

adventurewomen

THE DESTINATION IS JUST THE BEGINNING

## THAILAND & LAOS

# Thailand: Elephants, Temples, and Beaches



January 8 - 17, 2022



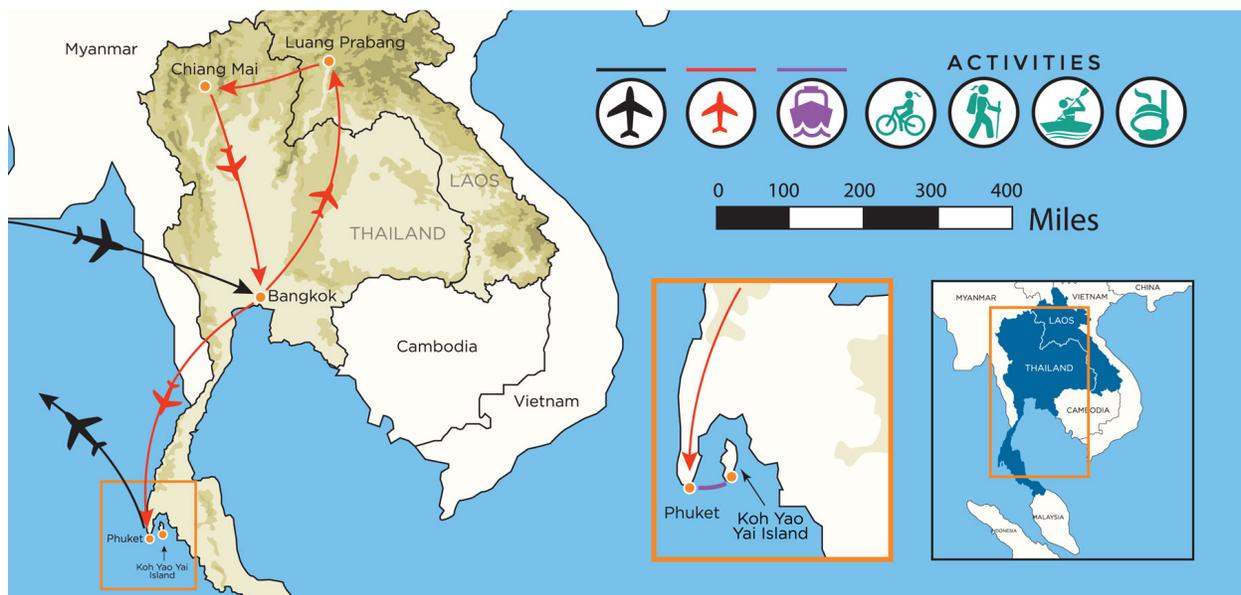
## THAILAND & LAOS

# Thailand: Elephants, Temples, and Beaches

### TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ Explore Thailand and Laos by kayak, long-tail boat, and tuk tuk
- ▶ Meet local Laotian artisans and entrepreneurs at the Traditional Arts and Ethnology Center
- ▶ Spend the day caring for elephants at the Elephant Nature Park
- ▶ Bike through the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Luang Prabang, Laos and participate in spiritual ceremonies
- ▶ Snorkel and kayak among remote islands in the Andaman Sea near Phuket, Thailand

### TRIP ROUTE



## THAILAND & LAOS

# Thailand: Elephants, Temples, and Beaches

### QUICK VIEW ITINERARY

- Day 1 Arrive in Bangkok and fly to Luang Prabang
- Day 2 Explore Luang Prabang
- Day 3 Give alms, cook your own Laotian lunch, learn about traditional arts
- Day 4 Fly to Chiang Mai
- Day 5 Visit Elephant Nature Park
- Day 6 Fly to Bangkok
- Day 7 Explore Bangkok on the Water and in the Air
- Day 8 Fly to Phuket and snorkel among remote islands
- Day 9 Kayak the mangroves of Koh Yao Yai Island
- Day 10 Depart

### ACTIVITY LEVEL

Active

### TRIP PRICE

Main Trip: \$4,595  
Optional Single Accommodations: \$950  
Internal Air: \$900

# THAILAND & LAOS

## Thailand: Elephants, Temples, and Beaches



your adventure  
in depth

DAY 1  
Saturday  
1/8/22

### Arrival into Luang Prabang

Welcome to Luang Prabang, the ancient, royal, and spiritual capital, and UNESCO heritage site - step into the slow, quiet, intentionally present world of Laos.

Arrive in  
Bangkok and  
Fly to Luang  
Prabang

Meet your guide and AdventureWomen Ambassador in the Suvarnabhumi Airport Arrivals hall in Bangkok before taking a flight to Luang Prabang.

Lunch

Eat an a la carte lunch at the Bourang Restaurant in Luang Prabang.

Explore by Bike

Set out by local bike to see the highlights of Luang Prabang. You'll spend about three hours exploring, but you will only bike about five miles on flat terrain.

You'll see the Royal Palace home to the "Prabang" sacred golden statue from which the town takes its name. Stop at Vat Mai before continuing to the Heuan Chan Heritage House where you will gain a better understanding of Laotian architecture and culture, and how families lived in long houses up until about 1960. Visit Vat Xieng Thong, the most emblematic temple in Laos, glittering in gold paint and mosaic glass.

Welcome  
Dinner

Enjoy a cocktail overlooking the Mekong River to celebrate the start of your trip before heading back to the hotel for your welcome dinner. Get to know your fellow travelers this evening and learn about why each woman on your trip is excited to explore Thailand and Laos!

Accommodations  
Maydou

Meals Included  
lunch, dinner

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DAY 2  
Sunday  
1/9/22

### Luang Prabang, Laos

Luang Prabang is a well-preserved ancient city that is well known for its many Buddhist temples and monasteries. The city boasts of many magnificent architectural sites that are tied to the country's deep religious and cultural heritage.

#### Cruise the Mekong

Drive to the pier where you'll board your private boat. Cruise about an hour and a half upstream to the Pak Ou Caves. You can buy snacks and drinks on board. Sip a coffee and watch the scenery as you float by.

#### Explore Pak Ou Caves

Hike up a half a mile to the higher cave or a quarter of a mile to the lower cave - both caves are full of candles, incense, and golden Buddhas. Soak in this fascinating place along the river.

#### Lunch on the Boat

Have lunch on the boat as you travel from Pak Ou Caves to the Luang Prabang pier.

#### Garavek Storytelling

A Lao storyteller will tell traditional stories accompanied by the khene (a handmade bamboo mouth organ) in an intimate 25-seat theater.

#### Dinner at Local Restaurant

Enjoy dinner tonight while overlooking the Nam Ou River. Walk or drive the 15 minutes back to the hotel after your meal.

Accommodations  
Maydou

Meals Included  
breakfast, lunch,  
dinner

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DAY 3  
Monday  
1/10/22

### Luang Prabang, Laos

The Pak Ou Caves contain thousands of gold lacquered Buddha statues which are crowded into two caves carved out of towering limestone cliffs. The statues range in size from a few centimeters to the size of a person.

#### Give Alms to the Monks

Depart the hotel at 5:20 this morning on foot. Witness the hundreds of orange-clad barefoot monks gathering alms. This is a thousand year old daily ceremony in Luang Prabang. Continue by tuk tuk to the local market to see how locals purchase their fresh food. Have breakfast back at the hotel.

#### Cooking Class

Dive in to a hands-on culinary experience where you'll make your own lunch of traditional Laotian fare.

#### Deaf and Mute Community Center

Visit and learn about this establishment which is lead by women and specializes in training deaf and mute members of the community in the arts of dress making, weaving, carpentry, catering, mechanics, and hospitality.

#### Baci Ceremony

This ceremony recalls the spirits of the body back; once this is done, symbolically, you tie cotton bracelets on each other's wrists. You'll participate in this ceremony at a local home with a family and a master of ceremony.

#### Dinner on Your Own

Enjoy dinner on your own this evening - there are plenty of choices to pick from! Also, be sure to check out the local night market.

Accommodations  
Maydou

Meals Included  
breakfast, lunch

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DAY 4  
Tuesday  
1/11/22

### Luang Prabang to Chiang Mai

Known in Thailand as the “The Rose of the North,” Chiang Mai is the third largest city in Thailand. Once the kingdom of Lanna, a sister kingdom to Luang Prabang, Chiang Mai is rich in traditional and modern arts. The local people are passionate about nature, and enjoy a calm, balanced, easy paced life.

#### Traditional Arts & Ethnology Center

Meet one of the two women who founded the Traditional Arts and Ethnology Center. Learn to identify what crafts come from which ethnic groups, how to tell between factory-produced and hand-made pieces, and learn about the challenges facing women in Laos today.

#### Fly to Chiang Mai and Have Lunch

Make the short trip to the Luang Prabang Airport, where you'll board your 90-minute flight to Chiang Mai. Enjoy lunch en route.

#### Gallery Stroll

Take an hour or so to relax at your hotel before strolling from gallery to gallery on the Ping River. You'll see Thai art, silk weaving, basket weaving, and the community arts center. Enjoy dinner at the end of your walk.

#### Dinner at Local Restaurant

Enjoy dinner while you take in the views along the Ping River before heading back to your hotel for the evening.

Accommodations  
Na Nirand

Meals Included  
breakfast, lunch,  
dinner

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your adventure  
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DAY 5  
Wednesday  
1/12/22

### Chiang Mai

The Elephant Nature Park is a globally recognized and awarded organization that provides care for injured or distressed elephants throughout Thailand. They focus on education, cultural and environmental preservation, and they are a sanctuary for endangered species.

**Elephant Nature Park** Spend a full day at the Elephant Nature Park, about an hour's drive from Chiang Mai. You'll get to prepare food, feed, observe, and learn about Asian Elephants. Enjoy a simple lunch, and then spend the afternoon with these gentle giants.

**Lunch and Afternoon** Lunch and the afternoon are on your own. You might want to get a massage at the hotel or head to the Hmong market where many ethnic groups buy the parts to make their clothes.

**Traditional Lanna Dinner** You'll have a traditional dinner where you will sit on the floor on pillows. You'll be served many dishes family-style on a round rattan table that is low to the ground. These typical Lanna, or northern Thai dishes could include roasted green chili dip, fresh vegetables, and thicker nutty curries.

Accommodations  
Na Nirand

Meals Included  
breakfast, lunch,  
dinner

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DAY 6  
Thursday  
1/13/22

### Chiang Mai to Bangkok

Nature rules the minute you leave the city limits of Chiang Mai. Mist-enshrouded mountains, rolling hills, thick forests and swift rivers are all part of the magnificent wild landscapes. Just 90 minutes north of the city, the Mae Tang River valley is home to several ethnic hill tribes who farm the rich river-irrigated land.

**Hike to Wat Phu Lat** Head out on an easy hike through part of Doi Suthep National Park (the “mountain of the open heart”) to the jungle wat of Phu Lat. The hike will be about an hour and a half with minimal elevation gain. Walk along the stream among the gardens where statues, flowers, and jungle all mix together. You should wear closed-toed shoes.

**Baan Kang Wat Artisans Community** Visit the artist colony of Chiang Mai. You will meet the next generation of local artists making their debut here in a funky collection of shops. The shops are a mix of indoor and outdoor space where you can see metal workers, painters, potters, weavers, and gelato makers!

**Lunch on the Way to the Airport** Grab lunch on our way to the Chiang Mai airport before your flight to Bangkok.

**Fly to Bangkok** Board your 1 hour and 15 minute flight and then drive for about 45 minutes into the city of Bangkok where you’ll check into your hotel before dinner.

**Dinner at Local Market** Get ready for dinner - at a street food bazaar! Head into one of the local night markets for endless options from the many street food stalls. Your guide will help you understand what you are eating and which part of the country it comes from.

Accommodations  
The Raweekanlaya

Meals Included  
breakfast, lunch,  
dinner

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DAY 7  
Friday  
1/14/22

### Bangkok

The real name of Bangkok is: Krungthepmahanakhon Amonrattanakosin Mahintharayutthaya Mahadilokphop Noppharatchathaniburirom Udomratchaniwetmahasathan Amonphimanawatansathit Sakkathattiyawitsanukamprasit, meaning “City of Angels, Great City of Immortals, Magnificent City of the Nine Gems, Seat of the King, City of Royal Palaces, Home of Gods Incarnate, Erected by Visvakarman at Indra’s Behest.” Call it Bangkok for short!

#### Kayak through the Canals

Bangkok used to be referred to as the “Venice of the East” due to the number of buildings that were built on stilts above the river. Today you’ll explore the city on the water during a one-hour kayak ride.

#### Longtail Boat Ride

Hop in a longtail boat for a short ride to lunch. Enjoy a local noodle soup or a mixed noodle dish.

After lunch, drive to the heart of Bangkok. From there, travel by local transport to explore Wat Irun.

#### Wat Irun

Take the sky train and a local ferry across the Chao Phraya River to Wat Arun (Temple of Dawn). This stupa-shaped temple spire is decorated with colored glass and Chinese porcelain. Enjoy sunset at the temple. Take a ferry and taxi back to the hotel.

Accommodations  
The Raweekanlaya

Meals Included  
breakfast, lunch

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DAY 8  
Saturday  
1/15/22

### Bangkok to Phuket

Thailand's largest island—separated from the mainland by a channel and connected by causeway—is a tropical paradise bathed by the ultramarine Andaman Sea. Lush verdant hills, rice paddies and rubber plantations, and undersea coral gardens are all geographical beauty marks.

**Fly to Phuket** Head to the airport for your 90-minute flight to Phuket this morning.

**Longtail Boat Ride and Lunch** After landing in Phuket, drive to the pier to catch a longtail boat which will take you to Phakbia Archipelago for some snorkeling. Change into your bathing suit and grab a quick lunch en route.

**Snorkeling** Hop on a longtail boat, and stop to have lunch and change into bathing suits. Snorkel through the off-the-beaten-path Lao Lading and Phakbia islands.

**Arrive at Hotel and Check in** After an afternoon of snorkeling, take another longtail boat ride to Koh Yao Yai island, where you'll check into your hotel which will be your home for the next two nights. Get settled and relax a bit before dinner.

**Dinner** Enjoy a delicious dinner as a group this evening.

Accommodations  
Koh Yao Yai Village

Meals Included  
breakfast, lunch,  
dinner

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DAY 9  
Sunday  
1/16/22

### Phuket

Koh Yao Yai is characterized by sandy shores, mangroves, rubber plantations, and fishing villages. The surrounding waters are rich in coral and dotted with dive sites, like the King Cruiser Wreck near Anemone Reef and the pinnacles of Shark Point.

#### Village Visit and Kayaking

Take a 20-minute drive to the village of Baan Yai Mee where you will visit a local home in a community that is known for its woven palm leaf baskets. After your visit, kayak along the mangrove forests that are home to monkeys and are vital for the ecology of the coastal marine life.

#### Afternoon at Leisure

Enjoy lunch at a village restaurant before driving back to the hotel where you will have the afternoon to relax or enjoy activities at the property before tonight's dinner.

#### Dinner

Enjoy a delicious dinner as a group this evening.

Accommodations  
Koh Yao Yai Village

Meals Included  
breakfast, lunch,  
dinner

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DAY 10  
Monday  
1/17/22

### Depart Phuket

Enjoy one last morning in Phuket.

**Lunch and Ferry** Have lunch on your own before hopping on the ferry to Phuket.

**Transfer to the Airport** Say goodbye to your new AdventureWomen friends as you transfer to the airport for your flights home. There will be one group transfer to the airport and then to Phuket town from the ferry dock. You should not book a flight that leaves before 4:00pm.

If you have flights that depart very late, and you would like to book a day room in Phuket town, let us know and we can help with those arrangements.

*Please note: AdventureWomen will attempt to adhere to the itinerary as much as possible. However, certain conditions (political, climatic, environmental, and cultural) may necessitate changes in the itinerary. AdventureWomen reserves the right to alter any itinerary at any time, if necessary. We will attempt to notify participants of changes as far in advance as possible. Costs incurred by such changes will be the responsibility of the participants.*

Meals Included  
breakfast

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### Accommodation Details

#### Maydou

Villa Maydou is at the heart of the historic center of Luang Prabang, the former royal capital of Laos, which is a UNESCO World Heritage site. It sits nearby of the Pagoda “Wat Meuna” and near the Nam Khan river old bridge. The hotel is composed of five beautifully appointed and comfortable Lao traditional houses within a large tropical garden which includes a salt pool. Two of the houses are registered in the UNESCO World Heritage Program after having been restored under the authority of “La Maison du Patrimoine,” the UNESCO program responsible for the preservation of the traditional architecture of Luang Prabang.

#### Na Nirand

Na Nirand Boutique Resort is a charming property that is tucked away in the heart of Chiang Mai. All rooms are designed in the colonial style that dates back to the 19th century.

Amenities: soap, shampoo, conditioner, and WiFi

#### The Raweekanlaya

The Raweekanlaya is a charming, 38-room boutique hotel located in a historic part of Bangkok.

Amenities: en suite bathroom and shower, a hairdryer, a full set of amenities, a safe and a refrigerator.

#### Koh Yao Yai Village

Embark on a journey to Koh Yao Yai, a secluded tropical island in the Andaman Sea and discover stunning nature, rich culture, and a traditional way of life. On the west coast of the island is Koh Yao Yai Village, a hideaway resort in Thailand like no other. The collection of cozy southern-style Thai villas are nestled amongst the rainforests of Koh Yao Yai, all offering generous spaces inside and out to relax and unwind.

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### Included:

- ▶ All accommodations indicated in the itinerary based on double occupancy
- ▶ All meals as listed in the itinerary
- ▶ All ground transportation
- ▶ Flights within Thailand and Laos as indicated in the itinerary (priced separately from the main trip)
- ▶ One group transfer for arrival and departure flights
- ▶ Fully-guided activities as indicated in the itinerary
- ▶ Services of an English-speaking guide in Thailand
- ▶ Services of an English-speaking guide in Laos
- ▶ Water and snacks while touring
- ▶ Gratuities for restaurant staff, boat crews, and drivers
- ▶ One AdventureWomen Ambassador

### Not Included:

- ▶ International airfare to and from Thailand
- ▶ Optional activities as indicated in the itinerary
- ▶ Meals not specified in the itinerary
- ▶ Alcoholic beverages and soft drinks
- ▶ Fees for passports, visas, or immunizations
- ▶ Cost of hospitalization or evacuation
- ▶ Items of a personal nature
- ▶ Gratuities for guides

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### Cancellations and Refunds

Notification of cancellations must be received in writing. Full payment is due 90 days prior to departure date, and the registration deposit is non-refundable.

For cancellations received 61-90 days prior to the trip departure date: 50% of the total trip cost is non-refundable. For cancellations received 1-60 days prior to the trip departure date: 100% of the total trip cost is non-refundable.

You are highly encouraged to purchase trip cancellation insurance to cover emergency situations. Travel insurance information will be sent to you once you have registered for your trip.

### Switching Trips

Our deposits are nonrefundable and nontransferable. If for some reason you need to switch to a different trip, please call us and we will do our best to accommodate you, but switching is not guaranteed.

### No Smoking Policy

Beginning in 1995, our trips became smoke free. Please note that there will be no smoking by any participants on AdventureWomen vacations.

### Health Insurance

You must have your own health insurance to participate in an AdventureWomen trip.

### Adventure Travel Today

At AdventureWomen, we want everyone to understand that our excursions are adventure travel vacations and not "tours." We define "adventure travel" as travel in which one **actively participates**, as opposed to a "tour," in which one is more or less a passive observer. AdventureWomen designs and organizes vacations all over the world for women who want to **experience an active, out of the ordinary vacation, and meet new friends**. Most of all, we want our trips to be **fun!**

**good-natured realist and have a sense of humor!** Adventure vacations, by nature, require that participants be self-sufficient, flexible, and able to accept situations as they exist, and not just as they would have preferred or expected them to exist. The constraints of scheduled group traveling also necessitate that each of us be understanding of and sensitive to others. **Being on time** is important, and contributes to the congeniality, success and well-being of both individuals and the group!

In this spirit, the successful adventure traveler should be a