese are the main participants in the festival and thousands of believers arrive from the surrounding area. At midnight, every supplicant ascends to the rim of the crater, murmuring their wishes and then throw their offerings into the volcano's mouth.

JULY

- **Bali Arts Festival, Denpasar (Indonesia)**



From mid June to mid July

Just 10km from the popular Kuta beach area, thousands come to see the most accomplished musicians and dancers perform at Denpasar's. Around seven types of complex and vibrant Balinese music ensembles, dance, traditional costume, floats and giant dolls herald the start of the festival. The entertainment on offer during the month includes traditional and modern music, dance and theatre, puppet shows and various competitions.

EXO RECOMMENDS: this festival is a must seen for art lovers.

- **International Wax Sculpture, Thung Si Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani, (Thailand)**

July 1-31

Join the alms-giving for Asalha Puja and the Khao Phansa Buddhist ceremony. Participate in the ceremony of welcoming His Majesty the King's royal candle and the international candle-carving competition from various countries, as well as taste "Pha Khao Laeng".

AUGUST

- **Hua Hin golf festival (Thailand)**

Aug.

Each August, for the whole of the month, Hua Hin and Cha-am play host to a golfing extravaganza. Every day during August, you can normally play at most of the main courses for heavily discounted green fees. The festival represents great value for all golf enthusiasts.

EXO RECOMMENDS: contact us for a special promotion package.

- **TAUNG BYONE NAT FESTIVAL, Taung Byone village near Mandalay, (Myanmar)**

Aug. 12 - 25

This festival is known as the major gathering spot for spiritual mediums, celebrating the legend of Byat Wi and Byat Ta, two Indian brothers. Hundreds of mediums and thousands of pilgrims come once a year to Taung Byone, where the statues of the two brothers are placed in a shrine and there stands still the "Pagoda of Wishes" with the two missing stones. Offerings and dances, the inflow of merchants, the constant arrival of pilgrims and the intensive uses of loudspeakers continue day and night.

** What you can experience: interesting to visit there to meet friendly local people as well as to observe on tradition of spiritualism. Suitable for the families with children, but, the place is usually crowded with local people. Therefore, needed extra care for the children.*

SEPTEMBER

- **Bangkok's Film Festival, (Thailand)**

September

Now in its 8th year the curtain will rise on the annual Bangkok Film Festival, 24 to 30 September, in the heart of Bangkok's downtown swank shopping district. The spectacular event promises to deliver more than 90 exciting films with the focus on a new generation of film makers particularly from throughout Asia. The event is co-hosted by the Tourism Authority of Thailand and the Federation of National Film Associations of Thailand, with the gala opening set in the forecourt of the upscale Central World shopping mall.

- **Id UI Fitr, (Indonesia)**

September

Id UI Fitr marks the end of Ramadan and is a public holiday all over Indonesia. Muslims hold mass prayers in mosques and public squares from early morning until night. There are processions and reveling to celebrate the end of the fast. In Jatijajar, Kebumen, Central Java, you can watch a *wayang kulit* (shadow puppets) performance which goes on all night to conclude the festival. Or you could check out the night bazaar which takes over Kaliwungu, 24km west of Semarang.

- **MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL, (Vietnam)**

September 22

It's one of the most impressive events for the Vietnamese, particularly the children. The welcome-the-moon party in the evening is a good opportunity for the children not only to enjoy the food, but also to learn more from their grandparents and parents. There is no other event in the year other than this festival that provides them with as much entertainment, toys, candies, and fruit. In the bright moonlight, clear sky and fresh environment, everybody is relaxed with a pure and detached joy.

- **Boat Racing Festival, Luang Prabang, (Laos)**

September 8

Boat Racing is held in Sebangfai River. At the same occasion a trade fair of agricultural products, local handicrafts, traditional Lao music and dance performance; at the same time, citizens donate the offering to the dead in to share merits.

October





- *** Ubud Writers and Readers Festival, (Indonesia)**

6-10 October

This festival now exists since 7 years and attracts every years more people. The 2010 theme is “harmony in diversity” and will open hot debates on religious dogmas, political ideologies and national allegiances that bitterly divide the world. This year the festival welcomes writers from Bosnia, Cuba, Argentina and Iran: voices of those seldom heard. Emerging and established authors will once again take centre stage in four days of conversation, readings, panels, workshops and performances in breathtaking venues across Ubud.

- **Phuket Vegetarian Festival, (Thailand)**

October

It is one of the most spectacular of all the vegetarian festivals held in Thailand. The nine-day festival is firmly embedded in the Chinese community's belief that abstinence from meat is good for body and soul. In Phuket town, visitors watch in awe at fire walking, body piercing and other acts of self mortification, some of the feats quite scary.

- **Ok Phansa Boat Race Festival, The Banks of the Mekong, Vientiane (Laos)**

October (various dates)

Ok Phansa, the end of the rainy season, is celebrated with ten days of fabulous boat races and festivities beside the Mekong River in Vientiane. The capital city is a brilliant place to see this festival, which celebrates the re-emergence of husbands, brothers and sons who have been in temples on retreat during the rainy season. Ok Phansa is very similar to the Christian festival of Easter, when Lent is over and the period for stinting yourself has come to an end.

- **Water Festival, (Cambodia)**

Last full moon in October

This spectacular event is the most extravagant festival in the calendar, convened over a three-day period. Up to 2 million people from all over the country flock to the banks of the Tonle Sap and Mekong rivers in Phnom Penh, to watch hundreds of brightly colored boats with over 50 paddlers in each, battle it out for top honors. In the evening, brightly decorated floats cruise along the river complementing the nightly fireworks display. The festival marks the changing flow of the Tonle Sap River and is seen as a thanksgiving to the Mekong River for providing the country with fertile land and an abundance of fish.

NOVEMBER

- **BALLOON FESTIVAL, Taunggyi, (Myanmar)**

Nov. 15 - 21

The fireworks are in the form of rockets. There is always hot balloons competition day and night. Day balloons are usually in the form of Pagodas, and animals such as elephant, dragon or ducks while the night balloons usually in the shape of rugby ball, huge elongated paper balls with small lighted multicolored paper lanterns hung around their sides and balloons would sting along fireworks and fire sticks which are set off mid-air fireworks.

- **Bonn Kathen, (Cambodia)**

From October to November

During this important religious festival, Cambodians all throughout the country march in processions to the wats, following musicians loudly drumming the traditional Chha- Yam drums. Saffron robes are everywhere during this 29-day festival as the monks come out of their annual retreat during the rain season. This festival, also known as Monk's Robes Festival, lasts for 29 days from October to November, with the actual start day determined by the lunar calendar.

Note: don't hesitate to contact us to get the lunar calendar dates.

- **Festival of lights of Loy Krathong, Sukhothai, (Thailand)**

Nov

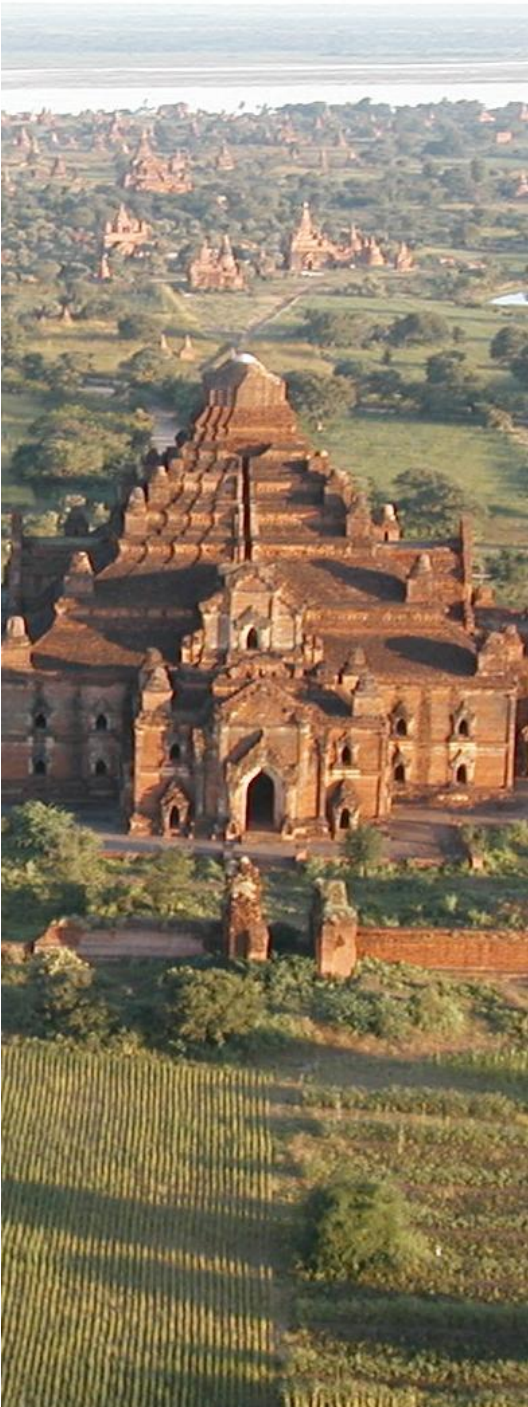
You will be dazzled by the float procession of large krathong from 17 Northern provinces. The procession will consist hanging lanterns, Krathong design contest, and Miss Noppamas Beauty Contest, light and sound presentation, firework displays, Sukhothai arts and culture performances, and the activity of "Dawn of happiness".

EXO RECOMMENDS: loy Krathong will be held everywhere in Thailand, but Sukhothai promises to be the most spectacular spot.

- **Pha That Luang Festival, That Luang, Vientiane (Laos)**

Nov

During this week long Festival, hundreds of orange-robed Buddhist monks form processions to walk from That Luang to Wat Si Muang, another large temple in Vientiane which contains the foundation stone of the capital city. The processions begin early in the morning, and just after dawn the monks line up with large metal bowls bowl filled with sticky rice, vegetables, little sweets, at a stall which represents their wat (temple).As they pass each stall, they drop an offering into the bowl of each monk.





- **River Kwai Bridge Week, Kanchanaburi, (Thailand)**

Nov

Each year in late November to early December, the world famous River Kwai Bridge built by Allied prisoners-of-war during World War II, becomes the focal point of celebrations. Event highlights include historical and archaeological exhibits, a carnival, folk and cultural performances, rides on World War II vintage trains, and a spectacular light and sound presentation re-enacting the bridge's World War II legacy.

EXO RECOMMENDS: Kanchanaburi offers a lot for soft adventure lovers, like elephant riding, kayaking, biking...

DECEMBER

- **Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya World Heritage fair, (Thailand)**

Dec. 20

Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya was once the glorious capital of Thailand. It was also a centre of trade and government, and possessed a long period of prosperity. Be amazed by the light-and-sound show, the exhibitions on Ayutthaya as a World Heritage Site, as well as the cultural performances. Having fun shopping for a variety of OTOP product is another activity.

- **KATE FESTIVAL, An Phuoc District of Ninh Thuan Province, (Vietnam)**

December

The Kate Festival is held on the first ten days of the seventh month of the Cham Calendar. It's an occasion for the Cham people to express their venerability to their god. During this festival, people go on a pilgrimage to the holy land of My Son and visit their friends and family. On the last ten days, the Cham people bring precious gifts to their ancient Cham King. At night, everyone from the villages gets together to see the ritual performances and traditional dances with the solemn Kapo music rhythms.

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