



THAILAND 14 DAY TOUR CULTURE ~ CUISINE ~ BEACH

Photo by Custom Touring

Want a deep interaction with Asian elephants and to immerse yourself in rich Thai culture? This 14-day Thailand tour ticks those boxes and more! Marvel at the Thai peoples' craftsmanship when you visit the stunning Grand Palace in Bangkok, then walk across the bridge over the River Kwai in Kanchanaburi. Discover the UNESCO-listed historical parks in Ayutthaya and Sukhothai, meet the locals at the Long Neck Karen Village in Chiang Rai, tour the Baan Chang Elephant Park in Chiang Mai where you will prepare food for the elephants and take care of them. End your in-depth mainland exploration with some laid-back beach time in Phuket.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival, Bangkok

When you arrive in Bangkok, a private tour guide will greet you with a warm smile, and escort you to your hotel for check-in.

•Overnight Bangkok

Day 2: Bangkok: Grand Palace and Long-Tail Boat Cruise

Breakfast, Lunch

Today, a classic sightseeing tour will uncover the mystery of Bangkok, the charming capital of Thailand. The first must-see place is the Grand Palace, a palace complex that was once the home to the Thai king. Inside, its dazzling architecture, spectacular roof lines, extensive murals, and extravagant ornamentation, are the best proof of Thai people's creativity and craftsmanship.

Followed by a long-tailed boat ride along the small canals of the Chao Phraya River.



Photo by Custom Touring

When the boat leaves the modern city center, you will enter a hidden historical area where people still live in traditional ways. Instead of skyscrapers, you will see traditional Thai houses with carved designs while cruising by the houses of the local people and waving Hello to them.

Before nightfall, step into Wat Arun, better known as the Temple of the Dawn. With its 80-meter-high main tower decorated by colourful porcelain, rising on the bank of the Chao Phraya River, the temple is generally considered one of the most photogenic landmarks in Bangkok, especially at sunset.

- Overnight Bangkok

Day 3: Bangkok - Kanchanaburi, WWII Historic Sites

Breakfast, Lunch

Your destination today, the city of Kanchanaburi, will lead you to the time of World War II. Visit the Hellfire Pass Museum, telling the poignant stories of prisoners of war and labourers who were forced to use hand drills, pickaxes, and shovels to cut through the mountain to build the Death Railway. Today you can walk along the trail to feel what the prisoners felt as they constructed the railway.

After lunch, continue to Krasae Cave with its wooden railway bridge and a great view over the Kwai River. On to Kanchanaburi Town where you will walk across the Bridge over the River Kwai and enjoy a boat ride on the Kwai River. The last stop is a visit to Don Rak War Cemetery to remember those who lost their lives during World War II during the construction of the Death Railway.

- Overnight Kanchanaburi

Day 4: Kanchanaburi - Ayutthaya

Breakfast, Lunch

After breakfast, journey to the Historic City of Ayutthaya, the second Siamese capital founded in 1350, to discover more about Thailand's rich and compelling history. Once an important center of global diplomacy and commerce, and now an archaeological ruin and a World Heritage Site, Ayutthaya is reasonably compact with most of the must-see sights contained within the west side of the moated island area, including the Wat Chaiwatthanaram, the Wat Ratchaburana, the Wat Phra Si Sanphet, and the most impressive Wat Mahathat which is famous for the face of a stone Buddha image peeking out from the roots of a Banyan tree.



Photo by Custom Touring

Although the city was destroyed by the Burmese in the 18th century, its remains, characterized by the prang (reliquary towers) and gigantic monasteries, still offer a fascinating glimpse into the city's past size and splendour of its heyday.

En route to Ayutthaya, you will stop at the Bang Pa-In Summer Palace, a site previously used by the Thai kings as a summer retreat in the 17th century.

- Overnight Ayutthaya

Day 5: Ayutthaya - Lopburi - Sukhothai

Breakfast, Lunch

Take some time to explore Wat Phutthaisawan, just outside of the city island of Ayutthaya. This riverfront temple survived during the Burmese-Siamese War and is still inhabited by monks. Inside, you will see a huge reclining Buddha image and a row of Sukhothai Buddha images, whose headdress and sitting posture make them easily distinguishable from other Buddha images.

Afterward, proceed north to Lopburi for a visit to Phra Prang Sam Yot, a 13th century temple in Khmer style. It also has another famous name, Monkey Temple, which comes from a large group of long-tailed macaques living in and around the temple. Ramble around and play with these furry little mischief-makers, but be cautious of everything that they may snatch. You will reach Sukhothai in the early evening. Check into your hotel and relax.

- Overnight Sukhothai

Day 6: Sukhothai - Lampang, Sukhothai Historical Park

Breakfast, Lunch

The UNESCO-listed Sukhothai Historical Park is one of Thailand's cultural highlights, along with Ayutthaya. A deep exploration of the park will give an insight into the Sukhothai Kingdom, which is commonly described as "the first Thai kingdom". The remains of the royal palace and countless beautiful temple ruins within the old walls, covering an area of 29,000 acres, are the epitome of that era.



Photo by Custom Touring

Only 55km north of the town of Sukhothai lies the Sri Satchanalai Historical Park. It is similar to Sukhothai but smaller and less known. You can enjoy the historical atmosphere and find the best angles to shoot the ruins, without the crowd. Onward to Lampang.

- Overnight Lampang

Day 7: Lampang - Chiang Rai, Glance over the Lanna Kingdom

Breakfast, Lunch

In Lampang, one of the major cities of the Lanna Kingdom from the 13th to 18th centuries, several Lanna-style buildings are still well preserved. Before leaving for Chiang Rai, you will visit three of them today, to see the history and culture of Lanna.

One is Wat Phra That Lampang Luang, which is arguably the most beautiful wooden Lanna temple in Northern Thailand and the oldest standing wooden structure in Thailand.

Next is a complex of Lanna-Burmese wooden houses named Baan Sao Nuk, where many items used in northern peoples' lifestyle in the past are waiting for you to explore. The last one, Wat Phra Kaeo Don Tao, is the principal Buddhist temple in Lampang, built in an interesting mix of Lanna, Shan and Burmese architectural styles.

- Overnight Chiang Rai

Day 8: Chiang Rai - Chiang Mai, Golden Triangle & Long Neck Village

Breakfast, Lunch

Compared with its nearby town Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai retains its strong Lanna characteristics and has its own cultures and traditions.

But it is often overlooked by travelers because it is the northernmost major city in the country, located in the jungle and mountainous areas. It is also the location of the famous Golden Triangle, where Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand are separated by the chocolate brown water of the Mekong River.



Photo by Custom Touring

At Mae Sai Border, you can cross into Myanmar for a short exploration on your own, with an extra migration fee payable. At the top of the Golden Triangle, you can stand on the Thai side and see Laos to your right and Myanmar to the left. At Long Neck Karen Village, you can meet colourfully dressed women with shiny rings around their necks. At the White Temple, you can see the amazing integration of Thai traditional elements with modern design and popular culture. After the tour, proceed to Chiang Mai for the night.

- Overnight Chiang Mai

Day 9: Chiang Mai: Lanna Family Visit & Wat Phra That Doi Suthep

Breakfast, Lunch

Different from other Thai dishes, northern Thai food, also known as Lanna food, is characterized by salty and sour taste. This morning, you will head to the outskirts of Chiang Mai to visit a Lanna family. Upon arrival, the hospitable host will introduce you to his family, show you their family photos and houses, tell you the history of this area, educate you on the traditions of the Lanna family, lead you to explore his garden full of fresh vegetables and herbs used in cooking, and teach you to cook some authentic Northern Thai flavours. And finally, you can enjoy a delicious lunch from your cooking effort and some extra dishes, together with the family.

At the end of the tour, climb up to Wat Phra That Doi Suthep on a hill for the panoramic views of the whole Chiang Mai city.

- Overnight Chiang Mai

Day 10: Chiang Mai: Fun Day with Elephants

Breakfast, Lunch

Thai elephants, as the symbol of Thailand, mostly live freely in the lush forest in the northern part of the country. Today you will join a small group to visit Baan Chang Elephant Park, making friends with these gentle giants.

There are many opportunities to get close to them in the park. Learn the general knowledge of elephants, prepare food rich in vitamins to feed them, take them through the forest and go down to the water for bathing, and so on.

- Overnight Chiang Mai



Photo by Custom Touring

Day 11: Chiang Mai - Phuket, Beach Time

Breakfast

After a historic journey on the mainland, there is nothing better than a beautiful island holiday with sunny beaches. Fly to Phuket to start your beach holiday. As one of the best beach destinations in the world, Phuket has everything you want, from gorgeous beaches and various water activities to wonderful restaurants and vibrant nightlife.

- Overnight Phuket

Day 12: Phuket, Beach Time

Breakfast

Two days will be left for you to explore this beautiful island at your own pace. Perhaps you may like to escape from the crowded Phuket to different islands for a one-day short trip. Through an island-hopping tour that is served by the hotel, you can discover breathtaking seascapes, snorkel with colourful fish, enjoy a picnic lunch on a deserted beach, and sun yourself on the deck surrounded by clear waters.

- Overnight Phuket

Day 13: Phuket, Beach Time

Breakfast

Beach time continues. Why not take a stroll around the old town of Phuket before or after relaxing on the beach? With stunning architecture, cozy coffee shops, ancient shrines, it is a wonderful place to spend time. When night falls, the main street will be brightly lit and night markets will become active. Watch the locals' nightlife in a lively bar with a mug of beer in hand, visit different street vendors offering fresh fruits, incredible snacks and sweet desserts to try, or seek interesting handicrafts from various artists as souvenirs to take home.

- Overnight Phuket

Day 14: Phuket - Bangkok, Departure

Breakfast

Time to say goodbye to sunny Phuket and Thailand. Fly to Bangkok to connect with your international flight back home.



Phuket Mai Khao Beach - South End: Photo by Flickr, Greg Strosaker