

A Taste of Thailand

Discover Thailand's rich culinary history in this ten-day exploration of the country's food and culture.



Day 1 – Arrive in Bangkok

Arrive **Bangkok**, where you'll be met at the airport by your guide and transferred to your hotel in the city centre.

After checking in to your hotel, embark on a tour of the **Grand Palace & Wat Phra Kaeo**. Thailand's most famous landmark, this is a spectacular palace/temple complex housing the original Emerald Buddha. The Palace is located at the very heart of the city, just off the Chao Phraya River, and is best reached by river taxi.

From the Palace, continue to **Wat Po**, the oldest temple in the city, as well as its first university (teaching Thai medicine). It houses a huge reclining Buddha, one of the city's most striking sights.

As evening approaches, take a drive through the streets and avenues of **Bangkok's Old Quarter**; the illuminated temples, Palace, and Royal Ground present a fabulous spectacle at night.

Your evening tour of Bangkok's culinary delights begins with a visit to the **Krua Aporn** restaurant. This folksy, inconspicuous restaurant is located a little way outside of the city centre, and has become something of a best-kept secret among Thai foodies, thanks to its perfectly-cooked, old-fashioned Thai dishes! You'll only stop here briefly, however; just long enough to try the local speciality, "somtam", a papaya salad typically served with raw crab.



For your main course, make a stop in Old Bangkok to sample a famous Thai speciality, 'pad Thai'. The pad Thai at **Long Pha** is prepared in the traditional way, on charcoal, and is simply delicious.

End the evening with a stroll through the flower market with its many beautiful orchids. Time-allowing, you might like to visit the adjacent night market on Memorial Bridge for a bit of souvenir shopping. Return to your hotel late evening.

NB. If arriving into Bangkok in the evening, we can arrange for an additional night in the capital with a full-day tour beginning the following morning.

Day 2 – Bangkok

Leave Bangkok this morning for the province of **Samut Songkhram**. Though only a short 60 minute journey from Bangkok, Samut Songkhram couldn't feel further removed from the busy capital, and provides a real insight into traditional Thai country living.

You'll travel to Samut Songkhram on the famous **Maeklong Railway**, disembarking at **Talat Rom Hoop**, a fruit and vegetable market that has developed around the railway tracks. In a remarkable display, the vendors at the market dexterously pack their stalls away minutes before the train approaches, only to unload them again once it's passed. Take the time to explore the market with your guide, before boarding a long-tail boat that will carry you along the busy canals around the market to a village on the coast.

Here you'll visit a homestay where you can learn how to make traditional Thai desserts such as coconut pudding, or khanom krok. Afterwards, stop for lunch at a local restaurant before returning to Bangkok on the train.



On your return, take the time to explore the narrow alleys of Bangkok's old town where you can sample the city's famous street food. If you're full from lunch, you might like to just try the

traditional Thai coffee. Return to your hotel late afternoon, with the rest of the evening at leisure (dinner to own account)

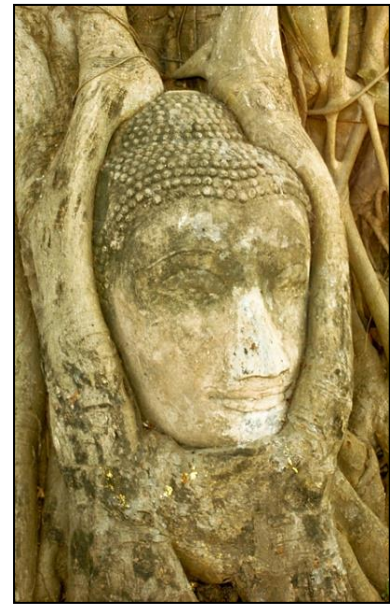
Day 3 – Bangkok to Ayutthaya

Depart Bangkok with your guide and driver, and journey one hour north to **Ayutthaya**, capital of the Siamese Empire between the 14th and 18th centuries. Once one of the greatest cities in the world, old Ayutthaya is now a ruin, but walking the grounds of this medieval city you'll get a feel for just how magnificent it once was. On arrival, enjoy a short walking tour of the old city; then check-in at your hotel before heading out for lunch.

For lunch, visit a local restaurant where they serve an Ayutthaya specialty, spicy boat noodles, before continuing your explorations of the old city.

As well as visiting the temples and ruins of old Ayutthaya, you'll also have time today to stop in at a local blacksmiths, where you can learn how *dab*, or Thai swords, are made.

In the evening, enjoy dinner at a friendly restaurant situated on the river, which serves excellent seafood, followed by a walk through the night bazaar.



Day 4 – Ayutthaya to Khao Yai

Leave Ayutthaya this morning and travel east to **Khao Yai National Park**. A world heritage site, Khao Yai is Thailand's oldest and most famous wilderness reserve, covering an area of over 2,000 sq km. Enjoy a walk in the valleys and hills of the park, while keeping an eye out for wildlife. The park is rich in birdlife, and you may also see some larger mammals, including elephant (of which there are an estimated 200). Gibbon, bear and gaur are present in the park but only rarely seen.

Lunch is at a restaurant near the National Park.

In the afternoon, visit the Gran Monte winery, where you can sample Thai wine and enjoy a guided tour of the vineyard, followed by a supper of some of the best local food and wine!



Overnight in Khao Yai.

Day 5 – Khao Yai to Khon Kaen

Leave Khao Yai this morning and head north into **Khorat** province. Your destination is the tiny town of **Khon Kaen**, but you'll stop for lunch en route at the 11th-century Khmer temples of **Phi Mai**, where you can sample a local favourite, pad Khorat (a regional variation on pad Thai).

As you approach Khon Kaen, you'll have the chance to take an outdoors class in Issan cooking, and learn how the food of the north differs from that of the south (the short answer: it's spicier!)



Continue to Khon Kaen and visit the **One Pillar Pagoda**, a close replica of the famous Hanoi temple, built by Khon Kaen's substantial Vietnamese community. It's a great spot from which to watch the sunset.

In the evening, enjoy fusion cuisine at a local restaurant, **Hua Hang**, before checking in to your hotel for the night.



Day 6 – Khon Kaen to Sukhothai

This morning, enjoy a breakfast picnic in an open rice field, before continuing your journey north-west towards Sukhothai, Thailand's first capital. Stop at the city of **Phitsanulok** for lunch (if you're feeling brave you might like to sample the local treats on offer at the edible insects market; if not, you'll be pleased to know that there are many restaurants serving traditional Thai favourites), and to visit **Phra Si Ratana Temple**, which houses one of the most impressive Buddha images in Thailand, dating back to the 14th-century.

Continue to Sukhothai, arriving late afternoon. Sukhothai's Historic Park is a world heritage site and undoubtedly the most impressive temple complex in Thailand. Enjoy a sundowner at the temple ruins, followed by dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 7 – Sukhothai to Saraphi

Wake early this morning and set off to explore the ruins at Sukhothai, either on foot or by bike. You can visit the most prominent sites, including **Wat Si Chum**, **Wat Mahathat** and **Wat Phra Phail Luang** on a guided tour, or just explore the main Historic Park at leisure. Note that not all of Sukhothai's famous temples are located within the Park itself, some are located outside the city.

(NB. the temple complex is large and so you won't be able to cover everything – if you're interested in really exploring the history of Sukhothai, then consider including an additional night here.)



Leave Sukhothai late morning and continue north in the direction of **Chiang Mai**, Thailand's northern capital. It's a long drive (four hours). Expect to arrive at your destination, **Saraphi**, a small town just outside Chiang Mai, in the late afternoon. Here you'll enjoy a late lunch at a homestay, where you stay tonight.

In the afternoon, enjoy a relaxed hike in the surrounding countryside, taking you through small villages, past rice paddies and over rivers. Keep an eye out for the trees decked in orange ribbon, part of a curious local ritual to signify that they have been ordained into the monastic life, and thus protect them from being chopped down! Return to your homestay in the evening and enjoy a home-cooked barbecue as the sun sets.



Day 8 – Saraphi to Chiang Mai

Drive into Chiang Mai this morning. It's a short drive of half an hour, so you can set off right away and enjoy breakfast once you arrive, perhaps at one of the food stands for which the city is famous. Afterwards, you might like to visit the Chiang Mai gourmet coffee outlet, where there's a wide selection of locally grown and imported coffee.

Spend the rest of the morning at one of Chiang Mai's many food markets. Here you'll be accompanied by a Thai chef, who'll reveal the secrets of her trade as she guides you through the market, picking out the best of the local produce which you'll then use in your cooking class.

Once you've mastered the art of Thai cooking, say goodbye to your teacher and hop aboard a songtaew, or pick-up truck, and journey to the 700-year old underground temple of **Wat Umong!** Explore the temple, before returning to your hotel late afternoon.



The rest of the evening is at leisure; you might like to explore Chiang Mai's famous night bazaar, which is great for souvenir shopping. Ask your guide for advice on where to eat, or just take the time to explore the city centre yourself—Chiang Mai is full of fantastic restaurants.

Day 9 – Chiang Mai to Mae Chan

Depart Chiang Mai this morning and continue your northward journey to **Mae Chang**, in **Chiang Rai** province. This small town is situated within the Golden Triangle, where Laos, Myanmar and Thailand meet. It's a four to five hour drive, a section of which is through the beautiful **Doi Luang National Park**. You'll have the opportunity to stop along the way at an Akha hill village, where you can visit a homestay and get a feel for how the northern tribes live, their lives so far removed from the city dwellers of Bangkok and Chiang Mai, before stopping for lunch at a local restaurant.



You can also make a stop en route at a very special coffee outlet, where they serve another of Thailand's unique specialities, elephant dung coffee. This is coffee made from beans that have been digested by an elephant, and then handpicked from the dung. For those with less rarefied tastes, ordinary coffee that hasn't arrived out of an elephant's bottom is also available.

Arrive in Mae Chan late afternoon and transfer directly to your hotel. The rest of the evening is at leisure (dinner to own account).

Day 10 – Departure

You will be transferred to Chiang Rai airport this morning for your flight to Bangkok, where you can connect with your international flight home.



Price Guide:

*The cost of this itinerary is from **£1,998 per person**, based on two persons sharing twin/double accommodation. For more information, or if you would like to enquire about a tailor-made holiday combining part or all of the above itinerary, please [contact us](#).*

Includes:

- Twin/double accommodation (B&B basis)
- Lunch on all days except day 10
- Private driver
- All entrance fees and activities mentioned in itinerary
- Experienced guides

Excludes:

- International flights – please ask us for a quote
- Visas
- Personal travel insurance
- Personal expenses and tips
- Dinner included on days 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7, otherwise to own account