

EXPLORE!

Tour Notes



Comfort Itinerary Version (TMTH5)

TOUR DURATION
15
DAYS



View type: thumbnail

Tour Code: TMTH5

Tour Essentials

Accommodation: 2 nights Comfortable Hotel
1 night Basic Overnight Train
2 nights Hotel

Included Meals: 12 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 3 dinners

Transport:

Countries: Thailand

Tailormade Thai Family Adventure

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.

DAY 1 Fly to Thailand

Fly to Bangkok on an overnight flight from the UK.

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.



 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 Arrive Bangkok

Arrive in Bangkok, where you will be met and transferred to your hotel. The rest of the day is free to explore, you may wish to explore the vibrant night markets or visit the muay Thai martial arts.

Overnight: **Comfortable Hotel**

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 3 Bangkok

Today you have a full-day city tour of Thailand's capital; you'll visit the ornate Grand Palace and Temple of the Emerald Buddha, Wat Pho and the huge reclining Buddha, then board your long-tailed boat for a relaxing cruise along the Chao Phrayar River - the perfect way to soak up the flavours, sights and sounds of this bustling Asian city. Late in the afternoon, board your overnight train north.

Overnight: **Basic Overnight Train**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 4 Chiang Mai

Arrive this morning in Chiang Mai, the northern capital of Thailand, for a sightseeing tour including Warorose market, where you will find everything from fruit and veg to flowers and handicrafts. Chiang Mai has over 300 temples and you will have the opportunity to visit some of our favourites before visiting Doi Suthep Temple. Built in 1383 and situated at the top of Suthep Mountain it's a 300 step climb to the top, where you may have a chance to chat with the monks or take a blessing.

Overnight: **Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast


DAY 5 Elephant sanctuary

Head out to the Lampang elephant sanctuary. Established in 1969, it is the largest elephant conservation centre in the country and is also host to an elephant hospital, caring for sick and abandoned elephants. You will be able to see elephants bathing and carrying logs and there is also the option to ride one of these amazing animals. Or, how about getting your hands dirty and making some 'elephant paper', using a truly recyclable material - elephant dung?! This afternoon, you have a Thai cookery course, where an expert cook will teach the basics of Thai cookery, be careful not to add too much chili!

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner


DAY 6 Pai

Today you head into the northern hills to spend the next three days exploring the area of the hilltribes. There are numerous individual tribes, each with its own particular beliefs, way of life and colour of dress. Drive to Pai where your trekking journey begins in the afternoon when you hike to a Red Lahu Village (approximately two and half hours walking), where you spend the night in the local village houses. Meet the shaman, farmers and children from the village. The Lahu form several subgroups which differ in costume, language and traditions.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7 White Karen Village

Today's trek of approximately four hours take you to a White Karen village. You stop at Tham Yao cave along the way. This is a vast and pristine cave system located close to the village. The Karen tribe consists of four distinct groups and forms the largest hilltribe in Thailand. The men often wear Western clothes although the women are prolific weavers and are usually colourfully dressed. Karen people are renowned for their handicrafts such as woven baskets, musical instruments and animal bells.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8 Boat to Mae Hong Son

A two to three hour hike this morning takes you to a Shan Village, where you'll meet the locals and see them going about their daily life. You then transfer to the Pai River and board a bamboo raft and float to Mae Hong Son, where you spend the next two nights. Mae Hong Son is a tranquil spot which lays in a forested valley next to the river, surrounded by mountains – a spectacular setting.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 9 Return to Chiang Mai

Visit the local market this morning, followed by a guided sightseeing tour to include some of the local temples. You will notice a difference to temples previously seen as a few of these are Burmese in design. This afternoon, drive to Chiang Mai, the scenic bus journey will take around five hours.

Overnight: **Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 10 Koh Samet

This morning you fly from Chiang Mai back to Bangkok, then continue by road and ferry to Koh Samet where you have the afternoon free to relax.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 11 Free time on Koh Samet

Only 6 km in length, Koh Samet is home to some of the best beaches in Thailand. Bright, white sands contrast vividly with the clear blue sea that laps the tree-lined shores of this idyllic island. Up until the 1980's Koh Samet was home to a small community of fishermen, when the island became a designated national park. Since then tourist development has taken place, although the island still retains some of its original charm. Our two days on the island leave you free to relax and enjoy this tropical paradise, with the opportunity to do as much, or as little as you want.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 12 Free time on Koh Samet

Today is free to relax or explore the island at your leisure. Alternatively, your Tailormade Regional Specialist can arrange a snorkelling boat trip around the island.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 13 Bangkok

Transfer back to Bangkok, the rest of the day is free to do some last minute sightseeing and souvenir shopping.

Overnight: **Comfortable Hotel**

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 14 Depart Thailand

Unfortunately time to depart for your evening flight to the UK.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 15 Arrive UK

 **Included Meals:** None

EXPLORE! The Adventure Travel Experts available online 24/7

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 12 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 3 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.

Food

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

The prices for 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.

Thailand

Bottle of Beer £: 1.50

Water £: 0.50

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 at 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

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

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. You will also need to ensure your travel policy covers you for all activities you intend to do whilst on tour.

We are delighted to include FREE travel insurance **for all qualifying customers** who book an Explore trip from 01 January 2015.

For more information about Travel insurance and to check whether you are eligible to receive free cover, please visit www.explore.co.uk/insurance. Explore Worldwide Ltd are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The registration number can be checked by visiting the the FCA's website www.fca.gov.uk or by contacting them on 0800 111 6768.

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>.

General Information

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, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.
- Award-winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of 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 traditions, 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: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people), Dekamer (a turtle rescue centre in Turkey) and Kids Saving the Rainforest (a wildlife rescue centre in Costa Rica supported through the LATA foundation). We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation and Friends of Conservation.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

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.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

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 2014 and 31st December 2015.

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: 5 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 5. 6/ itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 6.

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