

Thailand Uncovered from only £440pp*



9 DAYS / SMALL GROUP OR PRIVATE TOUR / STANDARD TOUR /

Travel to the north of Thailand and enter a world of adventure. Trek through lush forests stopping at local hill tribe villages to learn about their simple way of life. Enjoy a ride on an elephant and learn how important these working animals are to the locals' day-to-day lives. Take a ride on a traditional bamboo raft along beautiful tree-lined rivers, enjoying the abundance of colourful wildlife all around. This is adventure and nature in perfect harmony!

TOUR FACTS

Tour Code & Class:	MATHTU / Standard
Group Size & Age:	Min. - 2 Max. - 12 / Min. age - 7
Activity - Multi:	Sightseeing, trekking, bamboo rafting and elephant safari
Activity Level:	Medium
Trek & River Grade:	Easy / I to II
Accommodation:	4 nights in hotels, 2 nights in bamboo huts, 2 overnight sleeper trains
Transport:	Minibus, 2nd class A/C sleeper train, pick-up truck/jeep, local bus
Meals:	6 Breakfasts (B), 3 Lunches (L) and 3 Dinners (D)

YOUR 9 DAY TOUR ITINERARY

- Day 1:** Arrive in Bangkok. Transfer from airport to hotel.
- Day 2:** Bangkok - Grand Palace & City canal tours, sleeper train to Chiang Mai.
- Day 3:** Chiang Mai - Doi Suthep temple & handicrafts tour.
- Day 4-5:** Trekking to hill-tribe villages & elephant ride.
- Day 6:** Bamboo rafting, Chiang Mai.
- Day 7:** Chiang Mai - free time, sleeper train to Bangkok.
- Day 8:** Bangkok - Free time, evening dinner cruise.
- Day 9:** Bangkok - Free time. Transfer to airport for flight home.

"Would you like to extend this tour and visit Chiang Rai? ...then check out our Golden Triangle tour"



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, Hill-tribe trek, Elephant ride, River raft, Chiang Mai sightseeing, Dinner cruise on Wat Po.

FLIGHT BOOKINGS AVAILABLE
See page 5 for details

FLIGHTS INCLUDED:*	LOCAL PAYMENT:	ENTRANCE FEES:	AIRPORT TRANSFERS:
X	X	✓	✓

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: MATHTU when booking

* LAND ONLY PRICE, FLIGHT QUOTES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST. / LAST AMENDED 11/08/2008 /

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DETAILED ITINERARY

DAY 1 / ARRIVE IN BANGKOK

You arrive at Bangkok airport where we greet you and transfer you to your hotel. Your Thailand Uncovered rep welcomes you, helps you settle into the hotel, and provides you with some useful tips for exploring the area as well as outlining the schedule for the next few days.

Overnight at hotel in Bangkok.

DAY 1 EXTRA OPTIONS

Bangkok Introductory tour

See pages 3-4 for details

DAY 2 / BANGKOK, GRAND PALACE & CANALS TOUR, TRAIN TO CHIANG MAI

After a pre-tour briefing, we start today with a half day tour to the splendid Grand Palace complex and the Royal Temple of the Emerald Buddha where varied styles of Thai architecture are delicately woven together to enchant the viewer.

In the afternoon we take a cruise along the canals of Bangkok's surprisingly rural western suburbs and enjoy the natural scenery and observe the daily lives of the people who live along the canals. We stop en route for an opportunity to talk to some of the students attending the temple school or take a leisurely stroll through vegetable and herb gardens. Continuing by boat we visit an orchid farm and the boathouse where the Royal Barges are kept and maintained.

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

Overnight on sleeper train to Chiang Mai (B).

DAY 3 / CHIANG MAI, DOI SUTHEP & HANDICRAFT TOURS

Chiang Mai is a lively, bustling city and its charming character makes the province "a must" to visit. Today we will take a trip up

to the highly revered Doi Suthep Temple, which contains a holy relic of the Buddha. Situated on a mountain top, the temple affords spectacular views of the city and surrounding countryside and we learn more here about the importance that Buddhism has to the Thailand people and culture. Our afternoon is spent visiting local villages to observe the manufacture of silks, hand-made cottons, the traditional techniques still employed in wood carving, and in the production of silverware, lacquer-ware and paper umbrellas.

In the early evening we have a group trekking orientation so that you will be prepared and know what to expect during the next section of the tour.

Overnight at hotel in Chiang Mai.

DAY 4 / 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.

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.

Overnight in a bamboo hut (B L D).

DAY 5 / 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 6 / 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).

DAY 7 / CHIANG MAI, FREE TIME

We have left today free, and offer a wide range of options for you to choose from in and around this exciting city. Your tour leader will give you all the information you need on the options available, which include a Thai cookery course, a visit to Lampang & an Elephant conservation centre, taking an easy bike ride through the surrounding countryside and temples, or relaxing with a traditional Thai massage. No activities this day are included in the tour price.

In the evening we board the overnight train to Bangkok staying in

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comfortable second-class air-conditioned sleeping berths.
Overnight at hotel in Chiang Mai (B).

DAY 7 EXTRA OPTIONS

Full day Thai cookery course
Lampang & Elephant Conservation Centre
See pages 3-4 for details

DAY 8 / BANGKOK, FREE DAY. DINNER CRUISE

Upon arrival back in Bangkok we transfer you to your hotel, where the rest of your day is free to do some last minute shopping or a little more sightseeing. Options are available to visit more temples, or explore more of the different sides of Bangkok using a range of different local transport. The evening is set aside to enjoy a superb dinner onboard a luxury boat, while cruising along the Chao Phraya River. The spectacular sights along the river make an impressive backdrop to the meal and a traditional Thai show is also included.
Overnight on sleeper train to Bangkok (B).

DAY 9 / TOUR ENDS

Your day is free until we transfer you to the airport in time for your flight home. As many flights leave Bangkok in the evening, you have time during the day to do some more tours, and we offer a range of options including a morning visit to the Damnoen Saduak floating market or a full day tour to Kanchanaburi and the bridge on the River Kwai.

Extensions are also available on this tour to visit Ankor Wat in Cambodia, or to head to the beach for some rest and relaxation. Please contact us for details. (B).

DAY 9 EXTRA OPTIONS

Kanchanaburi River Kwai day trip
Damnoen Saduak floating market
See pages 3-4 for details

Note: Our **Thailand Wildlife Safari**, and **Wildlife & Beaches** tours are timed to start immediately after this tour, and can be combined to create one longer holiday. A discount will be given if two tours are booked together.

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: £70

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 Standard level group tours, then if you are happy to, you may share a twin room with 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: £20-£35 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.

Bangkok Introductory tour - Price: £20 p/p (min 2)

This introductory half day tour is done on foot and using a wide selection of different public transport to familiarise you with the city of Bangkok and its many different sites and features. We concentrate more on learning about the life of the city rather than visiting famous sites which you may see during the main part of

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your tour.

Book & Pay in advance or in Thailand.

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

For this option we transfer you to the Baan Hong Nual Cookery School 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 or in Thailand.

Lampang & Elephant Conservation Centre - Price: £50 p/p (min 2)

After an early morning departure to Lampang, en-route we visit the Elephant Conservation Centre to see the elephants bathing and demonstrating their skills at hauling timber. We will tour the facilities of the elephant hospital, to which sick and injured elephants are brought from all over the country, and also see how young elephants are weaned from their dependence upon humans in preparation for release into the wild. We continue to Lampang city for one of the most sacred temples in the North, Wat Phrathat Lampang Luang, and the Burmese-style temples Wat Phra Kaew Dontao and Wat Sri Longmuang. Lunch is included with this tour, which can be run for a minimum of 2 people.

Book & Pay in advance OR in Thailand.

Kanchanaburi River Kwai day trip - Price: £50 p/p (min 2)

This option leaves Bangkok early in the morning (around 06.30) and takes you on a trip by road to historic Kanchanaburi (approx 3 hours drive), with visits to the Allied War Cemetery, war museum and the bridge over the River Kwai. You then take a train journey on the

Death Railway, over the bridges and a spectacular wooden viaduct built by the POWs. The tour also features a short long-tailed boat trip along the Kwai Noi. Lunch is included, normally at a restaurant by the river. You will get back to Bangkok at around 18.00.

Book & Pay in advance OR in Thailand.

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
- Entrance fees (including park entrance fee for trekking)
- All transfers, including 24-hour airport transfer service
- Tours & guides as indicated in the itinerary
- All transport

NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TOUR:

- International airfares
- Visa costs
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks, tips, and other personal expenses
- Sleeping bag
- Travel insurance - please see the policies available on our website
- Any other items not mentioned above

ACCOMMODATION:

Our Standard tours use good quality hotels at approx. 3-star level, in which all 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 (3-star):

- Narai Hotel, Royal Benja Hotel (a/c room).

Chiang Mai (3-star):

- Park Hotel (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.

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

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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 both your airport arrival and departure transfers (24-hour service), and all other transfers.

After customs and immigration formalities you will be met by our representative, and after introductions, they will take you straight to your hotel (full details will be provided after booking).

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.

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 Bangkok and for the Chiang Mai section (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 fees to all the tourist sites and National Parks mentioned in the itinerary.

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.

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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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