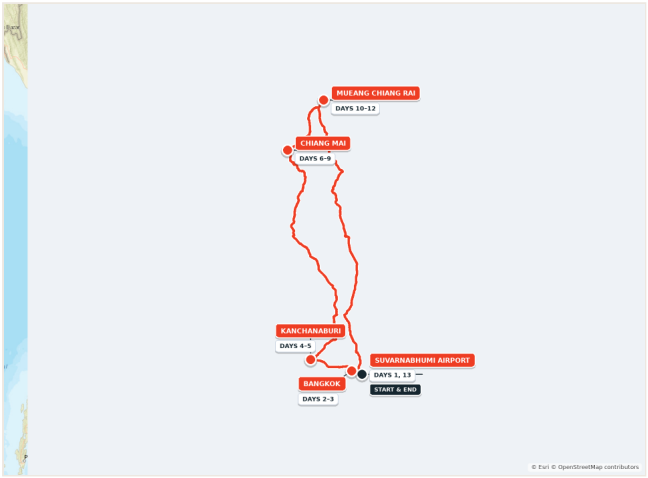
Classic Thailand

COUNTRY(IES)	Thailand
TOUR TYPE	Private
TRANSPORT	AC minibus, train & flight
GROUP SIZE	Min: 1 | Max: 18
DURATION	13 days
STARTS	Bangkok, Thailand
ENDS	Bangkok, Thailand
MEALS	Breakfasts - 11, Lunches - 5, Dinners - 3

TOUR ROUTE MAP **13 Days**



ROUTE: **Suvarnabhumi Airport** (Start) → **Bangkok** → **Kanchanaburi** → **Chiang Mai** → **Mueang Chiang Rai** → **Suvarnabhumi Airport** (End)

HIGHLIGHTS

Temples & palaces of Bangkok, bridge on the River Kwai, wildlife of Erawan National Park, Chiang Mai gateway to the north, Chiang Rai and the Golden Triangle

Itinerary

DAY 1 Arrive in Bangkok, transfer to hotel

Meet the transfer at Suvarnabhumi International Airport and travel directly to the Bangkok hotel. Once there, the remainder of the day is free with no included visits or activities. Independent exploration is possible but should not be described as part of the organised programme. The collection therefore functions as a straightforward international arrival and hotel transfer followed by unstructured leisure time in the capital.

ACTIVITIES

- **Arrive at Suvarnabhumi International Airport**
  Arrive at Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok, Thailand to begin your tour. Meet your local representative and clear formalities before heading into the city.
- **Transfer from Bangkok Airport to Hotel**
  A road transfer from Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi International Airport into the city centre. Travel to your Bangkok

hotel and settle in after your international journey.

- **Free Time in Bangkok**
  Enjoy free time in Bangkok, Thailand to rest after your flight or explore the streets near your hotel. Get a first feel for the capital's busy markets and vibrant atmosphere.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
Bangkok hotel	None	Extra day in Bangkok - pre-tour, Single room supplement (THTMCT)

DAY 2 Grand Palace & city canal tours

Spend time at the Grand Palace and Temple of the Emerald Buddha before moving to the Saen Saeb Canal for a boat journey through Bangkok. The first visits focus on royal and religious heritage, while the canal introduces a working transport route through modern neighbourhoods. The change from ceremonial landmarks to everyday city life gives the day its character.

ACTIVITIES

- **Visit Grand Palace and Temple of the Emerald Buddha – Bangkok**
  Visit the Grand Palace and Temple of the Emerald Buddha in Bangkok, Thailand, one of the country's most important royal complexes. Admire glittering stupas, ornate halls and sacred statues as you learn about Thai history.
- **Saen Saeb Canal Boat Cruise on Bangkok**
  Trade your bike for a boat and cruise along the Saen Saeb canal in Bangkok, Thailand. Glide past homes, markets and temples that line this busy urban waterway.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Bangkok hotel	Breakfast,Lunch

DAY 3 Kanchanaburi & River Kwai tour

This journey travels west from Bangkok into the forested landscapes of Kanchanaburi, a region closely linked to the history of the Second World War. The day follows key sites associated with the Thailand–Burma Railway, revealing personal stories, memorials, and surviving infrastructure. Visits trace the impact of wartime labour, engineering challenges, and human endurance in the river valleys and mountain passes. A historic train journey along the River Kwai reinforces the geographical scale of the route. The experience concludes at Hellfire Pass, offering a reflective end to a day shaped by history and remembrance.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Bangkok to Kanchanaburi**
  Drive west from Bangkok to Kanchanaburi in western Thailand, leaving the capital behind for a more rural

province. The road journey sets up your visit to the famous River Kwai region on the tour.

- **Explore Kanchanaburi War Cemetery**
  Visit the Allied War Cemetery in Kanchanaburi, Thailand, where many prisoners of war are buried. The peaceful site lies near the town centre and is a key stop for understanding the region's past on the tour.
- **Explore JEATH War Museum**
  Explore the JEATH War Museum in Kanchanaburi, Thailand. Exhibits document the harsh conditions faced by prisoners during World War II.
- **Explore Bridge over the River Kwai**
  See the famous Bridge over the River Kwai in Kanchanaburi, Thailand. The bridge forms part of the historic Death Railway line.
- **Train from River Kwai Bridge to Tham Krasae**
  Travel by train along the Death Railway in Kanchanaburi, Thailand. The journey crosses the River Kwai and a dramatic wooden viaduct.
- **Explore Hellfire Pass Memorial**
  Visit Hellfire Pass Memorial in Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand. Learn about the forced labour used to carve this mountain cutting during the railway construction.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Kanchanaburi camp	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 4 Erawan National Park

Transfer from Kanchanaburi to Erawan National Park and visit Erawan Waterfall. The source mentions limestone hills, jungle, streams, tiered falls and pools but does not specify swimming, hiking duration, individual waterfall levels or wildlife sightings. These details should not be assumed. The collection should remain focused on the national park visit and its natural scenery.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Kanchanaburi to Erawan National Park**
  Drive from Kanchanaburi town to Erawan National Park in western Thailand. The road passes forested countryside toward the national park entrance.
- **Explore Erawan Waterfall in Erawan National Park**
  Visit Erawan Waterfall in Erawan National Park, Thailand. Walk the forest trail to turquoise pools and cascading tiers set in dense jungle.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Kanchanaburi camp	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 5 Ayutthaya temples tour

Leave Kanchanaburi for Ayutthaya and spend time exploring the historic park before boarding the overnight train north to Chiang Mai. The heritage visit fills the first part of the day, followed by the long rail journey into northern Thailand. The contrast between former royal capital and overnight travel gives the day a clear change of pace and setting.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Kanchanaburi to Ayutthaya**
  Drive from Kanchanaburi to Ayutthaya in central Thailand, moving from the river valley into a former royal capital. The road link connects two very different historic regions visited on the tour.
- **Ayutthaya Historical Park and Temples Tour**
  Explore Ayutthaya Historical Park in Ayutthaya, Thailand, visiting ancient temples and palace ruins from the former Siamese capital. The archaeological area lies on an island surrounded by rivers north of Bangkok and is a major cultural stop on the tour.
- **Train from Ayutthaya to Chiang Mai (Overnight Sleeper)**
  Board an overnight sleeper train from Ayutthaya to Chiang Mai in northern Thailand. The rail journey takes you up-country to the mountains, giving a different perspective on the country as the tour continues.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Sleeper train	Breakfast,Lunch

DAY 6 Doi Suthep temple tour, Kantoke dinner

After arriving by train and transferring into Chiang Mai, travel to the mountain temple for the main sightseeing visit of the day. Clear weather may provide wide views across the surrounding area. The evening shifts towards local culture with a Kantoke dinner and traditional performances, providing a structured introduction to northern Thai food, hospitality and performing traditions.

ACTIVITIES

- **Arrive at Chiang Mai Railway Station**
  Arrive at Chiang Mai Railway Station in Chiang Mai, Thailand early in the morning. Disembark and prepare for the city visit.
- **Transfer from Chiang Mai Railway Station to Hotel**
  Travel from Chiang Mai Railway Station to your hotel in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The short transfer keeps you within the city and settles you into your new base for the next part of the tour.
- **Explore Wat Phra That Doi Suthep in Chiang Mai**
  Visit Wat Phra That Doi Suthep overlooking Chiang Mai, Thailand. The mountaintop temple offers panoramic views and a revered golden pagoda.

- **Kantoke Dinner and Cultural Performance – Chiang Mai**
  Enjoy a traditional Kantoke dinner in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Northern dishes are served alongside local music and cultural dance performances.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Chiang Mai hotel	Dinner

DAY 7 Tour to Lampang & elephant centre

This day journey travels from Chiang Mai into the historic city of Lampang, known for its preserved Lanna heritage and quieter pace of life. The route highlights northern Thailand’s cultural depth through visits to important temples that reflect regional architecture and religious traditions. Time at the elephant conservation centre offers insight into ethical care and the role of elephants in Thai history. The experience balances wildlife awareness with spiritual and architectural exploration. A return drive to Chiang Mai completes a day shaped by heritage, conservation, and regional identity.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Chiang Mai to Lampang**
  Travel by road from Chiang Mai to Lampang in northern Thailand. The drive passes rural landscapes and smaller towns.
- **Explore Elephant Conservation Centre in Lampang**
  Visit the Elephant Conservation Centre near Lampang, Thailand. Learn about elephant care, rehabilitation and traditional mahout training.
- **Explore Wat Phrathat Lampang Luang**
  Visit Wat Phrathat Lampang Luang in Lampang, Thailand. This historic temple is one of the most sacred sites in northern Thailand.
- **Explore Wat Phra Kaew Don Tao in Lampang**
  Stop at Wat Phra Kaew Don Tao in Lampang, Thailand. The Burmese-style temple reflects regional religious influences.
- **Explore Wat Sri Longmuang in Lampang**
  Visit Wat Sri Longmuang in Lampang, Thailand. The temple features traditional northern Thai architectural elements.
- **Drive from Lampang to Chiang Mai**
  Return by road from Lampang to Chiang Mai in northern Thailand. Arrive back in the city in the evening.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Chiang Mai hotel	Breakfast,Lunch

DAY 8 Chiang Mai, free day

Spend the day at leisure in Chiang Mai with no included visits, transport or activities. The old city, markets, cafés and galleries are examples of how the time might be used independently and should not be treated as organised sightseeing. The schedule is deliberately open, allowing rest or personal exploration according to individual interests before the next confirmed stage of the trip.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Time in Chiang Mai**
  Enjoy free time in Chiang Mai, Thailand, to wander the old city, visit temples or relax at a café. This relaxed northern city provides a softer pace before you start trekking on the tour.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Chiang Mai hotel	Breakfast

DAY 9 Chiang Rai, Mae Kok river boat trip

Travel by road from Chiang Mai to Chiang Rai and then join the scheduled boat trip on the Mae Kok River. The source provides general mountain and rural scenery but does not list intermediate stops, villages or temples, so none should be added. The boat journey is the main included activity beyond the road transfer and offers a different perspective on the landscapes surrounding Chiang Rai.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Chiang Mai to Chiang Rai**
  Travel north by road from Chiang Mai to Chiang Rai in Thailand. The route crosses mountainous countryside.
- **Mae Kok River Boat Trip on Chiang Rai**
  Take a boat trip along the Mae Kok River near Chiang Rai, Thailand. Cruise through rural scenery and riverside villages.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Chiang Rai hotel	Breakfast

DAY 10 Full day Golden Triangle tour

Enjoy an unstructured day in Chiang Rai with the hours completely open for your own plans. You may explore the town independently, spend time in cafés, enjoy the surrounding landscapes or simply take a break after travelling. The flexible schedule allows you to set your own pace and enjoy a slower day before the next organised activities begin.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Time in Chiang Rai**
  Spend a free day in Chiang Rai, Thailand. Explore the town or surrounding countryside independently.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Chiang Rai hotel	Breakfast

DAY 11 — Chiang Rai, free day

Enjoy an unstructured day in Chiang Rai with the hours completely open for your own plans. You may explore the town independently, spend time in cafés, enjoy the surrounding landscapes or simply take a break after travelling. The flexible schedule allows you to set your own pace and enjoy a slower day before the next organised activities begin.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Time in Chiang Rai**
  Spend a free day in Chiang Rai, Thailand. Explore the town or surrounding countryside independently.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Chiang Rai hotel	Breakfast

DAY 12 — Morning flight to Bangkok

This travel segment marks the transition from northern Thailand back to the capital city. A flight from Chiang Rai to Bangkok shortens the distance between the country’s far north and its urban centre. On arrival, a transfer connects the airport with the hotel, reintroducing the pace and scale of the capital. The journey reflects Thailand’s modern transport links across diverse regions. This segment provides a smooth and efficient return to Bangkok.

ACTIVITIES

- **Travel from Flight Chiang Rai to Bangkok**
  Take a domestic flight from Chiang Rai to Bangkok, Thailand. Enjoy aerial views during the short journey south.
- **Transfer from Bangkok Airport to Hotel**
  A road transfer from Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi International Airport into the city centre. Travel to your Bangkok hotel and settle in after your international journey.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Bangkok hotel	Breakfast

DAY 13

Transfer to the airport for departure

Spend the first part of the day at leisure in Bangkok with no included sightseeing. Shopping, independent exploration or rest are possible uses of the free period rather than scheduled activities. Later, complete the hotel transfer to Suvarnabhumi International Airport for departure. The day remains intentionally simple and marks the end of the programme through a combination of personal time and the final airport connection.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Time in Bangkok**
  Enjoy free time in Bangkok, Thailand to rest after your flight or explore the streets near your hotel. Get a first feel for the capital's busy markets and vibrant atmosphere.
- **Travel from Bangkok Hotel to Airport**
  A road transfer from your Bangkok hotel to Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Thailand. Travel out of the city in time for your departing flight.
- **Depart from Suvarnabhumi International Airport**
  Depart from Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok, Thailand at the end of your tour. Begin your onward journey with memories of jungles, beaches and canals.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
N/A	Breakfast	Extra day in Bangkok - post-tour

INCLUDED

- All Accommodation
- All meals indicated in your itinerary
- Airport transfers at the start and end of your trip
- Site entrance fees for all tours detailed in your itinerary
- Qualified tour guide to accompany you on all sightseeing
- Private vehicles for all road journeys indicated
- Comprehensive pre-departure material

EXCLUDED

- International flights (can be arranged on request)
- Thailand Tourist Visa
- Departure taxes
- Tips
- Meals, drinks & snacks not mentioned in the itinerary
- Any other items not mentioned in the itinerary

Tour Options

Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting. However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements , full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

No additional options available for this tour.

Important Notes

1 Accommodation

We use good quality hotels rated at the Thai 4 and 5-star level on this tour, together with a river camp and sleeper train. Accommodation is based on twin, triple or double en-suite rooms with air conditioning. Please visit the accommodation tab of this tour for examples of the hotels normally used on this tour. If you have any specific accommodation requests please let us know and we'll be happy to provide you with a customised quotation.

2 Transport

Our trips feature a mix of different transport options. We want you to feel like you're really experiencing the country you're travelling through, but at the same time we want you to finish journeys refreshed enough to enjoy the next stage of the tour. With this in mind we use public transport where we think it offers a good local experience & this may include 2nd class overnight sleeper trains, local buses and local ferries. We also use private transportation including jeeps, song- thaews or pickup trucks, and mini buses for sightseeing tours where required.

Sleeper trains:

The sleeper trains in Thailand are of a good standard and are popular with tourists. Each carriage has its own steward who ensures the train is kept clean and tidy, and from whom meals and drinks can be ordered to your seat. There is also a separate restaurant car. Each carriage will sleep approximately 40 people. On either side of the carriage there are 2 seats facing each other, with a window and small table. In the evening, the steward will convert these seats into beds for you, with a pillow, sheets and a blanket as well as a curtain for privacy.

3 Transfers

The tour includes a 24-hour arrival and departure airport-hotel transfer service in Bangkok airport and all other transfers.

4 Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

As we don't offer guaranteed group departures on this tour we can run the itinerary for however many people you happen to be travelling with, starting from 1 upwards. The prices given for this tour are based on a minimum of 2 passengers travelling, so if you have a different number of passengers in your group please contact us for a customised quotation.

In Thailand we provide fully trained, local English-speaking guides for all of the sightseeing tours. At Encounters Travel we only use local guides and reps. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing. Please check our website for more details and profiles of some of our most famous guides.

5 Dates & Prices

This tour is designed as a sample tailor-made tour itinerary. As such we do not offer set group departure dates that you can join. Rather, the tour is available for you to do privately starting on any date of the year. Guideline seasonal prices are given below, based on 2 people travelling. If you would like to adjust the tour itinerary, or there will be more or less people travelling, please contact us and we will customise a price for you.
For many people planning a trip to Thailand, the weather will be a determining factor in choosing when to travel. In general there isn't really a 'bad' time to visit Thailand as you'll normally experience a mix of sunshine and rainy days at most times of the year. The high season for travel in Thailand is between November and February when the weather is generally at its best throughout much of the country. In Northern Thailand the dry season is from November to May and then June to October generally experiences heavy rainfall. Please speak with our reservations team who will be happy to help you in selecting an appropriate time for your tour.

6 Money

The currency in Thailand is the Thai Baht (THB). You do not need to arrange to bring any Thai Baht with you to Thailand, as change facilities are readily available in the airport, hotels and banks. We recommend that you consider bringing both credit cards and some cash in a hard currency (e.g. GB Pounds, Euros, US Dollars).

ATMs are readily available in the arrivals hall of Bangkok airport and in most major towns. Many local shops in larger towns and resorts will accept VISA/Mastercard or Amex, but may charge fees of up to 10% - check before you pay. Travellers cheques are not recommended as they can not be changed in many places now, and can incur high fees.

For security we recommend that you use the safety deposit box in your hotel room or at the hotel reception if available. You should also be careful of pickpockets in crowded places, especially places like Khao San Road in Bangkok.

While in Thailand you will need sufficient funds to cover meals not included in the itinerary, drinks, snacks, souvenirs and personal expenses such as laundry. Check the Included/Excluded notes below the tour itinerary for more guidance. These should generally all be paid for in Thai Baht.

It is difficult to recommend a level of personal spending money which will suit everyone as this can differ greatly, but as a guideline, we would suggest allowing USD 15-25 per person per day as a minimum. Allow more if you plan on doing lots of shopping, or buying many alcoholic drinks.

7 Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please contact us if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

8 Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.
We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000 partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see our website or booking conditions for more information.

9 Responsible Tourism

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.
The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudge: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water

bottles).

- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

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10 Follow Us Online

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.

www.facebook.com/encounterstravel

https://x.com/encounterstravl (yes, without the 'e')

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11 Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event).

Considering travel insurance for your trip? World Nomads Travel Insurance offers coverage for more than 150 adventure activities as well as emergency medical, lost luggage, trip cancellation and more.

If your tour includes car hire, or if you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

IMPORTANT: We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.

Covid-19

Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable.

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12 Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current official government travel advice for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's 'Travel Aware' campaign which provides further useful and invaluable information.

travel aware
gov.uk/travelaware

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13 Reduce Plastic Waste with Water-to-Go Filter bottles

Traveling responsibly means minimizing plastic waste, but staying hydrated on the go is essential. At Encounters Travel we are committed to reducing single-use plastics, which is why we've partnered with Water-to-Go. Their portable filtration system removes over 99.9% of contaminants from any non-saltwater source, turning even questionable water sources into safe drinking water.

Given that tap water is un-safe to drink in many of the countries in which we operate, we recommend purchasing a Water-to-Go bottle prior to departure. This will help you avoid the use of single use plastic bottles and keep you hydrated on the go.

Save big! Get a huge 25% off your Water-to-Go bottle and other Water-to-Go products (such as filters, lids, and carriers). Use code **ENCOUNTERS25** at checkout (valid in the UK, USA and Canada).

How Water-to-Go Technology works:

- Their reusable, BPA free water bottles contain their own unique 3-in-1 filtration technology effectively providing clean safe drinking water from any non-salt water source around the world.

- Three different (1 traditional and 2 nano) technologies are combined in one filter cartridge to remove up to 99.9999% of microbiological contaminants in water.

The three technologies used in a Water-to-Go filter are:

- Mechanical filtration – A tiny pore size, so small contaminants can't fit through.
- Electrical – A positive charge reduces the pore size even further and attracts contaminants like a magnet, trapping them inside the filter.
- Activated Carbon – Unlike most carbon based filters, instead of using adhesives to glue the carbon particles together, (which vastly reduces the carbon's efficiency) it is contained within the membrane, helping to reduce contaminants whilst eliminating bad tastes and odours. Try filtering water from your tap at home and taste the difference!

Water-to-Go filter bottles deliver safe, healthy water worldwide

- Water-to-Go filters remove bacteria, viruses, waterborne disease, protozoa, heavy metals such as lead as well as harmful chemicals.
- Their filters remove Chlorine and Fluoride from tap water.
- The filter will eliminate harmful contaminants from the water but allow beneficial minerals such as sodium and magnesium to pass through leaving you with the healthiest water possible.
- Water-to-Go filters have been independently tested against internationally recognised standards by industry specialists including The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK), BCS Laboratories (USA), Bangalore Test House (India) and IMI (China).

Use Water-to-Go products and you'll be healthier, wealthier and helping to make the world a better place!

- Depending on filter size, each Water-to-Go filter is able to replace 260 or 400 single-use plastic water bottles!
- They ensure you have access to safe water anywhere in the world without ever having to buy environmentally damaging bottled water.
- Their water bottles deliver safe, clean drinking water at just 5p per litre.
- The filter membrane is biodegradable and the shrouds are recyclable.
- The water bottles are used and approved by everyone from backpackers to commuters, gym users to expecting mums. Perfect for everyday, outdoor and travel.

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14 Private & Tailor-made Tours

While our group departures offer a fantastic way to explore with like-minded travellers, we understand that some guests prefer a more exclusive experience. Most of our group tours can be booked on a private basis, allowing you to enjoy the same expert-led routes with your own dedicated party. The primary advantage of choosing a private arrangement is the flexibility it provides; we can easily customise the itinerary to include your preferred style of accommodation or adjust the pace to suit your needs. Private tours can be run on the same start days as our group tours, or on other dates. However, some activities within our trips are restricted to particular days of the week - we

will advise you on anything like this that we need to work around. Pricing will be based on the number of travellers in your party, and any customisations you may like to make.

For those seeking something truly unique, our specialist sales team is available to collaborate with you on a completely tailor-made tour, designed from the ground up to match your specific interests, accommodation level and requirements.

To request a quotation for a private or tailor-made tour, please contact us.

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15 International Flights

We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people with varying travel plans, we don't include your international flights in the main tour price. We are however very happy to suggest flights to go with the tour. Please contact us with your preferred dates and departure airport and we'll give you a selection of airlines, times and fares to choose from.

Your airport arrival & departure transfers are included on the first and last days of the tour.

Most of our Thailand tours start and finish in Bangkok, and include an arrival and departure airport transfer from/to Bangkok international airport (BKK). However, some tours also finish on one of Thailand's islands. Transfers back to Bangkok or to one of the nearby island airports can be arranged on request.

We do also sometimes advertise flight inclusive packages from selected airports. Where these are shown on our website, prices are correct at the time of quoting, but are subject to continued availability of the fare used. Prices will be reconfirmed at the time of booking, and we will also provide the flight times and airline details before tickets are issued.
Flight inclusive prices are based on the cheapest Economy ticket class available which is generally non-refundable and non-changeable unless the flight is cancelled for reasons such as Covid-19, in which case the airlines are more flexible. More flexible ticket options, as well as Premium Economy and Business Class tickets are available on request for an additional supplement. Any changes made to flight inclusive bookings will be subject to the airline rules on your ticket.

Flight CO2 Emissions:

Traveling by air is an amazing way to explore the world, but flights also contribute to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions that impact the environment. By considering the airline's CO2 emissions when you choose your flight, you can help minimize your travel footprint.

When selecting your international flights and airline, we do therefore recommend that you try and also take into account the flight CO2 emissions. Some airlines and flight search websites (eg. Google Flights, Skyscanner) do publish this information, so you can compare between your flight options and make an informed decision. Thankfully, many airlines are working towards sustainability efforts, and choosing a greener option allows you to contribute to positive change while still enjoying your incredible adventure.

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16 Entrance Fees

The tour price includes entrance fees to all the tourist sites mentioned in the itinerary. You will need to cover the cost of entrance to any other extra sites that you may wish to visit.

17 Tipping

Tipping is not part of Thai culture but has become customary but not compulsory in the tourist and service industry. Tipping is always optional, and any amounts paid should reflect excellent service. You may therefore wish to tip your guide and driver at the end of the tour. You should not feel obliged to tip any particular amount, and should consider your personal budget. We are often asked to provide a guide however, and can suggest that approx. GBP 5 / USD 8 per person per day would be appropriate.

18 Health and Vaccinations

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including emergency evacuation and repatriation.

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting and where you are travelling from. We recommend you contact your GP/medical practitioner or a travel clinic for current information on vaccinations needed for your destination. You should ensure that you are up to date with vaccines and boosters recommended for your normal life at home, including for example, vaccines required for occupational risk of exposure, lifestyle risks and underlying medical conditions. In addition, additional courses or boosters normally recommended for the countries in this region are:

Thailand: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus. Malaria map. Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.
Vietnam: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria map. Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.
Cambodia: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria map. Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.
Laos: Additional vaccinations: Diptheria, Poliomyelitis, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria map. Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

The above information can change at short notice. For up to date health information & vaccination requirements we recommend that you contact your medical practitioner or a travel clinic.

Malaria: Vaccinations are not available against Malaria, which is a disease transmitted by mosquitoes that can be very serious and sometimes fatal. You should avoid mosquito bites by covering up bare skin with clothing such as long sleeves and long trousers and applying insect repellents to exposed skin. When necessary, sleep under a mosquito net. Mosquitoes are most active during and after sunset. You should consult with your GP/medical practitioner/travel clinic about the most appropriate malaria prophylactic medication to take for the regions you are visiting.

Yellow Fever: This disease is spread by infected mosquitoes that bite during the day. A Yellow Fever Certificate of vacinnation may be required as a condition of entry depending on which country you are arriving from, or that you have travelled or transitted through recently (including connecting flights with stopovers of over 12 hours). You can view this US CDC information about where the virus is present and follow the links to further information detailing which countries need you to have a Yellow Fever vaccination as part of their entry requirements. Please ensure you have this certificate with you and to hand if necessary.

Please inform us of any pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or asthma and any prescription medicine you may be taking. We also need to know about any food allergies or physical disabilities that you may have.

19 Passports and Visas - Thailand

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities.

Most foreign nationals (including UK, EU, USA, CA, AU, NZ, SA) are granted a visa exemption on arrival for stays in the country of up to 30 days. If you are looking to spend longer in Thailand then you will need to leave the country and re-enter to extend your stay. We strongly recommend arranging your visa in advance if you would like to stay longer than 30 days in Thailand.

20 Voltage

Sockets are two round or flat pronged and 220 volts (Type A, B, C). Universal adaptors are available in most airport shops if you don't have one already. Standard European adapters will work fine, though sometimes they may feel a little loose in the sockets. All hotel rooms have electrical sockets where you can re-charge cameras, phones etc. Hair dryers are normally available on request from the hotel reception if not in your room already.
If you have US appliances (110 volts) you will need a voltage converter as well as a plug adapter.

21 Time

The time in Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos is GMT plus 7 hours. Daylight saving adjustments are not observed.

22 What to take

Luggage: Suitcases, rucksacks or fabric holdalls are all fine to bring with you to Thailand, though if your itinerary has many stops and different travel included within it, we recommend packing light and not bring any large cases. You should also bring a small daypack/bag to take out during the day. Your main luggage will normally be left in the hotel during your sightseeing trips – you will not need to carry it far, and there are nearly always hotel porters to assist.
Luggage limits: There is no luggage limit for this tour. However, most airlines restrict you to between 20kg and 25kg for your hold luggage and between 5kg and 10kg for hand luggage. Please check with your airline before travelling to the airport.

Climate and Clothing: There are three reasonably well-defined seasons in Thailand, but unlike in Europe, where seasons are temperature based, Thailand is tropical and generally speaking warm all year round. Rains from the monsoon are the marker of seasons and the rainy season is from June to October. Pre-monsoon is from March to May, when the weather becomes progressively hotter. Post monsoon is from November to February when the weather is cooler. The range of temperature is more marked in the north where pre-monsoon can be very hot, though the heat is much drier than in the south. Winter in the north can feel cool, particularly in the mountains.

Take light clothes with something warmer for the winter nights if you are travelling to the north. Some light raingear would be useful in the wet season.

Other items: We recommend you also bring:

- Cool footwear (sandals are ideal). If you are interested in exploring the reefs, a pair of reef shoes is recommended to avoid injuries. If you are trekking, then bring comfortable and sturdy walking shoes or light walking boots.
- Swimming costumes – rash-guards/t-shirts are recommended for snorkelling to avoid sunburn.
- Sunscreens, after sun lotions and personal hygiene products – Please adhere to 100ml restrictions for anything you wish to carry on hand-luggage on flights.
- Prescription medications (if required) – please bring supporting documents.
- Power adapter for phones, laptops etc
- Sunglasses and hats
- Basic first aid kit and toiletries
- Money belt
- Small torch
- Dive certification card and log book if you intend to participate in SCUBA diving.
- Sleeping bag if your tour includes any hill-tribe or village trekking

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23 Culture and Customs

Dress code

The Thai people consider dressing appropriately to be important and respectful, so please follow their example. This means covering up your swimwear while not on the beach or by the pool, and while shorts and T-shirts are fine, please try not to look scruffy. Remember to take your shoes off before entering local houses or any religious buildings.

Temple etiquette

When entering temples you should wear clothes that cover your knees and shoulders. Women may be asked to wear long skirts, not trousers, and shorts are not appropriate for either sex. You may wear a shawl to cover up and these are sometimes available to hire before entry. Again please take your shoes off before entering.

Buddhist Culture

Thailand is a Buddhist country and Buddhism permeates nearly all aspects of society and culture, resulting in a country with different customs to much of the West. Rudeness and disrespect are frowned upon and you will be judged on your behaviour. Some tips for behaviour to avoid causing offence are; do not touch other people with your feet, point your feet at Buddhist statues or shrines (be careful of this when you sit), and don't touch the head of someone you don't know well. Public displays of affection are frowned upon, so save these until you are in private. You'll find being polite using a few Thai words will really pay dividends (thank you is Kawp Khun Kaa if you are female, and Kawp Khun Kraap if you are male. Your tour guide will provide more information and advice while you are on the tour; please don't hesitate to ask them any questions or for advice.

The Royal Family

The Thai people have huge respect for their Royal Family and this is enshrined in many laws as well. You should bear this in mind when speaking to Thai people and in simple things like remembering that Thai paper money has the King's face on and should therefore be treated carefully.

Drugs and Alcohol

Drugs are illegal in Thailand and heavy penalties including very large fines and jail time can be imposed. Don't think that because you are a tourist you are exempt or will be treated differently. Drinking is legal and you should not worry about having a few beers or cocktails while on tour. However remember to be respectful to your surroundings, fellow group members and the local population.
