Siam Treasures

COUNTRY(IES)	Thailand
TOUR TYPE	Private
TRANSPORT	A/C minibus, sleeper train, local ferry & flight
GROUP SIZE	Min: 2 | Max: 12
DURATION	18 days
STARTS	Bangkok, Thailand
ENDS	Bangkok, Thailand
MEALS	Breakfasts - 12, Lunches - 6, Dinners - 5

TOUR ROUTE MAP **18 Days**



ROUTE: **Suvarnabhumi Airport** (Start) → **Bangkok** → **Chiang Mai** → **Taeng River** → **Chiang Mai** → **Bangkok** → **Surat Thani** → **Khao Sok National Park** → **Ko Samui** → **Suvarnabhumi Airport** (End)

HIGHLIGHTS

Jungle trekking, elephant ride, bamboo rafting in Chiang Mai; river canoeing, jungle wand tree houses in Khao Sok National Park; idyllic Ko Samui beaches

Itinerary

DAY 1 Arrive into 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	Single room supplement (THSGST), Extra day in Bangkok - pre-tour

DAY 2 Bangkok, city tour

Spend the day exploring Bangkok through public transport and the historic Rattanakosin district. The source refers generally to royal landmarks and temple complexes but does not name specific sites, so none has been added. After the city exploration, transfer to the railway station and board the overnight train to Chiang Mai. The day therefore combines urban sightseeing with a scheduled rail journey north without inventing unsupported individual monuments.

ACTIVITIES

- **Explore Bangkok by Public Transport**
  Explore central Bangkok, Thailand using public transport such as tuk tuks, BTS Skytrain and canal boats. Experience daily life and historic districts around Rattanakosin Island.
- **Visit Grand Palace and Rattanakosin Island – Bangkok**
  Visit the Grand Palace complex and Rattanakosin Island in Bangkok, Thailand. Discover royal buildings and historic neighbourhoods at the heart of the old city.
- **Drive from Bangkok Hotel to Bangkok Railway Station**
  A short road transfer from your Bangkok hotel to the main railway station in Bangkok, Thailand. Prepare to board the overnight train heading south.
- **Train from Bangkok to Chiang Mai**
  Board an overnight sleeper train from Bangkok to Chiang Mai in northern Thailand. Rest onboard during the long-distance journey.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
On board sleeper train	Breakfast

DAY 3 Arrive in Chiang Mai, free day

Complete the overnight train journey and transfer from Chiang Mai railway station into the city. The remainder of the day is free, and suggestions such as the old city or cafés remain independent possibilities rather than included activities. No temple, market or evening programme is specified for this collection. The focus is therefore on the station transfer and an unstructured arrival period.

ACTIVITIES

- **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.
- **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	None

DAY 4 Start jungle trek adventure

This journey moves from the city of Chiang Mai into the rural highlands of northern Thailand, highlighting local markets, forested landscapes, and village life. The route passes through regional trading hubs before reaching waterfall sites surrounded by lush countryside. A guided trek through Huay Nam Dang National Park leads into remote hill-tribe areas shaped by farming and forest traditions. The experience emphasizes connection with nature and rural communities. The day concludes with an overnight stay in simple village huts, offering insight into daily life in the northern highlands.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Chiang Mai to Mae Malai Market**
  Drive from Chiang Mai to Mae Malai Market in Chiang Mai Province, northern Thailand. The roadside market is a common starting point for treks into the surrounding hills on the tour.
- **Explore Mae Malai Local Market in Chiang Mai Region**
  Stroll through Mae Malai local market near Chiang Mai, Thailand, where villagers sell produce, spices and snacks. This colourful stop introduces you to daily life in the region before heading into the hills.
- **Explore Pang Lan Waterfalls in Chiang Mai Region**
  Visit the Pang Lan Waterfalls in the hills of Chiang Mai Province, Thailand. The forested falls offer a scenic break and a good starting point for the trekking section of the tour.
- **Trek from Huay Nam Dang National Park to Baan Mae Jok Village**
  Trek through Huay Nam Dang National Park in northern Thailand to reach Baan Mae Jok, a Karen hill-tribe village. The walk takes you into forested hills above Chiang Mai and brings you close to rural community life on the tour.
- **Overnight Stay in Baan Mae Jok Village Huts**
  Spend the night in simple village huts at Baan Mae Jok in Chiang Mai Province, Thailand. This homestay-style stop lets you experience Karen village culture as part of the trekking section of the tour.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Village huts	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 5 Jungle trekking

This trekking day continues through the rural highlands of northern Thailand, linking remote villages along forest paths and farmland trails. Walking between Baan Mae Jok and Baan Pa Khao Lam offers insight into traditional village life shaped by agriculture and mountain terrain. The route reflects how communities remain connected through natural pathways rather than roads. As the landscape opens toward the river valley, the journey gradually shifts in character. The trek concludes at a rafting camp, marking the transition from hill villages to riverside surroundings.

ACTIVITIES

- **Trek from Baan Mae Jok Village to Baan Pa Khao Lam Village**
  Hike from Baan Mae Jok to Baan Pa Khao Lam through forest and farmland in Chiang Mai Province, Thailand. The trail links two Karen villages and deepens your immersion in hill-tribe areas on the tour.
- **Trek from Baan Pa Khao Lam to Rafting Camp**
  Continue trekking through forest trails in northern Thailand. Arrive later in the day at the riverside rafting camp.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Village huts	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 6 Bamboo rafting, return to Chiang Mai

This experience follows the Mae Tang River through northern Thailand’s rural landscapes before returning to the city. Bamboo rafting offers a calm and traditional way to travel, revealing riverside scenery shaped by forested hills and farming communities. The journey reflects the close relationship between waterways and village life in this region. After time on the river, the route continues by road back toward Chiang Mai. The day balances gentle adventure with a gradual transition from countryside to city.

ACTIVITIES

- **Bamboo Rafting in Mae Tang River**
  Float by bamboo raft along the Mae Tang River in northern Thailand. Pass tropical riverbanks and small tribal settlements.
- **Drive from Shan Village to Chiang Mai**
  Transfer by road from a Shan village back to Chiang Mai, Thailand. Arrive in the city in the evening.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Chiang Mai hotel	Breakfast,Lunch

DAY 7 Chiang Mai, free day, overnight train to Bangkok

The first part of the day is free in Chiang Mai, giving you time to rest or explore independently. Later, transfer to the railway station and board the train south towards Bangkok. The open morning keeps the pace flexible before the long rail journey begins and carries you away from northern Thailand towards the capital.

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.
- **Drive from Chiang Mai Hotel to Chiang Mai Railway Station**
  Transfer from your Chiang Mai hotel to the railway station in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Prepare for the overnight journey south.
- **Train from Chiang Mai to Bangkok**
  Board an overnight sleeper train from Chiang Mai to Bangkok, Thailand. Travel south through the countryside overnight.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
On board sleeper train	Breakfast

DAY 8 Arrive in Bangkok. free day

Complete the overnight train journey and arrive back in Bangkok with the rest of the day free. Use the time to rest after travelling or explore independently at your own pace, whether around riverside districts, neighbourhood markets or other parts of the capital. The open schedule keeps the remainder of the day flexible.

ACTIVITIES

- **Arrive at Bangkok Railway Station**
  Arrive at the railway station in Bangkok, Thailand in the morning. Continue onward to your hotel.
- **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
Bangkok hotel	None

DAY 9 Bangkok, canal tour, overnight train to Surat Thani

Take a boat trip on the Saen Saeb Canal and observe Bangkok’s working waterways before transitioning to onward travel. The later programme includes the hotel-to-station transfer and an overnight train journey to Surat Thani. No

temple visits or other city sightseeing are specified in this version of the collection, so none should be added. The day remains focused on canal transport and the overnight rail connection towards southern Thailand.

ACTIVITIES

- **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.
- **Drive from Bangkok Hotel to Bangkok Railway Station**
  A short road transfer from your Bangkok hotel to the main railway station in Bangkok, Thailand. Prepare to board the overnight train heading south.
- **Train from Bangkok to Surat Thani**
  Board a second-class air-conditioned sleeper train from Bangkok to Surat Thani in southern Thailand. Settle into your berth as the train rolls through towns and countryside overnight.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
On board sleeper train	Breakfast

DAY 10 — Arrive in Surat Thani, transfer to Khao Sok National Park

This journey introduces southern Thailand’s rainforest landscapes, moving from Surat Thani into the protected wilderness of Khao Sok National Park. A morning stop marks the transition from overnight travel to the forested interior. Canoeing along calm river channels reveals towering limestone cliffs and dense jungle scenery. Cultural elements appear through a visit to a local village temple, reflecting everyday life at the forest’s edge. A guided night walk completes the day, offering insight into the park’s nocturnal wildlife and rainforest atmosphere.

ACTIVITIES

- **Breakfast Stop in Surat Thani**
  Break your journey in Surat Thani, Thailand for breakfast after the night train. Refresh and get ready for your onward trip into Khao Sok National Park.
- **Drive from Surat Thani to Khao Sok National Park**
  Travel by road from Surat Thani into Khao Sok National Park in southern Thailand. Watch plantations and small villages give way to dense rainforest and limestone peaks.
- **River Canoeing in Khao Sok National Park**
  Canoe along a calm river inside Khao Sok National Park, Thailand. Paddle through lush rainforest scenery surrounded by limestone cliffs.
- **Explore Village Temple in Khao Sok**
  Stop at a village temple near Khao Sok National Park, Thailand to see how local communities worship. Enjoy a peaceful pause in a simple rural shrine surrounded by jungle scenery.
- **Night Jungle Walk in Khao Sok**
  Join a guided night walk in the rainforest of Khao Sok National Park, Thailand. Use torches to look for nocturnal

wildlife and listen to the sounds of the jungle after dark.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Khao Sok tree-house	Lunch,Dinner

DAY 11

Khao Sok activities

Spend the day around Khao Sok with a guided rainforest walk, time at an elephant camp and a visit to Mai Yai Waterfall. The forest walk provides ecological context, while the elephant camp introduces the long relationship between people and elephants in the region. The waterfall adds a contrasting landscape feature later in the day, keeping the focus on Khao Sok's natural environment.

ACTIVITIES

- **Jungle Walk in Khao Sok with a Local Guide**
  Take a guided jungle walk inside Khao Sok National Park, Thailand. Follow forest trails past waterfalls, streams and lush vegetation while your guide explains the local ecology.
- **Explore Elephant Camp in Khao Sok Region**
  Visit a local elephant camp near Khao Sok National Park, Thailand. Learn about elephant care and observe the animals from close range.
- **Explore Mai Yai Waterfall in Khao Sok**
  Stop at Mai Yai Waterfall in Khao Sok National Park, Thailand. Enjoy a cooling break beside cascading water surrounded by forest.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Khao Sok tree-house	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 12

Khao Sok activities

This journey moves from the rainforest interior of Khao Sok toward the dramatic limestone landscapes of Ratchaprapha Lake. Travel by road and boat reveals steep karst cliffs rising from calm emerald waters. The experience combines guided jungle hiking with visits to small caves that shape the park's underground landscape. Time spent on the lake highlights the remote and tranquil character of this protected area. Free time at the raft houses allows you to enjoy the surrounding scenery and quiet atmosphere at your own pace.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Khao Sok Tree-House to Ratchaprapha Lake**
  Drive from your tree-house accommodation in Khao Sok National Park, Thailand to Ratchaprapha Lake. Pass steep limestone cliffs and dense forest on the way to the pier.

- **Boat from Ratchaprapha Lake to Raft Houses – Khao Sok**
  Travel by long-tail boat across Ratchaprapha Lake in Khao Sok National Park, Thailand to reach floating raft houses. Enjoy dramatic views of karst towers rising straight from the water.
- **Jungle Hike in Khao Sok National Park**
  Head deeper into Khao Sok National Park, Thailand on a longer jungle hike. See giant buttress-rooted trees, wild orchids, ferns and, with luck, some of the park's wildlife.
- **Explore Small Caves in Khao Sok**
  Visit small caves within Khao Sok National Park, Thailand after your jungle walk. Step inside rocky chambers and hear stories about the geology and wildlife of the area.
- **Free Time / Leisure – Khao Sok Raft Houses**
  Relax at the floating raft houses on Ratchaprapha Lake in Khao Sok National Park, Thailand. Swim in the lake or try tubing and enjoy the peaceful natural surroundings.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Khao Sok raft-house	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 13 Drive and ferry from Khao Sok to Ko Samui

This travel day connects southern Thailand’s rainforest interior with its island coastline. Leaving Khao Sok National Park, the route returns to Surat Thani before continuing by ferry across the Gulf of Thailand. The sea crossing marks a clear shift from jungle landscapes to tropical island scenery. Arrival at Ko Samui introduces a relaxed coastal atmosphere shaped by beaches and palm-lined shores. The transfer to the hotel completes the transition from inland exploration to island leisure.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Khao Sok National Park to Surat Thani**
  Travel by road from Khao Sok National Park back to Surat Thani, Thailand. The journey leaves the rainforest behind.
- **Travel from Ferry Surat Thani to Ko Samui**
  Board a ferry from Surat Thani to Ko Samui in the Gulf of Thailand. Cross open water toward the tropical island.
- **Travel from Ko Samui Pier to Hotel**
  Transfer by road from the pier to your hotel on Ko Samui, Thailand. Check in and enjoy island surroundings.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Ko Samui hotel	Breakfast

DAY 14

Ko Samui, free time

This free day allows you to enjoy Ko Samui at your own pace, embracing the island’s relaxed tropical atmosphere. Time can be spent on the beach, exploring coastal villages, or enjoying the island’s cafés and seaside restaurants. The slower rhythm reflects Ko Samui’s blend of local life and resort culture. Free time offers space to unwind after overland and jungle travel. This day focuses on rest, flexibility, and personal enjoyment on the island.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Time in Ko Samui**
  Enjoy a free day on Ko Samui, Thailand. Relax on sandy beaches or arrange optional island activities.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Ko Samui hotel	Breakfast

DAY 17

Ko Samui, fly to Bangkok

This travel segment marks the transition from island life back to Thailand’s capital. A short flight from Ko Samui to Bangkok connects the Gulf coast with the country’s main urban centre. On arrival, a transfer brings you from the airport to your hotel, re-entering the pace of city life. The journey reflects the contrast between relaxed island settings and metropolitan energy. This segment provides a smooth and efficient return to Bangkok.

ACTIVITIES

- **Travel from Flight Ko Samui to Bangkok**
  Take a domestic flight from Ko Samui to Bangkok, Thailand. Enjoy aerial views over the Gulf of Thailand.
- **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 18

Bangkok, free time, transfer to airport

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 as stated in the itinerary
- All transport and transfers
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- Services of a local tour guide during sightseeing and activities
- Admission fees, with instruction where necessary
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary

EXCLUDED

- International flights (available on request)
- Visa fees
- Travel insurance (compulsory, get a quote here)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips for tour leader, rafting guide and park guide
- Any other items not mentioned above

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 3-star level on this tour, together with village huts, treehouses and rafthouses.

Hotel rooms all have air-conditioning and en-suite bathrooms.

Village huts:

Accommodation whilst trekking is in traditional bamboo huts, and a thin mattress, sheet and blanket is provided. Please note that for the trekking you may wish to bring a light sleeping bag or extra blanket with you. These may be hired in Chiang Mai if required.

Khao Sok Tree houses:

There are 7 individual tree houses and 1 tree house with 3 individual rooms. They are up quite high in the forest canopy complete with sturdy stairs and handrails. One of the tree houses is at a lower level for those with a fear of heights. Facilities are basic but comfortable with private toilet and cold water shower, double bed and mosquito net. Our backdrop is a limestone mountain with interesting caves to explore. About 100 metres away is the dining and relaxing area located in a classic Thai house.

Khao Sok Raft houses:

On the Raja Phraba lake, there are 7 individual raft houses and 1 raft house with 3 rooms. Each of the individual raft houses has a double bed and the 3 roomed raft house has double and single beds that can be configured into different combinations as required. All rooms have mosquito nets. There are shared toilet facilities nearby. The dining and relaxing area located in a separate raft house.

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.

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4 Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

We are committed to being a small group operator, as we feel this gives everyone in the group the best chance to get to know their fellow travellers and to hear and make the most of their guide. There's no point in us providing great guides if you've got to peer over 30-40 shoulders to see them! So, we won't ever put you in a 50-seater coach with 49 other people and just one guide. Instead, we set our Thailand group departures to have a maximum of 18 travellers.

At Encounters Travel we aim to only use local Thai 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.

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5 Chiang Mai Jungle Adventure

Jungle trek:

In general the trekking on this tour will not be too hard for anybody who is reasonably physically fit. We walk for around 1 ½ hours on the first day, mainly downhill, and for around 5-6 hours on the second day with some climbing and descending and plenty of breaks. The precise itinerary of the trekking may have to be changed from time to time to take into account the weather and local conditions, but the same concept is well maintained.

While trekking we sleep in villagers' huts. As the huts consist of a single all-purpose room, in which the villagers live and sleep, you will sleep on the covered balcony or a bamboo bed inside the hut. A thin mattress, sheet and a blanket will be provided but for additional comfort you may wish to bring a sleeping bag as in mountain areas it can be quite cool at night, especially in December/January.

Additional equipment such as a rucksack, water canteen, life-jacket is available from our office in Chiang Mai. Sleeping bags may also be hired from here.

As you are required to carry your own kit, unnecessary items should be avoided and left in secure storage in your hotel in Chiang Mai (a private porter can also be provided upon request for an additional charge).

Simple meals will be prepared by the porter by a stream, in a hill-tribe village or at some other suitable spot, during the day, and in one of the village huts in the evening & for breakfast.

Your guide has long experience of the country through which you will travel and is very familiar with the tribes' people and their customs. His advice on these subjects should be followed.

Elephant rides:

Elephant-back safaris are available in this region but not included in this tour. We no longer include elephant safaris on any of our Thailand tours due to animal welfare and safety concerns.

Rafting:

The rafts are of the basic bamboo-pole variety and can carry approximately from 4 to 8 people. The rafting can

take from 4 to 6 hours depending on the season, and the water level & current. Along some parts of the river there are a lot of snags (dead trees, big rocks, broken wood, etc.), which can sometimes be dangerous. A life jacket (provided) is essential as it will not only keep you afloat, if by chance you should fall off the raft, but also help to prevent injury if hitting any of these snags. During the rainy season (or the dry season following heavy rainfall) the current will be quite strong and the guide will decide if the rafting should proceed or not. His advice on this matter should be strictly followed.

6 Dates & Prices

We run regular small-group departures on this tour starting on Sundays throughout the year. All departures are guaranteed to run with a minimum of 2 people. Departure dates and prices are listed on our website and on a separate dates & prices sheet available on request.

7 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.

8 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.

9 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.

10 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).

11 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')

12 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.

13 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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14 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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15 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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16 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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17 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.

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18 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.

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19 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.

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20 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.

21 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.

22 Time

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

23 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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24 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.