

# Elephants & Rafts

10 DAYS / SMALL GROUP OR PRIVATE TOUR / FAMILY TOUR

Get right into the heart of the countryside with this adventurous holiday to Bangkok and northern Thailand. After some cultural sightseeing in Bangkok, we head north to Chiang Mai and into the hills to enjoy a jungle trek, elephant ride and a bamboo river rafting trip, spending 2 nights in remote hill-tribe villages and learning about the ways of life in rural Thailand.

## TOUR FACTS

<b>Tour Code:</b>	FATHER
<b>Group Size &amp; Age:</b>	Min. - 3 Max. - 16 / Min. age - 7
<b>Travel Idea:</b>	Family Tour
<b>Activity Level:</b>	Moderate
<b>Comfort Rating:</b>	Standard
<b>Accommodation:</b>	5 nights in hotels, 2 nights in bamboo hut, 2 overnight train
<b>Transport:</b>	Internal flight, 2nd class A/C sleeper train, minibus, pick-up truck, elephant, long-tail boat

## YOUR 9 DAY TOUR ITINERARY

- Day 1:** Arrive in Bangkok. Transfer from airport to hotel.
- Day 2:** Bangkok - Grand Palace & Wat Pho tour. Overnight sleeper train to Chiang Mai.
- Day 3:** Chiang Mai - Free morning, Doi Suthep and zoo tour.
- Day 4:** Forest trekking to hill-tribe village.
- Day 5:** Forest trekking and elephant ride. Overnight hill-tribe village
- Day 6:** Bamboo rafting, Return to Chiang Mai.
- Day 7:** Chiang Mai - Free time (various options available) Overnight sleeper train to Bangkok.
- Day 8:** Bangkok - Free morning, afternoon city canal tour.
- Day 9:** Bangkok - Free time. Transfer to airport for flight home.

**"Would you like to send some time at the beach after this tour? ...then check out our Wet & Wild in Thailand tour which has departures timed to run immediately after this tour finishes"**



## FLIGHT BOOKINGS AVAILABLE

See page 5 for details

Regular small-group departures run during UK holiday periods. Please call or check the website for dates and prices. Private and tailor-made options also available on request.

Please refer to page 3 or website for details.

## TOUR HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

Bangkok sightseeing, Hill-tribe trek, Elephant ride, River rafting, Chiang Mai sightseeing,

<b>FLIGHTS INCLUDED:*</b>	<b>LOCAL PAYMENT:</b>	<b>ENTRANCE FEES:</b>	<b>AIRPORT TRANSFERS:</b>
X	X	✓	✓

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# Elephants & Rafts continued...

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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 TOUR, TRAIN TO CHIANG MAI

We leave your morning free today to relax after your flights, and to enjoy the hotel facilities. We'll pick you up after an early lunch in the hotel, for an afternoon 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. We also take time to visit nearby Wat Pho temple, Bangkok's oldest and largest Wat, and home to the largest reclining Buddha.

Our journey tonight is by second-class sleeper train to Chiang Mai in air-conditioned sleeping berths – the trains are clean and well maintained with dedicated stewards for each carriage, so just relax and enjoy the journey (approx. 13 hours).

*Overnight on sleeper train to Chiang Mai (B).*

### DAY 2 EXTRA OPTIONS

#### Bangkok to Chiang Mai flight upgrade

*See pages 3-4 for details*

### DAY 3 / CHIANG MAI, WALKING TOUR

After arriving in Chiang Mai, we transfer to our hotel to check in. Chiang Mai is a lively, bustling city and its charming character makes the province "a must" to visit.

After a chance to settle in after the overnight train journey, and perhaps explore a little around the hotel, we take a trip up to the highly revered Doi Suthep Temple, which contains a holy relic of the Buddha. This important temple is situated on a mountain top that affords spectacular views of the city and surrounding countryside.

En-route back to the city, we stop at the nearby Chiang Mai zoo. Set in an attractive 36-acre park, it has a good reputation and is home to over seven thousand animals, including a children's zoo, walk through aviary and freshwater aquarium. It also houses two giant pandas on loan from China. In the evening we enjoy dinner in a local restaurant by the river, and this is the perfect time for our group trekking orientation so that you will be prepared and know what to expect for our jungle adventure over the next few days.

*Overnight at hotel in Chiang Mai (D).*

### 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.

*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

After enjoying a hearty breakfast, we start our exciting but easy bamboo rafting, travelling up to 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, TRAIN TO BANGKOK

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, 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.

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\* SEE WEBSITE FOR FULL PRICE LIST, FLIGHT QUOTES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST.



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In the evening we board the overnight sleeper train back to Bangkok staying in comfortable second-class air-conditioned sleeping berths.

*Overnight at hotel in Chiang Mai (B).*

## DAY 7 EXTRA OPTIONS

**Full day Thai cookery course**

**Chiang Mai biking & Wieng Kum Kam tour**

**Chiang Mai handicrafts tour**

*See pages 3-4 for details*

## DAY 8 / BANGKOK, FREE MORNING, AFTERNOON KLONG TOUR

Upon arrival back in Bangkok we transfer you to your hotel, where the rest of the morning is free. In the afternoon you 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. You'll stop en route for an opportunity to talk to some of the students attending a temple school, or take a leisurely stroll through vegetable and herb gardens. Continuing by boat you visit an orchid farm and the boathouse where the Royal Barges are kept and maintained.

*Overnight at hotel in Bangkok.*

## DAY 8 EXTRA OPTIONS

**Chiang Mai to Bangkok flight upgrade**

*See pages 3-4 for details*

## DAY 9 / TOUR ENDS

Your day is free until we transfer you to the airport in time for your flight home.

*(B).*

## DAY 9 EXTRA OPTIONS

**Damnoen Saduak floating market half-day tour**

*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 during UK school holidays. 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 as many or as few adjustments to the itinerary as per your own requirements and we will provide suggestions, ideas and prices to fit your own personal interests and budget.

## 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: £185

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

**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

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). Please contact us for prices to fit your family make-up.

*Book in advance. Pay in advance.*

### Bangkok Introductory tour

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.*

### Bangkok/Chiang Mai or v/v flight upgrade

This option upgrades your sleeper train journey between Bangkok and Chiang Mai (or v/v) to an internal flight. The price includes an extra night in the hotel in Chiang Mai and all your transfers.

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**Note:** Flights are subject to availability and flight times will be advised at the time of booking.

*Book in advance. Pay in advance.*

## Chiang Mai handicrafts tour

Lasting for half a day, this tour visits the villages of Bor Sang and San Kampaeng which are famous for their craft industries. We observe the manufacture of silk, hand-made cotton goods, and the traditional techniques still employed in woodcarving and in the production of silverware, lacquerware and paper umbrellas (min 2 people).

*Book & Pay in advance or in Thailand.*

## Chiang Mai Biking & Wieng Kum Kam

This full-day tour provides a fun way to visit Wieng Kum Kam, an ancient city built by King Mengrai in the 14th Century, and only recently rediscovered. We bike to the royal temple of Wat Kanthorn, the shrine of King Mengrai, and the Wat Hao Nong temple, before viewing some of the recently unearthed buildings. After several more stops including one for lunch, we visit a local market and then head back to the hotel (min 2 people, on a joining basis, min age 12, lunch included).

*Book & Pay in advance or in Thailand.*

## Full day Thai cookery course

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.*

## Damnoen Saduak floating market tour

This half day tour runs from around 07.00-11.30 and leaves Bangkok for Ban Paew to start a boat cruise along the Damnoen Saduak Canal where you 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 most colorful floating market in Thailand, where numerous fruit, vegetables, and a myriad other goods are sold on the water.

*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 (available for hire in Chiang Mai)
- Travel insurance - please see the policies available on our website
- Any other items not mentioned above

## ACCOMMODATION:

Our Family tours in Thailand use a wide range of different accommodation from basic bamboo huts and tree-houses to luxurious 5-star hotels. The itinerary has been designed so that you switch between these to maintain a balance of comfort and adventure.

## Chiang Mai Trekking:

Accommodation whilst trekking is in traditional communal bamboo huts, and a mattress, sheet and mosquito net is provided. A sleeping bag is required, and this can be hired cheaply from Chiang Mai if you wish.

## 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 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.

**Note:** Our website prices are based on a range of hotels, and we will let you know which are to be used a few weeks before departure. If you would like to finalise and guarantee specific hotels before you book, please request a tailor-made tour. Please see the Accommodation page on our website for more information about the hotels we use.

## ROOMING ARRANGEMENTS:

Not all of the hotels in Thailand offer bedding arrangements in their rooms that work well for families with children. We always try to use those that do, and will choose rooms most suitable to your family make-up and the age of your children. This may include rooms with 3 single beds, a double plus singles, extra roll-away

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beds for younger children, or connecting double & twin rooms. We cannot guarantee exactly what type of room you will have at the time of booking, but will always ensure that younger children either share the same room with their parents, or have a room with a connecting door to their parent's room.

If you want to guarantee yourself or one of your children a single room for the duration of the tour, then we will need to add a single supplement charge.

## 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 includes 2nd class overnight trains with air conditioned berths, local buses and local ferries. We also use private transport, i.e. pick-up trucks and minibuses where necessary.

### TRANSFERS:

The tour includes both your arrival and departure airport 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 for all the sightseeing tours. Our website prices are based on using different guides in different parts of Thailand (for example, you generally keep the same guide for all of the Bangkok/Kanchanaburi/Ayutthaya region, and then a different guide would be used in the north for Chiang Mai & Chiang Rai. We do not generally send our guides with you to the beach resorts, where most optional activities are arranged either through your hotel/

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resort, or our local reps. If you would like the same guide to escort you throughout the whole tour we can certainly arrange this, but there will be an extra cost.

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. Please check our website for further details.

**Note:** For groups of under 6 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).

## GROUP SIZES & AGES:

In order to provide the most personal service, and to make sure that you get as much out of our tours as possible, we like to keep our tour groups small, so there are just a few families travelling together. We therefore set the maximum number at 16 and the minimum at 3 people. The minimum age for children to join the tour is 7 years at the date of travel. Average ages of children travelling on this tour tend to be from 9 to 14. We may run several groups on each departure date and as far as possible will split these groups up so that children of similar ages travel together.

You can join our group departures as any kind of family, as long as at least 1 child under 16 is present. Grandparents are welcome to join the tour, but if your party has a very high ratio of adults to children, then we would recommend you think about joining one of our Standard or Superior level tours. Please contact us for more information and advice if required.

## 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.

## 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:

Our small group departure dates are listed on our website and on a separate dates & prices sheet (available on request). These have been timed to depart during the main UK school holidays, while taking into account the weather in Thailand.

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

Discounts are offered for children aged 7-11 who have their own room, while larger discounts are available for single children aged 7-11 who share a room with 2 adults. Single children sharing a room with a single adult will pay the full tour price. Please contact our knowledgeable sales staff for details and for more help on creating the right tour for your family and budget.

## 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).

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## 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.

## FACEBOOK & TWITTER:

Uncover the World recently joined the Facebook community; it would be great if you joined us and shared some of your travel photos and stories. It's also a great way to stay in touch with your fellow travellers, share photos, and also keep updated with special offers and news about new tours and destinations from us - click on [www.facebook.com/UncoverTheWorld](https://www.facebook.com/UncoverTheWorld) and 'Like' us.

You can also follow us on Twitter - [www.twitter.com/utworld](https://www.twitter.com/utworld)

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