



INSPIRING
VACATIONS

13 Day
Thailand &
Laos
Adventure

Bangkok

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A group of Buddhist monks in orange robes are shown from the waist down, carrying traditional alms bowls. The bowls are made of woven bamboo or rattan with a metal rim. The monks are walking in a line, and the focus is on their hands and the bowls. The background is slightly blurred, showing more monks in the distance.

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Travelling with Inspiring Vacations allows you to explore the wonders of the world in a variety of different ways. We have partnered with a worldwide network of local travel experts to bring you culturally unique and delightfully unforgettable travel experiences. Whether it is meandering through narrow canyons by rail, cruising the idyllic waters of the Mediterranean or touring through t...

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TOUR ITINERARY

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TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1

| | |
|----------------|---------|
| Destination | Bangkok |
| Meals included | |
| Accommodation | N/A |

Sa-wat dee! Welcome to Thailand. Thailand's bustling capital, Bangkok, is famous for its tuk-tuks, khlong boats and street vendors serving up delicious local food. Your adventure begins with a welcome meeting at 6 pm, if you arrive earlier, why not venture out into this enigmatic city. Bangkok has so much to offer those with time to explore, so perhaps arrive a day or so early to uncover the Chinatown area, visit the magnificent (but very crowded) Grand Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, wander down the tourist mecca of Khao San Road, indulge in a Thai massage or see the backstreets of Bangkok by bike on an Urban Adventure. Find out more at urbanadventures.com. After the meeting tonight, gather your fellow travellers together and tuck into some into world famous street food for our first optional dinner.

Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

Optional Activities Bangkok - Bangkok by Bike Urban Adventure - THB1980 Bangkok - Grand Palace - THB500

Meals Included There are no meals included on this day.

Special Information It's very important that you attend the welcome meeting as we will be collecting insurance details and next of kin information at this time. If you are going to be late please let your travel agent or hotel reception know. Ask reception or look for a note in the lobby for more information on where the meeting will take place.

DAY 2

| | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| Destination | Bangkok 🚆 Chiang Mai |
| Meals included | Breakfast |
| Accommodation | N/A |

Begin the day with a 1-hour river cruise down the Chao Phraya River to explore the famous 'khlongs' (canals). Life along these canals seems a world away from the chaotic streets of the capital. Pay a visit to Wat Pho, one of the Bangkok temples, with a 46-metre long gold-plated Buddha reclining inside. Even the feet of this statue are incredible, three metres long and intricately decorated with mother of pearl. The temple grounds are equally fascinating, filled with beautifully decorated stupas, halls, and shrines. This evening you'll head north to Chiang Mai on an overnight train journey, accommodated in a sleeper carriage (approximately 13 hours). The carriages are air-conditioned, with bunk

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beds; clean sheets, blanket and pillow are provided. Your baggage travels in the carriage with you. There is a food and drink service available on board. Sometimes the air conditioning can make the carriage quite cold so you may want to bring a warm layer of clothing.

Accommodation Overnight train (1 night)

Included Activities Bangkok - Khlong boat canal tour Bangkok - Wat Pho

Optional Activities Bangkok - Thai Massage - THB250 Bangkok - Jim Thompson's House - THB150

Meals Included Breakfast

DAY 3

| | |
|----------------|------------|
| Destination | Chiang Mai |
| Meals included | |
| Accommodation | N/A |

The most vibrant city in northern Thailand, Chiang Mai has many famous temples and an interesting old city area. Renowned for its lively cafe scene and extremely welcoming locals, this place captivates many travellers. First, embark on a scenic, winding drive up a mountain (around 45 minutes) to one of the country's most stunning temple complexes, Doi Suthep. A 300-step naga-guarded stairway leads you to the temples, and the climb is well worth the effort. The hypnotic atmosphere of chanting Buddhist monks and sweeping views of the city make this a most memorable experience. After making our way back down from the temple, check in to the hotel and plan the rest of your time here. In the evening you can choose to wander through the enormous, colourful Night Bazaar or perhaps relax at a fine restaurant along the riverfront. Make sure to sample some delicious traditional northern Thai food – the signature dish is kao soy, yellow wheat noodles in a curry broth, traditionally served with chicken or beef.

Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities Chiang Mai - Doi Suthep temple complex

Meals Included There are no meals included on this day.

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DAY 4

| | |
|----------------|------------|
| Destination | Chiang Mai |
| Meals included | |
| Accommodation | N/A |

Today is free for you to explore and there are plenty of optional activities available. Perhaps join a local cooking class today and discover the secrets of real Thai cuisine, you'll learn the key ingredients, how to use them, and what to use in their place if you can't get them at home. As well as taking your own comprehensive recipe book with you after the class, you'll feast on the fruits of your labour for lunch. Get active with a bicycle tour to discover the city and surrounding countryside from a different perspective, or be spirited away on an early morning Chiang Mai tour that puts you at the epicentre of Buddhist rituals. Learn to meditate, offer alms to monks, and make an offering at a temple. Also popular is the Jungle Flight ziplining and the lovely Elephant Nature Park.

Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

Optional Activities Chiang Mai - Thai cooking course - THB800 Chiang Mai - Bicycle tour - THB990 Chiang Mai - Zipline Course - THB3599

Meals Included There are no meals included on this day.

Special Information Please be aware that there are many operators in Chiang Mai offering activities that do not meet Intrepid's animal welfare guidelines such as animal performances at Chiang Mai zoo, elephant riding and bathing, bullock cart rides and tiger temples. Your leader is not able to book any of these activities for you and we strongly discourage our travellers from supporting such activities.

DAY 5

| | |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| Destination | Chiang Mai 🚗 Chiang Khong |
| Meals included | |
| Accommodation | N/A |

Take a journey through rural countryside to the Thai border town of Chiang Khong (approximately 5.5 hours). Formerly known as 'Juon', peaceful riverside Chiang Khong remains an important market town for the surrounding hill tribes and for trade with Laos. Stretch your legs with a stroll around town, and if you find yourself with time, then Wat Phra Kaew and Wat Luang are both well worth a visit while you're here. Tonight, why not enjoy a final Thai drink and dinner, while Laos beckons from across the mighty Mekong.

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Accommodation Guesthouse (1 night)

Meals Included There are no meals included on this day.

DAY 6

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Destination | Chang Khong [Boat] Mekong River [Boat] Pak Beng |
| Meals included | Breakfast |
| Accommodation | N/A |

After crossing into Laos and for the duration of our time in the country we will be joined by additional Laos guides – a government requirement. Board a slow boat for the 2-day journey down the mighty Mekong River to Luang Prabang. The journey is relaxed, so you can experience the slow pace of village life and the breathtaking scenery along the river up close. The river boat is basic in nature, with a toilet, covered roof, and open sides to take in the fresh air. There are seats in the front of the boat and a small open area in the back where you can have a nap on the mat, play cards, read or have lunch. Dock at the small town of Pak Beng (after about 6 hours) to spend the night. Hmong and tribal Thai people are frequently seen on the main streets, where vendors sell local textiles and handicrafts.

Accommodation Guesthouse (1 night)

Included Activities Mekong River - 2 day boat trip

Meals Included Breakfast

Special Information Our guesthouse here is very basic -- standard accommodation in this small, remote trading port. It can be quite cool from November to February so make sure you have some warm gear packed for this period. Due to dam construction upstream, water levels aren't as reliable as in previous years, and when the river is at its lowest from February to April, part of the journey may occasionally need to be made by land instead of by boat.

DAY 7

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Destination | Pak Beng [Boat] Mekong River [Boat] Luang Prabang |
| Meals included | Breakfast |
| Accommodation | N/A |

Reboard the boat and cruise to the Pak Ou Caves. An important religious site overlooking the river at the junction of the Mekong and Ou Rivers, the revered Pak Ou Caves consist of two sacred limestone caverns filled with Buddha images of

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all styles and sizes, brought by devoted villagers over the centuries. The lower cave, known as Tham Ting, is entered from the river by a series of steps and can easily be seen in daylight. The higher cave, Tham Phum, is deeper and requires a torch for viewing. Continue on to the former royal capital of Luang Prabang (approximately 7 hours total journey time). This atmospheric World Heritage-listed city is a favourite of many travellers. Nestled in the hills of northern Laos on the confluence of the Mekong and Khan rivers, the city is claimed to be 'the best preserved city in South East Asia' by UNESCO. The city and its people retain a refined, yet relaxed, air and it's a wonderful place to wander the streets into boutiques, cafes and small shops. Stay in a hotel tonight and if you are feeling energetic, climb Mt Phousi for some sunset views – the large hill that dominates Luang Prabang's skyline, topped by a glittering golden stupa. You can climb the 328 zigzag steps up to the sacred gilded stupa and big drum of the Phu Si Temple for a panoramic view of Luang Prabang and its surrounds.

Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities Luang Prabang - Pak Ou Caves

Optional Activities Luang Prabang - Mt Phu Si - USD2

Meals Included Breakfast

DAY 8

| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| Destination | Luang Prabang |
| Meals included | Breakfast |
| Accommodation | N/A |

Once the heart and soul of the ancient Lao Kingdom (Lan Xang) and designated a World Heritage site in 1995, Luang Prabang is endowed with a legacy of historic red-roofed temples and French-Indochinese architecture, not to mention some of the country's most refined cuisine, a multi-ethnic population and rich culture. Rise with the sun this morning and witness a traditional alms giving ceremony. View the procession of saffron-robed monks on their daily outing collecting food offered by devotees, a practice that dates back centuries. The offerings must be collected early, as the monks cannot eat anything after midday. By giving food to a monk, it is believed you 'het bon' (make merit) which will be carried over into the next life. Your leader will guide you through the do's and don'ts and help you to take part in this alms giving tradition. Return back to your hotel for breakfast and a free morning. In the afternoon, head south of town and stop for a sweet (socially responsible) treat at Laos Buffalo Dairy, an enterprise that works with the surrounding villagers by renting their buffalo, in order to produce delicious products including yoghurt, cheese and ice cream. The Dairy ensures a regular income for locals while ensuring the buffalo and their calves are well looked after. Why not

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contribute to this local business by purchasing an ice cream! Continue on to the beautiful Kuang Si Falls, a picturesque, multi-level cascade that offers fantastically blue pools that are perfect for a mid-afternoon dip. Back in Luang Prabang this evening you'll have free time to make further discoveries, including visiting the popular night market.

Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities Luang Prabang - Kuang Si Waterfalls Luang Prabang - Alms giving ceremony Luang Prabang - Laos Buffalo Dairy social enterprise visit

Optional Activities Luang Prabang - Night Market - Free

Meals Included Breakfast

DAY 9

| | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Destination | Luang Prabang |
| Meals included | Breakfast, Lunch |
| Accommodation | N/A |

This morning, experience a wonderful local elephant project in nearby Mandalao that will give you a new perspective and profound understanding of these magnificent beasts. Discover the mysterious beauty of the Lao jungle as you walk side by side with recently rescued elephants on stroll through their natural habitat – a perfect way for these happy creatures to enjoy their freedom after decades of hard labour in logging camps. Begin by leaving Luang Prabang for the village of Xieng Lom (approximately 30 minutes) before taking a quick boat ride across the Nam Khan River where you'll be introduced to your new gigantic companions. Feed them some special treats (a sure way to win their friendship) followed by a gentle, therapeutic walk, that offers you the opportunity to absorb their calming energy as you wander along a small dirt path through the surrounding flora and fauna, past traditional farms and the Huay Nok stream – where you may be able to spot elephants splashing around in the water as they cool off from the hot Lao sun! As you prepare to start your walk back to Mandalao, say goodbye to your new friends. Return to Luang Prabang in the afternoon and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure.

Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities Luang Prabang - MandaLao Elephant Conservation trek

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Optional Activities Luang Prabang - Royal Theatre - USD20 Luang Prabang - Wat Xieng Thong - USD2 Luang Prabang - National Museum - USD4

Meals Included Breakfast Lunch

Special Information Trip departing Bangkok on 8th of April 2020 Please note Mandalao Elephant Park will be closed from 14th to 16th of April 2020. If you are travelling on our trip that starts in Bangkok on the 8th of April please note you will visit Chang Chill Elephant Park in Thailand instead of Manadalao Elephant Park in Laos.

Following elephants through the jungle is a once in a lifetime experience, however it can be messy! Be prepared to wear clothes that you don't mind getting wet and muddy. Optional footwear (rubber boots) are available for guests, these shoes are designed specifically for muddy and slippery conditions. Ponchos and umbrellas are also available, as well as water, sunscreen and bug-spray.

DAY 10

| | |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| Destination | Luang Prabang 🚗 Vang Vieng |
| Meals included | Breakfast |
| Accommodation | N/A |

Take a private minivan through dusty villages and winding mountain roads to Vang Vieng (approximately 7 hours). The mountain scenery is impressive, but the road can be rough, especially as attention is now being diverted from maintaining the roads to building the new railway from China. Situated on the Nam Song River, Vang Vieng is surrounded by towering limestone karsts and is a great place to enjoy being out in and surrounded by nature. After checking in to the hotel, use tonight to plan out your next few days with your group and leader.

Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

Meals Included Breakfast

DAY 11

| | |
|----------------|------------|
| Destination | Vang Vieng |
| Meals included | Breakfast |
| Accommodation | N/A |

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There's plenty to do in and around Vang Vieng, known as an adventure town thanks to its unique and varied surrounding country. The area is renowned for its caves, many of which are easily accessible from the town. Perhaps the most famous is the cave of Tham Chang, a beautiful cavern fed by a natural spring making it a perfect spot for a refreshing swim. Hire bicycles to explore further afield, hike the trails to nearby lookout points, join a day trip to go kayaking on the river, or you can visit an organic mulberry farm just outside town and enjoy a meal there.

Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

Optional Activities Vang Vieng - Bicycle hire - USD2 Vang Vieng - Wat Si Vieng Song - Free Vang Vieng - Kayaking - USD35 Vang Vieng - Tham Phu Kham Cave - LAK10000

Meals Included Breakfast

DAY 12

| | |
|----------------|------------------------|
| Destination | Vang Vieng 🚗 Vientiane |
| Meals included | Breakfast |
| Accommodation | N/A |

Continue by private minibus to the country's capital, Vientiane (approximately 3.5 hours). Possibly Asia's most laidback capital, even here everything seems to be conducted at a relaxed pace. Vientiane has a wealth of cultural delights to discover on foot, or for the less energetic, by jumbo (tuk-tuk). Faded colonial mansions, tree-lined boulevards and old temples create an atmosphere of timelessness, particularly in the older part of town along the Mekong River. Pay a visit to Wat Si Saket, the oldest temple still standing in Vientiane and home to almost 7000 Buddha images. Visit COPE visitors centre, an organisation dedicated to assistance those who have been injured by the multitude of unexploded ordnance across the country. This is an excellent cause and a chance to educate yourself about Laos' devastating war history as well as buy a snack or drink from their Karma Cafe. This evening, maybe join your fellow travellers for dinner tonight.

Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities Vientiane - COPE visit Vientiane - Wat Si Saket

Meals Included Breakfast

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DAY 13

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Destination | Vientiane |
| Meals included | Breakfast |
| Accommodation | N/A |

There are no activities planned for the final day and you are able to depart the accommodation at any time. For those with more time here, there are plenty of choices, including the Pha That Luang Monument.

Optional Activities Vientiane - Xieng Khuan (Buddha Park) tuk tuk & entrance - LAK205000 Vientiane - Pha That Luang Monument (incl. long skirt hire to enter) - LAK15000 Vientiane - Lao Textile Museum - LAK30000 Vientiane - Haw Pha Kaeo Museum of Religious Art - LAK10000

Meals Included Breakfast

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TOUR ITINERARY

Inclusions

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Meals: 9 breakfasts, 1 lunch
Accommodation: Guesthouse (2 nights), Hotel (9 nights), overnight train (1 night)
Transport: Longtail boat, Taxi, Minivan, Overnight Train, Boat, tuk tuk, Private Bus
All activities listed in the itinerary unless optional

Fine Print

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Accommodation

The accommodation listed is subject to change. Any changes will be of an equal or higher standard. Bedding configurations (double or twin) are requests only. All efforts will be made to meet your preferences, however, any changes are beyond our control.

Single Travellers

This trip is designed for shared accommodation and doesn't involve a compulsory single supplement. Single travellers share with people of the same gender in accommodation ranging from twin to multishare. This only applies to accommodation during the tour - pre-trip and post-trip accommodation will be booked on a single room basis.

Single Supplement

A single supplement is available on all nights of this trip from an extra AUD \$465 subject to availability. Single Supplement excludes Day 2 (Overnight train) and Day 6 (Pak Beng Guesthouse) where you will share with other travellers.

Triple Share

Not available.

Children

Children must be 15 years old or over and share a room with parents at all times. Children are charged the same price as adults.

Tour Documentation

Final documentation will be provided approximately 30 days prior to travel.

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TOUR ITINERARY

EXCLUSIONS

Airfares
 Personal Expenses
 Travel Insurance
 Optional activities
 Anything not mentioned in the itinerary or optional

OPTIONAL TOURS

Bangkok - Bangkok by Bike Urban Adventure (Day 1) - THB1980
 Bangkok - Grand Palace (Day 1) - THB500
 Bangkok - Thai Massage (Day 2) - THB250
 Bangkok - Jim Thompson's House (Day 2) - THB150
 Chiang Mai - Thai cooking course (Day 4) - THB800
 Chiang Mai - Bicycle tour (Day 4) - THB990
 Chiang Mai - Zipline Course (Day 4) - THB3599
 Luang Prabang (Day 7) - Mt Phu Si - USD2
 Luang Prabang - Royal Theatre (Day 9) - USD20
 Luang Prabang - Wat Xieng Thong (Day 9) - USD2
 Luang Prabang - National Museum (Day 9) - USD4
 Vang Vieng - Bicycle hire (Day 11) - USD2
 Vang Vieng - Wat Si Vieng Song (Day 11) - Free
 Vang Vieng - Kayaking (Day 11) - USD35
 Vang Vieng - Tham Phu Kham Cave (Day 11) - LAK10000
 Vientiane - Xieng Khuan (Buddha Park) tuk tuk & entrance (Day 13) - LAK205000
 Vientiane - Pha That Luang Monument (incl. long skirt hire to enter) (Day 13) - LAK15000
 Vientiane - Lao Textile Museum (Day 13) - LAK30000
 Vientiane - Haw Pha Kaeo Museum of Religious Art (Day 13) - LAK10000

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HOW TO BOOK & PAYMENTS

Deposit & Payments

Book now and secure your package with only a AUD \$200 deposit per person.
Pay a 2nd instalment of AUD \$500 per person within 28 days.
You will then be invoiced for final payment 90 days prior to departure.
Booking Process

Select the purple 'Reserve Your Seat' tab to begin your booking (you must 'Sign Up' first by entering your email and creating a password)
Then select the purple 'Book now' tab of the tour you have selected
Select your Departure Date, Departure City, Number of Passengers, Room Configuration, any Upgrade Options, and enter any Special Requests
Click the purple 'Proceed to Secure Checkout' tab
Enter your credit card or PayPal details to secure your deposit/payment. You may also pay via BPAY (not available within 70 days of departure)
Once your order is complete, you will be prompted to complete a Booking Form so that we can fulfil your booking
Your booking is confirmed once your Booking Form is submitted and you can begin the countdown to your Inspiring Vacation!

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