



Right as we eagerly touched down in Koh Samui, we were quickly introduced to our mentors and guides from World Volunteers. We kick started the trip with lunch at a Michelin acclaimed Thai Restaurant, which marked the start of many delectable Thai cuisine meals we would indulge in. Being in the outskirts of Thailand, we were deeply immersed in the country's rich culture in its true form during our visit to a buddhist temple, where we learnt more about buddhist practices and teachings. We ended the day with a Thai cooking class whilst watching the sunset by the beach, which certainly set the tone for more exciting days to come.



We started day 2 with a ferry trip to the rustic island of Koh Tao, a tourist hot spot for divers. We indulged in the plentiful flora and fauna this remote island had to offer with a hike offering stunning views of the coastline. After lunch, we began our introduction to Marine Conservation, where we engaged with an organisation known as Coral Tribe, whose mission is to protect the depleting coral reefs in Asia.



We learnt about coral transplants, where divers pick up corals of opportunity, and regrow them in artificial reefs to make up for the dwindling population of corals. After getting our hands dirty doing a beach clean up activity, we ended the day with an evening of rest and relaxation at Hacienda, where we bonded in games of pool, bowling and mini-golf.





On day 3, the time had come for us to put our learning into action. We were introduced to bottle cap recycling, and even had the chance to experience the whole process ourselves, from cleaning the bottle caps, to shredding it, and finally melting and moulding it to form products such as reusable plastic carabiners and cups. In addition, we got to do a microplastic survey on the beach. As part of our last activity with Coral Tribe, we helped build coral nurseries in order to rehabilitate vulnerable corals. It was an insightful experience that led us to appreciate the beauty of our coral ecosystem. We bid farewell to Koh Tao and took the ferry back to Koh Samui in the evening.



Day 4 presented us with an eclectic mix of activities. We began the sunny morning with a refreshing visit to the beach where we were able to unwind and appreciate the beautiful waters of Koh Samui. Splitting into two groups, we covered a physically demanding Muay

Thai training session, the beautiful Na Mueang waterfall, and even delved deeper into the local culture with a chance to see a mummified monk whose body has been preserved since 1973. We closed off the day with a visit to a local night market and Central Samui shopping mall.



Day 5 brought us to a bittersweet goodbye to the wonderful guides who journeyed with us throughout this fulfilling IE trip. Some of us felt homesick while others wished the trip did not end so soon. Nonetheless, one thing's for sure, everyone certainly gained something invaluable in their own way from this once in a lifetime experience. From the fun and games to the immersive culture and marine conservation activities, as we look back on the sublime experiences this trip has had to offer, it gave us a greater sense of admiration for the culture and uniqueness of Thailand and its people.