

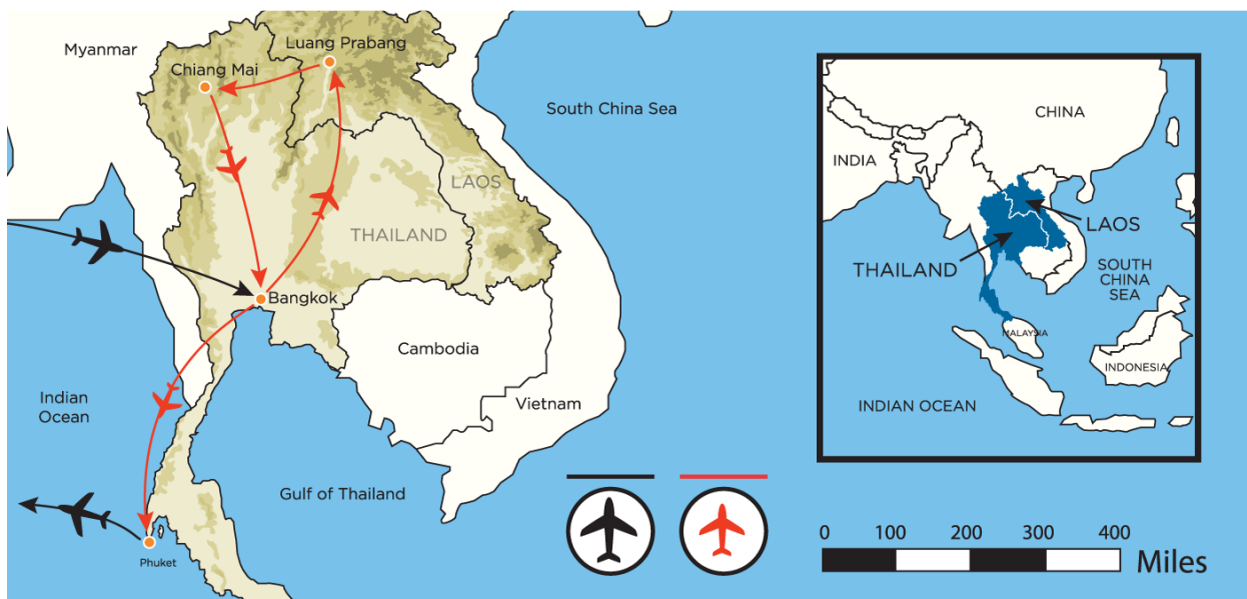
THAILAND & LAOS

Exploring Culture, Elephants, 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
- ▶ Explore the city of Luang Prabang, Laos in tuk-tuk ride, and participate in spiritual ceremonies
- ▶ Snorkel and kayak among remote islands in the Andaman Sea near Phuket, Thailand

TRIP ROUTE



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QUICK VIEW ITINERARY

- Day 1 arrive in Thailand, sunset at Wat Irun, street food bazaar welcome dinner
- Day 2 fly to Luang Prabang, explore the city in tuk-tuk
- Day 3 take part in a cooking class, visit Kuang Si Waterfalls, attend a Baci ceremony
- Day 4 give alms, visit the Traditional Arts and Ethnology Center, fly to Chiang Mai and start exploring the city
- Day 5 full day at Elephant Nature Park, traditional Lanna Kan Tom dinner
- Day 6 enjoy a traditional dyeing class workshop, explore the White Market at Neiman One
- Day 7 hike to Wat Phu Lat, visit the Artisans Community in Baan Kang Wat, 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: \$5,770
Optional Single Accommodations: \$1,500
Internal Air: \$1,800

TRIP DATES

January 12 - 21, 2025

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your adventure
in depth

DAY 1
Sunday
1/12/25

Arrive in 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 near 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
Villa de Pranakorn

Meals Included
dinner

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DAY 2
Monday
1/13/25

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.

Travel by tuk-tuk

Explore the city by taking a tuk-tuk ride and see the Royal Palace, home to the revered "Prabang" sacred golden statue, from which the town derives its name. Then, discover Vat Mai, a former royal temple, before seeing the Heuan Chan Heritage House. You will gain insight into Lao traditional architecture and culture by exploring the way families lived in long houses until around 1960. Finally, discover Vat Xieng Thong, the most iconic temple in Laos, adorned with golden paint and mosaic glass embedded with mirrors.

Dinner

Enjoy dinner with the group this evening.

Accommodations
Maydou

Meals Included
breakfast, lunch,
dinner

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DAY 3
Tuesday
1/14/25

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.

Visit Kuang Si Falls Kuang Si Falls is a natural attraction located near the town of Luang Prabang. Drive 45 minutes to get there with a stop in a rural village on the way. Kuang Si Falls is one of the most picturesque waterfalls in Southeast Asia. Near the entrance to Kuang Si Falls, visit the Asian Sun Bear Rescue Center. This sanctuary is home to rescued Asiatic black bears, among other bear species. You can observe these bears in a semi-natural habitat and learn about their conservation efforts.

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
Wednesday
1/15/25

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.

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

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.

City 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 restaurant close to the hotel.

Accommodations
Aksara Heritage
Hotel
Meals Included
breakfast, lunch,
dinner

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DAY 5
Thursday
1/16/25

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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DAY 6
Friday
1/17/25

Chiang Mai

Being the largest city in Northern Thailand, Chiang Mai is a hub for gifted artists and skilled crafts people. Neiman One exemplifies this artistic spirit as a recently built cultural center and art venue, combining elements of an open-air shopping complex and a culinary paradise all in a single location.

Workshop at Studio Naenna

Experience a three-hour immersive traditional dyeing workshop at Studio Naenna, established in 1988 by Patricia Cheesman, a renowned textile expert. You'll have the opportunity to meet Patricia, who has dedicated most of her life to studying and refining textile art in Laos and northern Thailand. She has mastered every aspect of the craft, from pre-curing natural dyes to mastering the traditional weaving techniques of the various ethnic groups living in neighboring villages. During this workshop, each participant will have the chance to craft their own indigo tie-dye piece, a cherished tradition in northern Thailand.

Explore the White Market

Following a short 20-minute drive, venture into the White Market located at Neiman One, a vibrant community bursting with culinary delights, cultural experiences, diverse shopping options, and a range of services. The White Market showcases the creative talents of Chiang Mai's local designers, encompassing a wide array of items including clothing, jewelry, and more.

Dinner at Ginger Farm

Enjoy dinner at Ginger Farm, a farm-to-table concept located in the middle of the White Market in the Neiman One Plaza.

Accommodations
Aksara Heritage
Hotel
Meals Included
breakfast, lunch,
dinner

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DAY 7
Saturday
1/18/25

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. 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.

Visit the Artisans Community in Baan Kang Wat

In Chiang Mai’s artist community, a new wave of artists from the younger generation is making its debut. Within a unique blend of shops that combine both indoor and outdoor areas, you can encounter a diverse group of artisans, including metal craftsmen, painters, ceramic artists, weavers, and even gelato creators - all in the same space! After your visit, drive about 30 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.

(Optional) Saturday market

Tonight, there’s a craft market renowned for its silver jewelry at the South Gate of the Moat. Locally, it’s commonly referred to as the Saturday Market. Should you wish, our guide can assist you in arranging transportation to reach this market, be it a tuk-tuk or taxi.

Accommodations
Aksara Heritage
Hotel
Meals Included
breakfast, lunch

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DAY 8
Sunday
1/19/25

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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DAY 9
Monday
1/20/25

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

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DAY 10
Tuesday
1/21/25

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 this morning. 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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Accommodation Details

Villa de Pranakorn

Villa de Pranakorn carries a rich heritage stemming from the Kittisuwan family, spanning over a century. This historic property has been handed down through multiple generations. Today, Villa de Pranakorn seamlessly combines the timeless allure of its heritage with a modern approach to luxury hospitality and top-notch service. The outcome? Meticulously designed spaces and venues where you can relax, savor food and drinks, and pamper yourself.

Amenities: soap, shampoo, hairdryer, in-room safe, in-room tea/coffee, Wi-Fi.

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 near 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, Wi-Fi

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, hair dryer, air conditioning, and Wi-Fi

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, Wi-Fi

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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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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