



Northern Thailand – ‘The Hills of Mae Salong’

All year round; 14D/13N ex London or 13D/12N Bangkok to Bangkok.

A fascinating and varied 2 week northern Thailand adventure. The delights of Thailand’s beaches and islands are world renowned but these mist shrouded mountains, lush forests and remote villages of the far North are still waiting to be discovered. Beginning in Bangkok we’ll head north via the ruined, ancient city and now UNESCO World Heritage Site of Sukhothai to Chiang Mai, Thailand’s northern capital, from where we’ll continue into the infamous Golden Triangle Region for an exciting journey through the mountains by foot and by boat and staying overnight as guests in hill-tribe villages.

Day 1 Departure from UK.

Day 2 Arrival in Bangkok - meet your tour leader and transfer to a comfortable, downtown hotel in the City’s Banglamphu district. Afternoon to relax, recover from your jet-lag by the pool or explore the area’s lively markets and street-life.

Day 3 City tour with a difference - central Bangkok by riverboat, skytrain, tuk-tuk and canal boat. We’ll see the famous sites and what lies behind the famous sites. Visits will include the Grand Palace, fabulous Wat Phra Keow (Temple of the Emerald Buddha), Siam Square and the fascinating [Jim Thompson House Museum](#).

Day 4 Morning departure by train across the Central Plains and their emerald green rice paddies, to up-country Phitsanolk town – the ‘Gateway to the North’. Lunch time arrival and a visit to the local handicraft museum. Transfer to nearby Sukhothai town with the afternoon to relax in our guesthouse garden or discover the local markets.

Day 5 Bicycle tour of the nearby, ancient city and now UNESCO World Heritage Site of [Sukhothai](#) – former capital of Siam – which, with it’s crumbling sandstone temples, ancient carvings, towering Buddha statues and lotus-covered ponds, is one of the country’s most sacred and evocative sites.

Day 6 Scenic drive through the mountains to [Chiang Mai](#). Check in to our centrally located hotel with time to relax by the pool or explore the area before an evening tour of the town’s famous night bazaar.

Day 7 Departure from Chiang Mai for the far North with a scenic drive to the remote border town of Tha Ton, including a stop on the way to visit the fascinating cave temples at Chiang Dao, before checking out the spectacular views at Tha Ton Pagoda situated high on a mountain top straddling the Thai/Burmese border.

Day 8 Beginning with a descent by boat of the scenic Kok River, we’ll trek on foot and by elephant through the region’s dramatic mountain scenery with an overnight stay in a Lahu village.

Day 9 Our hike continues across streams and through the forests of this spectacular and remote mountainous region. Overnight stay as guests of a Akha minority family in a rarely visited, and still very traditional, village.

Day 10 Morning transfer by truck to the nearby fascinating town of [Mae Salong](#). Originally founded by Chinese Republican soldiers (Kuomintang), who took refuge in the area after defeat by Mao Tse Tung’s communist forces. The town was off limits for many years due to its role as a centre for the opium trade but is now known for tea plantations and spectacular scenery as well as being the centre for the local hill-tribe peoples. Time to wander around the picturesque mountain-top town and perhaps participate in a tea tasting ceremony?

Day 11 Opportunity for an early start to visit the morning hill-tribe market before continuing to the magnificent botanical gardens at [Mae Fah Luang](#). From here we’ll travel north to the bustling Burmese border market at Mae Sai. Visit Sob Ruak and the Golden Triangle itself, where the borders of Thailand, Laos and Burma meet, and where we can take in the unusual Opium Museum, before continuing to Chiang Rai for our overnight accommodation.

Day 12 Morning scenic drive through the mountains to Chiang Mai with a stop on the way to visit the spectacular Wat Rong Khun Temple. Mid afternoon arrival with time to stretch your legs or just relax by the pool.

Day 13 Day at leisure in Chiang Mai. Check out the local markets, some last minute shopping or visit the famous Doi Suthep, with an evening departure for UK via Bangkok. (Note, an optional Thai cookery lesson can be arranged if desired).

Day 14 Arrival in the UK.

Note: this tour is offered with or without return flights from London. Persons not wishing to take up the flight option will join the tour on day 2 in Bangkok and depart in Bangkok on day 14. (Note return flights to Bangkok are included.)

Highlights: Bangkok's palaces and temples, ruins of Sukhothai, overnight in hill-tribe village, mountain trekking, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Golden Triangle, cookery lesson, Thai food

Fitness: easy to moderate, maximum hiking 5-6 hours on day 9. (Activities can be tailored to any level.)

Accommodation: hotel, hill-tribe village

Transport: minibus, truck, train, flight

Meals: full board except for lunch on day 2 & 13 and dinner on days 3, 6, 12 & 13



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