Thailand's Central & Northern Heritage: Bangkok, Ayutthaya & Chiang Mai – 9 Days

9D / 8N	Easy	Private	USD 1,098 / pax
Duration	Difficulty	Tour Type	Starting From

This 9-day adventure through Thailand unveils a captivating blend of historical grandeur, natural beauty, and vibrant urban life. Begin in the dynamic capital of Bangkok, journey through Kanchanaburi's wartime history and Ayutthaya's ancient ruins, and conclude in the serene cultural heart of Chiang Mai. Experience diverse landscapes and rich traditions across central and northern Thailand.

DESTINATIONS & ROUTE

Bangkok → Ayutthaya → Chiang Mai

TOUR OVERVIEW

Overview

This 9-day journey through Thailand offers a rich tapestry of experiences, from the dynamic urban energy of Bangkok to the ancient wonders of Ayutthaya and the tranquil mountain culture of Chiang Mai. Travelers will explore historical sites, engage with local traditions, and witness stunning natural landscapes, providing a comprehensive insight into the heart of the country.

Highlights

Witness the monks' morning chanting ritual at Wat Pho in Bangkok.

Explore the majestic Grand Palace and marvel at the revered Emerald Buddha.

Navigate Bangkok's historic khlongs by long-tail boat, discovering hidden temples and local life.

Experience the unique Maeklong Railway Market and the vibrant Damnoen Saduak Floating Market.

Delve into World War II history at Kanchanaburi's museums and the iconic Bridge on the River Kwai.

Trek through Erawan National Park to discover its beautiful seven-tiered waterfall and natural pools.

Journey through ancient Ayutthaya's UNESCO World Heritage temples by charming Kermit tuk-tuk.

Enjoy an ethical interaction and bathing experience with elephants at a jungle sanctuary near Chiang Mai.

Discover the traditional mountain village of Mae Kampong, learning about local tea and coffee cultivation.

Ascend Doi Suthep for panoramic views of Chiang Mai and visit its historically significant temple.

Route Summary

The adventure begins in Bangkok, Thailand's bustling capital, where grand temples and vibrant markets await. From there, the tour ventures west to Kanchanaburi, known for its significant World War II history and scenic River Kwai. The journey then continues to Ayutthaya, the former capital of Siam, a UNESCO World Heritage site filled with impressive ruins. Finally, the tour concludes in northern Thailand's cultural hub, Chiang Mai, offering serene temples, elephant encounters, and immersive village experiences.

Who It Suits

Designed for all types of travelers, this tour is ideal for those interested in history, cultural immersion, and soft adventure. Whether you seek ancient temples, bustling markets, ethical wildlife encounters, or scenic natural beauty, this itinerary offers a balanced and engaging exploration of Thailand's diverse offerings.

Practical Information

Throughout the tour, private air-conditioned transfers ensure comfortable travel between destinations. English-speaking guides provide expert commentary and assistance. Accommodation is provided in hand-picked hotels, with one unique overnight

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experience on a sleeper train. Meals are included as specified, offering a taste of local cuisine. Prepare for varied activities, from city walks to boat trips and light trekking, requiring comfortable footwear.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

* Witness the monks' morning chanting ritual at Wat Pho in Bangkok.
* Explore the majestic Grand Palace and marvel at the revered Emerald Buddha.
* Navigate Bangkok's historic khlongs by long-tail boat, discovering hidden temples and local life.
* Experience the unique Maeklong Railway Market and the vibrant Damnoen Saduak Floating Market.
* Delve into World War II history at Kanchanaburi's museums and the iconic Bridge on the River Kwai.
* Trek through Erawan National Park to discover its beautiful seven-tiered waterfall and natural pools.
* Journey through ancient Ayutthaya's UNESCO World Heritage temples by charming Kermit tuk-tuk.
* Enjoy an ethical interaction and bathing experience with elephants at a jungle sanctuary near Chiang Mai.
* Discover the traditional mountain village of Mae Kampong, learning about local tea and coffee cultivation.
* Ascend Doi Suthep for panoramic views of Chiang Mai and visit its historically significant temple.

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Day 1 — Bangkok Arrival and Relaxation

Stay: Eleven Hotel Bangkok Sukhumvit | Transport: Private AC vehicle

Upon landing at Bangkok Suvarnabhumi International Airport, a local representative will greet you and provide a comfortable transfer to your hotel. After checking in, the remainder of the day is yours to unwind and settle into the vibrant atmosphere of Thailand's capital. You might choose to relax at the hotel or take a gentle stroll around the immediate vicinity to get a first taste of the city.

Activities: Airport pickup and hotel transfer
Check-in and leisure time

Day 2 — Bangkok's Sacred Sites and Hidden Waterways

Meals: B, L | Stay: Eleven Hotel Bangkok Sukhumvit | Transport: Private AC vehicle, long-tail boat

Your day begins early with a visit to Wat Pho, where you can observe the serene morning chanting ritual of the resident monks, typically starting at 9:00 AM. Following this peaceful experience, explore the temple grounds, home to the impressive 45-meter Reclining Buddha. Next, proceed to the Grand Palace, a monumental complex showcasing Thailand's rich architectural heritage and royal history. Here, you will be struck by the intricate details of the throne halls and the revered Emerald Buddha.

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A delicious Thai lunch awaits at The Never Ending Summer, a rustic restaurant situated by the Chao Phraya River, offering a choice of main dishes and drinking water.
In the afternoon, board a traditional long-tail boat to navigate the majestic Chao Phraya River. The journey will lead you into a network of "khlongs" (canals), taking you off the beaten tourist path. You'll make a stop at Wat Khun Chan, an intriguing temple area rarely visited by outsiders. A short walk across a footbridge reveals old alleys where you can enjoy a refreshing coffee before visiting Wat Paknam, known for its distinctive white stupa and a hidden museum. The boat ride continues through a picturesque section of the khlongs, passing a mix of traditional wooden houses and modern residences, eventually reaching an orchid and fruit farm. Here, you'll have time to wander and admire various orchid species. Afterwards, a transfer will take you back to your hotel, concluding your day of exploration.

Activities: Witness monks' chanting ritual at Wat Pho
Visit the Reclining Buddha
Explore the Grand Palace and Emerald Buddha
Enjoy lunch by the Chao Phraya River
Take a long-tail boat tour of Bangkok's khlongs
Discover Wat Khun Chan and Wat Paknam
Visit an orchid and fruit farm

Day 3 Iconic Markets and Kanchanaburi's War History

Meals: B | Stay: U Inchantree Kanchanaburi Resort | Transport: Private AC vehicle, motor boat, local train

The morning starts with a drive southwest from Bangkok to the unique Maeklong Railway Market. Witness the incredible sight of vendors swiftly packing up their stalls as a train approaches, then setting up again moments after it passes. Capture memorable photos and sample local snacks before continuing to Damnoen Saduak, a renowned rural floating market. Here, you'll embark on a motorboat trip along the waterways, navigating through the bustling and colorful market where goods are sold directly from boats.
After experiencing the floating market, the journey proceeds to Kanchanaburi. Upon arrival, delve into the city's poignant World War II history with visits to the JEATH War Museum and the Allied War Cemetery, offering a solemn reflection on the past. Conclude your historical exploration by boarding a local train for a scenic 30-minute ride along the river, providing unique views before transferring to see the famous Bridge on the River Kwai. The evening is spent in Kanchanaburi.

Activities: Visit Maeklong Railway Market
Experience Damnoen Saduak Floating Market by motorboat
Explore the JEATH War Museum and Allied War Cemetery
Take a scenic train ride along the River Kwai
See the Bridge on the River Kwai

Day 4 Erawan's Cascades and Journey to Ayutthaya

Meals: B | Stay: Kantary Hotel Ayutthaya | Transport: Private AC vehicle

Following breakfast, depart for Erawan National Park, home to the magnificent seven-tiered Erawan Waterfall. Prepare for a

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refreshing trek up the various levels of the falls, where you can admire the stunning natural pools and lush surroundings. Comfortable walking shoes are recommended, and don't forget your swimsuit if you wish to take a dip in the crystal-clear waters.

After enjoying the natural beauty of Erawan, a scenic drive of approximately 3.5 hours (220 km) will take you to Ayutthaya. This ancient city, often referred to as the 'Venice of the East' due to its location surrounded by the Chao Phraya River and its tributaries, was once the glorious capital of Siam. Founded in 1350 by King Uthong, it boasts numerous monuments and ruins that bear witness to centuries of Thai history. Upon arrival, check into your hotel and enjoy some leisure time.

Activities: Hike to the seven tiers of Erawan Waterfall
Swim in natural pools (optional)
Travel to Ayutthaya
Check into hotel and relax

Day 5 Ayutthaya's Royal Heritage and Night Train to Chiang Mai

Meals: B | Stay: Overnight train (2nd Class Sleep AC) | Transport: Kermit tuk-tuk, private AC vehicle, overnight train

Your morning in Ayutthaya begins with a unique ride in a "Kermit tuk-tuk," a distinctive vehicle found only in this province and Trang. This charming mode of transport will take you on a tour of the city's principal temples. Discover the impressive Wat Yai Chaimongkol, marvel at the iconic Buddha head entwined in tree roots at Wat Mahathat, and stroll through a local market. Your temple exploration continues with a visit to Wat Phra Srisanphet, a significant royal temple.

Following this, you will visit the Bang Pa-In Summer Palace, an architectural marvel built during the Ayutthaya era. The palace complex showcases a fascinating blend of European, Khmer, Thai, and Chinese styles, reflecting its history as a favored royal retreat. In the late afternoon, you will be transferred to the train station to board an overnight sleeper train bound for Chiang Mai, marking a unique transition to northern Thailand. Please note, there is no guide on board the train.

Activities: Explore Ayutthaya's temples by Kermit tuk-tuk: Wat Yai Chaimongkol, Wat Mahathat, Wat Phra Srisanphet
Browse a local market
Visit Bang Pa-In Summer Palace
Board an overnight train to Chiang Mai

Day 6 Chiang Mai City Exploration & Doi Suthep Views

Meals: B | Stay: Aruntara Riverside Boutique Hotel | Transport: Private AC vehicle, rickshaw, elevator (at Doi Suthep)

Upon arrival at Chiang Mai train station, your local guide will meet you and transfer you to a local restaurant for breakfast and morning coffee. The morning is dedicated to a walking tour of the Old Town. You'll see remnants of the ancient city wall, the moat, and one of the historic gates. Discover some of Chiang Mai's most beautiful temples, including Wat Phra Singh, Wat Phan Tao, and Wat Chedi Luang. Wander through charming small streets lined with traditional houses, enjoying a rickshaw tour for a classic perspective. The tour also includes a walk through the bustling Warorot Central Market, offering a glimpse into local life. After lunch, you will check into your hotel.

In the afternoon, ascend Doi Suthep hill, home to one of Thailand's most historically and spiritually significant temples. The

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scenic drive winds through lush mountainous terrain to the temple's base. From there, you will climb over 300 steps or take an elevator to reach the summit. At the top, be rewarded with breathtaking panoramic views of Chiang Mai City. After soaking in the views, transfer back to your hotel. In the evening, you have the opportunity to explore the lively Chiang Mai Night Market at your leisure.

Activities: Enjoy breakfast and coffee upon arrival in Chiang Mai
Walk through Chiang Mai Old Town, including city wall, moat, and gate
Visit Wat Phra Singh, Wat Phan Tao, and Wat Chedi Luang temples
Take a rickshaw tour through traditional streets
Explore Warorot Central Market
Drive up Doi Suthep mountain
Visit Wat Phra That Doi Suthep temple
Admire panoramic views of Chiang Mai
Browse the Chiang Mai Night Market (optional)

Day 7 Ethical Elephant Encounter in Chiang Mai

Meals: B, L | Stay: Aruntara Riverside Boutique Hotel | Transport: Sharing transfer (van)

Your day begins with a hotel pickup between 8:00 AM and 8:30 AM, followed by a scenic 1.5-hour drive south of Chiang Mai. The journey takes you through picturesque rolling hills, forests, and local agricultural areas, leading to the Elephant Jungle Sanctuary. Upon arrival around 10:30 AM, you'll meet your guide and take a short 10-15 minute walk through the jungle to the sanctuary itself. Here, you'll change into traditional Karen clothing, preparing for an immersive experience.
An introductory lesson will provide insights into elephant anatomy, history, and behavior, setting the stage for your interactions. Around 11:00 AM, you'll have the opportunity to meet the elephants, feeding, interacting, and playing with them in their natural environment. This is a fantastic chance to learn about their individual personalities and capture memorable photos. A delicious lunch of traditional Thai food and fresh fruit is served at 12:00 PM. The afternoon continues with a hands-on activity where you learn to make herbal medicine balls for the elephants, followed by feeding them and then walking with them to the river for bathing and brushing. Around 2:00 PM, join the elephants for a therapeutic mud spa, followed by a swim in the river and more photo opportunities. After changing clothes and bidding farewell to the elephants around 3:00 PM, you'll depart the sanctuary for the 1.5-hour drive back to Chiang Mai, arriving at your hotel between 5:00 PM and 5:30 PM, with the rest of the evening at leisure.

Activities: Drive to Elephant Jungle Sanctuary
Learn about elephant anatomy and behavior
Feed, interact, and play with elephants
Enjoy traditional Thai lunch
Make herbal medicine balls for elephants
Bathe and brush elephants in the river
Participate in a mud spa with elephants

Day 8 Mae Kampong Village Trek and Local Culture

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Meals: B, L | Stay: Aruntara Riverside Boutique Hotel | Transport: Private AC vehicle

After breakfast, embark on a beautiful drive to Mae Kampong, an ancient village nestled in the mountains, approximately 50 kilometers from Chiang Mai City. En route, make a stop at San Kampaeng market to purchase ingredients for your lunch and seasonal fruits. Upon reaching Mae Kampong, you will be welcomed by local villagers and your community guide, who will share insights into the history of this remarkable settlement.

A scenic trek around the village allows you to observe daily life and the unique local economy. Most residents are involved in cultivating Bai Miang, a plant processed into tea, as well as growing coffee and aromatic mushrooms. Other villagers showcase their craftsmanship through handicrafts like tea-leaf-filled pillows, rattan baskets, and bamboo furniture. Lunch will be a home-cooked meal at a village homestay, providing an authentic taste of local cuisine. The program offers flexibility for various walks around Mae Kampong, tailored to your preferences. A traditional massage is also available for those seeking relaxation. In the late afternoon, you will return to Chiang Mai.

Activities:
Drive to Mae Kampong village
Stop at San Kampaeng market for local ingredients
Meet local villagers and community guide
Trek around Mae Kampong village
Learn about Bai Miang tea cultivation and other local crafts
Enjoy a homestay lunch
Optional traditional massage

Day 9 Chiang Mai Departure

Meals: B | Transport: Private AC vehicle

Enjoy your final morning in Chiang Mai at leisure. Depending on your flight schedule, you might have time for some last-minute souvenir shopping or simply relax at your hotel. At the appropriate time, a private transfer will be arranged to take you to Chiang Mai International Airport for your onward journey.

Activities:
Leisure time in Chiang Mai
Transfer to Chiang Mai International Airport

WHAT'S INCLUDED

INCLUDED

- v Accommodation listed in the program or similar (subject to availability)
- v English speaking guides
- v Meals as mentioned in the program: B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner
- v Private transfers in private AC vehicles (Except join in tour

NOT INCLUDED

- x International and domestic airfares
- x Early check in/Late check out
- x Other services are not mentioned in the program
- x Visa fees upon arrival in Thailand
- x Tips and personal expenses

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by sharing transfer)
- v Entrance fees
- v Excursions by boat as mentioned in the program
- v Train ticket in 2nd Class Sleep AC
- v Drinking water bottle on tour days
- v Service charges and government tax

PRICE INCLUDES

- v Accommodation listed in the program or similar (subject to availability)
- v English speaking guides
- v Meals as mentioned in the program: B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner
- v Private transfers in private AC vehicles (Except join in tour by sharing transfer)
- v Entrance fees
- v Excursions by boat as mentioned in the program
- v Train ticket in 2nd Class Sleep AC
- v Drinking water bottle on tour days
- v Service charges and government tax

CANCELLATION POLICY

Tour Code: IMP-6750FCFDEB88