

Rice Barge Experience from only £875pp*

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



Cruise along the magnificent Chao Phraya River on board the award winning traditional teakwood rice barge 'Thanatharee', converted to meet the specific needs of independent minded travellers. We leave Bangkok behind and cruise through Thailand's rural heartland for an unforgettable trip that will be a highlight of any visit to Thailand. We also tour Bangkok, visit Kanchanaburi and Erawan National Park, and explore the magnificent ruins of Ayutthaya, a former capital of Thailand and also a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Regular small-group departures run all year round starting on Thursdays. Call or check the website for dates and prices. Private and tailor-made options and full boat charters are also available on request.

Please refer to page 3 or website for details.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

Bangkok, Rice Barge cruise & cycling tours, Bridge on the River Kwai, Erawan National Park, Temples at Ayutthaya, Damnoen Saduak Floating Market.

FLIGHT BOOKINGS AVAILABLE

See page 4 for details

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

Tour Code & Class:	CRTHRB / Standard
Group Size & Age:	Min. - 2 Max. - 12 / Min. age - 7
Activity - Cruise:	Sightseeing, river cruise, cycling
Activity Level:	Low
Accommodation:	7 nights in hotels, 2 nights on rice barge
Transport:	Rice barge cruise boat, private A/C minibus, cycling, boat trip
Meals:	9 Breakfasts (B), 7 Lunches (L) and 4 Dinners (D)

YOUR 10 DAY TOUR ITINERARY

- Day 1:** Arrive in Bangkok. Transfer from airport to hotel.
- Day 2:** Bangkok - Grand Palace & City canal tours.
- Day 3:** Board traditional rice barge, sail up the Chao Phraya River.
- Day 4:** Rice barge cruise. Various easy cycling tours and visits.
- Day 5:** Rice barge cruise - Markets & school tour, boat to Bangkok.
- Day 6:** Kanchanaburi - River Kwai tour.
- Day 7:** Erawan National Park.
- Day 8:** Ayutthaya - Temple tour, transfer back to Bangkok.
- Day 9:** Bangkok - Damnoen Saduak floating market, afternoon free.
- Day 10:** Bangkok - Free time. Transfer to airport for flight home.

Note: This is an extended version of our Temples & Palaces tour

"Would you like to shorten this tour and miss out Kanchanaburi & Ayutthaya? ...then check out our Warterways of Old Siam tour"

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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 TOURS

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.

Overnight at hotel in Bangkok (B L).

DAY 3 / RICE BARGE CRUISE

This morning we leave our hotel early in the morning (07.00-07.30) for the 15km transfer to the pier where we board the "Thanatharee" at Pinklao Pier in Bangkok, and start sailing up the Chao Phraya river to Ko Kred, an isle in the middle of the River. Here, we explore the Mon pottery-making village on the isle before continuing to

the lively Pathum Thani market where varieties of fresh meats, vegetables and various local goods are sold.

Returning to the boat we continue up river, and have lunch on board, passing by Wat Pailom, well known as a winter nesting ground of the Asian Openbill Stork which migrates from Northern India and Siberia. We then head further upriver to the unspoilt Maenam Noi, a small branch of the main Chao Phraya River.

We'll arrive at Wat Singh at approximately 18:00, tie up for the night and enjoy a fine meal prepared by the crew and on-board chef.

Note: *The itinerary of the barge portion of this tour is only a guideline and is subject to change without prior notice due to tide and local conditions, but the same concept is well maintained. During some months, normally around September-November, it may not be possible to use the Maenam Noi in which case the itinerary will follow the main Chao Phraya River.*

Overnight at on board rice barge (B L D).

DAY 4 / RICE BARGE CRUISE

This morning we have an opportunity to give food to the monks on their morning alms round, and to learn more about the importance of the Buddhist religion in Thailand.

After breakfast we take an easy cycle ride to explore the local villages before departing on the boat for the temple of Wat Taku. After lunch on board, we board our bicycles again for another tour through rural farmland and small villages along the river.

We rejoin the barge at Wat Kophai and continue to Bang Sadej where we cycle to visit its famous temple and a local orphanage where, mainly hilltribe children receive an education and vocational training. We'll continue on to the main village to meet the local people and see the cottage industries they engage in. Then we depart on the boat to Pamok for our second night on board.

Overnight at on board rice barge (B L D).

DAY 5 / RICE BARGE CRUISE. BOAT TO BANGKOK

Our morning visits today are to the lively morning market at Pamok, and a local school. We also visit a local family who make drums. Then we head on towards Ayutthaya before boarding a modern boat for a fast return journey downriver back to Bangkok.

Overnight at hotel in Bangkok (B L).

DAY 6 / KANCHANABURI & RIVER KWAI

Today we take you on a trip to historic Kanchanaburi where the remains of the famous bridge over the River Kwai can be seen. You visit the Allied War Cemetery, war museum and the bridge over the River Kwai. After a lunch by the river it's time to take a train journey on the Death Railway, over the bridges and a spectacular wooden viaduct built by the POWs during the Second World War. A short long-tailed boat trip along the Kwai Noi River is also included.

Overnight at hotel in Kanchanaburi (B L D).

DAY 7 / ERAWAN NATIONAL PARK

This morning you take a walk into Erawan National Park and visit a beautiful multi-tiered waterfall. Erawan National Park is a unique and rugged landscape of high elevation plateaus and steep valleys. Its forests support an amazing array of plants and a diverse range of wildlife, from minute brilliantly coloured insects to tigers and the mighty Asian elephant.

The afternoon is now free for you to enjoy the riverside location of Kanchanaburi at your leisure. There are plenty of activity and sightseeing option available or alternatively you can just relax and take it easy.

Overnight at hotel in Kanchanaburi (B L D).

DAY 8 / AYUTTHAYA, TEMPLE TOUR

Next we head east to Ayutthaya, the former capital of Thailand (1350-1767AD) and UNESCO world heritage site. Ayutthaya's many

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ancient temples are scattered throughout the site and along the encircling Chao Phraya River. We visit several of the most important temples and the former summer palace Ban Pa-In, before driving back to Bangkok. A Thai lunch is included today, on board a traditional rice barge.

Overnight at hotel in Bangkok (B L).

DAY 9/ BANGKOK FLOATING MARKET, AFTERNOON FREE

We depart early this morning to Ban Paew and a boat cruise along the Damnoen Saduak Canal. We enjoy the beautiful sights along the way and witness the day-to-day activities of the Thai people who live on the canals. The cruise ends at the wonderfully colourful floating market at Damnoen Saduak. The afternoon is free for you to enjoy more sightseeing or perhaps do some last minute shopping.

Overnight at hotel in Bangkok (B).

DAY 9 EXTRA OPTIONS

Afternoon Thai cookery

See pages 2-3 for details

DAY 10 / TOUR ENDS

Your day is free to do some last minute sightseeing and shopping, until we transfer you to the airport in time for your flight home.(B).

SMALL GROUP, PRIVATE AND TAILOR-MADE TOURS

SMALL GROUP DEPARTURES:

We have regular small group departures on this tour throughout the year, starting on Thursdays. Our group may join with other travellers on the rice barge.

PRIVATE DEPARTURES:

You can also choose to do the tour privately and charter the whole

barge. This can be done on any dates, subject to availability and existing bookings on the boat. Please contact us first to check availability and prices.

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, but fitting with the rice barge departure from Bangkok on Saturday morning. 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.

Credit cards, traveller's cheques or cash are accepted in Bangkok for payments for options arranged after you arrive (a fee will be added if you use a credit card). A receipt will be provided.

Single room supplement - Price: £100 p/p

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 do not select the single supplement, you may share a twin or triple room with another traveller/s (same sex) in the group.

Note: Couples will always be given a private double room where possible 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 your tour.

Book & Pay in advance or in Thailand.

Afternoon Thai cookery - Price: on request

For this option we transfer you to the pier for a cruise in a long-tailed motorboat and to witness the scenic life of people who live along Bangkok's waterways. You'll learn some of the secrets of Thai cooking at the house of a Thai family located on the banks of the canal. Upon arrival a Thai herbal drink is served as a welcoming to the house. Discover how fresh herbs and spices are blended into tasty dishes. You will have plenty of time for discussion and to test the tastes of all that is demonstrated.

Book & Pay in advance.

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INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TOUR:

- All accommodation (see below)
- Meals as indicated on the itinerary
- Entrance fees to all sites mentioned in the itinerary
- 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
- 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.

Sleeping facilities on the rice barge consist of an air-conditioned multi-share cabin with comfortable bunk beds sleeping a maximum 12 persons. The two sides are separated by a fabric curtain. One common bathroom and one toilet are located in the main deck, and there is another toilet on the upper deck. You should bring your own towel and personal toiletries (towel and soap are provided).

In a rare case that there are more than 12 joining persons, the sleeping area for additional persons will be at the barge's common area (on the upper deck, space is available for a maximum of 4 persons).

Mosquito nets, pillows and blankets are provided.

Note: For our group departures, we will advise you of the hotel 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):

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Bangkok (3-star):

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

Kanchanaburi (3-star):

- Kasalong, Pung Wan Resort & Spa (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.

TRANSPORT:

This tour aims at bringing you as close to the real Thailand as possible and not cocooning you from it. Along with the traditional teakwood rice barge, we use private minibuses and vans for the transfers and sightseeing tours, a large modern cruising boat with a dining room for the Ayutthaya to Bangkok river journey, as well as jeeps or pick-up trucks in the National Park. Bicycles are carried on board the rice barge.

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.

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.

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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.

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!

DATES & PRICES:

We have regular departures on this tour throughout the year, starting on Thursdays to fit with the rice barge departures from

Bangkok. Some months are missed due to the local weather conditions. Our small group departure dates are listed on our website and on a separate dates & prices sheet (available on request).

You can also choose to do the tour privately and charter the whole barge. This can be done on any dates, subject to availability and existing bookings on the boat. Please contact us first to check availability and prices.

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

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.

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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