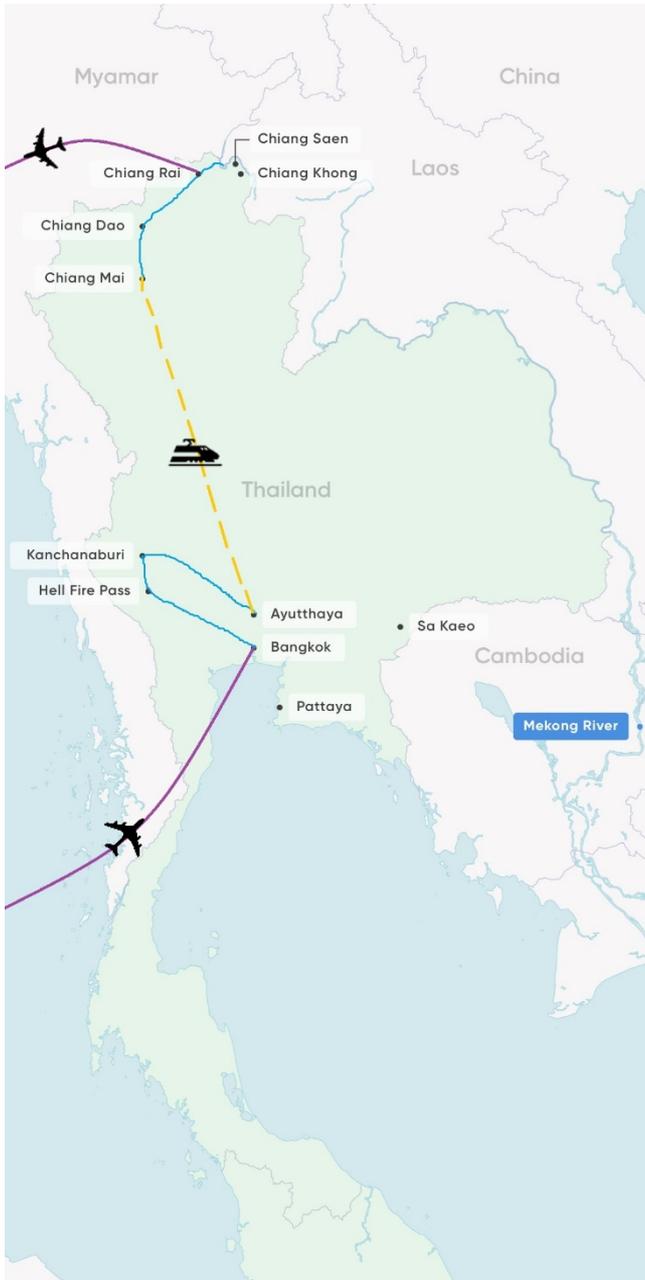


Thailand: Country & Contrasts (11 days)



Departs anytime (2018-19)



Please note: This itinerary can be modified in any way to best suit your school's particular aims, learning objectives and budget.

Please contact us detailing any changes you'd like to make.

It is the contradictions that provide this popular country with its rich, multifaceted personality. Ridiculously opulent megamalls sit juxtaposed to ornate temples. Squalors of shanties amidst perfect rice paddies, adjoined to crowded freeways filled with slow moving cars. Streets lined with food carts frequented by Buddhist monks dressed in robes using the latest smartphones – Thailand is truly unique.

This 11-day trip is designed for students who desire an authentic Thai experience, one that they could not have if they travelled with their parents or by other means. Our program is designed to enhance students' awareness of the Asian region. We hope to engage them in a series of active programs, intended to highlight the country's contrasting cultures and regional development issues.

Activities in the trip include a thorough exploration of the modern metropolis of Bangkok and Chiang Mai, an excursion to *Hell Fire Pass*, visit to the former ancient capital of Ayutthaya, a considerate elephant activity as well as a plethora of other educational and service activities.



Billy Penfold
Director

Day 1

Arrive Thailand

Bangkok's cultural underpinnings are evident in virtually all facets of everyday life, most enjoyable through its residents' sense of fun. Ordering food, changing money and haggling at markets will usually involve a sense of playfulness and a smile.

Upon arrival in Bangkok, we will be greeted by our tour leader. They will provide a short talk, answering any questions before we head out to our first experience in the Thai capital. The city awaits as we travel by sky train (or boat) to visit an art and cultural precinct.

This evening we will enjoy our first taste of the cuisine (for which Thailand is duly famous), followed by a swim at our hotel pool. (dinner) **Flight details to be advised**

Day 2

Bangkok



This morning we will set out to explore the sights, sounds and smells of this famous Asian city - the epitome of the modern, steaming Asian metropolis. We will begin by boarding a riverboat, exploring the Chao Phraya River to see everyday life in Bangkok. Our visit continues to the Grand Palace with its many spectacular temples. These glorious buildings were once the seat of monarchical power and were built as a city. Learning of the exploits of the modern King, our local guide will explain just why Thailand maintains one of the world's strongest and most respected monarchies. We shall also visit Wat Po - a Buddhist temple

with a reclining Buddha. Mid-afternoon there will be time to enjoy some of Bangkok's world-famous retail precinct by sky train.

Today our tour leader will explain to us the history of this famous Asian city, and the hurdles it faces amidst a growing population of some 12 million people. Dinner this evening will be at a popular local restaurant. (breakfast, lunch)

Day 3

Kanchanaburi (Hellfire Pass)



Beyond its city, Kanchanaburi has a dark history of which we will learn as we visit this Thai province, a short distance from Thailand's border with Myanmar. Here we will visit the site of the infamous Thai – Burma Railway project as well as its cutting, *Hellfire Pass*. The Pass was created by British, Dutch and Australian prisoners of war (POWs) who were forced excavate rock for this ill-famed Japanese project.

Later we will visit the largest war cemetery in Thailand where thousands of allied soldiers are buried. Another site includes the POW built *Bridge on the River*

Kwai— popularised by the Hollywood Movie of the same name. After lunch we will stop at a small museum to learn more about this tragic chapter in Thailand's history, before travelling to our riverside accommodation where we will spend the night. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 4

Ayutthaya Overnight train to Chiang Mai



We travel north today to the temple ruins of Ayutthaya - whispering of its glory days as a royal capital. Once abounding with gilded temples and treasure-laden palaces, it was the capital of Siam from 1350 until 1767, when the city was brutally sacked by the Burmese. Standing among towering stupas, it's easy to imagine how they looked in their prime.

Today we will take a boat trip around this World Heritage listed cultural park to view its beautiful ancient buildings and waterways. After lunch, we will continue along the river, stopping at Chao Phrom market to try some local delicacies.



This evening we will transfer to Ayutthaya central train station for our overnight trip to Thailand's far-flung Chiang Mai province. In the comfort of soft-sleeper air-conditioned carriages, we will pass travel through the night (approximately 14-hours) journeying some nine hundred kilometres into the country's northern provinces. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)
NB: Snacks and drinks can be purchased on board. Blankets and pillows are provided. Toilets are western style. As we will be departing on the train this evening, it will be impractical to eat as a group. Thus, students are required to purchase their own takeaway meals tonight before departure to eat on route. Meals/ snacks are available for purchase cheaply, and we will do prior to departure this evening (meals are approx. US\$7).

Day 5

Chiang Mai (Student Initiated activities)

We will arrive early this morning in this sprawling city that despite being large, maintains an overwhelmingly rural feel more like a sleepy country town than a bustling capital. A short distance in any direction brings visitors to its lush green hinterland, rivers as well as a plethora of wildlife sanctuaries.

Prior to travelling, a Student Educational Adventures staff member will talk to teachers and students about specific activities that your students might like to add to their overseas experience. These activities can be included based on students' knowledge of the country or their particular interests or passions for any aspect of a country's culture.

The activities we can include are many and varied. These may include: an introduction to a country's creative or performing arts scene, visits to local schools, great race activities, cooking classes, outdoor educational pursuits such as hiking, bike riding or a plethora of cultural programs. Please contact us for further ideas.

OPTION 1:

Grand Canyon: Also known as the Hang Dong Canyon, the Grand Canyon in Chiang Mai is an old soil quarry less than an hour drive from the centre of Chiang Mai. It is filled from collected water, now estimated to be forty meters deep. Here you can swim, sunbathe on the 'beach' or relax in an inner tube. This is a popular spot with the locals, especially in the hotter summer months (March-May). The water is very clean, and the manmade and natural soil formations make for a great photo opportunity. (lunch, dinner)



OPTION 2:

Art in Paradise: For those interested in art and photography, the world's largest 3D art museum will surely impress. Created by local artists in the form of interactive art, these paintings invite your full participation. The 3-story building features works of animals, underwater worlds, deserts, pharaohs tombs amongst others spread across several zones and themes. (lunch, dinner)



OPTION 3:

Thai cooking class: Thai food can be an intense mix. The base flavours – spicy, sour, sweet and salty – aren't exactly meat and potatoes! But for adventurous foodies who don't need white tablecloths, there's probably no better dining destination in the world.

Today we will take part in a hands-on cooking class to learn the secrets of this favourite world fare. It is hosted by a talented local chef who will also give us a thorough explanation of the myriad of spices and ingredients essential to Thai cuisine. (lunch, dinner)

Day 6

Chiang Mai

A very early start this morning will allow us to take part in an authentic Thai boxing class (Muay Thai) before the heat of the day. The art of Muay Thai has been Thailand's most popular sport for hundreds of years. It is unique among other kinds of fighting disciplines in its approach to close quarters fighting, providing us with a fun and very energetic workout. Following our session, we will return to our hotel for breakfast before setting out for an



the tribe has set up a vibrant community. These days, they welcome curious visitors who have come to learn of their unusual custom. (breakfast, lunch)

exhilaration white water rafting activity. Aside from being highly enjoyable, it will allow us to enjoy the beauty of the Thai rainforest and mountains as we float through a particularly picturesque region north of Chiang Mai. Mid-afternoon we journey to an eco-village nestled in a picturesque valley. This region is home to various ethnic minority groups, including the Long Neck Karen hill tribe. The Long Neck Karen tribe received their nickname due to the practice of wearing thick golden coils. They are also refugees. In the early 1990's, many of the Karen fled Myanmar in the wake of conflict with its government, resulting in various pockets of land settlements. Since this time,

Day 7, 8 & 9 Chiang Dao



the village students will learn something of the local traditions and history of the tribe, whose traditions differ markedly from mainstream Thai society. NB: Facilities in the village are basic. A thin mattress, pillow and mosquito net will be provided in each long-house. Sleeping arrangements are communal style. Toilets are of swat style and showering facilities are simple. It is recommended that students wear good quality walking shoes/boots. (3 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 3 dinners)

We depart Chiang Mai and travel to the hill tribe region of Chiang Dao. Over the years, this northern Thai province has become a state of refuge for many Karen and Palong ethnic tribes' people who fled neighbouring Myanmar. We will spend three days in this region, embarking on a community project designed to assist this village of Karen/Palong refugees in constructing a dwelling.

Our time in the village will entail working in groups with the local inhabitants. We will be engaging in a number of manual building tasks, including brick laying, cement mixing, carpentry and landscaping. It is expected that whilst in

Day 10 Chiang Dao 🚗 Chiang Rai



This morning, we will complete our community project and hand over to its new residents. Local tradesmen will finish off the fixtures and fitting over the coming days. Following this we will farewell our village and travel further north to the town of Chiang Rai.

This once infamous town was once the centre of the world opium trade, the crop being widely harvested around its fertile hinterland crossing into Myanmar and Laos. Today Chiang Rai is a friendly town famous for its bustling night markets and tasty cuisine, both of which we will experience this evening. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 11 Chiang Rai (Golden Triangle) Depart Thailand ✈️ Home

We will journey to Thailand's furthest northern point to visit the country's "Golden Triangle" region, which until recently was where most of the world's opium was produced. A mandatory stop while in this part of the world is a visit to the Opium Museum. It houses a great array of interactive displays, media and interactive exhibits detailing the history of opium and the impact of illegal drugs, opiates and other narcotics.

In the afternoon we visit a World Wildlife Fund (WWF) sanctioned elephant reserve to learn about conservation efforts, habitat retention and the impact of tourism. We can walk alongside the elephants through the forest. Afterwards, we will head to Chiang Rai airport for our flight home. (breakfast) **Flight details to be advised**

Summary

Grading

Moderate; Students will be required to be in good health to get the most of this trip whilst any one of reasonable fitness will be able to take part. There are no real physical difficulties however students will be expected to walk every day, often significant distances. Students will also be expected to work diligently during the days of the community service project. It will be necessary for you to carry your own luggage throughout the trip but only for short distances. There are some early mornings and accommodation is basic in Chiang Dao.

Accommodation

Student accommodation is on a twin/triple share basis. Teacher accommodation is on a single room basis. Hotels hold a 3-star equivalent rating.

Transport

Modern air-conditioned bus & vans.

Group Size

Minimum group size 20 students & 2 staff members travelling *free of charge*.

▲ [Smaller group sizes can be quoted upon application](#)

Your Tour Leader

Your tour leader is probably the person who most influences the success of your trip. Thus, Student Educational Adventures employs our own team of meticulously trained student dedicated, local tour leaders - not foreigners, imported at your students' expense with no language skills or insight into your host culture.

These nationals are not only the best folk to show you their country. They are your teachers, translators and an enthusiastic purveyor of authentic experiences. They are there to facilitate your immersion into new cultures and are the bridge between you and world of education and new experiences.

Your tour leader is always with your students throughout your trip and is thoroughly versed in safety protocols and duty of care responsibilities. This ranges from assisting in the most basic of health and safety measures to ensuring that teachers & students are always safe during our trips. All have been chosen because of their ability to deal with the needs and unique issues associated with escorting young people through this wonderful and at times, most foreign of regions.

Service Learning Program

All service-learning programs initiated by Student Educational Adventures in Vietnam are conducted after careful consultation with the local community and with the local People's Committees.

These projects are initiated based on a model of mutual learning and designed as an immersion experience. An understanding of the importance of an integrated approach to community development is useful to frame what students and teachers might see, learn or experience during a student immersion.

Country & Contrasts (11 days)

Inclusions

- All accommodation, transport, activities, entrance costs and other programs as describe in the itinerary
- Student Educational Adventures Group Leader throughout the tour
- Additional local guides where required
- Meals (+ drinking water) as listed in the daily itinerary
- Pre-departure support, briefings & planning meetings for students and parents
- 24/7 in-country support

Exclusions

- International flights to/from Thailand
- Community project (US\$1,600)
- Some meals
- Thai Visa (not required by many nationalities)