

Southeast Asia

This year we spent most of December in Southeast Asia, so we decided to send out our annual letter to welcome the new year. On December 5th we flew via Taipei to Singapore, where we stayed the night and had the best street-vendor mango ever. We boarded the Sapphire Princess on the 8th. We saw the Lok Kawi Animal Park and Sabah Heritage Village in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia; enjoyed a Cai river cruise in Nha Trang, Vietnam; had a rain-soaked bus tour of the temples, Big Buddha, and coconut-picking monkeys in Ko Samui, Thailand, (The 52 km road around the island turned into a meter deep river in many places, which the bus was amazingly able to slosh through.); visited a spice garden and butterfly farm in Penang, Malaysia; and had a bus tour of Kuala Lumpur. After disembarking, we took a ferry to Bantam Island, Indonesia, where we spent two days at a seaside resort snorkeling and enjoying some of the best local seafood on the trip. We then flew to Jakarta for two nights, where we took a quick tour of the city (5 different transportation modes), then flew to Pangkalan Bun, Kalimantan, Indonesia, boarded our private EcoTour houseboat, and entered the Tanjung Puting National Park. We had a crew of five, including a guide and a chef, and we took hikes to orangutan feeding stations, sometimes in the rain. With wildlife sightings along the Sekonyer River, we saw about 30 orangutans, a gibbon, a wild boar, numerous birds, and monkeys. The proboscis monkey bands were especially interesting to watch. We then flew back to Singapore, where we toured the city, with a special stop at the Botanical Gardens. Back home through Taipei, we had a 15-minute connection to get to our LAX flight; EVA facilitated our plane exit from the delayed Singapore flight, but we had to run.