



WORLD DISCOVERY
— HISTORY CULTURE WILDLIFE —

Thailand Express



The Grand Palace, Bangkok

DAY 1 – Depart UK.

DAY 2 – Arrival in Bangkok.

On arrival in Bangkok you will be met outside customs by a representative of World Discovery and taken by private car direct to your hotel.

DAY 3 - Bangkok.

After a leisurely breakfast, your guide will meet you at your hotel and take you to the **Grand Palace**, arguably the most important cultural icon in the land. You are allowed inside to see the **Emerald Buddha**, the displays of royal artifacts and memorabilia, and wall decorations. Continue on foot to the **Royal Navy Club** for a simple Thai lunch. Board your private boat nearby, and cross the Chao Phraya River to the Thonburi district, where you will visit the **Wangderm Palace** and the **Royal Barge Museum**. The grand procession of Royal barges is seen only once a year during His Majesty the King's birthday celebrations (early December). See the actual boats in their dry docks. Now it's time to relax and experience life on the water with a beer or soft drink as your boat continues along Bangkok's old **klongs** (canals) and waterways. Return to your hotel in the late afternoon.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch.

DAY 4 - Ayutthaya. Drive to Phitsanulok.

Drive north of Bangkok to visit the ancient capital of **Ayutthaya**. The glory of the Ayutthaya Empire (1350-1767 AD) is evident in the remains of temples such as **Wat Phra Sri Sanphet** and **Wat Chai Wattanaram**. A further visit is to **Wat Yai Chai Mongkol** with its white reclining Buddha and massive pagoda. In the afternoon continue to Phitsanulok, stopping en route for a walking tour of a typical Thai village.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 5 - Sukhothai. Si Satchanalai. Continue to Phrae.

Sukhothai was the capital of Thailand from 1240 until the early 15th century; this morning you will visit the attractive ruins before continuing to Sukhothai's twin city of **Si Satchanalai**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site with some superb structures including the Wat Chang Lom or 'Elephant Shrine'. After your visit continue to **Phrae**, an ancient but little visited moated city with peaceful lanes filled with temples and traditional teak houses which is renowned for its excellent woodcarving.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 6 - Phrae. Drive to the 'Golden Triangle'.

Not to be missed in Phrae is the **Baan Pratabjai**, a house consisting of hundreds of beautifully carved teak pillars in the graceful 'Lanna' Thai style. Your journey continues north to the famous 'Golden Triangle', the place on the mighty Mekong River where the borders of Laos, Burma and Thailand converge. In the afternoon take an enjoyable cruise by long-tailed motor-launch on the river.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 7 - Mae Sai. Ban Lorcha. On to Chiang Mai.

After breakfast drive to **Mae Sai**, Thailand's northernmost town, right on the Burmese border. Explore the interesting market before continuing to **Ban Lorcha**, an Akha community-based project run by the villagers, where you can gain insight into the Akha tribe's way of life in a respectful fashion. In the afternoon drive to Chiang Mai, Thailand's second city, once the capital of ancient Lanna, 'the Land of a Million Rice Fields'.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 8 - Chiang Mai.

After breakfast begin your guided exploration of Chiang Mai. You will start at the **Arts and Cultural Centre** where an orientation presentation will help you better understand the history, arts and culture of this northern region. Next visit **Wat Chedi Luang**, home to 'The Pillar of the City', a totem used in ancient Thai fertility rites because the temple itself marks the exact centre of Chiang Mai. After lunch in a local restaurant, you will go up to the summit of Doi Suthep Mountain (1,600 metres) to visit the 600 year old temple of **Wat Phra Doi Suthep**. Your guide will show you how modern Chiang Mai people 'make merit' using incense and flowers. You may join in merit making if you like. The ascent to the temple is via a magnificent Naga (dragon-headed serpent) staircase of 306 steps (a lift is available if this is too strenuous an option). On a clear day, the views over the city are magnificent. Return to your hotel. In the late evening you can visit Chiang Mai's famous night bazaar.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch.

DAY 9 - Depart for UK.

At leisure. In the evening transfer to Chiang Mai Airport for the flight to Bangkok to connect with your flight to the UK.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 10 - Arrive UK.

Your flight departs in the early morning and arrives in London the same morning.