

Essential Thailand



-  Start Location
-  End Location
-  Over night

-  Visited Location
-  Cruise
-  Ferry

-  Plane
-  Train

Day 1 | Arrive Bangkok (3 Nights)



'Sawadee ka' and welcome to Thailand! Your trip will kick off in buzzy Bangkok, an urban wonder boasting all the soaring skyscrapers and glistening malls of any capital city, but with a distinctly Thai touch. Here you can see it all; orange robe-clad monks strolling the streets with smartphones in hand, while glowing temples and neon-lit bars co-exist peacefully side by side. After transferring to your hotel you'll meet up with your Travel Director to get a glimpse of what's to come on your Thailand value tour, then dinner tonight will have you sampling some of Thailand's tasty cuisine while you get to know your fellow travellers.

Meals: Dinner

Hotel: Galleria 10

Day 2 | Bangkok Sightseeing



Get ready for a full day of sightseeing in Bangkok. We'll show off Bangkok's best cultural and spiritual delights, starting at Wat Pho, Bangkok's most ancient temple. Set eyes on the hugely impressive Reclining Buddha, the largest in Thailand, before moving on to the Grand Palace, a former royal residence. The intricate architecture of this massive complex never ceases to amaze and be sure to see the jewel in its crown, the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. We'll make a pit stop for lunch at a local restaurant then board a private boat and take to the maze of canals (klongs) that snake through the city. Kick back and enjoy the ride as you pass by traditional stilted family homes and soak up the quiet river lifestyle of those who work and live on the water. Still keen for more? This afternoon, you can join our optional visit to Jim Thompson's House, an exquisite example of traditional Thai residential architecture, where you'll find an incredible collection of Asian art.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Hotel: Galleria 10

CHOICE OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

Jim Thompson House - Jim Thompson House is one of the best examples of traditional Thai residential architecture and houses a breath-taking collection of Southeast Asian art. Jim Thompson, born in Delaware in 1906, fell in love with Thailand while posted as an intelligence agent in Bangkok during WWII. He later made it his permanent home and started a business supplying fine Thai silk to overseas fashion houses, single-handedly saving what had been a dying cottage industry. His silk company continues to flourish today. With the proceeds of his success, Thompson collected an impressive range of art works, and sections of teak houses, assembling them into a museum complex set in a lush garden alongside central Bangkok's Saen Saep Canal. The main house is full of tastefully displayed Asian art and curios including Buddha images, paintings, ceramics and antique furniture. The living areas have been preserved as they were when Thompson lived there before his mysterious disappearance. There is also a Thai restaurant and bar plus, a sizeable boutique selling quality silk items, books and prints. The price shown is in Thai Bhat.

Adult: 1650.00 THB

Day 3 | Bangkok Free Day



Today is all yours to explore Bangkok your way and the adventures are limitless. Want to check out the markets? You can find flower species of every shape, colour and origin at the lively Pak Klong Talad (Bangkok flower market), while the charming streets of Chinatown are the perfect place to munch on street food and shop for jade. If you love architecture, you'll likely choose to join our trip to the ancient city of Ayutthaya, the former capital city of Thailand. We'll make a stop along the way at the stunning Bang Pa Summer Palace, then continue on to Ayutthaya, an archaeological hotbed of temples, monasteries and statues that offer a glimpse into the glory days of this ancient land. We'll head back to Bangkok on a cruise and enjoy a buffet lunch as you watch the local life go by along the banks of the Chao Phraya River.

Meals: Breakfast

Hotel: Galleria 10

CHOICE OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

Ayutthaya with Lunch Cruise - Depart the hotel early by coach and travel to Bang Pa In Summer Palace; a palace complex which was formerly used by the Thai kings. It is beautifully decorated in both traditional Chinese and European style and the buildings are laid out along an artificial ornamental pond. Continue to Ayutthaya, the ancient city which was the former Thai capital over 400 years ago. The ruins of the old city now form the Ayutthaya Historical Park, an archaeological site that contains palaces, Buddhist temples, monasteries and statues. Nowadays the glory and the beauty of the Grand Palace and temples of the past has vanished, leaving merely a glimpse of ruins, despite this it is a good reflection of the past. Visit different temples including Wat Maha That, Wat Na Phra Mane, and Wat Lokayasutharam. Later climb aboard your cruise back to Bangkok and enjoy the buffet lunch in comfortable surroundings out on the deck or in the air conditioned passenger room. Take in the views of the Chao Phraya River bank, catch a glimpse of local life and see the cheerful children waving as the boat sails past. As you sail back into Bangkok look out for the Royal Grand Palace and Wat Arun (Temple of Dawn), both iconic Bangkok sights and particularly magical when viewed from the river. The price shown is in Thai Bhat.

Adult: 1800.00 THB

Bangkok Cycling Discovery - After experiencing the buzz of the energetic Bangkok, travellers will delight in this tranquil tour of Bang Kra Jao: an inner city oasis offering a welcome slice of nature amid the capital city. This untouched island in the Chao Phraya River was nicknamed the "green lung" of Bangkok thanks to its lush tropical landscape, blossoming native flowers and tropical fruits. But that's not all it has to offer. On a bike tour through the island, you can see ancient temples, explore villages and meet the locals. It may seem like the portal to another world, but all you need to do is look above the treetops to catch the glittering city skyline of Bangkok. And that's the magic of this island: combining two iconic Thai experiences in one gorgeous moment. The price shown is in Thai Bhat.

Adult: 2395.00 THB

Day 4 | Bangkok - Kanchanaburi (2 Nights)



It's goodbye Bangkok and hello Kanchanaburi town today, where we'll jump straight into the action with a visit to the Thailand-Burma Railway Museum, and the War Cemetery where over 6000 prisoners of war were laid to rest. Next up, we'll pause for lunch then see the infamously named Death Railway, before boarding a local train for a ride with a difference. Gorgeous views over the river and a journey across wooden viaducts will keep your camera busy, as will the next and final stop for today – the famous Bridge over the River Kwai. Our hotel is just a short distance from here, where we'll dine as a group this evening.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Hotel: Royal River Kwai Resort and Spa

Day 5 | Kanchanaburi Free Day



With a completely free day today on your Thailand tour package, Kanchanaburi town is yours to explore your way. Those keen to take it easy can rest up at the hotel and take advantage of the spa facilities, or perhaps you'll take the opportunity to explore the town and its surroundings. Hoping to get out on the river? Our optional River Kwai Longtail Boat Cruise could be just what you're looking for. This adventure will begin with a visit to Hellfire Pass, a 500 metre long and 26 metre deep section of rock that was dug by Prisoners of War with nothing more than picks, rocks and their bare hands, to allow for the construction of Death Railway. From here you'll then travel on to the River Kwai and travel 30 minutes downstream by longtail boat to the River Kwai Jungle Rafts. Fuelling up on a yummy lunch, you'll then visit the Mon Tribal Village before continuing on downstream, where the coach will meet you and carry you back to the hotel.

Meals: Breakfast

Hotel: Royal River Kwai Resort and Spa

CHOICE OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

Hellfire Pass and River Kwai Longtail Boat Cruise - Join us for a moving trip to the infamous 'Hellfire Pass' where you'll hear the harrowing stories of how the 500-metre-long and 26-metre-deep section of rock was dug out by Prisoners of War. Soldiers were forced to remove the rock using no more than picks, hammers and their bare hands, to allow the 'Death Railway' to continue its route from Bangkok to Yangon. You'll have time to explore the Hellfire Pass Memorial Museum, dedicated to Prisoners of War and labourers who suffered and died during WWII. Later, head to the River Kwai for a longtail boat ride, passing by unspoiled mountains and jungle scenery. Tuck into a delicious Thai lunch, before a taste of culture at Mon Tribal Village. Hop back in the longtail boat and get one last look at your gorgeous surroundings before heading back to your hotel. The price shown is in Thai Bhat.

Adult: 1800.00 THB

Day 6 | Kanchanaburi - Sukhothai (2 Nights)



We'll be up bright and early this morning to travel north to Sukhothai. The Thailand essentials just keep on coming and along the way we have a treat in store, with a visit to Bhutsaya Khiri Suvarnabhumi, or Rock Buddha. This impressive carving of a seated buddha, masterfully etched out of the hillside, was only finished in 2019 and is a true sight to behold. Stopping for a local lunch en route, we'll arrive into Sukhothai later this afternoon, then dinner tonight will be a group affair.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Hotel: Le Charme Sukhothai Historical Park Resort

Day 7 | Sukhothai Sightseeing and Free Time



Being famed as the birthplace of Thai civilisation is a pretty big reputation to uphold, but Sukhothai does it with ease. Still historically significant to this day, we'll start our adventures today with a visit to the UNESCO listed Sukhothai Historical Park, where we'll get to explore the centuries old temples and palace ruins. History itch scratched, this afternoon will then be yours to explore as you wish. Hungry to learn more about Thai cuisine? Our optional cooking class is there for all the budding chefs amongst you. You'll start this foodie adventure by learning about the unique herbs and spices of Thailand courtesy of your host, then put the farm to table craze into action by using these ingredients to make a signature Thai dish, such as "Pad Pak Bung Fai Daeng". And the best part? You get to eat your tasty creation for dinner.

Meals: Breakfast

Hotel: Le Charme Sukhothai Historical Park Resort

CHOICE OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

Thai Cooking Class - Learn the secrets of Thai cuisine at Baan Suan Suda, where your friendly host showcases homegrown herbs, vegetables and fruit while you stroll through the lush garden. Ingredients sorted, it's time to roll up your sleeves and show off your skills. You'll make Stir-Fried Chinese Water Morning Glory or Pad Pak Bung Fai Daeng where the Fai Daeng refers to the flames which leap up from the wok when the vegetables are thrown in. The best part? You'll get to feast on the dishes you've created for dinner. The price shown is in Thai Bhat.

Adult: 1400.00 THB

Day 8 | Sukhothai - Chiang Rai (2 Nights)



The dramatic mountain beauty of Chiang Rai awaits us today, so we'll be up early to travel further north. Along the way, we'll make a stop at Khaw Phayao Lake, the largest freshwater lake in the North, before heading on to Wat Rong Khun, otherwise known as the White Temple. Unlike many Thai temples that are centuries old, Wat Rong Khun is unique in the fact that it was only built in 1977. The brainchild of artist Chalermchai Kositpipat, it's also one of the most recognisable temples in Thailand – you'll know it when you see it. Finally, we'll complete today's journey with a short drive to Chiang Rai, where we'll check in to our hotel and eat dinner tonight as a group.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Hotel: Wiang Inn Hotel Chiang Rai

Day 9 | Golden Triangle Sightseeing



Today is the day we journey to the heart of the Golden Triangle. This morning your first stop will be the self-proclaimed 'edutainment' Hall of Opium, a fascinating museum that reveals an incredible 5000 years of history. The state of the art exhibitions, harrowing recounts and even a tiny opium plantation all tell a vivid story of the conflicts, rituals and abuse that have all stemmed from opium, a trade that once ruled the Golden Triangle over the past century. Next up, we'll stop for lunch at a local restaurant, then hop on board a boat that will take you cruising along the mighty Mekong River to the exact spot where the borders of Thailand, Myanmar (Burma) and Laos collide. You'll have time to step out onto dry land in Laos and head into the Don Sao Island Markets where you can browse all the handicrafts and local snacks on offer. It's the only part of Laos that can be visited without a visa, so make the most of it before heading back to your hotel in Chiang Rai.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Hotel: Wiang Inn Hotel Chiang Rai

Day 10 | Chiang Rai - Chiang Mai (2 Nights)



Who's ready to dip their toes in some bubbling hot springs? We hope all of you, as our first stop today en route to Chiang Mai, are the lovely Mae Kajan Hot Springs. Feeling refreshed, we'll grab lunch in a local restaurant before travelling on to the laidback city of Chiang Mai. Sprawling in size but with a historic centre that has managed to retain the charm and pace of a low-key country town, Chiang Mai is also THE place for temple exploring. So, guess what we'll be doing this afternoon? You got it! We'll be exploring both Wat Phra Singh temple, which was built in 1345, and Wat Chedi Luang temple, a charming wooden creation famous for its huge Lanna style chedi. This evening, prepare to discover the charm of Chiang Mai by night as we head out to visit the city's iconic night markets.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Hotel: The Empress Chiang Mai

Day 11 | Chiang Mai Free Day



Your day your way is what today is all about, and with it being your last day, be sure to make the most of it. For those looking to get out of the city and into the tropical lush greenery that surrounds Chiang Mai on all sides, be sure to join our visit to Baan Tong Luang Village, located north of the city in a beautiful valley. This ecological village is the home of the Long Neck Karen hill tribe and you'll have the chance to learn about their ancient costumes, customs and rituals.

Meals: Breakfast

Hotel: The Empress Chiang Mai

CHOICE OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

Hill Tribe Village Experience - Head to the north of Chiang Mai to visit Baan Tong Luang Village, an ecological Paduang village situated in a beautiful valley and home to Long Neck Karen hill tribe from Myanmar. The women wear heavy copper neck rings as a ritual starting from when they are 5 or 6 years of age. Other hill tribes such as Lahu, Hmong and White Karen can also be seen in the village in their traditional costumes. The price shown is in Thai Bhat.

Adult: 2015.00 THB

Khantoke Dinner and Show - Experience the traditional customs and culture of the Lanna people of Northern Thailand at the Old Chiang Mai Cultural Centre. Enjoy a feast of Northern Thai food served the Khantoke way, on a pedestal tray used as a small dining table, then watch a fantastic show of traditional hilltribe costumes, music and dancing. If you want to get an insight into Northern Thai culture, this is one of the very best ways to do it. The price shown is in Thai Bhat.

Adult: 1550.00 THB

Chiang Mai Night Ride - When the sun sets and the peak rush-hour traffic dies down, Chiang Mai comes alive with night markets, glistening temples and local charm. On the Chiang Mai Night Ride you'll have the chance to tour the famous Thai city, ticking all the best sights off your bucket list - without those pesky crowds in your way. The bike ride takes travellers through the quiet backroads of the old town as the sun sets, before visiting the famous temples and statues of the city - which are so beautifully lit-up they shine even in darkness. Finishing up with a cycle to the river, spend the rest of your memorable evening wandering through the vivacious night markets and sampling delicious, exotic snacks. What

better way to end your travels than one last hit of Thai culture? The price shown is in Thai Bhat.

Adult: 2105.00 THB

Hmong Nong Hoi Village and Queen Sirikit Botanic Garden - Experience the magic of Chiang Mai's natural beauty and gain insight to the life of a local hilltribe on this morning trip to the Hmong Nong Hoi Village and Queen Sirikit Botanic Garden. In the scenic mountain village you'll have the unique opportunity to learn about the Royal Projects across Northern Thailand that aim to teach local hilltribe how to cultivate new crops. You'll also have the chance to see how villagers work, treating ailments with an herbalist, making farm tools and producing alcohol from corn. On the way back, you'll drop into the breathtaking Queen Sirikit Botanic Gardens and Orchid Farm to wander among 700 different plant species. The price shown is in Thai Bhat.

Adult: 1800.00 THB

Day 12 | Depart Chiang Mai



Your incredible journey through Thailand's cities, rivers, mountains, temples and markets has come to an end. You've encountered diverse cultures, tasted all kinds of Thai foods and experienced the warmth of Thai hospitality and we're sure you'll be leaving with the iconic Thai smile on your face! Transferring to Chiang Mai International Airport, you'll catch your onward flight.

Meals: Breakfast