

North Thailand Explorer from only £495pp*

15 DAYS / SMALL GROUP OR PRIVATE TOUR / ECONOMY TOUR /



As a top tourist destination, Thailand has so much to offer the active, adventure-seeking traveller. This tour combines the vibrant, colourful capital of Bangkok, with its majestic monuments and neon nightlife; and Chiang Mai, adventure capital of the north, where there are a wealth of outdoor activities on offer. Suited to the budget travellers' pocket, this tour offers fantastic value for money and the peace of mind of a well organised tour.



FLIGHT BOOKINGS AVAILABLE
See page 5 for details

Regular small-group departures run all year round. Call or check the website for dates and prices. Private and tailor-made options are also available on request.
Please refer to page 3 or website for details.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:
Bangkok sightseeing, Local homestay, Hill-tribe trek, Elephant ride, River raft, Chiang Mai sightseeing, River boat ride Chiang Rai.

FLIGHTS INCLUDED:* X	LOCAL PAYMENT: X	ENTRANCE FEES: X	AIRPORT TRANSFERS: X
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TOUR FACTS

Tour Code & Class:	MATHNE / Economy
Group Size & Age:	Min. - 1 Max. - 12 / Min. age - 12
Activity - Adventure:	Sightseeing, trekking, bamboo rafting and elephant safari
Activity Level:	Medium
Trek & River Grade:	Easy / I to II
Accommodation:	9 nights in hotels, 2 nights in bamboo hut, 2 overnight sleeper trains
Transport:	Minibus, 2nd class A/C sleeper train, pick-up truck/jeep, local bus, elephant, bamboo raft
Meals:	12 Breakfasts (B), 3 Lunches (L) and 3 Dinners (D)

YOUR 15 DAY TOUR ITINERARY

- Day 1:** Arrive in Bangkok (optional airport transfer).
- Day 2:** Bangkok. Bus to village home-stay near Kanchanaburi.
- Day 3:** Explore Kanchanaburi.
- Day 4:** Bus to Ayutthaya. Overnight train to Chiang Mai.
- Day 5:** Chiang Mai - Walking tour.
- Day 6-7:** Trekking to hill-tribe village and elephant ride.
- Day 8:** Bamboo rafting, Chiang Mai.
- Day 9:** Chiang Mai - Free day.
- Day 10:** Bus to Thaton. Free time.
- Day 11:** River boat trip to Chiang Rai.
- Day 12:** Chiang Rai - Free day.
- Day 13:** Bus to Chiang Mai. Overnight train to Bangkok.
- Day 14:** Bangkok - Walking tour.
- Day 15:** Bangkok - Free time. Tour ends (optional airport transfer).

**To book visit: www.thailand-uncovered.com,
email: tours@thailand-uncovered.com or call us on: +44 (0) 845 130 48 49
Please quote Tour Code: MATHNE when booking**

* LAND ONLY PRICE, FLIGHT QUOTES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST. / LAST AMENDED 26/06/2008 /

North Thailand Explorer continued...



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DETAILED ITINERARY

DAY 1 / ARRIVE IN BANGKOK

The tour starts today when you check into to our initial hotel in Bangkok (airport transfers are available on request). In the early evening our Thailand Uncovered rep welcomes you and provides you with some useful tips for exploring the area and holds a group meeting where we would like you to give your local leader an idea of some of the things you would like to see and do on your tour tomorrow.

Overnight at hotel in Bangkok.

DAY 1 EXTRA OPTIONS

Arrival airport transfer

See pages 3-4 for details

DAY 2 / BANGKOK. VILLAGE HOME-STAY

The morning is free today for you to discover more of Bangkok before we leave the bustling city behind by taking a local bus for about 2 hours to a small village near to Kanchanaburi town. After settling into your charming homestay and receiving a warm welcome from your host family you will then have time to explore the village and have the chance to offer your English skills to the local school children. You may also join in the daily activities of your 'Thai family'.

Overnight in homestay (B D).

DAY 3 / EXPLORE KANCHANABURI

After breakfast it is time to say farewell to your kind hosts as we catch the local bus to Kanchanaburi to explore the town. After a walking tour you may choose to take a ride on the famous 'Death Railway', or rent a 'songthaew' to Erawan Falls, one of Thailand's most beautiful national parks.

Overnight at hotel in Kanchanaburi (B).

DAY 4 / BUS TO AYUTHAYA. TRAIN TO CHAIANG MAI

We leave the Kanchanaburi area this morning and catch the local bus to Ayutthaya. There are many mystical ruins at this famous UNESCO World Heritage Site to visit either by bicycle, local tuk tuk or on elephant back! You can choose at your own expense exactly what you want to see, and how.

In the early evening we transfer to the station and board the air-conditioned sleeper train to Chiang Mai (approx. 13 hours).

Overnight on train to Chiang Mai (B).

DAY 5 / CHIANG MAI, WALKING TOUR

Chiang Mai is a lively, bustling city and its charming character makes the province "a must" to visit. Today we will take a walking tour of the city, after you have settled into your cosy local hotel. Walk through the old city to see charming temples, the Warorot Market or visit a meditation temple. Late afternoon is time for our group trekking orientation so that you will be prepared and know what to expect while trekking.

Overnight at hotel in Chiang Mai.

DAY 6 / TREKKING, HILL-TRIBE VILLAGE

In the morning we leave Chiang Mai by jeep or pick-up truck, heading north to the Huay Nam Dang National Park. Before we start trekking, we will visit a local village market to pick up fresh supplies, and will also visit a local waterfall where we can take a refreshing dip.

The trekking starts in the afternoon through forested and hilly terrain for about 1½ - 2 hours (5-6 km) to a Karen hill-tribe village. Here we learn about their way of life and explore the village before enjoying a simple dinner. Tonight you share small bamboo huts in the Karen village.

Overnight in a bamboo hut (B L D).

Note: *The trekking, elephant ride and rafting section of the tour is subject to alterations at short notice due to weather and local conditions, but the same concept is well maintained.*

DAY 7 / TREKKING, ELEPHANT RIDING

Breakfast is quite simple but sufficient to give you the necessary energy for a further 3 hours (7-8 km) of trekking. Our guides will teach us about the local flora & fauna, and about how the local villagers live with and manage the forests. We will arrive at an elephant camp around lunch time where we have a meal break and look forward to an afternoon's elephant ride for around 1-1.5 hours (3-3.5 km) to a rafting camp near to a Karen village. We feel this is the best way to experience an elephant ride – right in the middle of the forest on small paths & trails, and crossing rivers and streams. You can enjoy swimming in the stream that passes the village and after dinner your second night is again in a village bamboo hut.

Overnight in a bamboo hut (B L D).

DAY 8 / BAMBOO RAFTING, CHIANG MAI

You should eat as much breakfast as you can to have enough energy for the bamboo rafting, 20-25 km downriver. There will be some stops made at local hill-tribe villages along the way. This thrilling trip travels downstream as the river winds through steep valleys and mixed forests with the sounds of wildlife all around you. There are occasional gentle rapids and the chance to swim in the river if you wish before the trip ends at a second rafting camp. The rafting can take about 3-4 hours with fast rapids in the rainy season and up to 6 hours in the summer when the water level is shallow and the current is slow. After lunch we return to Chiang Mai by pick-up truck and back to your hotel.

Overnight at hotel in Chiang Mai (B L).

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DAY 9 / CHIANG MAI. FREE DAY

We leave the whole day free today, but there are still lots of options for you to choose from in this exciting city according to your preference and budget. Your leader will give you good information on what to do, such as Thai cooking, a visit to Doi Suthep temple, taking a bike ride through local villages and temples, or relaxing with a traditional Thai massage. No activities this day are included in the tour price.

Overnight at hotel in Chiang Mai (B).

DAY 9 EXTRA OPTIONS

Thai cookery course

See pages 3-4 for details

DAY 10 / BUS TO THATON

This morning we take a trip to Thaton which is a fascinating sleepy town and we will take 4-hour local bus ride to get there. The town is set in a beautiful valley so climbing up the hill to Wat Thaton is a must to see the wonderful views over the mountainous countryside. Or if you prefer, you can just relax on the grassy banks of the Mae Kok River in front of your bungalow.

Overnight at hotel in Thaton (B).

DAY 11 / RIVER BOAT TRIP TO CHIANG RAI

You won't want to leave Thaton today, but we make up for this by taking a 4-hour long-tail boat trip down river to Chiang Rai, which is an unforgettable experience. On arrival you will have some time for a leisurely walk around Chiang Rai town.

Overnight at hotel in Chiang Rai (B).

DAY 12 / CHIANG RAI. FREE DAY

We leave the whole day free today for you to choose what you'd like to see or do. Your choices include, among other things, a visit

to the Golden Triangle (and, perhaps, to the border town of Mae Sai to get more country stamps on your passport!) or perhaps Doi Tung, the famous horticultural project instigated by His Majesty the King's mother.

Overnight at hotel in Chiang Rai (B).

DAY 13 / BUS TO CHIANG MAI, TRAIN TO BANGKOK

After a lazy morning, we take the local bus to Chiang Mai today, where we have some free time before boarding the overnight train to Bangkok, staying in comfortable second-class air-conditioned sleeping berths.

Overnight on train to Bangkok (B).

DAY 14 / BANGKOK. WALKING TOUR

The train will reach Bangkok in the morning and we then check in to our hotel. After setting in, those who are still energetic can perhaps do a walking tour to see a different side of the bustling city. In the evening you can have a farewell dinner together before everyone leaves for their next destination.

Overnight at hotel in Bangkok.

DAY 15 / TOUR ENDS

Our tour finishes this morning after breakfast. Additional accommodation and departure airport transfers are available on request. (B).

DAY 15 EXTRA OPTIONS

Departure airport transfer

See pages 3-4 for details

SMALL GROUP, PRIVATE AND TAILOR-MADE TOURS

SMALL GROUP DEPARTURES:

We have regular small group departures on this tour throughout the year. Departure dates are given on our website, and on request.

PRIVATE DEPARTURES:

You can also choose to do the tour privately, following the itinerary above, but on any other date. We add a small supplement for these departures. Please contact us first to check availability.

TAILOR-MADE TOURS:

Finally, this tour can also be used as a base for a private tailor-made itinerary, to be run on any dates. You can make adjustments as per your own requirements (for example, adding extra days, slightly shortening the tour, adding a scuba-diving course etc.).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

OPTIONS:

Booking and paying for options:

Options can be booked when you make your reservation on our website, between confirming your booking and your departure, and some can also be arranged during the tour itself, subject to availability at the time.

To comply with ATOL regulations in the UK, some options including flights where we don't issue the tickets here in the UK, are to be booked in advance, but purchased from, and paid for to, our agent in Bangkok.

Credit cards, traveller's cheques or cash are accepted in Bangkok for these payments at the start of the tour (a fee will be added if you use a credit card). A receipt will be provided to show the flight & payment details.

Single room supplement - Price: £90

If you want to guarantee yourself a single room throughout the tour, then we need to add a single supplement charge.

If you are a single traveller joining one of our Economy level group tours, then if you are happy to, you may share a twin room with

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another single traveller on the tour of the same sex. If there are no other single travellers available for you to pair up with at the time of your booking, then we will need to add the single supplement to your tour price, but will refund this if we are able to pair you up later on.

Note: Couples will always be given a private double room, and triple/family rooms are available on request.

Book in advance. Pay in advance.

Extra days - Price: £15-£25 p/p/night

These are available on request in Bangkok before and after the tour starts and finishes. If you'd like to add extra days into the time elsewhere, then please request a tailor-made tour.

The price includes a night in the hotel, breakfast, all taxes and transfers (single supplements apply).

Book in advance. Pay in advance.

Arrival airport transfer - Price: £15 p/p (£30 for 1 person)

If you wish, we can arrange to meet you on your arrival in Bangkok airport, and provide a private transfer to the hotel used at the start of the tour. This is a 24-hour service.

Book in advance. Pay in advance.

Departure airport transfer - Price: £15 p/p (£30 for 1 person)

At the end of the tour, this option covers a private transfer to the airport in time for your flight home. This is a 24-hour service and is available on Day 14 or 15 of the tour.

Book & pay in advance OR in Bangkok.

Full day Thai cookery course - Price: £20 p/p

For this option we transfer you to the Baan Hong Nual Cookery School in Chiang Mai for a Thai cooking course, which will be devoted to an introduction to the main ingredients used in Thai

cuisine, their uses, storage and suitable alternatives. The uses of these ingredients will then be demonstrated with the assistance of the participants in preparing a typical Thai lunch. Afterwards there will be an opportunity to try a selection of Thai fruits and snacks.

Book & Pay in advance.

INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TOUR:

- All accommodation (see below)
- Meals as indicated on the itinerary
- Rucksack, water canteen and lifejacket whilst trekking/rafting
- Trekking park entrance fee
- All transport and transfers as per itinerary
- Tours & guides as indicated in the itinerary

NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TOUR:

- International airfares
- Visa costs
- Arrival & departure airport transfers (available as extra options)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Entrance fees (except park entrance fee for trekking)
- Drinks, snacks, tips, and other personal expenses
- Sleeping bag (available to hire in Chiang Mai)
- Travel insurance - please see the policies available on our website
- Any other items not mentioned above

ACCOMMODATION:

Our Economy tours use a range of accommodation including lodges, camping, village huts, family home-stays and tourist class hotels at approx. 2-3-star level. Most rooms have air-conditioning and en-suite bathrooms.

Accommodation whilst trekking is in traditional bamboo huts, and a thin mattress, sheet and blanket is provided. Please note that for the trekking you may wish to bring a light sleeping bag or extra

blanket with you. These may be hired in Chiang Mai if required.

Note: For our group departures, we will advise you of the hotels to be used on the tour about 2 weeks before departure. If you have specific requirements for hotels, then please request a private or tailor-made tour.

Hotels used on this tour (subject to availability):

Bangkok (2 to 3-star):

- Royal Hotel, Trang Hotel (a/c room).

Kanchanaburi (Basic):

- Sam House (fanned bungalow).
- Nong Khao Homestay (basic but comfortable accommodation, with all bedding provided).

Chiang Mai (2-3-star):

- Downtown Hotel, Prince Hotel (a/c room).

Thaton (Basic):

- Bansun Riverhouse (fanned room)

Chiang Rai (2-3-star):

- Golden Triangle Inn (a/c room).

At certain times of the year or where circumstances dictate we may need to use different hotels from those listed above. In this event alternative accommodation will always be of a similar standard.

Please see the Accommodation page on our website for more details of the hotels that we use in Thailand.

Sleeper train:

The sleeper trains in Thailand are of a good standard and popular with tourists. Each carriage has its own steward who ensures the train is kept clean and tidy, and from whom meals & drinks can be ordered to your seat. There is also a separate restaurant car. Each carriage will sleep approx. 40 people. On either side of the carriage

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there are two seats facing each other, with a window and small table. In the evening, the steward will convert these seats into beds for you, which have a pillow, sheets and a blanket, and a curtain for privacy.

JUNGLE TREKS, ELEPHANT RIDES & RAFTING:

Jungle treks:

The trekking on this tour is graded at our 'Easy' level (bear in mind that our grades are designed to cover all the countries in which we operate, and a 'Hard' trek may involve 8-10 days of walking 4-6 hours a day).

In general the trekking on this tour will not be too hard for anybody who is reasonably physically fit. We walk for around 1 ½ hours on the first day, mainly downhill, and for around 3-4 hours on the second day with some climbing and descending. The precise itinerary of the trekking may have to be changed from time to time to take into account the weather and local conditions, but the same concept is well maintained.

While trekking we sleep in villagers' huts. As the huts consist of a single all-purpose room, in which the villagers live and sleep, you will sleep on the covered balcony or a bamboo bed inside the hut. A thin mattress, sheet and a blanket will be provided but for additional comfort you may wish to bring a sleeping bag as in mountain areas it can be quite cool at night, especially in December/January.

Additional equipment such as a rucksack, water canteen, life-jacket is available from our office in Chiang Mai. Sleeping bags may also be hired from here.

As you are required to carry your own kit, unnecessary items should be avoided and left in secure storage in your hotel in Chiang Mai (a private porter can also be provided upon request for an additional charge).

Simple meals will be prepared by the porter by a stream, in a hill-tribe village or at some other suitable spot, during the day, and in one of the village huts in the evening & for breakfast.

Your guide has long experience of the country through which you will travel and is very familiar with the tribes' people and their customs. His advice on these subjects should be followed.

Elephant rides:

Elephant-back riding is great fun and should not be missed. However, please bear in mind that we encourage you not to ride the elephant on its neck. Though some might feel it is challenging it can also be dangerous. Clients wanting to do so must take full responsibility themselves as we cannot guarantee their safety and will accept no responsibility in the event of an accident.

Rafting:

The rafts are of the basic bamboo-pole variety and can carry approximately from 4 to 8 people. The rafting can take from 4 to 6 hours depending on the season, and the water level & current. Along some parts of the river there are a lot of snags (dead trees, big rocks, broken wood, etc.), which can sometimes be dangerous. A life jacket (provided) is essential as it will not only keep you afloat, if by chance you should fall off the raft, but also help to prevent injury if hitting any of these snags. During the rainy season (or the dry season following heavy rainfall) the current will be quite strong and the guide will decide if the rafting should proceed or not. His advice on this matter should be strictly followed.

TRANSPORT:

This tour aims at bringing you as close to the real Thailand as possible and not cocooning you from it. To this end we use public transport wherever we feel that it meets our high standards - this may include 2nd class overnight sleeper trains, local buses and local ferries. We also use private transport including jeeps or pick-up trucks to and from the trek, and minibuses for the sightseeing tours where necessary.

TRANSFERS:

The tour includes all transfers detailed in the itinerary. Airport arrival and departure transfers are not included in the tour price, but are available on request (see Options section above).

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS:

In order to keep our tours flexible, and to make them accessible to as many people as possible, we do not include your international flights in the set tour itinerary or price.

However, we do hold an ATOL (UK flight sales license) and are happy to book your flights for you. If you let us know your ideal dates and departure airport, then we will be happy to provide you with some flight options that we can arrange for you. You can then choose whether to book the flights through us, or make your own arrangements. Either way, your airport arrival & departure transfers are included.

TOUR LEADERS/GUIDES:

For this tour we provide fully trained, local English-speaking Thai guides to act as your tour leader. A specialist local guide will accompany you on the trekking section. Our local reps in all the towns and cities en-route are also at your service.

To help support the local people and economy, and also because we know it works best for you, our policy at Thailand Uncovered is to use only local guides and tour leaders for this tour. Please check our website for further details.

Note: For groups of under 4 people we may use separate guides in each location (i.e. you will not be accompanied on the overnight trains, but our reps will be there for all the other transfers for you).

ENTRANCE FEES:

The tour price includes entrance to the National Parks visited during the trekking section of the tour. Entrance fees to any tourist sites visited are not included.

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TIPPING:

Tipping is not part of Thai culture, but has become customary but not compulsory in the service & tourist industry. Tipping is always optional, and any amounts paid should reflect excellent service.

It is normal and accepted for people to tip differently, and you should not feel under any pressure to tip any particular amount.

We are often asked for advice on common amounts however, and suggest that up to 10% of the tour price would be a suitable budget for this tour.

COUNTRY GUIDE:

For an in-depth overview of Thailand, please checkout the country guide pages on our website.

DATES & PRICES:

We have regular departures on this tour throughout the year. Our small group departure dates are listed on our website and on a separate dates & prices sheet (available on request).

We can also run the tour privately for you on any other dates for a small supplement, or customise it to make a tailor-made tour to fit your personal requirements.

Please contact our knowledgeable sales staff for more help on creating the right tour for you.

CLIMATE:

The weather in Thailand varies between the northern & southern halves of the country, and the time of year, and is controlled by several different monsoons. These monsoon rains start and finish at slightly different times every year.

In the northern & central regions (including Bangkok & Chiang Mai), the 'dry season' lasts from November/December to May, before getting steadily hotter in June and July. The most rain falls in August

and September.

In the south (including Khao Sok & Krabi), the 'dry season' normally runs from November to April, with most rain falling from May to October, with less temperature difference between them than in the North.

In Koh Samui and Ko Tao, the 'cool dry season' runs from December to February, with the 'hot dry season' running from March to August, and the 'rainy season' starting sometime in September and finishing late November.

Each of the seasons has its own charms and its difficulties!

HEALTH:

For up to the minute health information & vaccination requirements for Thailand we recommend that you contact your GP or a travel clinic (1st Contact have a travel clinic with free advice tel. 0800 0393073).

General vaccination recommendations for Thailand include Tetanus, Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Polio and Typhoid.

Note: *The trekking area in this tour is not considered to be a malarial risk (the only endemic area is close to the border with Myanmar).*

VISAS:

British, European, and many other nationalities do not require a visa for travel to Thailand for stays of 30 days or less. If you are staying longer then visas are required. For further information on your visa requirements, please contact us or checkout the visa pages on our website.

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM:

We take responsible travel seriously, and as well as taking this into consideration when we design our itineraries, and select the people and agents we work with, we also donate £2 for every person travelling on of our Thailand tours. One of the organisations we

support is the Border Green Energy Team (BGET), who provide hands-on appropriate technology training and financial support to village innovators in ethnic minority areas on both sides of the Thai/Burma border. More examples of how we spend your money and full details of our responsible travel policy are given on our website.

PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION:

After booking, we will provide you with detailed information to help you prepare for the tour. This will include helpful advice on money, health, insurance, tipping, climate, clothing etc.

Further information is also available in the County & Travel guides on our website.

YOUR SPACE @ UNCOVER THE WORLD:

We have launched a community space for use by past, present and future travellers with us. Here you can make contact with fellow travellers in your group before you travel, or share photos and stay in contact with them after you return home. You can also ask questions of our staff and read updates on itineraries and destination news etc. For further details, please check...

<http://yourspace.uncovertheworld.travel>



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