EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Comfort Itinerary Version (TMTH1)

TOUR DURATION **12** DAYS

Tour Code: TM

Tour Essentials

Accommodation:	2 nights Comfortable Hotel 1 night Basic Overnight Train
Included Meals:	8 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 0 dinners
Transport:	
Countries:	Thailand

Tailormade Thailand's Hilltribe Treks and Tropical Beaches

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Your tour itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced tour leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Fly to Thailand

Depart the UK for Thailand.

DAY 2 Arrive in Bangkok

Upon arrival in Bangkok, you will be transferred to your hotel and have free time to relax or explore the city this afternoon.

Overnight: **Comfortable Hotel**

DAY 3 Explore Bangkok

Today you have a tour of Thailand's capital, including a visit to the Grand Palace and Temple of the Emerald Buddha. This large complex is home to over 100 ornate and colourful stupas and temples; the King still resides in the adjoining palace. You'll then continue to Wat Pho and visit the huge 16th century Reclining Buddha. Part of the temple compound is a Thai Traditional Massage School, the first temple teaching massage, and you'll have the opportunity to have a short visit. Your tour continues through the local market to the Chao Phya River, where you have a long-tail boat trip, the perfect way to relax and see everyday life along the riverbanks.

Overnight: **Comfortable Hotel**

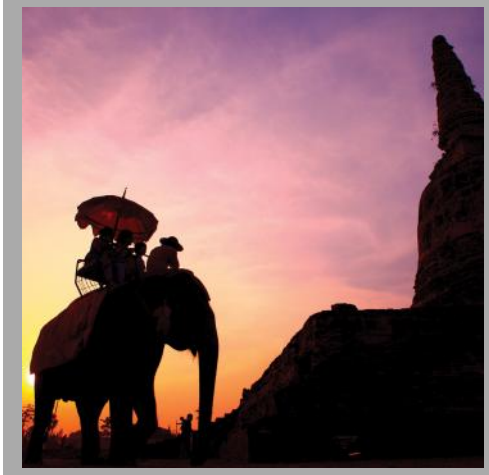
DAY 4 Overnight train to Chiang Mai

This morning is free to explore the city. Why not ask your Tailormade Regional Specialist to arrange a visit to Jim Thompson's House; the world's largest teak building, Vimanmek Palace or the famous Damnoen Saduak Floating Market. This evening board your overnight train for your journey to the north.

Overnight: **Basic Overnight Train**

Why Book this tour?

Although the climate varies within the country, Thailand is a good year round destination. For the bulk of the country the months from November to April offer pleasantly cool, dry conditions making it perfect for travel. On the southern peninsular the climate differs between the east and west coast. East coast beaches receive their warmest temperatures during our summer months, whilst the west coast enjoys their warm, dry conditions during our winter and spring.



DAY 5 Explore Chiang Mai

Upon arrival, explore this beautiful, culturally rich city which is surrounded by lush forests, rivers and mountains. Within its ancient walls are more than 30 temples which are well worth visiting. In the evening, you may also wish to wander down to the Ping River for dinner at one of the many restaurants before heading to the buzzing night bazaar and try your hand at bartering.

DAY 6 Village stay

Leaving the hustle and bustle of Chiang Mai behind, you stop at a local market before embarking on your trek through the jungle, amidst mountain scenery and small villages. You'll also ride an elephant before arriving at a village homestay for the night, where you'll have the opportunity to interact with the hilltribes people.

DAY 7 Jungle explorations

This morning you continue your trek through the countryside, arriving at a river you take to a bamboo raft and pole downstream. Afterwards you journey back to Chiang Mai for the evening.

DAY 8 Fly to Ko Samet

After breakfast, fly to Bangkok and continue to Koh Samet by car and ferry for your first night of beach relaxation.

DAY 9 Relax on tropical beaches

Today has been left free for you to relax. Koh Samet is full of tropical beaches, discover those nearby to your hotel or take a taxi to other beaches around the island.

DAY 10 Free day

Relax on the local beaches or by your hotel's pool. Enjoy delicious, fresh seafood and cocktails as the sun goes down - the perfect end to your holiday.

DAY 11 Fly to the UK

Today it's time to depart by ferry back to the mainland, continuing on to the airport for your flight home.

DAY 12 Arrive UK

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 8 breakfasts, 3 lunches,0 dinners included in the price of this tour. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Foreign Exchange

Thailand

ATM Availability: ATMs are available in Bangkok but are limited on the islands.

Credit Card Acceptance: Major stores and restaurants.

Travellers Cheques: Can be exchanged banks and exchange offices throughout the tour although rates may not be as favourable.

Local Currency: Thai Baht

Recommended Currency for Exchange: We recommend that you bring your money in GBP or US$.

Where to Exchange: Most major towns and on the islands - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a ‘flight inclusive’ package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

For passengers making their own travel arrangements, please ensure you join the group as described on day one of the tour itinerary. If you are considering purchasing your own airline tickets, you can book these through any travel agent, directly with an airline or through an online flight consolidator. In all cases, we would be happy to arrange transfers to and from the joining point of your tour if required.

Joining Tour Abroad

Clients booked on **'Land Only'** arrangements should make their own way to the joining point. Please refer to separate **'Joining Instructions'** for time and place of rendezvous with tour leader

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of joining **any** of our tours that you must have valid travel insurance. It must indicate that you have cover for (at least) medical expenses and emergency repatriation in the event of illness or injury. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling in England and Scotland. We also strongly recommend your policy includes curtailment, personal effects and cancellation protection as all deposits paid are non-refundable.

If you require travel insurance for your tour, Explore Worldwide is an appointed representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services authority. Our travel insurance policy is specially tailored to the needs of the adventure traveller and will cover you for any included activity on any Explore trip. You can either purchase this at the time of booking or call us on 0844 499 0903 after you have booked.

Vaccinations & Protection

Thailand

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and infectious hepatitis. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Although not compulsory, travellers may also wish to immunise themselves against Japanese encephalitis. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/ and from your local healthcare provider.

Preparing for your Tour

Climate

Thailand

Generally hot with high humidity. There is some rainfall from April to September with most days being hot (around 33 Degrees) and a light breeze on the islands. If it does rain, it will be more of a heavy tropical downpour that lasts a few hours. Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at http://www.explore.co.uk/weather.

Luggage allowance on tour:

Unfortunately it does occasionally happen that luggage does not always reach its destination on the same flight as its owner, or possibly it may be damaged in transit. If you are unlucky enough for this to occur, it is important that you file a PIR (Property

Irregularity Report) with the airline before leaving the airport. This is essential when you come to make a claim either against the airline or from your travel insurance company

General Information

Food

The prices for meals and drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive. The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide.Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Thailand

Lunch £: 2.50

Dinner £: 4.00

Drink

Thailand

Bottle of Beer £: 1.50

Water £: 0.50

Country details

Thailand

Population: 67,000,000

Size of Country: 514,000 sq km

Major Language: Thai, English

Religion: Buddhist

Time Difference to GMT: +7

Electric Supply & Plugs

Thailand

2 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures & tailormade holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, elephant, or any number of unusual forms of transport . Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Our commitment to the environment

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures and traditional, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: The Sunshine Orphanage (which cares for abandoned children in Luxor, Egypt), Education for All (sponsoring children through their secondary education in Morocco), The Hope Foundation (helping an Indian Village to recover from the 2004 Tsunami) and the Mufindi Orphanage, which support AIDS orphans in Tanzania.

We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation, Travel Operators for Tigers (helping save the Bengal Tiger from extinction) and Friends for Conservation. We have also adopted a beautiful Sri Lankan Elephant called 'Serendip'.

We are delighted to have received a Five Star sustainable tourism status from the Association of Independent Tour Operators in recognition of our on-going commitment to sustainable tourism.

Cool Earth

Explore are delighted to support Cool Earth to reduce carbon emissions through preventing the illegal deforestation of the South America rainforest. One of the top sources of global carbon emissions, rainforest deforestation equivalent to the USA's annual emissions, it also destroys flora and fauna, sometimes to the point of extinction. It also degrades the lives and communities of the 350 million residents of the rainforest.

Cool Earth prevents the deforestation through its support of local communities as forest guardians and by focussing on areas in immediate danger of deforestation. It has so far protected over 350,000 acres of rainforest, with each acre saving an emission of 260 tons of CO2, as well as protecting rare animals and plants. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year. In addition to mitigating emissions, when you travel with Explore, you are helping to protect the source of 20% of the world's fresh water and oxygen, as well as the livelihoods of the 1.6 billion people who are reliant on the rainforest. www.coolearth.org

Earth Matters

- The Travel Foundation

  Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk
- Tourism Concern

  Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group www.tourismconcern.org.uk
- For further information on responsible travel go to http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/

Know before you go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at http://www.explore.co.uk/essential-travel-information/travel-resources/travel-safety

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2013 and 31st December 2014.

Tour Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 1 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 1. 2/ itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2.

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