



Thailand Highlights

Classic Tour | 13 Days | Comfortable

Bangkok – Kanchanaburi – Chiang Rai – Lisu Lodge – Chiang Mai

Discover more of Bangkok and the northern highlands on a journey that weaves through the glittering temples and lush jungles of Thailand, soaking up the country's rich heritage.

- Explore the markets in vibrant Bangkok
- See the famous 'Bridge over the River Kwai'
- Take a walk through Hellfire Pass
- Discover the tea plantations in Chiang Rai
- Spend time with the locals in Lisu Lodge
- Meet the elephants in Chiang Mai



Thailand Highlights tour inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- Visa fees for UK and EU passport holders
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with ABTA, ATOL and IATA

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, tipping, early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary.

Classic Tours:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of Southeast Asia on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully-inclusive basis so you'll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts or local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

Comfortable Tours:

'Thailand Highlights' is a **comfortable** tour. Although this is the easiest grading of tour Wendy Wu Tours offers it still requires a reasonable level of fitness.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time
- You will be required to get on and off small boats without assistance

Of course, our National Escorts and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Itinerary – Thailand Highlights

Days 1-2: Bangkok

You will be met at Bangkok Airport in the arrivals hall by your local guide or National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer approximately 1 hour to your hotel and check-in to your room.



Destination Information

Bangkok - Bangkok has been Thailand's dominant city since the 18th century. It was established as the capital after the former capital Ayutthaya was attacked by the Burmese and burned down. The emerging city, which was protected by a wall, was occupied by a large number of stilt and floating houses built to adapt to common seasonal flooding. Up until the Thailand War, Bangkok was still largely undeveloped until it became a popular place of rest and relaxation for the American soldiers, which resulted in a boom of nightclubs, massage parlours and bars. However, in the 80's and 90's, Bangkok underwent rapid modernisation and exploded into the metropolis it is today; a city that is lined with skyscrapers and is full of life. With a population of over 7 million, the fast pace of the city can be daunting for the first-time visitor, yet beneath all of the hustle and bustle there are many hidden gems waiting to be discovered, offering a unique taste of Thai culture and history. Bangkok's dazzling neon signs, charming architecture, spicy Thai cuisine and colourful markets make for an exciting first few days of our tour.

Day 3: Bangkok

Enjoy a sightseeing tour of the city today. Tour the Grand Palace, Wat Pho and Chinatown before cruising down Chao Phraya River on a longboat to Pak Khlong Talaat Flower Market, whilst enjoying an alternative view of the city. Sightseeing involves around 5 hours on foot today and involves hopping on and off the boats, often on unsteady and sometimes slippery surfaces, without handrails or assistance.



Destination Information

Wat Pho - One of Bangkok's largest temples. Experience the monk's chant as you explore the grounds of Wat Pho, which is over eight hectares. The largest reclining Buddha and the largest collection of Buddha images in Thailand are housed here.

Grand Palace - The Grand Palace is the city's most famous landmark. Built in 1782, for 150 years it was the home to the Thai King, the royal court and administrative seat of government. Within the Palace are several impressive buildings, including the Temple of the Emerald Buddha.

Pak Khlong Talaat Flower Market - The biggest wholesale and retail fresh flower market in Bangkok.

Chinatown - Teeming with market stalls and side street restaurants, Chinatown is a not to be missed experience in Bangkok.

Day 4: Bangkok – Kanchanaburi

Rise early this morning and drive to the Railway Track Market in Smut Songkram and then onto Damnoen Saduak Floating Market where you will travel by a motorised or paddle wooden boats through the canals. Sightseeing involves hopping on and off the boats, often on unsteady and sometimes slippery surfaces, without handrails or assistance. Continue to Kanchanaburi stopping at the famous 'Bridge over the River Kwai' on the way. On arrival in Kanchanaburi, visit the Allied War Cemetery and JEATH War Museum.



Destination Information

Railway Track Market - A open-air market with a little difference. Set on railway track; enjoy the unique experience as you see the vendors quickly pack up their stores as the train approaches the tracks.

Damnoen Saduak Floating Market - Step back in time to experience the traditional way farmers would trade their produce. The canals are lined with boats that are paddled by local women and piled high with vegetables, fruit and even souvenirs for the tourists. Sit back and soak up the atmosphere as the locals go about their daily life and entertain with their haggling techniques.

Bridge over the River Kwai - The infamous bridge built by prisoners of war during World War II, many of whom lost their lives during its construction.

Kanchanaburi - One of Thailand's largest provinces, rich in history and which boasts undeniable scenic beauty.

Allied War Cemetery – See thousands of graves belonging to British, Dutch and Australian prisoners who died while building the bridge.

JEATH War Museum – The Museum displays many artefacts, photos and stories of the prisoners of World War II. There are graphic images of the terrible conditions and torment that the young men faced and the stories of those who survived; some group members may find this upsetting and confronting.

Day 5: Kanchanaburi – Bangkok

This morning visit Hellfire Pass, a dramatic part of the railway that literally cuts through mountain, and take a 3 kilometre walk through the pass. Explore the Hellfire Pass Memorial Museum, which tells the stories of human suffering at the hands of this engineering feat before boarding the train at Nam Tok Railway Station. After lunch, travel back to Bangkok. This evening, enjoy a delicious Thai meal for dinner and watch a performance of traditional Thai dancing.

Please note the 3km walk will be on uneven ground, involves some steep steps and it is likely to be humid, be prepared for mosquitoes! If you do not wish to take part, you will still be able to see the pass from around 15 minutes' walk from the museum and you may remain in the museum area independently, please be aware that the group will be gone for around 2 hours.

Destination Information

Hellfire Pass - Was constructed for the Burma to Thailand railway by Prisoners of War. This part of the railway was particularly hard to build due to its remoteness and the scale of rock-cutting required. It took only six weeks to build this section, as the prisoners were forced to work 16-18 hour days and throughout the night. Its name derived from the eerie glow produced by the torches at night, reflecting off the gaunt faces of the prisoners.

Day 6: Bangkok – Chiang Rai

Discover the historical highlights of Ayutthaya by minivan on a day trip to the ancient capital of Thailand. Departing from Bangkok in the morning, drive 1 and half hours to Bang Pa-In Palace, boasting a mix of European, gothic and Thai-Buddhist architecture. There's time to explore the vast grounds that include several temple complexes, Wat Phra Sri Sanphet, a temple that forbids monks to enter (due to its 'royal' status), and then on to Wat Chai Wattanaram is a Buddhist temple in the city of Ayutthaya Historical Park the west bank of the Chao Phraya River, outside Ayutthaya island. Sightseeing will involve around 3 hours on foot today. Enjoy lunch at the local restaurant and take the road trip back to Bangkok. Transfer to the airport for your 1 hour and 20 minute flight to Chiang Rai.



Destination Information

Ayutthaya - The former Thai Kingdom capital city from 1350 to 1767. It ultimately suffered destruction at the hands of the Burmese. On arrival visit the largest temple of Wat Phra Sisanphet, which was used as the Royal Temple Palace by several kings. The following sight is Wat Chai Wattanaram where the construction patterns are very interesting. Then continue to Bang - Pa - In Summer Palace, which served as the summer palace for many Thai monarchs from the 17th century. This structure has a captivating collection of marvellous pavilions in a variety of Thai, Chinese, Italian and Victorian architectural styles.

Day 7: Chiang Rai

This morning, stop at the area known as the 'Golden Triangle'; the point where the borders of Thailand, Laos and Myanmar meet. Upon arrival, enjoy a boat ride crossing the Mekong River to Laos where you visit Don Sao Island. There is a small market on the island, selling Lao clothing, handicrafts and postcards, which you can send home with a Lao postmark from the small post office located here. Continue to Mae Sai, the northernmost point of Thailand and an important trading city on the Thai-Burmese border. Learn about its history and visit the local market, where you'll be able to purchase cheap jewellery imported from Myanmar (Burma), Chinese goods and



all sorts of delicious local eats for your ride back to Chiang Rai. This evening, explore the colourful night market in Chiang Rai.

Destination Information

Chiang Rai - The northern-most province of Thailand sharing borders with Myanmar and Laos, and also one of the most ethnically diverse provinces in Thailand. The province is abundant with natural scenery; lush rice terraces, hills scattered with orchids and the mountains of Myanmar and Laos are visible in the distance.

Day 8: Chiang Rai

This morning drive 1 and half hours to Mae Salong Mountain, renowned for its hill tribes and tea plantations. From the base of the mountain travel by truck to a plantation where you will have an opportunity to sample local tea. Enjoy lunch at a mountaintop restaurant before an excursion to Mae Salong, visiting a tea plantation, a Yao Tribe and an Akha village known as Ban Lorcha. Sightseeing today will include approximately 3 hours on foot.



Destination Information

Mae Salong - Once known as a centre for opium trade in the golden triangle, Mae Salong is now associated with tribal villages and for the production of excellent local tea.

Day 9: Chiang Rai - Lisu Lodge

Depart Chiang Rai and take a short 30-minute drive to explore the Wat Rong Khun or 'White Temple'. Next, stop at local market, then continue to Chiang Mai, where you will spend the night at the Lisu Lodge. As the name suggests, the lodge is located at a Lisu hilltribe village and you will be guided through the village by some of the locals before having dinner at the terrace of one of the wooden houses, where you will also be entertained by children from the local village who will perform some Lisu folklore.



Built in traditional Lisu style with an eye for western comforts, the guest cottages overlook the lush fields and hills surrounding the valley. Each guest room has an en-suite bathroom. The cottages include electric fans (but no air con), a mosquito net, a universal power outlet at the headboard, 2 complimentary bottles of water, a hair dryer, hot water for showers, toiletries and slippers, towels and a shower cap. You will need to pack an overnight bag for tonight's homestay as your main luggage will be left in safe storage and collected tomorrow.

Destination Information

White Temple - One of the most recognisable temples in Thailand, the White Temple is a contemporary Buddhist and Hindu temple designed by Thai artist Chalermchai Kositpipat in 1997.

Lisu Lodge - Named after the Lisu hill tribe village that is found near the lodge, the lodge is also part of a community-based project that aims to conserve the natural heritage of the hill tribes in Chiang Mai. The lodge is operated by Lisu hill tribe villagers who will take care of you during your stay.

Day 10: Lisu Lodge – Chiang Mai

Have breakfast from the lodge's organic farm and begin the 1 hour drive to Chiang Mai, stopping at a handicraft village where you can buy lacquer products, silk, furniture and souvenirs. Upon arrival, check into your hotel and later visit the ancient city of Wiang Kum Kam, continue to Wat Chedi Luang and Wat Phra Singh. Sightseeing will be approximately 2 hours on foot today.



Destination Information

Chiang Mai - Located among tall mountains, Chiang Mai is the largest and most culturally significant city in northern Thailand. The city was founded in 1296 and was the capital of the Lanna Kingdom, which was eventually occupied by the Burmese. For the next 200 years Chiang Mai was virtually abandoned until it was again taken over by Siam in the 18th century. During the 20th century, Chiang Mai became a thriving centre for handicraft pottery, weaving, silverwork and woodcarving; however tourism took over in the 1960's as the main source of income. Today, Chiang Mai is famous for its hilltribes, tea plantations and elephants.

Wiang Kum Kam - In 1984, just outside the modern Chiang Mai metropolitan area, archaeologists uncovered the remains of this city, which was said to have been buried underground by years of flooding. Nearly 20 temple sites have been uncovered in the area, many in ruins, except for two that are still actively used today.

Wat Chedi Luang - Where the famous 'Emerald Buddha' was once enshrined.

Wat Phra Singh - Founded in the 14th century to enshrine the ashes of King Kam Fu.

Day 11: Chiang Mai

After breakfast, you will visit the Thai Elephant Care Centre. The centre is located in the beautiful Mesa valley and is the peaceful final resting place for old elephants. You will be met by one of the local caretakers at the gate and he will guide you through the centre, explaining about the centre and its inhabitants, and you will of course have a look at the impressive beasts and their lifelong caretakers. After the visit, have lunch and continue to Mae Daeng to enjoy an exciting rafting trip on the river. After the rafting return to Chiang Mai.

Please note that in the rainy season, between June and August, bamboo rafting may not be possible for safety reasons.

Destination Information

Thai Elephant Care Centre – a care centre dedicated to looking after elderly elephants in their final stage of life.

Day 12: Chiang Mai

Enjoy a cooking class where you will learn to cook traditional Thai cuisine and enjoy your creation for lunch. Later, drive 1 hour to Wat Doi Suthep where you will have the option of climbing the Naga staircase 300 steps to the top, or catch the cable car to visit the exquisite golden pagoda. This evening we enjoy a typical Thai (Kantoke) dinner while watching a performance of traditional song and dance from Northern Thailand by various hill tribes.



Destination Information

Talat Warorod - Chiang Mai's oldest and largest market. Stroll past stalls selling an assortment of items, from woks, toys and pickled tea leaves.

Wat Doi Suthep - One of Thailand's most sacred temples. Tucked away in the mountains at 1,056 metres above sea level, it offers a panoramic view of Chiang Mai.

Day 13: Depart Chiang Mai

Today you will be transferred from the hotel to the airport, according to the departure time of your flight home.

Thailand Highlights Travel Information

Visas

UK passport holders do not need a visa for Thailand if they are travelling for less than 30 days for tourist purposes.

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with us that you take out suitable travel insurance. You must provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number when you book with us or as soon as possible thereafter. These details will be available to your National Escort should they be required. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Eating in Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia is home to an incredibly rich food history. The local cuisine is known for its intense flavours, spices and some of the freshest ingredients you can find. In general, meals include either rice or noodles and are packed full of flavour. Lemongrass, ginger, lime leaves, coriander, fish sauce and soy sauce are used in most local dishes. Whilst Southeast Asian food has a reputation for being hot and spicy, each region actually has its own distinct characteristics. Vietnam, for example, is perhaps best known for its fresh and aromatic dishes – relying heavily on flavours from fresh herbs such as mint, basil and dill.

Your itinerary has been carefully crafted to introduce you to a range of local dishes and we hope that you enjoy the culinary adventure ahead. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our fully inclusive group tours from dinner on the day of your groups' arrival until breakfast on your day of departure. When dining in Southeast Asia, although some restaurants have adopted a western approach to dining, expect some restaurants to follow the traditional communal style of eating. Typically, this will mean each diner has their own small bowl and may serve themselves from a variety of shared dishes. At some local restaurants, appetizers and main courses might be served when they are ready instead of following a particular order.

Determining when it's appropriate to use chopsticks, forks or spoons can be challenging for some travellers, even other Asians, as each country has different customs. In Vietnam, dishes are normally placed in the centre and people serve food for themselves with their own chopsticks and bowl. In Thailand and some other countries in Southeast Asia, fork and spoon are used for most dishes and chopsticks are typically provided to eat noodles. Usually chopsticks or other utensils are provided to scoop the food into your bowl to prevent your own chopsticks from touching the food that remains on the table. Dining in Southeast Asia is fairly casual with not too many rules. Leaving food on the plate is not considered rude.

Please refer to your travel guide for more information on Southeast Asian cuisine, including information for travellers with restricted diets.

Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to

four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and Southeast Asia. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort or Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

Solo travellers: If you are a solo traveller and willing to share a room, you will not have to pay a single supplement for any hotel rooms. Willing to share single travellers booking within 75 days of the first day of a group tour will be subject to availability. If no suitable match is available at time of booking you will be required to pay all single supplements.

Transport

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Roads in Southeast Asia have generally improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the itinerary are approximations only.

Planes: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines.

Development in Southeast Asia

Although Southeast Asia is developing quickly, it still lacks the international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in the UK. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in the UK; for example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade. All of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort or Local Guides.

Thailand public holidays

If you are travelling within the below Thailand Public Holidays please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Chakri Memorial Day - 6th April, Labour Day - 1st May, Coronation Day - 5th May, Songkran Festival 13th - 15th April, the Queen's Birthday - 12th August, Chulalongkorn Day - 23rd October, the Kings Birthday - 28th July.

Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a National Escort. There will usually be no more than 28 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides, instead of a National Escort.

Tipping Policy

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and Southeast Asia is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. In order to avoid any inconvenience Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your National Escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed to local guides and drivers throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the National Escort.

If you are travelling in a smaller group with local guides only, then tipping is paid in each destination. To be fair to the guides we ask for slightly higher amounts per traveller with small groups.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy but we do recognize that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

Climate

Please refer to our website or brochure for detailed temperature charts.

After your booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

Itinerary changes

It is our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate; in these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

Last updated: August 2017