

Thailand

Sample itinerary

A note: All of our itineraries are flexible. Our philosophy at Crooked Trails is to let the country guide our experiences and not to live by a strict itinerary. If unexpected events arise, we may change plans to take advantage of the situation or deal with an issue. However, we will do all we can to offer you everything that is on the schedule. Please be flexible yourself and allow the program to unfold.

Meals included in the program cost are listed as B (breakfast), L (lunch) and D (dinner) for each day.

- Day 1** **Travel Day.** Leave home at scheduled flight time.
- Day 2** **First day of program:** Arrive in Bangkok late. Upon your arrival you will be met at the airport by your Crooked Trails facilitator and transferred to your guesthouse in the heart of Bangkok near the Chao Praya River.
- Day 3** You will rise early due to jet lag so we will make use of the early rise and after our morning welcome and introduction breakfast, we will be exploring the Klongs (river system) by boat and along the way, we will visit Wat Arun (Temple of the Dawn) and Wat Po (Temple of the Emerald Buddha). Depending on how everyone feels we can go out on the town for dinner or stay nearby the guest house. After dinner we will board an overnight bus for Nan Town in the far North of Thailand. **B**
- Day 4** We arrive in Nan town very early in the morning after the journey on the overnight bus. After we check in and get some rest in the hotel in the morning, we will spend the afternoon visiting the interesting ethnological museum in the former Prince of Nan's palace as well as some of the historic temples in this old provincial town. This day is a relaxing one. **B**
- Day 5** After checking out of the hotel, we venture northwards across mountain passes to visit a bamboo basket-making group not far from the national border with Laos. Here minority group farmers will show us how they subsist in a hill environment as we walk through their fields and visit their outlying settlements. Later, we drive through a narrow valley before ascending one of Thailand's highest mountain areas, spending the night in the rest-house of Doi Phu Kha National Park with its welcome cool, fresh air.
- Day 6** After breakfast, we will enjoy a short morning trek in the national park. Later, we make our way down into the Pua valley to visit a Thai Leu village producing fine weavings –where we meet our host families and spend a night in the village.
- Day 7** We will join the local activity of the village as you will have a chance to learn

how to spin cotton by hand, how to weave and how to cook in the Thai Northern style. Tonight will be your final night with your host family.

Day 8

After breakfast, we will leave for our drive to Mien tribal village that specializes in traditional hand-made silver jewelry and to learn about their traditions as well as their fine embroidery and appliqué stitch work. After lunch, we drive to Lampang province to spend the night at an attractive rural river resort where it is possible to take a swim in the pool, visit the small spa and relax with a famous Thai massage and/or just take a stroll around the extensive gardens full of mature indigenous trees, palms, shrubs, orchids and other flowers.

Day 9

Morning flight to Phuket in the southern part of Thailand. The villages on this last leg of your trip are developing Community-based Tourism as part of their post-tsunami recovery process. The trip you are on contributes to this process by helping them build cultural tourism experiences and the skills to manage tourism. The communities are proud of their heritage and traditional way of life, and keen to protect it through CBT.

Starting from the CBT Guide Training Centre (TREC), we meet our guide and translator. Travel from TREC to the pier to take a long-tail boat to Tung Nang Dam. The island although not devastated by the Tsunami, suffered heavily from loss of fishing boats and fishing equipment. After the tsunami with the loss of their only livelihood means, village fishermen struggled to feed their families. As the village had been relatively lucky, with no loss of life or homes, they received little or no support from relief organizations.

It is a short boat ride to reach the island, where the villagers will welcome you and introduce you to your homestay family. After you have settled in and enjoyed your first meal you will be taken on a jungle trek to Eagle Mountain. The trek culminates with spectacular views of the mountains and Andaman Sea. You will descend in time to enjoy sunset on the beach.
(B,L,D)

Day 10

After breakfast we will board row boats to explore nearby mangrove swamps. Where lies the hidden world of extreme biodiversity. Traveling with local guides you will learn the importance of these fascinating sites. Lunch will be at a beautiful stilted house on the river. Evening free time with families.
(B,L,D)

Day 11

After breakfast we will travel by boat to Pak Trium. The original village was completely washed away by the tsunami along with two children. The villagers have rebuilt their homes on the mainland and are carrying on with daily life in a spirit of inspirational resilience. One of the initiatives to come out the disaster is a small but effective handicraft cooperative. The group can partake in tie-dye gifts and making rice cake. In the afternoon we will visit the site of the old village to see the extent of the devastation created by the wave and then on to a *krachang* (floating fisherman's home) for an early dinner. In the evening after dinner, we will join a local fishermen in a night fishing

excursion to Koh Kwai, if you manage to catch something you will be rewarded with a second dinner! **(B,L,D)**

Day 12-13 For the next two days we will be working on a service project to be determined by the local communities. Projects can include teaching English at the local school, working at the orphanage or helping with mangrove conservation. There will also be time for exploring the beaches, nature and playing with families. **(B.L.D)**

Day 14 After breakfast we will take a late morning flight to Bangkok. We will have the afternoon free for shopping and then all share in a final celebration dinner together. **(B)**

Day 15 Early morning departure. You will arrive home the day you leave due to the time change.