

Explore Thailand by tuk tuk on this unique 12-day adventure:

THAILAND TUK TUK ADVENTURE

18 - 25 May 2024



www.different-travel.com

info@different-travel.com

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Thailand: Tuk Tuk Adventure

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Trip overview

Take to the wheel and travel across northern Thailand like the locals – in your very own tuk tuk! After some initial tuk tuk driver training you embark on our three-wheeled discovery of this colourful country. This 8-day adventure takes in temples, forests, traditional minority villages in the hills, national parks and waterfalls as you ride from the awe-inspiring Chiang Mai. This adventure features the very best that Thailand has to offer for those prepared to step away from tourist trails and travel like the locals. It isn't just fantastic sights that you'll enjoy along the way, but also wonderful experiences – rafting downstream on bamboo rafts, exploring caves, picnic lunch by a waterfall, camping in the mountains and enjoying traditional feasts. This isn't just dipping a toe in the water, it's total immersion in the wonderful and exciting culture of this South-East Asian gem.

Thailand

Thailand offers an irresistible combination of breath-taking natural beauty, inspiring temples, renowned hospitality, exquisite cuisine and ruins of fabulous ancient kingdoms. From the lush jungles and wildlife of Chiang Mai and the verdant limestone islands of the Andaman Sea, to the bustling bazaars of Bangkok and the tranquil villages moored along the Mekong River, the 'land of smiles' offers something for everyone.

Chiang Mae and Mae Hong Son

The provinces of Chiang Mae and Mae Hong Son lie in the north west of Thailand bordering neighbouring Myanmar. The area is a melting pot of a wide variety of cultures and traditions with a diverse range of ethnic groups calling the area home. The mountainous region, home to Thailand's tallest mountain Doi Inthanon, is popular with motocyclists who travel here to take in the thousands of hairpin turns and crazy bends. Often described as one of the most scenic routes in the country you will be rewarded with incredible views over mountains, verdant jungles and lush paddy fields from the unique vantage point of your tuk tuk.





What is the experience like?

Who accompanies us?

In addition to your Different Travel Tour Manager who will be accompanying the trip throughout (usually from London), there will be a local English-speaking guide who will lead you through this fantastic journey.

There will also be a mechanic to assist with any tuk tuk related issues along the way.

How tough is it?

This trip is graded as moderately challenging. Although most of your journey will be in the tuk tuks, you will be spending many hours in the driving seat which takes a lot of concentration. There will also be the opportunity to take part in some other off-road activities, such as walking up steep steps to temple viewpoints and bamboo rafting, which require good mobility. A good level of fitness will enhance your enjoyment of the trip. The Different Travel Company has the right to refuse anyone who they feel is not fit enough for the challenge for the health and safety of the individual, and the group.

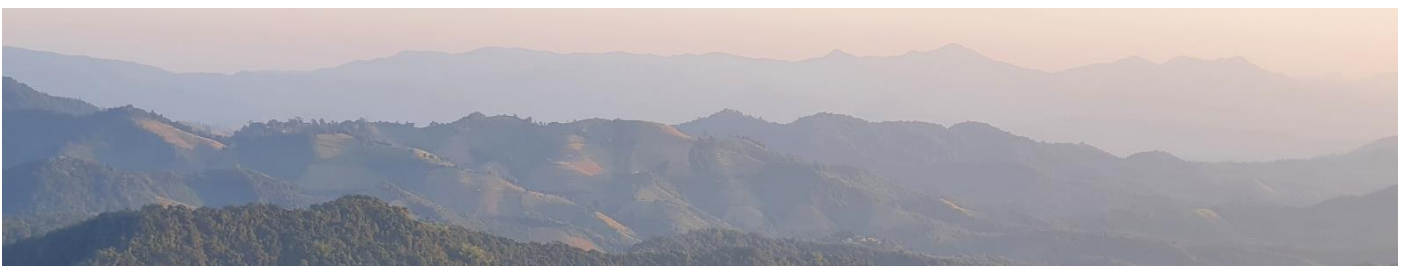
Tuk tuks, driving & road conditions

You will need a full driving licence and an International Driving Permit (IDP) to take part in driving the tuk tuks. You will be given driving training for the tuk tuks and advice on driving conditions on arrival. Please indicate on your booking form if you are a non-driver.

What is the climate like?

You can expect highs of 34°C during the day, dropping down to 24°C at night. Weather conditions vary and may be unpredictable but in general you can expect hot, cloudy days with a chance of rain and moderate humidity. Although, for the majority of the time, you will be in the tuk tuks, as they are open sided it can feel quite chilly so it is important to be prepared for all weather conditions and temperatures. Ensure you have suitable lightweight clothes which keep your skin protected from the sun. When the sun comes out it can feel very hot so wearing sunglasses, a hat and keeping well hydrated is crucial.

Please note: the above climate details are based on historical averages and may differ due to climate change and the unpredictable nature of the weather. We cannot be held responsible for weather conditions which differ to this. Should this happen the guide will assess the situation and make decisions to ensure the best enjoyment and ultimate safety of the group.





What about meals?

Thai food is one of the world's most popular cuisines and it's easy to understand why. You will enjoy a range of traditional meals, which are all freshly prepared and delicious.

Thai cooking is complex with the intention to engage at least three of the five fundamental food tastes in every dish; sour, sweet, salty, bitter and spicy. Fresh, locally sourced ingredients such as meat, fish and vegetables are paired with aromatic spices and herbs to create astonishing meals. These dishes are usually served with steamed vegetables and rice or noodles to form a typical meal. The distinct flavours of Thai food come primarily from coriander, lemon grass, coconut, lime, shrimp, fish sauce, ginger, black pepper, garlic and basil.

Northern Thai cuisine (Lana) is slightly different in style to that which is found in the rest of the country. Some popular dishes include Khao Soi curry, Sai Oua (Thai sausage), Kaeng Hang Lei (pork curry), Miang Kham (leaf wrapped snacks) and much more. Thai food isn't always spicy but if you like your food with a kick, chilli or chilli sauce is often available if you ask.

Special dietary requirements can be catered for upon request. Please let us know about these at the time of booking.

Where will we stay?

During the trip you will mainly stay in hotels/resorts on a shared basis with en-suite bathrooms. There will be one night of camping.

Practical information

Is there an age limit?

You must be aged 18 or above to join this trip. It may be possible for you to participate if you are 17 years old but you must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian and have a full driving licence. There is no upper age limit.

Who can take part?

An ideal candidate for the trip would be someone who enjoys being out of their comfort zone and trying something new. Adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected so do not expect standards to be the same as you are used to at home. Remote areas are sometimes unpredictable (be it because of group pace, weather conditions, local bureaucracy, or other factors) and itineraries may be altered to allow for this. For you to get the most out of your adventure it is important that you are flexible, positive, and eager to take on all the challenges that arise. Suitable fitness preparation before departure forms part of this.

How fit do I need to be?

Although this is not essentially a physical challenge, there is the opportunity to take part in other activities so a good level of fitness will greatly enhance the enjoyment of this trip.



Health declaration

We require a medical form to be completed by everyone upon registering, and any pre-existing conditions, medications used and other medical issues must be specified. All your medical details are treated in the strictest confidence.

The information will be securely screened by a qualified medical professional, and details provided to your tour manager and local guides so our staff are adequately informed and prepared to support you during the trip. By completing our booking form you are giving consent for us to contact you confidentially with any follow up questions regarding your health.

If you declare any medical conditions you may be asked to provide more information, or we may request to contact your GP.

In the event that your medical issues at the time of booking represent a concern for your safety and wellbeing, or the safety and wellbeing of others in the group, you may be recommended not to take part. If this happens your booking will not be confirmed and the deposit will be refunded.

We must be informed if any conditions or medication change, or if new conditions develop. If necessary confirmation of fitness to travel from your GP or specialist may be required.

Please note that we will never unreasonably deny participation on a trip nor contravene the Equality Act 2010.

COVID-19

Your health and safety is our top priority so rest assured that we are taking steps to ensure you not only have a memorable experience, but a safe one too.

We constantly monitor and follow the advice of the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) who provide recommendations and advice to British travellers about travel to a certain destination.

Health and safety is our top priority so we will **NEVER** operate a trip in an area where there is clear and present risk to our team members, whether that is due to a health outbreak, political instability, natural disasters or anything else.

If travel restrictions either in the UK or Thailand prevent safe travel we will look to either postpone or cancel your trip at no cost to you.

Please note that at the time of travel there may be enhanced safety and security measures in airports, bag drop may take longer, and you may need to provide a certificate of health or proof of vaccination. We will inform you about any information pertinent to your travel arrangements.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us on info@different-travel.com.





Trip cost

A £395 registration fee is payable at the time of booking. You can then choose one of the three payment options:

1. **Self-funded:** Pay your own tour costs balance of £2,045 by 8 March 2024. You are welcome to fundraise separately for any charity of your choice, but this is not mandatory. Any fundraising undertaken cannot be used for your trip costs.
2. **Sponsorship:** Fundraise £4,090 for your chosen charity by 23 February 2024. This includes your £2,056 tour costs balance and a £2,045 donation to charity.
3. **Flexi:** Pay your own tour costs balance of £2,045 and fundraise £2,045 for a charity of your choice by 8 March 2024. Any fundraising undertaken cannot be used for your trip costs.

Trip Includes:

- ✓ Return flights from London (inc. airport taxes, fuel supplements)
- ✓ All transport in Thailand
- ✓ All accommodation (hotels (5 nights), camping (1 night))
- ✓ Meals
- ✓ Use of tuk tuk, (up to 3 people per vehicle), driver training and fuel costs
- ✓ Support vehicle and mechanic
- ✓ National park entrance fees
- ✓ English-speaking guides and tuk tuk support crew
- ✓ UK Different Travel tour manager.

Trip Does Not Include:

- ✗ Transport to/from UK airport
- ✗ International Driving Permit (£5.50)
- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Vaccinations
- ✗ Personal expenses (e.g. drinks, souvenirs, etc.)
- ✗ Tips (approx. £30-£35 per person)

Itinerary

Day 1-2 (Saturday 18 - Sunday 19 May 2024): UK - Chiang Mai

Depart on an overnight flight to Chiang Mai. On arrival you will be met and transferred to a central hotel where you will have time to freshen up before meeting for a briefing and



welcome dinner.

Meals: Dinner

Overnight: Hotel

Day 3 (Monday 20 May 2024): Chiang Mai - Mae Wang

We depart after breakfast for the tuk tuk basecamp in Mae Wang and then start your



driver training. Once this is completed (usually around an hour or so) we head out in convoy along tiny country lanes, through small communities up to a remote forest temple. If you are lucky the monks may bless you for the adventure ahead!

We'll then head up the valley to our first stop – to enjoy a spot of bamboo rafting along the river! It's then time to jump back into your tuk tuks to head further up into the mountains to the valley of Mae Sapok where we'll walk through the forest to a waterfall for a picnic lunch.

Then it's up fantastic steep roads into the high mountains as we head towards our campsite for the evening. Located in the foothills of Thailand's highest mountain Doi Inthanon, the campsite is in a forest clearing with a stream running alongside. We'll cook up a feast over the campfire this evening – great traditional mountain food.

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Overnight: Camping



felt everywhere with very different styles of temples, clothing, language and food. Stopping for lunch along the way, we will arrive at our overnight accommodation, around 7-8km outside Mae Hong Son town, by mid-afternoon. In the evening enjoy a well-earned cold drink at the sunset bar before dinner!

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner
Overnight: Hotel

**Day 6 (Thursday 23 May 2024):
Mae Hong Son to Pai**

A stunning route awaits today as we loop around the far north west of Thailand. Mountains roll away to the left towards the border with Myanmar, and deep forest to the right runs up into the mountains of Northern Thailand. We pass through many mountain villages and communities along the route and stop to explore Lod Caves (Thailand's second largest cave system) before finally arriving in Pai in the late afternoon.

We stay just outside the well-known mountain town of Pai overnight and enjoy yet another great Thai feast and maybe even the town's night market to build up your energy for the final day's drive tomorrow!

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner
Overnight: Hotel



**Day 4 (Tuesday 21 May 2024):
Khun Wang - Khun Yuam**

Leaving early this morning, today is a spectacular drive well and truly off the beaten track. The first couple of hours see us traversing through Doi Inthanon National Park and then descending to the rarely visited western slopes of the mountain, before we then head along the quiet, remote mountain roads towards the small town of Khun Yuam. It's a long day on the road - we take it slow in the tuk tuks! - but worth every minute as we pass through a number of Karen mountain communities and stopping to take in the views. Tonight we head out for some Northern Thai food.

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner
Overnight: Hotel

**Day 5 (Wednesday 22 May 2024):
Khun Yuam - Mae Hong Son**

A fantastic day's driving heading north into the Mae Hong Son province. We are now in the farthest north west of Thailand, closest to Myanmar border and a part of the country that feels very different to the rest. A significant proportion of the population here are from a variety of ethnic mountain groups and the influence of these diverse cultures is

Day 7 (Friday 24 May 2024):

Pai - Mae Wang

It is the final day's drive today, and we've saved the best to last! An awesome day awaits as you drive around 180km up and over mountains, through rarely visited remote Karen villages, through forests and even stopping at some hot springs. There's a bit of everything that's best about Northern Thailand today, including some great steep hairpin bends to navigate!

We'll arrive back at tuk tuk base camp in Mae Wang by late afternoon and then transfer to Chiang Mai city by minibus for a farewell meal to celebrate the adventure on three wheels you've just completed.

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Overnight: Hotel

Day 8 (Saturday 25 May 2024):

Chiang Mai - UK

Depending on flights, you may have time to explore Chiang Mai this morning before your transfer to the airport for your flight back to London, arriving the following day.

Meals: Breakfast



N.B. While we do not anticipate changes, this itinerary may be subject to alteration due to flight schedules, hotel availability and other factors outside our control. During the trip itself the itinerary will depend on the group ability, weather and the daily circumstances. Any changes in the itinerary will be made in the interest of group safety and enjoyment. In-country, your guide and tour manager will have the final say in the interest of the health and safety of the group.

Before You Go!

Important information to help you prepare for the trip

Travel practicalities and country information

Trip knowledge

Food and drink

Kit tips

Luggage

Responsible travel and culture

Fitness, health and safety

Suggested kit list

Travel practicalities and country information

Visas

At the time of writing British citizens arriving by air or land for tourism purposes can enter Thailand for 30 days without a visa – this is known as the Tourist Visa Exemption Scheme.

- You must have a passport with a validity of at least six months from the date of entry to Thailand.
- You must provide proof of onward travel from Thailand (e.g. e-ticket).
- You must show the equivalent of at least 20,000 Baht (approx. £500) in cash (this doesn't have to be in Baht). Bank or credit card statements are not accepted as proof of funds. We advise that you observe these regulations, however due to the sheer number of visitors it is unlikely you will be asked to show the funds. If you are asked and you don't have the money with you, officers may assess the situation on a case-by-case basis, so it is in your best interest to remain calm and be respectful. <http://www.thaiembassy.org/london/en/services/7742/84451-Tourist-Visa.html>.

Travel insurance

The Different Travel Company will do everything possible to ensure a safe and enjoyable trip however unexpected things can occur such as delays, medical problems, baggage loss, cancellation by you etc. The purchase of travel insurance is mandatory. You are advised to organise it at the time of booking to ensure you are covered immediately. Different Travel is an Unregulated Introducer for Campbell Irvine Direct insurance policies. You can find out more here:

<https://microsite.campbellirvinedirect.com/differenttravel>

Please note: most travel insurance policies protect you before departure too so it is advised to buy insurance as close to booking as possible as it may protect you against the loss of your non-refundable, non-transferable registration fee if you cancel due to injury, illness etc.

International Travel Permit (IDP)

You must hold a full UK Driving Licence in order to take part in this adventure. You must also purchase an International Driving Permit (IDP). These are available over the counter at the post office for £5.50. You will need to take your UK licence and a passport photo. Visit

<https://www.postoffice.co.uk/identity/international-driving-permit> to find your nearest branch that offers this service.

Please inform Different Travel if you are a non-driver.

Phone and Wi-Fi Access

Wi-Fi is available in hotels and also at the campsite (although it may be very slow and unreliable at more remote locations). Your access to phone reception will vary depending on your home network, roaming capabilities, contract type and mobile handset. In general, you should have reception in the towns but there may be little reception while driving along rural/remote roads. Don't forget to turn off data roaming to avoid unexpected data charges. The three main mobile networks in Thailand are AIS, DTAC and True Move.

Religion

Although there is no official state religion for citizens of Thailand, Buddhism is the most common with about 93% of the population practicing some form. About 5% of the population identifies as Muslim and the remaining population identify as Christian or non-religious.

Electricity

The sockets in Thailand vary between the two flat parallel prongs (USA style) and two round pins (European style). It is advised that you take a multi-adaptor which will be suitable for any type of electrical socket. You can charge your devices at the hotels. Access to electricity at the campsite will be very limited and shared. If access to portable power is of importance to you, you are recommended to bring a portable power pack (also known as a power bank or battery pack) which when fully charged before departure allows you multiple recharges of USB-powered devices such as phones. You should buy a power pack with a minimum capacity of 12,000mAh and these are easily and cheaply available online on Amazon.

Money

The official currency of Thailand is the baht (THB). The exchange rate at time of writing (February 2023) is £1 = 40.38 Thai baht.

Thai baht can be purchased in the UK at bureaux de change but it attracts a poor exchange rate, so it is much more cost-effective to withdraw cash from an ATM, or exchange cash on arrival. You can exchange pounds Sterling to Thai baht locally. Do not purchase another currency (e.g. Euros or US dollars) specifically with the intention of exchanging that to baht. If you want to exchange cash locally, please bring cash in English pounds. NB. Scottish or Channel Islands notes will be rejected by local bureaux de change. Don't forget to change any leftover Thai currency before leaving the country.

Visa and MasterCard are accepted at many large hotels, restaurants and shops but will not be accepted in small shops or at markets. There is also always an extra charge for using cards, so cash is always preferable. You will also require cash for guide tips, laundry, drinks, snacks, souvenirs and other personal expenses. As a guideline, around £100-150 in Thai baht should be sufficient, although of course it depends on how much you wish to purchase.

Please note that you may be asked for proof of funds upon entry to Thailand. You are advised to bring the equivalent of at least 20,000 baht (approx. £514) in cash to show immigration officials.

Accessing cash

There are Visa and MasterCard compatible ATMs at the airport, in Chiang Mai and enroute but we advise you to bring some cash with you also. Please note that Thai banks do charge upwards from 220 baht (approx. £5) for any withdrawal from an overseas ATM card so it is advisable to take out a larger amount in one transaction.

Please notify your bank that you plan to use your card abroad in case it is cancelled and check transaction and withdrawal fees which may be expensive

Tipping

While tipping is not mandatory for the guides it is expected and greatly appreciated, please discuss with your tour manager an appropriate amount to give. We would recommend allowing around £30-35 for tips.

Photocopies

Remember to photocopy all your documents (insurance details, passport, credit/debit cards etc.) and take a copy with you during the trip, stored separately from the original copies. You should also scan and email these documents to yourself and leave a copy with a trusted family member or friend. If you lose any of your documents you will then have access to a copy with you and online. You may also wish to upload your documents to cloud storage such as Dropbox or Google Drive.

Photography

You should ask permission before taking photographs of the local people (especially monks). Taking a photograph of someone without their permission, especially in rural areas, can cause offence. In contrast, taking photographs of someone you have become friendly with is usually very welcome.

Language

The official Thai language is spoken throughout the country but you will also hear some local ethnic dialects on your travels. Here are a few phrases to help you:

	Thai	Karen
Hello	Sa wat dee kha/krap	Ghaw luh a ghay
Bye / Good evening	Baai baai/ Sa wat dee tohn yen	Ha luh a ghay
Good night	Ra tree sawat	Nah luh a ghay
Cheers!	Chai-yoh	Chok dee
Thank you	Kop kun kha/krap	Ta bluh
How much	Raa kaa tao rai?	
Yes	Chai	May
No	Mai chai	Ta may bah
1	Ne ung	Ter
2	So ng	Kee
3	Sa an	Thu
4	Se e	Lwee
5	Ha a	Yeh
6	Ho k	Khu
7	Je t	Nwee
8	Bpa et	Hkaw
9	Ga o	Kwee
10	Si p	Ta hse

Books

There are several guidebooks available about Thailand including:

Lonely Planet Thailand (Travel Guide), new edition out Aug 2020; ISBN: 9781786570581; £17.99.

Lonely Planet Southeast Asia Phrasebook, Sep 2018; ISBN: 978-1786574855; £4.99.

Rough Guide to Thailand (Travel Guide), (Nov 2018); ISBN: ISBN 978-0241311721; £10.79

Shopping

Southeast Asia is renowned for its various forms of lacquer ware and its silk industry. An array of other handicrafts includes quality hand embroidery, woodcarvings, brass and marble figurines. Paintings, silk screens and hand-painted ceramics can be found in Thailand well as a wide range of hand-woven products.

Trip knowledge

Accommodation

During the trip you will mainly stay in hotels/resorts on a shared basis with en-suite bathrooms. There will be also one night of camping.

Hygiene and bathroom facilities

At the hotel accommodation you will have hot showers. While camping there will be basic shower facilities. We recommend that you take quick showers, turning off the water when lathering up, so warm water (if there is any) can be shared. You will need to bring your own towel and basic toiletries (please don't pack too much!). Microfibre towels are highly absorbent but lightweight and fast drying; do not bring cotton towels. You may wish to carry a small pack of baby wipes for your general hygiene during the trek day (e.g. to clean your hands before you eat lunch).

Toilets

Thai toilets are generally of the squat variety, although Western toilets are often found in hotels, guesthouses and restaurants catering to foreign visitors. The campsite does have a western style flushing toilet. You should always carry toilet paper with you as it is rarely provided in public toilets. Always put used toilet paper into the bin provided – never put it in the toilet. We take frequent bathroom breaks during the drives and most coffee shops have facilities that you are able to use.

Weather and climate

You should expect temperatures of up to 34°C during the day and 24°C or slightly cooler at night. Some rainfall is expected at this time of year, usually as short but heavy downpours which then clear, so you should be prepared with waterproof clothing such as a lightweight poncho. Expect cloudy and humidity of around 70%. It can get chilly in the tuk tuks especially first thing in the morning so do bring a long-sleeved layer with you.

Altitude

There is no risk of altitude sickness or altitude related symptoms during this trip.

Wildlife

You will pass through villages where farming and animal rearing is the normal way of life. You will see lots of animals along the way including dogs, cats, pigs, goats, sheep, chickens, cows, geese, ducks and water buffalo. You may also see some insects and other creatures such as butterflies, stick insects, dragonflies, geckos, katydids, praying mantis, leeches, beetles of all shapes, sizes and colours and expect mosquitoes. You may also occasionally have to overtake an elephant or two!

Food and drink

Water

Tap water in Thailand is not safe to drink. You must not brush your teeth or rinse your mouth with the tap water. Bottled water is provided in many hotels and restaurants but you may wish to bring water purification with you for your own comfort and peace of mind. A highly recommended purification is 'Biox Aqua' tablets which contain chlorine dioxide. These kill 99.9% of all known bacteria plus cysts such as cryptosporidium and giardia and don't leave water tasting of chemicals. Please wait the allotted time for the purification to work before adding any electrolyte tablets or water flavouring. If you would prefer to avoid chemical purification, Steripen offer a range of highly effective UV light purification devices however these are very expensive.

Water bottle

Water is provided during the day and you will be supplied with a reusable water bottle. This is stored in an icebox in your tuk tuk to stay cool throughout the day. You may wish to bring your own one-litre water container for your own comfort. **Please write your name on all your bottles in marker pen.**

Keeping hydrated

Temperatures can rise above 30°C so it is wise to consume 2-3 litres of water per day, plus additional fluids such as tea and coffee, to avoid dehydration. It is recommended that you bring a small supply of electrolyte tablets (e.g. Nuun or High5) which you add to drinking water after it has been purified to help prevent dehydration. The tablets are flavoured so are particularly useful for people who don't enjoy the taste of plain water, or to disguise the taste of any chemical purification you use. Please note that electrolyte tablets must only be added to water after it has been purified; if you add them during the purification process, the treatment may be less effective and leave water unsafe. Electrolyte tablets can be purchased at outdoors stores and online for around £6 for 12 tablets. You may also wish to bring a small supply of rehydration salts (e.g. Dioralyte) which will treat dehydration.

Dietary requirements

The majority of special diets, such as vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, etc., can be catered for if we are notified in advance. Please ensure that you notify us of any dietary requirements at the time of booking or as soon as possible. Please note that we cannot guarantee that food preparation will have taken place in a contamination free environment.

Food

Breakfast, lunch and dinner are included throughout the trip as specified on the itinerary. The food you are provided is traditional Thai food and may include some Western dishes too.

You can expect the following to be served:

Breakfast: Pancakes, fruit, coffee, bread, eggs, omelette, fruit fritters.

Lunch: Fried noodles or rice with vegetables and/or egg, bread rolls or baguettes.

Dinner: Rice, soups, fried chicken, stir fry, chips, spring rolls, omelette, eggs, fish, vegetable dishes, fruit, noodles.

During the trip, breakfasts and dinners will be taken at the accommodation, and lunches will either be packed lunches or eaten at local stops along the way.

Snacks

You may want to bring a few snacks for energy and a pick-me-up. Please bring snacks you have tried before (and enjoy) so they are appetising to you. Most people bring sweets, individually wrapped cake bars, protein bars and dried fruit but don't forget to bring savoury snacks for when these become sickly. Great savoury snacks include salted nuts, Cheddar biscuits or salted crackers.

Kit tips

Discount

When you book you will receive a discount and vouchers booklet. Please check the documents section of your online profile.

Clothing

During the trip the heat and humidity may be high so you should bring comfortable lightweight clothing which protects your skin from the sun.

For your time in Chiang Mai, you can wear almost any smart casual clothing you like, suitable for the hot conditions. Thai men tend to wear jeans or trousers and t-shirts and shirts, and Thai women tend to wear jeans, loose trousers, long skirts and dresses and casual tops. Revealing clothing may attract unwanted attention and is best avoided. T-shirts should never display obscene, offensive, suggestive or potentially insulting writing or logos. When entering temples, you should cover shoulders and legs.

Waterproofs

The best waterproof gear to bring with you is a poncho. The temperatures will be high, and a poncho will allow the air to circulate so you stay dry and don't get too hot. Waterproof jackets and trousers are fine but not as comfortable to wear as a poncho. You may wish to wear waterproof trousers during the bamboo rafting – though you do dry off fairly quickly.

Top clothing tips

A loose fitting, non-cotton long sleeved shirt will keep you cool better than a short sleeved t-shirt as technically covering your skin keeps you in the shade. It also helps prevent sunburn. A long-sleeved shirt also offers the flexibility to roll sleeves up and down as required. A t-shirt is also fine, but you must be vigilant about applying sunscreen.

Lightweight non-cotton zip-off/convertible trek trousers are also ideal for the same reason as bringing a non-cotton shirt in that it keeps your skin in the shade; however sports leggings and/or shorts are fine too.

Headwear

A hat with a wide brim is recommended and/or a Buff (see buffwear.com).

Sunglasses

These are important even on overcast days. They must offer a minimum of 100% UV protection, and polarized sunglasses are ideal. Taking a spare pair is recommended.

Head torch

This is a vital piece of kit. Petzl is one brand which makes good quality headlamps but there are many head torches available from other companies. Please ensure you take an LED torch as ones with bulbs are not bright enough. Bring your head torch with fresh batteries inside it and take a full set of spare batteries. Do not bring a wind-up head torch as these are unreliable. Keep your head torch in your backpack every day. Please ensure you put fresh batteries in before departure and bring some spare batteries.

Cobber neck cooling wrap

A highly recommended accessory is a body cooling neck wrap known as a 'Cobber'. When this neck wrap is submerged in water for 30 minutes the poly-crystals absorb it making them swell and turn cold. You wear it around your neck, and it cools the blood flowing through your carotid arteries and keeps your body temperature down. One 30-minute submersion in water keeps the crystals cool and moist for 3 days before they start to dry out. They can be purchased for less than £10 from eBay or Amazon. You can read more about it here: <http://www.cobbercooler.com/shop/>

Sleeping bag liner

A tent, mattress, pillow and blanket are provided for the overnight camp but a silk or cotton sleeping bag liner is highly recommended for additional comfort. Silk sleeping bag liners are quite expensive if purchased on the high street, so consider eBay where you can purchase directly from the manufacturers (usually Vietnam or China) at a fraction of the price. Make sure you look out for 'pure silk' sleeping bag liners, not 'satin' (which is usually low quality and synthetic).

Luggage

This trip is different to a standard holiday so you will need the following three luggage items:

1. Daypack

You will need a daypack/backpack with you each day to contain essential items such as sunscreen, water, first aid kit, camera, snacks, toilet paper etc. This does not have to be a huge bag but a chest strap and hip belt will offer optimal comfort and support on the days when you will be exploring on foot.

2. A kit bag/holdall or small suitcase

You will need a soft-sided kit bag or one small suitcase for the trip. Your essentials can be carried in your day pack in the tuk tuks but your main luggage will be transported each day in the support vehicle.

The kit bag must be strong, light and waterproof. Some examples of kit bags include: Mountain Equipment wet and dry bag, North Face Base Camp duffle bag, Rab Expedition kit bag, but there are many brands and models available in outdoors stores for various prices. The capacity of your kitbag should be around 70-80 litres but as long as all your gear fits and is within the weight limit it doesn't matter if the size differs.

3. Combination padlocks which should be used to secure your bags.

Responsible travel and culture

Etiquette

- It is both socially unacceptable and a criminal offence to make any critical or defamatory comments about the Thai royal family.
- Images, statues or likenesses of Buddha should not be used in selfies, clambered over, or treated in any manner that could be construed as disrespect.
- Monks are considered nearly at the social equivalent of the monarchy and are offered sincere respect.
- Women must not sit or stand next to a monk or even brush past his robes.
- Thai people dress modestly and tourists wearing revealing clothing can be considered offensive.
- Thai people rarely shake hands when greeting or saying goodbye; instead they make a prayer-like gesture with their hands raised to their chest and bow their head, so their fingertips are just below the nose. This is called 'wai' and should be reciprocated.
- Public displays of affection are more often seen between friends, than between romantic partners.
- Holding hands and hugging is acceptable both amongst male and females, it is not always representative of sexual preference. If a Thai friend of the same sex holds your hand do not assume you are being propositioned.

Culture Shock

Thailand is different to the UK so you may experience some initial culture shock. In large cities the streets, markets and roads are packed with people, mopeds whizz by, and vendors cover the pavement with their wares. If you are curious about something you have seen, please enquire with your local guides so you can gain a deeper understanding of the culture. Take it slowly, be open-minded and learn about the local culture to put these differences into perspective.

Begging

Begging in Thailand has become prevalent in recent years due to the good, but ultimately misinformed, intentions of tourists. As part of our responsible tourism policy we advise against giving any money or gifts directly to beggars or children. Doing so can reinforce a belief that begging is a sustainable way to make a living. In particular we ask you not to offer sweets to children, as access to dental care may be difficult or expensive. There are far more responsible ways of giving which your tour manager and local guide can advise you on.

Haggling

When shopping in market places where there are no price tags on items, it is expected that you will haggle. The first price is sometimes double the value of the item but remember that you should pay what you think is a good price for the item, not trying to get the price as low as possible. Haggle in good humour with a smile and you will enjoy the experience.

Personal Safety

Thai people regard tourists with great respect however petty theft and pick pockets do operate in larger cities. In other areas reports of these activities are almost unheard of. You should be aware of your surroundings, ensure all bags are locked, and it is best to leave expensive jewellery or watches at home. Do not carry unnecessarily large amounts of cash with you at any time, or if this is unavoidable, ensure it is divided into different pockets. We recommend you bring a credit card for emergencies.

Responsible travel

We are environmentally conscious and aim to minimise our impact as much as possible.

Key points:

- Never leave toilet paper or litter on the ground.
- Don't dispose of fruit peel, cores or seeds on the ground; although they decompose eventually, they are unsightly and may attract animals.
- Turn off lights when not in rooms.
- Minimise your water usage by having short showers.
- Be considerate of other travellers.

Etiquette

- Dress appropriately for entering temples and religious sites (see above for advice on clothing).
- A traditional greeting in Thailand is a bow, bringing together the hands at chest level (similar to hand position for prayer). With foreigners Thai people sometimes convert to the handshake. The simple rule is to respond with the same greeting you were given.
- Observe sacred sites and religious buildings with respect. Loud conversation, noise, horseplay and other inappropriate behaviour is unacceptable and will disturb other visitors. Please behave in a quiet and calm manner and respect other visitors.
- Monks are revered and respected. Permission should be sought before taking pictures of people, particularly monks.
- Women should not touch nor sit too close to monks.
- In temples and religious sites please note that touching carvings, sitting on fragile structures, leaning on temple walls, applying graffiti, or removing rocks or artifacts from these places is strictly forbidden.
- Never touch someone on the head as it is considered the most sacred part of a person's body.
- Respect other accommodation guests by keeping noise to a minimum, especially early in the morning and late at night.
- Be respectful to your guides and hosts; don't forget to say please and thank you.
- Be considerate of the feelings of other group members.

Fitness, health and Safety

Fitness

While this trip is not physically demanding some activities do require a certain level of mobility. Some things to take into account:

- Some of the walks take place on unmade trails through forest vegetation.
- The route to the waterfall may be uneven and slippery when wet.
- You will have to navigate yourself down a riverbank onto the bamboo raft and may be required to disembark and walk off-trail if the river current becomes too fast in part.
- Some of the temples require you to walk up many hundreds of steep steps to reach the viewpoints.

You will not be forced to do anything out of your comfort zone but being in prime physical fitness will help you make the most of this trip.

First aid kit

You should bring a small first aid kit of essential items which is for your own personal use and keep it in your daypack. Suggested items include: personal prescription medicine, painkillers, blister plasters, insect repellent (50% DEET), anti-histamine tablets, Loperamide (e.g. Imodium), lip balm with SPF, indigestion remedy etc. Please keep the contents to a minimum.

Facemasks

While it is no longer compulsory to wear face masks in public in Thailand, at the time of writing, the Ministry of Public Health continues to recommend that you wear a mask in crowded or badly ventilated places. You may be required to wear a mask in some public buildings. It is customary and seen as polite to wear a face mask when entering a hotel for the first time to check-in but you may not be required to wear the mask at any other time.

Safety

Please take common-sense precautions while travelling to ensure your safety and the protection of your belongings. For example: leave flashy jewellery, watches and accessories at home; keep wallets out of sight stowed in a handbag or backpack rather than sticking out of a pocket; don't leave bags unattended at any time; carry cameras in their cases rather than carrying them openly with the camera strap; split cash into different pockets rather than carrying all your money in one place, especially immediately after you have used the ATM; and so on.

Vaccinations and travel health

Different Travel regrets that we cannot provide medical advice or recommendations. You are advised to seek medical advice at least eight weeks before travelling to ensure that all appropriate vaccinations are up to date. For general information visit www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk or www.travelhealthpro.org.uk but your GP or travel health professional should be the first stop for a consultation tailored to your medical history. Please note that failure to be adequately vaccinated or take necessary prophylactic medication can invalidate travel insurance policies as it is considered that you have not taken necessary precautions.

Insect repellent

There are many mosquitoes in Thailand. It is essential that you use insect repellent day and night to minimise your risk of mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue fever or Zika. 50% DEET is the most effective repellent available for use on your skin. Never use 100% DEET on your skin as it is not designed to be used this way. Please also ensure you wear long trousers and long-sleeved tops in evenings to minimise the chance of bites. Please consult your travel health practitioner for advice about mosquito-borne diseases and in particular malaria.



THAILAND: TUK TUK ADVENTURE

18 - 25 May 2024



Emergencies and evacuations

In the unlikely event of a serious illness or accident, the local team will ensure you are transferred as swiftly as possible to the nearest hospital. Please ensure your travel insurance covers you for airlifting/emergency evacuations as this can be required to reach casualties on more remote trails in an emergency. You are recommended to bring a credit card during the trip if you need to pay for medical treatment upfront in the event of an emergency.

Last updated February 2023



KIT LIST - THAILAND TUK TUK

The kit you take on your trek can make the difference between being 'just a trek' or a 'memorable trek'.

Our kit lists are put together with feedback from our own experiences and that of participants who have taken part in our previous trips.

The items on this list do not take into account your personal preferences based on your previous trekking experiences, or individual requirements.

PLEASE NOTE: This list is just a guideline and is not exhaustive or take into account personal preferences.

For information about items on this list please refer to the trip dossier or contact The Different Travel Company on info@different-travel.com

*Please consider eco-friendly or biodegradable options.

ESSENTIAL

SUGGESTED

OPTIONAL

DOCUMENTS + FLIGHT ESSENTIALS	✓
Passport and Copy	
E-Tickets	
Travel insurance	
ATM and credit card (s)	
Cash (£ Sterling)	
Pen for immigration forms	
Sunglasses (preferably polarized)	
Mobile phone + charger	
Driving Licence	
International driving permit	
Camera + spare batteries	

LUGGAGE	✓
Suitcase/large holdall	
Daypack/Hand Luggage (take note of airline dimensions)	
Combination padlocks	

CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR	✓
Sturdy trainers	
Lightweight trek trousers (zip off trousers ideal)	
Non-cotton, technical t-shirts	
Non-cotton long sleeved top/shirt	
Trek socks + underwear	
Light poncho/waterproof jacket	
A hoody or light jacket	
Change of clothes for evenings	
Sun hat	
Pashmina/wrap (for temples)	
Casual attire for sightseeing	
Neck cooling 'Cobber' or cooling towel	
Buff (www.buff.com)	

HEALTH AND HYGIENE*	✓
Hygiene kit to include: toothbrush and toothpaste, antiperspirant deodorant, wet wipes, shampoo, conditioner	
Personal first aid kit to include: prescription medicine, insect repellent, ibuprofen, paracetamol, plasters, blister plasters (e.g. Compeed), Imodium, rehydration salts (Dioralyte), antiseptic cream (e.g. Savlon), Anti-histamine cream/tablets, lip balm with SPF protection, zinc oxide tape, nail scissors/tweezers, muscle rub (e.g. Deep Heat)	
Hairbrush/comb	
Lateral flow tests (x2 min)	
Disposable masks	
Feminine care products	

OTHER KIT	✓
Sun block (high SPF)	
Toilet bag: toilet paper, wipes, hand sanitiser, nappy sacks	
1 ltr bottle of water	
LED head torch + spare batteries	
Adaptor (multi option)	
Ear plugs	
Pyjamas	
Energy food/snack bars	
Swimwear	
Bags for dirty washing	
Spare glasses/contact lenses	
Video camera + charger	
MP3 player/ipod	
Portable power bank	
Books/packs of cards	
Travel pillow	