

CLASSIC THAILAND

Bangkok, Ayutthaya, Phitsanulok, Lampang, Chiang Mai & Chiang Rai



Setting off from the neon lights of bustling Bangkok, this comprehensive, eleven day tour travels up through the ancient Siamese Kingdoms of Ayutthaya and Sukhothai, to the mountainous jungle landscapes of northern Thailand. Enjoy the magnificent Grand Palace in the capital and scale the stupa-studded mountain of Chiang Mai. Discover hidden gems including the reclusive hill tribes as you travel towards the mystifying summit of this truly unique and fascinating country.

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to Thailand. Please take the time to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important information such as flight details, visa requirements and travel insurance.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

DAY 1: UK to Bangkok

Depart London on your scheduled, overnight flight to Bangkok International Airport.

DAY 2: Bangkok D

On arrival into Bangkok you will be greeted and transferred to your hotel. The day will be at leisure to settle in and explore your new surroundings. Originally a small harbour village, Thailand's vibrant capital infuses grand Buddhist architecture within an ultramodern metropolis interspersed by aromatic food markets and waterways that unite this Venice of the East. In the evening, enjoy a buffet dinner before witnessing the highly acclaimed Siam Niramit, one of the world's largest shows depicting each region's fascinating cultural heritage through music, dance and stunning visual effects.

DAY 3: Bangkok B/L

Today's full day city tour takes you through Chinatown to the city's colourful flower market where beautifully scented jasmine buds are hand made for temple offerings. Visit Wat Pho, home to one of the country's longest and most impressive reclining Buddha images, before visiting Thailand's most important landmark, The Grand Palace. The royal complex displays European-inspired halls partitioned by tranquil gardens, ornate pavilions representing 200 years of successive Kings and the magnificent golden chedi of Thailand's most sacred temple - Wat Phra Kaew. In the afternoon board a traditional long-tail boat to navigate Bangkok's khlongs, where local wooden-stilted houses line the banks. Pass the domineering Wat Arun temple, encrusted with porcelain mosaics that reflect the

sunlight with a lustrous glow, before returning to your hotel for an evening at leisure.

DAY 4: Bangkok to Ayutthaya B/L/D

This morning, leave Bangkok to visit the famous floating market of Damnoen Saduak, a man-made river network populated by wooden canoes piled high with colourful produce. En-route, pass mango and lychee plantations and make a brief stop at a coconut farm to learn how the nuts are harvested and manufactured into a variety of products by hand. On arrival at the floating market, observe local traders paddling their fragile boats whilst preparing fragrant dishes within teetering woks.

Continue west to the historical jungle town of Kanchanaburi to visit the humbling war cemetery and nearby Thailand-Burma railway museum which documents the brutal Japanese occupation and harrowing conditions faced by prisoners during World War II. Enjoy lunch at a floating restaurant overlooking the infamous railway bridge that inspired Pierre Boulle's novel and the film - the Bridge Over the River Kwai. Transfer to the city of Ayutthaya for dinner and a well-deserved rest.

DAY 5: Ayutthaya to Phitsanulok B/L/D

Start the day at Ayutthaya's UNESCO historical park, an ancient royal capital that was once considered one of the region's most illustrious cities. Wander the Summer Palace, surrounded by rivers and lakes, the beautifully landscaped grounds boast romantic European style architecture, commissioned by the Royal family and still used on special occasions. After your guided tour, visit the ancient royal monastery of Wat Yai Chaimongkhon to see impressive constructions built after King Naresuan's victory over the Burmese in 1592. Departing Ayutthaya, journey through rural Thailand past typical Thai houses, peanut plantations and farmers working on the verdant rice paddies. A lunch stop will be made before continuing on to Phitsanulok for your overnight stay.

DAY 6: Phitsanulok to Lampang B/L/D

One of Thailand's most impressive UNESCO sites awaits this morning - the ancient Sukhothai Historical

Park. The peaceful surroundings contain ancient ruins hidden amongst lakes of lotus flowers, a stunning setting crafted during the country's golden era of religious architecture that formed the blueprint of quintessential Thai style. Continue to Si Satchanalai and cross the river to a local fishing village where women can be seen weaving cotton and men cast nets for the day's catch. Following lunch, journey into the jungle area, stopping at a local hill tribe to learn how native plants are used in traditional cooking. Arrive into Lampang late this afternoon.

DAY 7: Lampang to Chiang Mai B/L

After breakfast, drive to the Elephant Hospital and nearby Conservation Centre. Here you can observe these majestic creatures playing in the water with their mahout keepers and choose to take an optional elephant ride through the lush Thai jungle. Arriving into Chiang Mai, visit a gem and silk factory to see how these local handicrafts are produced before making a stop at Bo Sang's craft market, known as the 'umbrella village' after its ornate and vivid oil paper creations. This evening you can enjoy some free time to relax or experience a local tuk tuk ride to the nearby famous night market - head out after 7pm to explore the many stalls, restaurants and bars with live music and delicious street food.

DAY 8: Chiang Mai B/L/D

Roll up your sleeves and try your hand at cooking the most famous food and desserts in the country at the Baan Hongnual Cookery School this morning. After being collected from your hotel this morning, you will visit a local market to learn how to choose fish, meat and vegetables whilst at the same time learning about the herbs and spices that are needed and used in Thai cooking. From the market you will proceed to the cooking school for your class followed by lunch before returning to your hotel. Late this afternoon, your guide will take you to Doi Suthep, a nearby mountain, for panoramic views at sunset over the city's vast tropical plains. Near the summit discover Wat Phra That, Northern Thailand's holiest shrine, where kneeling

worshippers gather around the dazzling golden dome to light aromatic incense and lay lotus flowers before immaculate icons of the Buddha. As night falls, return to the city to sample a traditional Khantoke dinner and show, where food is served on large platters at low tables as you enjoy a performance by local Lanna dancers.

DAY 9: Chiang Mai to Chiang Rai B/L/D

Today, begin your ascent of northern Thailand's mountainous regions, through mist-coated fern forests to the charming town of Thaton. After lunch, board a traditional long-tail boat for a tranquil cruise along the Kok River; traverse slow moving waters to a chorus of cicadas to observe the thatched bamboo huts of the northern hill tribes dotted throughout the picturesque countryside. Disembark and drive to the infamous Golden Triangle, a mountainous range where Thailand, Laos and Burma converge which was once a prolific area for opium production. Continue to your hotel for a night in the laidback city of Chiang Rai.

DAY 10: Chiang Rai to Bangkok B/L/D

This morning visit the stunning Wat Rongkhun, an art installation in the form of a temple. Designed by visual artist Chalermchai Kositpipat, its striking white exterior is mixed with mirror fragments to create a mesmerising effect symbolising the Buddha's purity. Wander to the temple's entrance over a sea of sculpted hands reaching out in desperation and admire the interior murals, an incongruous mix of traditional Buddhist images with modern icons including Superman, the international space station and George Bush. After lunch head to Chiang Mai Airport for your flight to Bangkok, where you will be met and transferred to your hotel for a farewell dinner.

DAY 11: Bangkok to the UK or Extension B

Transfer to Bangkok airport in the morning for your direct flight back to the UK or continue on to your chosen extension.

Hotel Information

Bangkok (3 nights): 4★ Eastin Makkasan Hotel - 1091/343, Charurat Alley, Phetchaburi, Makkasan, Rajthevee, Bangkok 10400, Thailand. Telephone: 0066 2 651 7600

Ayutthaya (1 night): 4★ Classic Kameo Hotel - 210 - 211, 148 Moo 5 Rajana Road, PA, Thailand. Telephone: 0066 35 212 535

Phitsanulok (1 night): 4★ Amarin Lagoon Hotel - 52/299 Moo 6, Phitsanulok, Thailand. Telephone: 0066 55 220 999

Lampang (1 night): 4★ Lampang Wieng Lakor Hotel - Mueang Lampang District, Lampang, Thailand. Telephone: 0066 54 316 427

Chiang Mai (2 nights): 4★ Holiday Inn Chiang Mai Hotel - 318/1 Chiang Mai-lamphun Road, Tumbol Wat Kate, Chiang Mai 50000, Thailand. Telephone: 0066 53 275 300

Chiang Rai (1 night): 4★ Imperial River House Resort - 482 M4, Mae Kok Road, T. Rim Kok, A.Muang, Chiang Rai, 57100, Thailand. Telephone: 0066 5375 0830 34

All accommodation is 4★ and features an en suite bathroom, heating/air-conditioning and TV. Mercury Holidays have visited and inspected all of the hotels to ensure that they meet the high standards of service which we require for our clients. Should any of the hotels listed become unavailable you will be placed in alternative accommodation of the exact same standard.

Final confirmation of your hotels will be sent in a document approximately 10 days before you travel. Please note that drinks are not included and early check in on the day of arrival is not guaranteed; check-in is 2pm.

Meals

Breakfast is always western style and served in the hotel each morning. Lunch will be taken at local restaurants and dinner will be at the hotel in the evenings except on day 2 when you will enjoy dinner and a show in Bangkok and on day 8 when you will enjoy dinner and a show in Chiang Mai. Meals will generally be Thai cuisine in local restaurants and international buffet style or set meals at the hotels.

On your arrival

On your arrival at Bangkok Airport, please collect your luggage and proceed to the exit in the Customs Hall. You will be met by a representative of Hotelbeds Thailand who will be holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The representative will be wearing a black uniform with pink writing. Should you fail to locate the representative, please go to the

ATTA (Association of Thai Travel Agents) counter at the arrivals hall. They will be able to contact the airport representative and get someone to you for assistance.

Head Office Address

Destination Services, 511 Soi 6, Sri-Ayuthaya Road, Rajthevee, Bangkok, 10400
Contact Number: 0066 2245 1551



Flight and Airport Information

Your flight to Bangkok Suvarnabhumi International Airport is with British Airways (BA), departing from London Heathrow Terminal 5.

Route	Depart	Arrive	Flight Duration	Flight Number
London Heathrow - Bangkok	15:50	09:35	11 hours 45 minutes	BA9
Chiang Mai - Bangkok	16:35	17:55	1 hour 20 minutes	BA4162
Bangkok - London Heathrow	11:35	18:30	12 hours 55 minutes	BA10

IMPORTANT: Please note that all flight times and numbers listed above are provided for guidance only and are subject to change. Final flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

Baggage Allowance

Each passenger is entitled to 23kg of hold luggage. There is also an allowance of one cabin bag not exceeding 25cm x 45cm x 56cm in size and one personal bag not exceeding 45 cm x 36 cm x 20 cm that you can take on the aircraft as hand luggage. Weight restrictions will be finalized on your e-ticket receipt. Should you wish to take additional luggage you will need to pay an additional fee for this at check-in. Heathrow Airport advises that you should arrive at the airport at least three hours prior to your flight time for international departures.

Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking, lounges or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras - Tel. 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

Visas

A visa is not required before you travel to Thailand; you will be issued with a tourist visa valid for 30 days on arrival into the country. Further advice should be sought from the applicable tourist authority for other nationalities and for general queries. We strongly advise you check your destinations' Tourist Board or Embassy for the most up-to-date guidelines regarding visas and passport validity.

Insurance

You must obtain suitable travel insurance prior to departure. Mercury Holidays is partnered with Holiday Extras which offer insurance at the following prices:

Age in years	Up to 64	65-74	75-85
Up to 17 days cover	£42	£79	£135

For all persons 86 years and over, please contact us for insurance prices. To book your travel insurance with us please contact our reservations department on 01732 775000. If you have an existing policy with another company, please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Health and Vaccinations

It is strongly recommended that you check the latest health recommendations for travel to Thailand with your GP at least 4-6 weeks before travel. Any medicines you may need during your journey should be packed in your hand luggage. We suggest it is worth taking a few first aid supply such as travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc. Because these products can be more expensive abroad and familiar brands are not always available. It is not advisable to drink the tap water.

Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with a good level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves climbing of steep stairs and getting on and off coaches and boats. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties.

Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 11 and the maximum will be 30. In the unlikely event there are fewer than 11 passengers booked on your tour date, you may be asked to change to a different date. A full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

Tour Guides

This is a fully escorted tour meaning that you will be met on arrival and will have a guide with you throughout your stay until you depart Chiang Mai, ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times.

Tipping

Tipping is not compulsory and is at your discretion. Should you wish to tip, you can give this to your guide and driver when you leave Chiang Mai before returning to Bangkok. If you feel you have received a good level of service, we recommend approximately £1-2 per person per day for the guide and £1 per person per day for the driver.

Currency Exchange

The currency in Thailand is the Thai Baht (THB). We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK, however cash machines are available in all the major cities to withdraw money in the local currency.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take some extra money with you to cover any dinners where these are not mentioned on your itinerary and personal purchases, such as souvenirs, extra drinks and snacks. Approximately £200-£300 per person should be sufficient for the duration of your tour.

Credit Card Information

As normal practice you will be asked for your credit card details on check-in at the hotel in order to cover any extras incurred during your stay. If you do not have a credit card you may be asked for a cash deposit. American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.

Itinerary changes

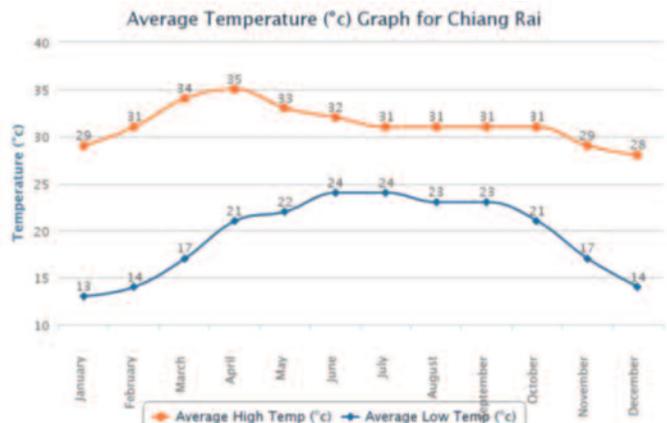
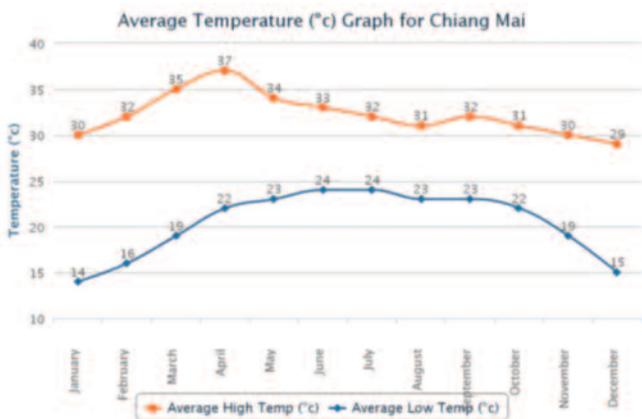
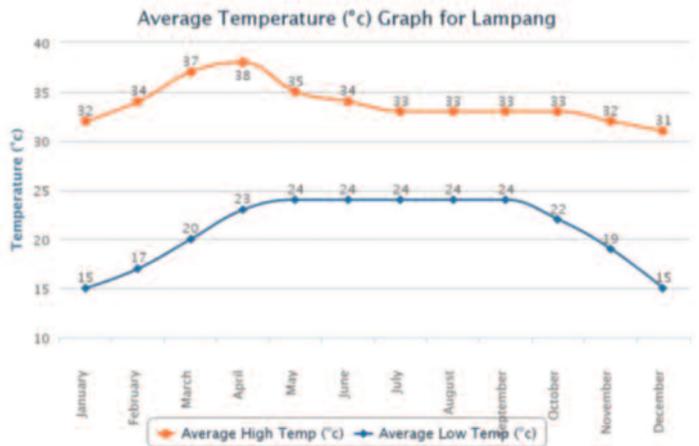
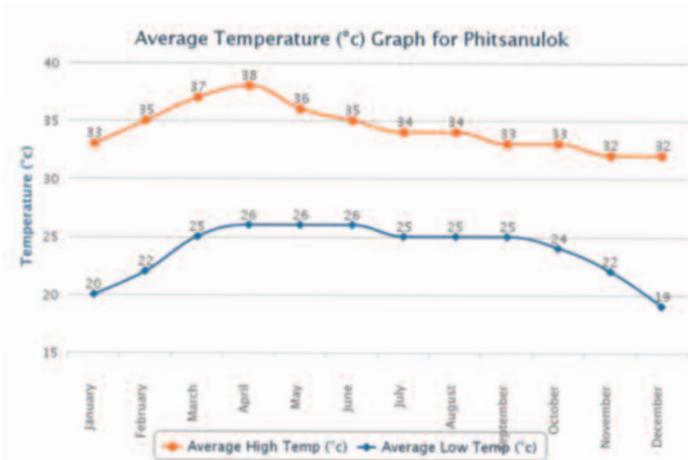
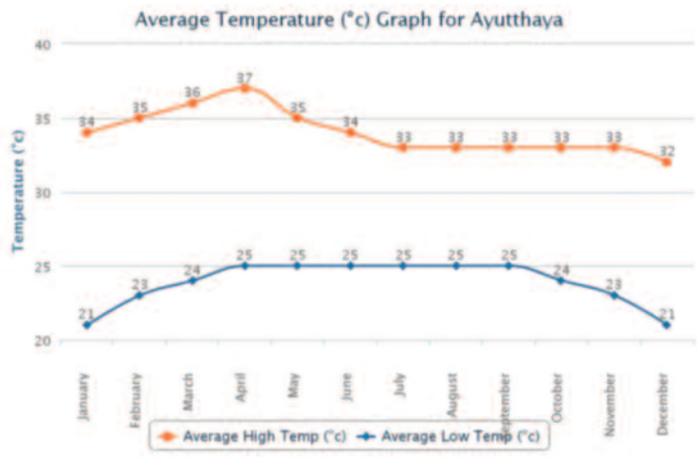
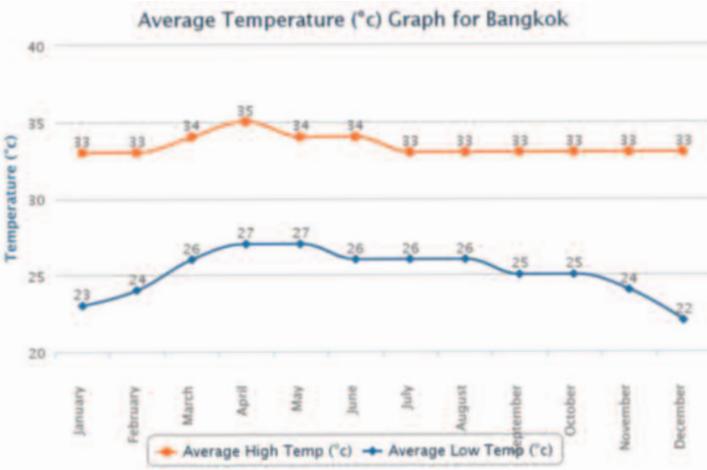
The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction and/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however order of events and sightseeing may vary according to the local conditions.

What to Pack

- Insect repellent
- Suncream and a hat with a big brim for sunny days
- Comfortable walking shoes such as trainers
- Sunglasses
- Ruck sack or light bag per person
- Personal toiletries and first aid kit
- Toilet paper/tissues for public toilets
- Travel plug adapter – the electricity supply on board the boat is 220V. You will need a 2 pin round plug adapter.

Weather and Climate

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year so please familiarize yourself with the climate charts below for a guideline of what to expect.



BANGKOK CITY STAY EXTENSION



This 2 night extension within Thailand's bustling capital will allow you to delve further into Bangkok's hidden treasures.

Bangkok (2 nights)

Re-discover the chaotic concrete jungle where ancient monuments and modern structures meet in a clash of vibrant aromas, bustling walkways, canals teeming with canoes and cultural splendours unique to the city.

Hotel Information

Your stay will take place the below hotel:

4★ Eastin Makkasan Hotel on Bed and Breakfast. Located in the heart of Bangkok's commercial district, this elegant hotel offers 278 contemporary, well-furnished rooms.

The Eastin Hotel Makkasan boasts a selection of facilities including a sky lounge, swimming pool and complimentary Wi-Fi throughout the property.

Hotel information: 1091/343 New Petchburi Road, Makkasan, Rajthevee, Bangkok 10400 THAILAND. Tel: 0066 2 651 7600

Any alternative hotels or board basis will have been confirmed at booking. Please speak to our reservations department if you are unsure. Final confirmation of your hotel will be sent in a document approximately two weeks before you travel.

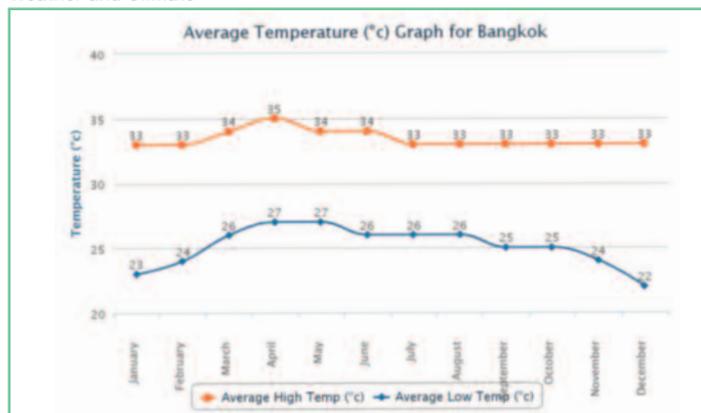
Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any meals that are not included in your board depending on whether you have booked B&B, Half Board or Full Board, as well as personal purchases, such as souvenirs, laundry and drinks.

Tour Guides

Your stay in Bangkok is not escorted by a tour guide and your time will be free to explore the area at your own pace. Transfers are included.

Weather and Climate



Eastin Makkasan Hotel

Flight Information

Route	Depart	Arrive	Flight Duration	Flight Number
Bangkok - Heathrow	11:35	18:30	12 hours 55 minutes	BA10

IMPORTANT: Flight times/numbers are for guidance only & are subject to change, flights are codeshare with Bangkok Airways. Final flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure. Each passenger is entitled to 23kg of hold luggage. There is also an allowance of one cabin bag not exceeding 25cm x 45cm x 56cm in size and one personal bag not exceeding 45 cm x 36 cm x 20 cm that you can take on the aircraft as hand luggage. Weight restrictions will be finalized on your e-ticket receipt. Should you wish to take additional luggage you will need to pay an additional fee for this at check-in.