

Extended Tour Sample #1

Northern Thailand Cultural Tour

Day 1: Check into your Bangkok hotel. Enjoy most of the day to relax and get over jet-lag. Take an optional ride in a canal boat through some of Bangkok's oldest areas. Have dinner at a well known restaurant while our guides give a brief introduction to Thailand and the tour itinerary.

Day 2: Travel to the Northeast by chartered air-conditioned vans and spend the afternoon with a group of silk weavers. In the evening we check into a nearby rural development training centre for a tour around the various projects. We spend the night at the project's residential lodge.

Day 3: With an early start we visit a spectacular Hindu temple of the Angkor period, which has been partly restored. After time to explore, we move onto a village famous for making silver jewellery. There are only a few master craftsmen still alive and attempts are being made to preserve this ancient skill which dates back centuries.

Day 4: Those who wake up really early can go to the morning fresh-produce market before we travel on to a village which takes part in a cooperative programme linking many nearby communities who have revived and now practise cotton and silk weaving, often using organic hand-spun cotton and always vegetable dyes. We take the overnight sleeper train back to Bangkok.

Day 5: On early morning arrival in Bangkok, you will once again check into the hotel. We will rest and have breakfast at the hotel. The rest of the morning is free for you to enjoy as you wish. In the afternoon, we will visit a popular local attraction. The evening is free for you to enjoy as you wish.

Day 6: After breakfast and checking out of the Hotel, we will take the morning flight northwards to the province of Nan. We will spend the afternoon visiting interesting local attractions such as a museum and temple. We eat dinner together and spend the night in Nan provincial town.

Day 7: After checking out of the hotel, we venture across mountain passes to visit a bamboo basket-making group not far from the national border with Laos. Here minority group farmers will show us how they subsist in a hill environment as we walk through their fields and visit their outlying settlements. That night, we will stay at a government guesthouse in a National Park.

Day 8: After breakfast, we can take a morning walk in the cool fresh air of one of Thailand's highest mountain areas. We then proceed to a village producing fine weaving. If time allows, we will visit an ancient temple along the way back into Nan town. Spend another night in Nan provincial town.

Day 9: After breakfast, we check out of the hotel and leave for our drive to a tribal village that specialises in traditional hand-made silver jewellery. Here we will learn about their traditions as well as their fine embroidery and appliqué stitch work. We will spend the night at an attractive and rurally situated river resort.

Day 10: Today we visit an elephant conservation centre to see the amazing show, enjoy an elephant ride and have a hands-on experience making paper from elephant dung! In the late afternoon we continue to Chiang Mai where we can spend the evening at the famous night bazaar.

Day 11: We spend the day with a Fair Trade development group, learning about their work with craft producers throughout Northern Thailand. At night we can enjoy the delights of traditional Northern Thai dancing and the tastes of Northern styled food in a “Khan Toke” dinner.

Day 12: On our penultimate day in Northern Thailand, we spend time with a long-established programme, which markets crafts locally and by export for six different ethnic hill groups of the North. We will visit one or two of their villages in the mountains as well as visit their shop full of interesting and attractive crafts. In the evening we will eat at a lovely riverside restaurant.

Day 13: In the morning, we spend time at a rehabilitation centre, where a fascinating legacy of Christian mission service has given new life to people afflicted with leprosy as well as, more recently, those with other physical challenges. In the afternoon we visit a sacred monastery before returning to Bangkok via airplane.

Day 14: After breakfast, we will visit some of the famous historical sights of Bangkok, including the glittering Wat Pra-keow (Temple of the Emerald Buddha) and Grand Palace, home of the former Chakri dynasty Kings. After lunch, the afternoon is free for you to enjoy as you wish. In the evening we will eat our last meal together before transfer to the airport to catch international flights.

For those taking the relaxing optional extra holiday by the sea, transfers to a Bangkok hotel and then onward travel will be arranged.

If you would like to stay on in Thailand and relax on its famed beaches, contact us to find out more about the Thailand Extension.