

adventurewomen

THE DESTINATION IS JUST THE BEGINNING

# THAILAND & LAOS

## Elephants, Temples, and Beaches



November 6 - 15, 2023



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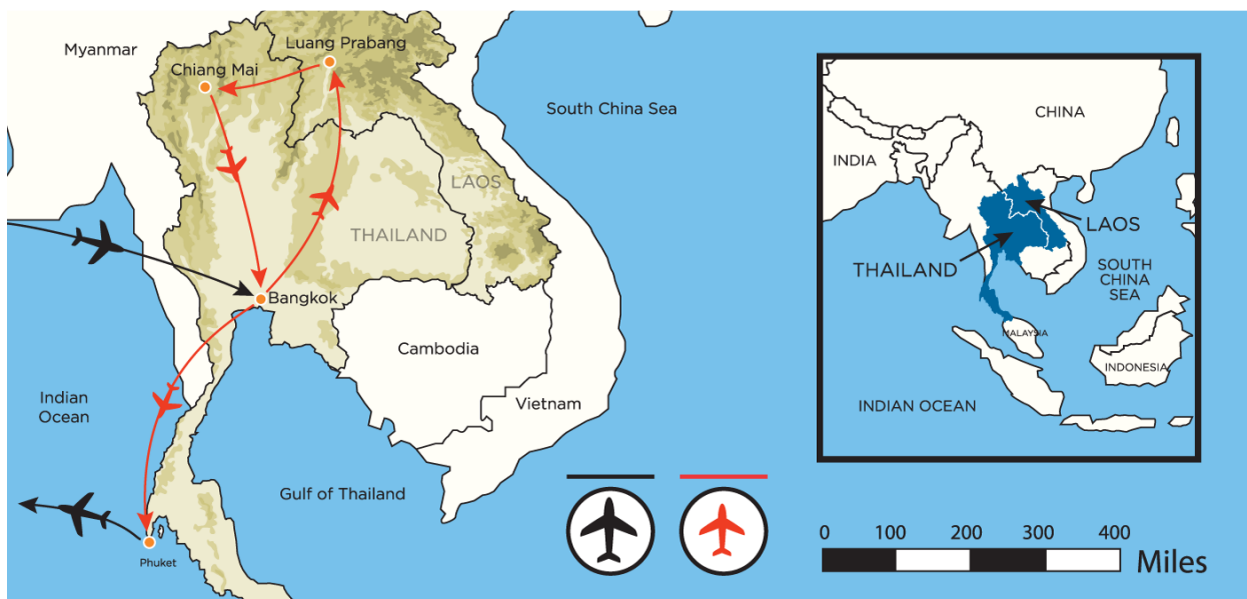
# THAILAND & LAOS

## 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

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### QUICK VIEW ITINERARY

- Day 1 arrive in Thailand, sunset at Wat Irun, street food bazaar welcome dinner
- Day 2 kayak and longtail boat in the local market
- Day 3 fly to Luang Prabang, bike through the city
- Day 4 take part in a cooking class, attend a IBaci ceremony
- Day 5 give alms, fly to Chiang Mai
- Day 6 full day at Elephant Nature Park, traditional Lanna Kan Tom dinner
- Day 7 hike to a waterfall, visit Watt Morwakee, explore on your own
- Day 8 Fly to Phuket, snorkel
- Day 9 explore by kayak, time to relax, farewell dinner
- Day 10 depart

### ACTIVITY LEVEL

Active

### TRIP PRICE

Main Trip: \$5,495  
Optional Single Accommodations: \$1,200  
Internal Air: \$1,600

# THAILAND & LAOS

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your adventure  
in depth

DAY 1  
Monday  
11/6/23

### Arrive Bangkok, Thailand

Welcome to colorful, exotic and endlessly fascinating Thailand! Your adventure gives you the chance to explore distinct Thai regions and experience the lifestyle and traditions unique to each. From the cultural delights of Bangkok to remote hillside villages, and from the natural wonders of Chiang Mai to the palm-fanned tropical beaches of Phuket, Thailand promises to engage everyone's imagination.

#### Arrival Information

Arrive in Bangkok, Thailand (BKK) before 12:00PM.

#### Pick-up and Transfer

There will be one group transfer provided from the airport around 12:00pm. The exact transfer time will be determined closer to departure. AdventureWomen can arrange additional airport transfers for an additional fee. Taxis from the airport are metered and also quite simple to navigate if you prefer to make your own way to the hotel.

#### Lunch on Your Own

Have lunch on your own today either at or nearby your hotel before meeting your group at 2:00pm in the hotel lobby.

#### 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.

#### Welcome Dinner

Have a welcome drink at the hotel before heading out for your welcome 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. 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  
The Raweekanlaya

Meals Included  
dinner

# THAILAND & LAOS

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DAY 2  
Tuesday  
11/7/23

### 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 to a Local Market

After breakfast, drive to a pier on the outskirts of downtown Bangkok where you will learn about kayaking techniques. Kayak a little less than an hour through a small stilt home neighborhood of Bangkok before returning to the pier.

#### 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, return to the hotel and relax before dinner.

#### Dinner

Enjoy dinner as a group at a local restaurant.

Accommodations  
The Raweekanlaya

Meals Included  
breakfast, lunch,  
dinner

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your adventure  
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DAY 3  
Wednesday  
11/8/23

### Bangkok to Luang Prabang

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

#### Fly to Luang Prabang

Drive to the airport and fly to Luang Prabang this morning. You'll say goodbye to your Thai guide at the airport, but you will see your guide again in Chiang Mai in a few days. Be dressed to explore Luang Prabang by bike when you arrive!

#### 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.

#### Dinner

Enjoy dinner with the group this evening.

Accommodations  
Maydou

Meals Included  
breakfast, lunch,  
dinner

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in depth

DAY 4  
Thursday  
11/9/23

### 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.

**Cooking Class** Dive into a hands-on culinary experience where you'll make your own lunch of traditional Laotian fare.

**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.

**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.

**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 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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## Elephants, Temples, and Beaches



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DAY 5  
Friday  
11/10/23

### 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.

#### 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.

#### Fly to Chiang Mai

Fly from Luang Prabang to Chiang Mai this morning. You'll be met at the airport by your guide who you last saw in Bangkok. Head to a late lunch to taste Cao Soi, one of the best-known dishes of Thailand. The rich, nutty curry is a local favorite.

#### Village Walk

Stroll through the village near your hotel. You'll visit the Ganesh shrine before making your way to Kalm Village where you will see boutiques featuring batik and other traditional hand-crafted good as well as the community artist exhibition space. Then walk to the Chedi Luang temple. Relax at the hotel at the end of your walk before dinner.

#### Dinner

Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant in the White Market tonight.

Accommodations  
Aksara Heritage  
Hotel  
Meals Included  
breakfast, lunch,  
dinner



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## Elephants, Temples, and Beaches

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DAY 6  
Saturday  
11/11/23

### 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.

#### 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  
Aksara Heritage  
Hotel  
Meals Included  
breakfast, lunch,  
dinner

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## Elephants, Temples, and Beaches



your adventure  
in depth

DAY 7  
Sunday  
11/12/23

### Chiang Mai

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.

#### Hike to a Waterfall

Head out on an easy hike through part of Inthanon National Park. You will walk through bamboo forests to spy a small, but pretty, waterfall before making your way back along the stream. You should wear closed-toed shoes.

#### Visit Watt Morwakee

Take a songtaw truck up a steep dirt road to Watt Morwakee. This temple is home to both monks and nuns and is one of the older watts in Chiang Mai Province. After your visit, drive about 90 minutes back to the hotel.

#### 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.

#### Dinner on Your Own

Dinner is up to you tonight. Eat at the market, dine at the hotel, or ask your guide for a recommendation for a nearby local restaurant.

Accommodations  
Aksara Heritage  
Hotel  
Meals Included  
breakfast

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## Elephants, Temples, and Beaches



your adventure  
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DAY 8  
Monday  
11/13/23

### Chiang Mai to Phuket

Indian colonists first established Phuket in the First century B.C.E. and its geographical location and wealth of natural resources have attracted explorers and traders from China, Arabia, Sri Lanka, Portugal, and the Netherlands who came in search of its legendary timber, ivory, gems and, eventually tin. The heart of the island is historic Phuket Town where shrines, Buddhist and Chinese temples, and mansions once owned by the tin barons of a century ago offer a delightful glimpse into the island's colorful history.

#### Early Morning Flight

Get up early this morning for your flight to Phuket, stopping in Bangkok on the way. When you arrive, drive to the pier and take in the view of the turquoise ocean. Pack your bathing suit in your daypack so you have it handy!

#### 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.

#### Return to Hotel and Dinner

Return to the hotel for a bit before heading to a local restaurant for dinner with the group.

Accommodations  
Thavorn Beach  
Village Resort  
Meals Included  
breakfast, lunch,  
dinner

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your adventure  
in depth

DAY 9  
Tuesday  
11/14/23

### Phuket

Your hotel on a beautiful stretch of beach is a perfect jumping-off point for a large variety of fun activities and excursions. The area boasts great surfing, snorkeling and scuba diving, as well as awesome opportunities for exploring ocean caves or just relaxing on the soft sand. The tour desk at your hotel will help you make arrangements for any off-site activities.

#### Longtail Boats and Kayaking

Take a 1-hour longtail boat ride to Hong Island, where you will enjoy some time snorkeling along the coast. Then set out on your kayak to explore Koh Bon before enjoying a picnic lunch on the beach. Start your journey back to the hotel in the longtail boat at the end of the day.

#### Farewell Dinner

Have a farewell dinner with your new AdventureWomen friends complete with a Krathong ceremony with a floating leaf basket of a candle and prayers. Reminisce over all of the memories you have made and celebrate the end of an amazing journey through this truly spectacular country.

Accommodations  
Thavorn Beach  
Village Resort  
Meals Included  
breakfast, lunch,  
dinner

# THAILAND & LAOS

## Elephants, Temples, and Beaches

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your adventure  
in depth

DAY 10  
Wednesday  
11/15/23

### Depart Phuket

#### Transfer to the Airport

Say goodbye to your new AdventureWomen friends as you transfer to the airport after breakfast. There will be one group transfer to the airport at 9:00am. Do not book your flight home to depart until after 12:00pm.

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.

#### Departure Information

Depart Phuket, Thailand (HKT) any time after 12:00PM.

*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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## Elephants, Temples, and Beaches



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### Accommodation Details

#### The Raweekanlaya

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

Amenities: soap, shampoo, conditioner, hair dryer, en suite bathroom and shower, safe, refrigerator, air conditioning, WiFi

#### 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.

Amenities: soap, shampoo, hair dryer, WiFi

#### Aksara Heritage Hotel

Located in the heart of historical Chiang Mai, the Aksara Heritage Hotel is a charming and peaceful property surrounded by ancient temples. Take a dip in the saltwater pool or enjoy a drink from the poolside bar.

Amenities: soap, shampoo, hairdryer, air conditioning, and WiFi

#### Thavorn Beach Village Resort

Overlooking the Andaman Sea, the Thavorn Beach Village Resort offers private beach bungalows nestled amidst lush tropical greenery.

Amenities: soap, shampoo, conditioner, hair dryer, air conditioning, WiFi

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## Elephants, Temples, and Beaches

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in depth

### Included:

- ▶ Accommodations as per itinerary based on double occupancy
- ▶ All meals as listed in the itinerary
- ▶ All ground transportation
- ▶ One group transfer on arrival and departure
- ▶ Guided sightseeing and activities as indicated in the itinerary
- ▶ English-speaking guide(s) throughout the trip
- ▶ Gratuities for drivers, hotel staff, boat staff, and waitstaff

### Not Included:

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

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## Elephants, Temples, and Beaches

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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