



The Kingdom of Thailand is filled with Buddhist temples, gorgeous beaches, exotic wildlife, and spectacular islands. On this 8-day tour, get to know Thailand's history, culture, and friendly people. During a city tour of Bangkok, see its three most important Buddhist temples, the Grand Palace, and a precious gem factory. Outside the city, visit a railway market and a floating market. Fly to Chiang Rai to explore scenery and sights near the "Golden Triangle" at the confluence of the Ruak and Mekong Rivers, where Thailand, Burma and Laos meet. On an excursion outside Chiang Mai, meet some indigenous White Hmong people in their village. Cap off this travel experience at the Elephant Jungle Sanctuary to see these beautiful creatures surrounded by pristine scenery. Tour leaders Fred & Shirley Redekop lived and worked in Thailand with Mennonite Central Committee.

Itinerary

Sunday July 11, Bangkok

Welcome to Thailand! Arrive at the Bangkok International Airport and transfer to your hotel. Enjoy the rest of the day at leisure.

Monday July 12, Bangkok

Today we will visit three of the most important Buddhist temples in Bangkok. Wat Traimit, also known as the temple of the Golden Buddha, houses a 3-metre tall statue made from solid gold and weighing in at 5.5 tonnes. Pass through Chinatown on your way to Wat Pho, the temple of the Reclining Buddha and home to the Chedis of the Kings. At 46 metres in length and 15 metres high, this Buddha is the largest in Bangkok. Next, we make our way to the Grand Palace, one of the most beautiful examples of an ancient Siamese royal court. It used to be the residence of the kings of Bangkok. Here you will see the palaces which were used for different occasions including: the Funeral Palace, the Reception Palace, the Throne Hall, the Coronation Hall, the Royal Guesthouse and Wat Phra Keaw – the beautiful Emerald Buddha temple. Return to Bangkok for a quiet evening, which may include a presentation and discussion with Mennonite Central Committee staff who are working in the area.

Tuesday July 13, Bangkok

Depart from Bangkok and head to Maeklong Railway Market, also known as Talad Rom Hoop. Learn about the history of this unique railway market that is filled with shoppers one minute and the route of a speeding train the next minute. It happens so quickly; you will be amazed. We will also visit the world-famous floating market of "Damnoen Saduak"—which dates back to 1868. The colorfully clad merchants at these lively markets paddle along congested canals in sturdy canoes laden with fresh fruits and vegetables to sell to shoppers on the banks. This is an exciting and fun way to see the local life and to go bargain hunting. Finish the day at a local lapidary factory and showroom to shop for locally made handicrafts, jewelry and silk. Transfer back to Bangkok.

Wednesday July 14, Chiang Rai

This morning we will transfer to the airport for our flight to Chiang Rai. Before you touchdown, be sure to look out the window to catch a glimpse of where the borders of Thailand, Burma and Laos meet. Visit this Golden Triangle (its sights and scenes present images of a traditional way of life unknown in the western world) followed by a boat ride on the Mekong River to see activities along the border of Laos. Stop at Donsao Island to browse for crafts at a local market.

Thursday July 15, Chiang Mai

Today we'll have an early morning drive out through the beautiful northern scenery, with a stop at the Hot Springs at Mae Kajan. Drive on to visit Wat Rong Khun (White Temple) which is completely white in color. Continue to the border town of Mae Sai. Just across the bridge lies the Burmese town of Tachilek, where you can shop for some Burmese souvenirs (such as sarongs, puppets, handicrafts and Burmese cheroots). Enjoy a delicious lunch at a local restaurant. Then drive up Doi Suthep to see Wat Phra Dhat Doi Suthep (built in A.D. 1384). Wat Doi Suthep is the most sacred temple in northern Thailand, containing a holy relic of Lord Buddha. Learn about the legend of the sacred white elephant before continuing on to Wat Suan Dok. This royal Temple of the Third Class houses an impressive 48ft golden, bell-shaped chedi that can be seen from miles away. Return to Chiang Mai for the night.

Friday July 16, Chiang Mai

After a refreshing breakfast, we will take a brief trip over to the Elephant Jungle Sanctuary. Here you will learn about these giant mammals and how this sanctuary cares for them. Enjoy the beautiful habitat that these protected animals call home. After spending the day with these gentle giants' head back to your hotel with a warm heart and smile on your face.

Saturday July 17, Chiang Mai

Today we will start with an early morning activity, taking part in the local custom of offering food and alms to monks at Wat Sri Soda. Ride to Chiang Mai gate to visit the morning market, then take a Rickshaw back to the hotel for breakfast. In the afternoon visit a handicraft market. In the evening, enjoy a Khantoke dinner with authentic traditional performances featuring regional tribes.

Sunday July 18, Chiang Mai

Say farewell to your fellow travelers and head for home with an unforgettable week of memories and experience packed along.

Tour fare per person:

CAD: Double Occupancy \$2830; Single Supplement \$390

USD: Double Occupancy \$2291; Single Supplement \$316

Important note: Costs could increase if you sign up less than 90 days before a tour begins.

Fare includes:

- Accommodations throughout tour
- Coach transportation throughout tour
- All breakfasts, 2 Lunches, 1 Dinner
- All entrance fees as per itinerary
- Expert tour leaders and local guides
- Gratuities

Fare excludes:

- International and domestic airfare and all associated costs
- The remaining meals (5 lunches, 6 dinners)
- Beverages with meals, other than water
- Porterage
- Optional excursions and all other services not mentioned
- Travel medical (out-of-country emergency) and cancellation/interruption insurance

Insurance

Travel medical (out-of-country emergency) insurance and cancellation/interruption insurance are not mandatory but are highly recommended.

Payments

All rates shown are in effect at time of printing (March 2020). Although every effort is made to maintain the prices as established, TourMagination does reserve the right to adjust prices on this tour should it become necessary. The published price is guaranteed when paid in full. We accept check/cheque payments, and credit card payments. Please note that payments made using credit cards will be charged a 3% fee.

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