

*Full Itinerary*

## TANTALIZING THAILAND



TALK TO OUR WELL TRAVELLED TEAM OF EXPERTS

Toll Free US and Canada: 1 (855) 342-4127

Office open: Monday - Thursday 9:00am - 8:00pm, Friday 9:00am - 5:30pm (London time). Call answered 24/7



### JOURNEY SNAPSHOT

ACTIVITY LEVEL:

Level 2

DESTINATION:

Tantalizing Thailand

DURATION:

12 days / 11 nights

FLIGHT INFORMATION:

Please arrange your flights into Bangkok Airport [BKK] on Day 1 and to depart from Phuket Airport [HKT] on Day 12

PICKUP LOCATION:

Bangkok Airport [BKK]

## OVERVIEW

Choose your own departure date for your group

From bustling Bangkok, its modern skyscrapers and the waters of the Chao Praya River, the historic temples, rustic villages and azure waters of "James Bond Bay", we're sure that Thailand will tantalize you!

Thailand is known for tropical beaches, its beautiful royal palaces, ancient ruins and its ornate temples. Join us as we travel from the bustling capital city, Bangkok, where the ultramodern city sits alongside the ancient canalside communities, with local markets, ancient temples and skyscrapers sitting side by side.

We travel north to Chiang Mai, the lively city, discovering its temples, beautiful countryside, local villages and wildlife, before we head to the coast in Phuket. Here we learn about the many different cultures that have shaped the modern city and country, and head out on the pristine turquoise waters to discover iconic bays. We'll travel by long boat and tuk tuk, taste the local cuisine, visit the markets - even ones that float - and see the local produce grow.

Thailand will tantalize your senses and leave you wanting to discover more of South East Asia.

## ITINERARY SUMMARY

**DAY 1** - Welcome to Thailand

**DAY 2** - Discovering Bangkok

**DAY 3** - Bangkok's Bustling Markets

**DAY 4** - Amazing Ayutthaya & Bang Pa-In

**DAY 5** - Travel to Chiang Mai

**DAY 6** - Northern Thailand's Nature

**DAY 7** - The Temples & History of Chiang Mai

**DAY 8** - With the locals of Mae Kampong

**DAY 9** - Travel to Phuket

**DAY 10** - Exploring Phuket Old Town

**DAY 11** - Sailing Phang Nga Bay

**DAY 12** - Farewell Thailand

## FULL ITINERARY

### DAY 1 - WELCOME TO THAILAND

Upon arrival at Bangkok Airport, you will be met by a representative and transferred to your hotel in the city.

With time to relax after your long journey, we will meet this evening for a welcome dinner at the hotel to start our adventure through Thailand.

**Included meals:** Dinner

**Accommodation:** Bangkok

### DAY 2 - DISCOVERING BANGKOK

An early start this morning to our day exploring Bangkok as we head out to Wat Pho temple in time to experience the monks' early morning chanting ritual. After this uplifting and often private experience, we visit the temple grounds and the famous 45m high reclining Buddha.

Afterwards, we will continue to The Grand Palace, Thailand's most important landmark, where you will be awed by the grandeur and majesty of the building and its throne halls and of course, marvel at the mysterious Emerald Buddha, the most revered Buddha image in Thailand.

We will then head for a light lunch served at a traditional Thai restaurant, situated by Chao Phraya River, before we board a long-tail boat to sail up the majestic Chao Phraya to the Khlongs, narrow canal waterways. The network of Khlongs takes us away from the normal tourist trails. Here we will stop at Wat Khun Chan, an interesting temple area rarely visited by tourists. Crossing a small footbridge leads into the old alleys where a cold coffee can be enjoyed before entering Wat Paknam or the white stupa with a hidden museum.

Back on the boat, we continue through old wooden houses and new modern mansions until reaching an orchid and fruit farm where you will have time to walk around and see the many types of orchids on display, before we return to the hotel for an evening at leisure.

**Included meals:** Breakfast & Lunch

**Accommodation:** Bangkok

### DAY 3 - BANGKOK'S BUSTLING MARKETS

Today we experience a more traditional side of Thailand with an insightful excursion to the capital's outskirts. We drive away from Bangkok, watching the city's towering high rises and busy streets fade into the distance and shortly arrive in the Samut Songkhram province.

Here we will venture to a rural railway market, where vendors set up stalls along the train tracks. It is one of Bangkok's most unique markets to visit, as vendors quickly pack up as trains arrive and then carry on business after the trains have departed.

We continue through the countryside to Damnoen Saduak, a floating market where residents paddle up to these floating stalls to buy their daily wares. See boats laden with fresh fruit, traditional snacks and other items being sold on the canals. It offers great photo opportunities and a unique chance to experience this traditional style of marketplace.

We enjoy lunch at the floating market before continuing through the remarkable waterways by long-tail boat. We will stop to visit a local Buddhist temple and then onwards to the King Rama II Memorial Park which boasts ornate Thai-style pavilions and we'll learn about the former, beloved King before returning to the city.

**Included meals:** Breakfast & Lunch

**Accommodation:** Bangkok

### DAY 4 - AMAZING AYUTTHAYA & BANG PA-IN

An early start awaits as we head to Ayutthaya, Thailand's ancient capital and cultural heartlands.

The day begins with a drive from Bangkok through the sprawling suburbs, verdant countryside and lush paddy fields to Ayutthaya, a UNESCO World Heritage-listed city.

Here we will learn about the rich history of the site, from its founding as the capital in the 14th century to its demise at the hands of Burmese invaders in the 1700s. Venture through the temple-studded landscape, stopping to visit the venerated Wat Yai Chaimongkol and the largest monument, Wat Phra Sri Sanphet. See Wat Mahathat and snap a photo of its iconic Buddha image surrounded by a tree.

We'll also get the chance to see how Ayutthaya has evolved over the years. Though only a short drive from the modern capital of Bangkok, Ayutthaya retains a sleepy, laid back atmosphere. We'll also walk through the market and the Muslim Quarter, sampling an unusual local delicacy, candy floss roti.

After a lunch of delicious local Thai dishes, we continue exploring with a leisurely long-tail boat ride down the Chao Phraya River, passing riverside villages along the 'River of Kings'. We'll arrive at a small island, home to Wat Niwet Thammaprawat, a distinctive Buddhist temple which features remarkable Gothic-style architecture and stained glass windows. From here we take the cable car across the river and continue by golf car to Bang Pa-In Summer Palace. Built in the 1600s as the summer residence for the Royal Family, Bang Pa-In boasts an impressive collection of gardens and majestic mansions. Although rarely used these days, the palace retains its royal elegance and offers a great opportunity to learn about the Kingdom's history and culture.

We return to Bangkok for an evening at leisure.

**Included meals:** Breakfast & Lunch

**Accommodation:** Bangkok

## DAY 5 - TRAVEL TO CHIANG MAI

After breakfast, it is time to check out of our hotel as we make our way to Bangkok Airport for our flight north to Chiang Mai, where we'll be met on arrival and transferred to our hotel.

We'll enjoy lunch at a local restaurant and before heading a short drive north of Chiang Mai city to board a long-tail boat for a leisurely cruise along the rural Mae Ping River. Along the river banks, you will see traditional wooden houses and modern residences as we sail to the Waroros fresh food market for a visit, experiencing the Northern Thai way of life.

After the tour, we transfer for dinner at a local restaurant then return to the hotel.

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

**Accommodation:** Chiang Mai

## DAY 6 - NORTHERN THAILAND'S NATURE

This morning we head out after breakfast to the Elephant Discovery Camp, located in a natural area in the hills of Mae Wang district. A short bamboo raft cruise takes us to the camp where we will be met by an elephant mahout, be introduced to the elephants, and learn about their story and daily lifestyle.

You'll get the chance to interact and play with the elephants under mahouts' supervision and watch them play in the mud pond. Learn to communicate with them and about how to prepare nutritional food and desserts for them using various natural ingredients. Also, there'll be a chance to have fun bathing and soaking the elephants in a big pond.

Lunch is served at the camp and we'll return to the city for an afternoon

**Included meals:** Breakfast & Lunch

**Accommodation:** Chiang Mai

## DAY 7 - THE TEMPLES & HISTORY OF CHIANG MAI

An early start awaits today as we set out for the foothills of Doi Suthep mountain, in time to buy offerings and join the locals during the daily alms giving ceremony. This is a serene Buddhist procession where dozens of monks walk barefoot through the street collecting food and everyday items.

We continue up the mountain to Wat Doi Suthep and climb the 309 steps of the Golden Naga staircase to reach its golden pagodas. After a visit, we continue to discover one of the best-kept secret temples of Chiang Mai - Wat Palad, known as the Temple below the Temple, of significant importance to the local area and whose grounds date back over 650 years.

Next, we head to to Wat Umong, built in the 14th century, a heavily forested temple covered by moss and small plants, offering a unique yet charming sense of natural decay. After a walk through its mysterious tunnels you reach the Viharn of the temple to experience your own private blessing ceremony.

We will get the chance to enjoy a delicious bowl of Khao Soy, a famous Northern Thai dish combining coconut cream, crispy noodles and plenty of spice that is sure to delight!

In the afternoon, we'll visit the Three Kings Monument, followed by Chiang Mai City Arts and Culture Center, located in an old building of elegant architectural design built in 1927. Standing on the location of a former royal hall, the building was used as the central administrative office of Phayap administrative unit of Siam, and later as the Provincial Hall of Chiang Mai.

**Included meals:** Breakfast & Lunch

**Accommodation:** Chiang Mai

## DAY 8 - WITH THE LOCALS OF MAE KAMPONG

Get a taste of rural life today on our trip to Mae Kampong as we drive away from the busy streets of Chiang Mai and into the rolling hills of north Thailand.

On the way to the village, we'll stop at a local market to pick up fresh ingredients that will later be used to prepare lunch. Upon reaching Mae Kampong, we'll meet with some of the village residents and take a light hike through the surroundings to explore plantations growing tea and coffee, two of the village's main crops. We'll learn how the tea leaves and java beans are grown, harvested and distributed for sale. Having worked up an appetite, we return to the heart of Mae Kampong and enjoy a home-cooked meal.

We'll see locals fermenting tea leaves, which will later be used for cooking, and see other traditional practices, providing a closer look at the village's traditional houses and a chance to chit-chat with the friendly residents.

The evening and dinner are at leisure in Chiang Mai.

**Included meals:** Breakfast & Lunch

**Accommodation:** Chiang Mai

## DAY 9 - TRAVEL TO PHUKET

We check out this morning and say goodbye to Chiang Mai as we head for the airport and our flight south to the island of Phuket, the largest of Thailand's islands.

On arrival in Phuket, our group will be transferred to the hotel where we can spend the rest of the day relaxing in the facilities before dinner this evening.

**Included meals:** Breakfast & Dinner

**Accommodation:** Phuket

## DAY 10 - EXPLORING PHUKET OLD TOWN

What is more typical than explore the old town of Phuket on a Tuk Tuk? A nice traditional way of getting around the island, on our fun tour we will learn about the island's past while seeing different architectural styles. Pass former Chinese schools repurposed into museums and restaurants as well as Chinese shrines. Pedal to Sino-Portuguese buildings that stand in testimony to the influence of the migrants who came to Phuket during the tin mining days of the 19th century and see the home of the island's former governor, a majestic building that echoes of its glorious past.

Our Tuk Tuk tour culminates with a visit to a downtown fruit market where we can explore the array of exotic tropical fruits on sale and sample some of the fresh seasonal items before transferring back to the hotel for an afternoon at leisure.

**Included meals:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** Phuket

## DAY 11 - SAILING PHANG NGA BAY

An early start as we head out on our final excursion to Phang Nga Bay. We board our speedboat as we sail out and enjoy the impressive landscape of Phang Nga Bay.

We will visit James Bond Island and drive through mangrove forests to reach the famous Muslim village of Koh Panyee before enjoying lunch in

a peaceful location. We'll spend the afternoon for a relaxing time at the shiny white beach, where you can enjoy sunbathing or swimming in the crystal clear water.

We return to our hotel for a final meal together to round off our time in Thailand

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

**Accommodation:** Phuket

## DAY 12 - FAREWELL THAILAND

It is time to say goodbye to Thailand as our tour comes to a close. Check out and transfer to the airport for your onward flight home

**Included meals:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** none

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Meet & Greet at Bangkok Airport on arrival
- Transfers as detailed in the itinerary
- Accommodation as detailed in the itinerary
- Meals as detailed in the itinerary
- 2 domestic flights: Bangkok [BKK] - Chiang Mai [CNX]; Chiang Mai [CNX] - Phuket [HKT]
- Transportation in air-conditioned vehicle
- All activities, visits and excursions as detailed in the itinerary
- Experienced English speaking tour guides
- Tour Director from The Big Journey Company as well as the local tour guide (subject to minimum group size being reached)

## WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- International flights arriving at Bangkok International Airport [BKK] on Day 1 and departing from Phuket Airport [HKT] on Day 12
- Transfers on arrival or departure, to/from the airports, outside of the journey dates
- Drinks
- Gratuities
- Visas, travel or medical insurance
- Any personal items and anything not mentioned under included in price above
- Any meals not mentioned in itinerary
- Any optional activities offered
- Any COVID tests or related entry & exit requirements

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Vaccinations are recommended for this tour. Please consult your doctor for advice.
- Visas may be required for entry to Thailand
- Please let The Big Journey Company know prior to travelling if you have any medical needs or take any medication that we need to be made aware of to ensure that you have a safe and pleasant tour.
- Check in is after 2-3pm and check out is before 10am unless otherwise specified in the itinerary.
- Cancellation 90 – 0 days prior to departure cancellation fee is 100%. It is your responsibility to ensure the correct travel insurance in place to protect you against the need to cancel your holiday.
- Further terms and conditions apply and will be provided upon request or at the time of booking. The Big Journey Company reserves the right to withdraw any offer prior to accepting a reservation request. This does not affect your statutory rights. This offer is subject to availability and space is limited.



## BOOK YOUR JOURNEY

*Choose from the list of dates below*

*Call to Book*

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