



# Thailand and Laos

## 10 Night Private Tour

Embark on an unforgettable 10 night adventure through Thailand and Laos, exploring vibrant cities, ancient temples, and rich cultural traditions.

Begin in bustling Bangkok, visit iconic landmarks, and dive into the local markets. Discover World War II history at the Bridge over the River Kwai and Hellfire Pass, then journey to Chiang Mai for a cooking class and sacred temple visits. Venture to Chiang Rai to see the stunning White Temple and the Golden Triangle.

In Laos, immerse yourself in the serene beauty of Luang Prabang, experiencing its spiritual rituals and cultural treasures, ending your journey with a visit to the Emerald Buddha in Bangkok.

### Highlights:

- Explore the unique Mae Klong Railway Market
- Visit the iconic Bridge over the River Kwai, and tour the Hellfire Pass Memorial
- Learn to cook authentic Thai dishes
- Visit ancient temples in Ayutthaya, Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai
- Participate in Luang Prabang's almsgiving ritual
- Visit the Emerald Buddha in Bangkok

### What's included:

- Getting there: Return flights to Bangkok
- Local English speaking guides throughout
- Transport: Return airport transfers, private ground transfers, overnight train, and internal flights from Chiang Mai to Luang Prabang, and Luang Prabang to Bangkok
- Accommodation: 10 or 11 nights total duration (including 1 or 2 nights on return flights) – 9 nights accommodation: 1 night Bangkok, 1 night Kanchanaburi, 1 night overnight train, 2 nights Chiang Mai, 3 nights Luang Prabang, 1 night Bangkok
- Meals included: 8 breakfasts, 2 dinners

### Not included:

- Any meals (other than the one mentioned in the itinerary), drinks, tips, expenses of personal nature.
- Early/late check-in/out service at hotels (surcharge if requested)
- Optional excursion/tours
- Travel insurance and visa
- Anything not mentioned in the "What's Included" column

# Full Itinerary

## Day 1: Overnight Flight

Board your overnight flight from the UK to Bangkok Airport BKK.

## Day 2: Arrive in Bangkok

Arrive in Bangkok, meet local guide and transfer to your hotel. Spend your afternoon relaxing and enjoying the hotel's facilities, or head out to begin exploring the city.

ACCOMMODATION: 3\* W22 by Burasari, Bangkok or similar



## Day 3: Bangkok to Kanchanaburi

Depart early and head an hour southwest of Bangkok to visit the Mae Klong Railway Market. Enjoy the countryside and pass the Samut Sakhon salt pan, where farmers harvest salt. At Mae Klong, experience the unique market set alongside train tracks, watching as vendors skillfully move their goods as the train passes by.

Next, explore the Damnoen Saduak Floating Market in Ratchaburi. Take a boat ride, barter with local vendors, and enjoy the lively atmosphere.

Continue to the Khwae Yai Bridge, park of the Death Railway and famous from the film "Bridge over the River Kwai", reflecting on its history as you walk across it.

End the tour at the Thailand-Burma Railway Centre, a museum documenting the construction of the Death Railway. Visit the nearby Allied War Cemetery to pay respects to the prisoners of war buried there.

Transfer to your hotel in Kanchanaburi for check in.

ACCOMMODATION: 3\* River Kwai Resortel, Kanchanaburi or similar

MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast



## Day 4: Kanchanaburi to Ayutthaya, and Overnight Train to Chiang Mai

Start your tour at the Hellfire Pass Memorial Museum, learning about the Death Railway and Hellfire Pass through photographs, tools used by prisoners of war, and a short video with commentary from former POW's. Then, walk the actual Hellfire Pass, reflecting on its history and visiting a memorial honouring the Thai, British, Dutch, American, and Australian lives lost.

Afterwards, transfer to Ayutthaya to visit Wat Mahathat, a 14th-century temple complex known for its Buddha head entwined in tree roots. Then, tour Wat Phra Si Sanphet, famous for its three chedis, which inspired Wat Phra Kaew in Bangkok.

End the day with refreshments at Ayothaya Riverside Hotel before boarding the night train to Chiang Mai.

ACCOMMODATION: Overnight train in 2<sup>nd</sup> class cabin with twin bunk and shared bathroom

MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast



## Day 5: Chiang Mai City Tour and Cooking Class

Arrive at Chiang Mai Railway Station at 07:15 and meet your guide for breakfast at a local restaurant before visiting Wat Phra That Doi Suthep, a revered temple dating back to 1382, located on Mount Doi Suthep. Take a tram to the temple grounds, where you'll see pagodas, bells, statues, and shrines, including a replica of the Emerald Buddha and a statue of Ganesh.

This afternoon, join a cooking class at Zabb E Lee Thai cooking school in the countryside. Begin with a visit to a local market to shop for ingredients, then head to the school to learn how to cook four Thai dishes, curry paste, and sticky mango rice using fresh, local ingredients. End the experience by enjoying your homemade meal with fellow participants.

ACCOMMODATION: 4\* Hotel Aruntara Riverside, Chiang Mai or similar

MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast, dinner

## Day 6: Chiang Rai

Travel north to Chiang Rai to visit the iconic White Temple, Wat Rong Khun, known for its radiant white colour and reflective glass mosaics, symbolizing the purity of the Buddha.

Next, visit an ethnic minority village, the authentic Akha village of Loyo. Continue to the Golden Triangle, where the borders of Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar converge, and enjoy a scenic boat ride for a closer view of this remarkable site.

Afterward, drive back to Chiang Mai.

ACCOMMODATION: 4\* Hotel Aruntara Riverside, Chiang Mai or similar

MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast



## Day 7: Chiang Mai to Luang Prabang

Transfer to Chiang Mai Airport for your included flight to Luang Prabang, on arrival you'll be greeted by your driver and transferred to your hotel.

Spend the rest of your day at leisure.

ACCOMMODATION: 3\* The Sanctuary Hotel Luang Prabang or similar

MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast

## Day 8: Luang Prabang

Start your day early in Luang Prabang to witness the mystical almsgiving ritual, where around 300 young monks collect food as a demonstration of humility. If you wish to participate, your guide can show you the respectful way to offer food, and remember to take photos discreetly without flash. Afterward, stroll through the morning market, filled with locals haggling for fresh produce.

Next, explore the city's cultural highlights, including Wat Xieng Thong, a beautifully decorative temple, and the former Royal Palace, now the National Museum showcasing rare artifacts.

Visit the UXO Visitor Centre (closed on weekends) to learn about Laos' history as the most heavily bombed nation per capita, through exhibitions and films.

Enjoy lunch at your leisure before meeting local artisans, Mone and Keo, who share their weaving skills and the success of their business at Ock Pop Tok, a renowned social enterprise.

End your day by climbing 328 steps up Mount Phousi for stunning panoramic views of the city at sunset.

This evening walk to the night market - a cultural treasure trove for those seeking unique gifts, and a foodie's paradise with the street food vendors and restaurant at the end. Enjoy a welcome dinner at a local restaurant.

ACCOMMODATION: 3\* The Sanctuary Hotel Luang Prabang or similar

MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast



## Day 9: Luang Prabang

Enjoy a day at leisure.

ACCOMMODATION: 3\* The Sanctuary Hotel Luang Prabang or similar

MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast

## Day 10: Luang Prabang to Bangkok with Afternoon City Tour

Transfer to the airport for a morning flight to Bangkok, where you'll be greeted by a local guide.

In the afternoon, embark on a city tour, starting at the Temple of the Emerald Buddha (Wat Phra Kaew), Thailand's most important Buddhist site. Here, the 66cm Emerald Buddha is adorned in seasonal outfits, and visitors can meditate or pray in its presence, surrounded by murals of Buddhist cosmology.

Conclude your day with a farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

ACCOMMODATION: 3\* W22 by Burasari, Bangkok or similar

MEALS INCLUDED: Dinner



## Day 11: Bangkok to the UK

Spend your final day relaxing until check out, and transfer to the airport for your flight back to the UK. Depending on your flights you will arrive home today or the next day.

MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast

# FAQs

## WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO TRAVEL?

The best time to visit South-East Asia is November to April when it's dry and warm. Wet season and monsoonal rains fall from June to October.

## MALARIA

It is not common to get malaria, unless you are staying in the mountains or the jungle for a long time.

## DRESS CODES FOR SOME HISTORICAL SITES

Be mindful of local customs and wear suitable attire when visiting religious or cultural sites. This typically involves covering your shoulders and knees. Dress code guidelines are often displayed at the entrance to these places.

## WHO IS THIS TOUR SUITABLE FOR?

This tour is accessible to most people with an average level of fitness and normal mobility. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties. Children aged 6 and above.

## VISAS AND VACCINATIONS

UK passport holders do not need a visa to travel to Thailand for a stay less than 60 days.

UK passport holders require a visa to enter Laos. Until 31 December 2024, visas on arrival and e-visas will permit you to stay for 60 days. From 1 January 2025, tourist visas will only permit you to stay for 30 days from the date you arrive in Laos. You can get a visa on arrival at Luang Prabang Airport, or you can apply for a Laos e-visa at least 5 days in advance of your arrival, which is valid for single entry only. Passports must be valid for 6 months and have 2 blank pages. Please refer to the FCDO website for more information.

Please refer to the FCDO website for more information about entry requirements and vaccinations.

## OVERNIGHT TRAIN

Guests will be booked into a 2nd class cabin onboard the overnight train from Ayutthaya to Chiang Mai, with shared bathrooms onboard the train. The beds are twin bunk beds. Should there be a third person travelling, two cabins will be booked.

## REVERSE ITINERARY

Due to operational requirements, this itinerary will operate in reverse on certain days of the week during low season (departing the UK on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday from 29 March to 26 October 2025). It will not be possible to visit the Hellfire Pass Memorial Museum and Death Railway Museum if the itinerary is operated in reverse.