

# EXPLORE!



## Islands in the Sun

On this tropical adventure we cruise between Thailand's idyllic islands in the southern Andaman Sea, spending time on Koh Yao Noi, Koh Lanta and Koh Hai as well as mainland Krabi. We have time to swim and snorkel in warm tropical waters against a backdrop of craggy limestone outcrops that are dotted through Phang Nga Bay. We can visit the secret Emerald Cave, and learn to cook a delicious Thai meal or simply relax on beautiful white sand beaches under the shade of a swaying coconut palm.

## Trip highlights

- ★ **Bangkok** - The spectacular Grand Palace and temple of the Reclining Buddha
- ★ **Koh Yao Noi** - Island life in picturesque Phang Nga Bay
- ★ **Krabi** - Beautiful beaches and limestone landscapes
- ★ **Koh Lanta** - Golden sand beaches and magical sunsets over the Andaman Sea
- ★ **Koh Hai** - Boat trip to the secret Emerald Cave

### ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

#### Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

**TRIP PACE:****Relaxed**

You can enjoy easy-going activities and experiences on these Relaxed pace tours, with opportunities to absorb the sights and immerse yourself in the local surroundings, but still come home feeling relaxed and refreshed.

**GROUP SIZE:****10 - 16**

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

# Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

## DAY 1 - Join tour in Bangkok

Arrive Bangkok and check in at the hotel. The rest of the day is free. You may choose to take an optional cruise along the city's Klongs (canals) in a traditional longtail boat. This is the ideal way to explore Bangkok's network of meandering waterways that branch off from the main channel of the Chao Phraya River. The excursion will also include visits to the Royal Barge Museum and the iconic Wat Arun, the Temple of the Dawn, which was built to represent the towering slopes of Mount Meru, the home to the gods of Khmer mythology.



**Accommodation: Royal Princess Larn Luang Hotel** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 2 - In Bangkok, visit Grand Palace and Wat Po; overnight train to Surat Thani

Travelling on foot this morning we head for the magnificent splendour of the Grand Palace, where we enjoy a tour of the site in the company of a local guide. Dating from the latter years of the 18th century, this huge edifice represents the emergence of the Thai nation once more from under the yoke of Burmese oppression. It is opulence on the grandest scale and is almost certainly the most impressive site in the city, with its unrivalled collection of palaces, golden stupas, wats (temples) and ornately decorative statues. The most impressive of the wats within the palace grounds is Wat Phra Kaeo (The Temple of the Emerald Buddha), where we find the small jade statue of Buddha, believed to have been created in Sri Lanka and reputedly discovered when a lightning storm split open an ancient chedi in the northern town of Chiang Rai during the early years of the 15th century. Reputed to contain fabulous powers it is still worshipped by Thais, from the king down, to this day. After our visit we continue on foot to the rambling complex of Wat Po, older even than the city itself and home to the fabulous reclining Buddha, a 46 metre golden plated statue depicting Lord Buddha as he enters Nirvana. We will have some free time to enjoy the delights of Bangkok before we head to the station, to get our overnight sleeper train to Surat Thani.



**Accommodation: Overnight Train from Bangkok to Surit Thani**

 Simple Overnight Train

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 3 - Drive to Phang Nga Bay; island hopping cruise to Koh Yao Noi

We arrive at Surat Thani and if time allows we can enjoy a walk around a local market before driving south to the pier to board a private long tail boat, depending on group size we may have more than one boat, for a lazy cruise through picturesque Phang Nga Bay to our first island of Koh Yao Noi. As we make our way through a seascape dotted with craggy limestone islands we will make a couple of stops to visit small islands, so that we can enjoy the beaches and warm waters of this idyllic part of Thailand. We arrive at Koh Yao Noi in the mid afternoon and take a short drive in a local truck to our hotel base for the next two nights.



**Accommodation: Koh Yao Chukit Resort** (or similar)

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Standard Bungalow

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Single room available

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 Meals Provided: None

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## DAY 4 - Free day on Kho Yao Noi

Today is free for you to either relax under the shade of a palm tree or choose from a number of optional excursions including hiring a bicycle and cycling around the island to learn about daily life on the island; or kayaking to nearby islands; or taking an island tour to see a rubber plantation, rice farming and other local industries. Your tour leader will discuss various options with you.



**Accommodation: Koh Yao Chukit Resort** (or similar)

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Standard Bungalow

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Single room available

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 5 - Public ferry to Ao Thalene for kayaking; drive to Nopparat beach in Krabi

This morning we transfer by local truck to the pier where we board a public long tail ferry to Ao Thalene pier from where we join other travellers on a kayaking excursion for around two to three hours. We then drive on to our hotel on Nopparat beach. On arrival we check into our hotel for the next two nights, after which the rest of the day is free to enjoy this stunning location at your leisure. Renowned for its limestone outcrops, the region is littered with caves that have unearthed prehistoric rock paintings and artefacts that date back some 40,000 years, one of the oldest finds of human habitation in South East Asia. These caves are also one of the prime sources worldwide for the nests of the Swiftlet that is used to make bird nest soup. Please note: rooms are air-conditioned and have fans. Hot water is available at certain times of the day.



**Accommodation: Phu Pha Ao Nang Resort** (or similar)

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Standard Hotel

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Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 6 - Free day in Krabi; optional cruise to Koh Phi Phi

A free day affords another opportunity to relax and enjoy the balmy serenity of these tropical shores, relaxing on the beach, or perhaps taking a walk through the surrounding area. Considered one of the most picturesque regions in southern Thailand, the area is blanketed in verdant vegetation, white beaches and numerous caves, islands and waterfalls just waiting to be explored. Alternatively you may wish to take the short trip to Krabi, to partake in an optional Thai cookery course, where an expert cook will teach even the most inexperienced the fundamentals of Thai cookery so that the fabulous cuisine can be recreated on your return home. For those looking for adventure farther afield there is the option to take a morning ferry to Phi Phi Island. Here, magnificent limestone cliffs rise out of the water while warm waves crash on the brilliant white sand. The undulating island is covered with rich vegetation and bright flowers and fringed with thatched roof houses. It was on Koh Phi Phi that the film *The Beach* was filmed.



**Accommodation: Phu Pha Ao Nang Resort** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 7 - Public ferry to Koh Lanta; free afternoon

Transferring to the local pier we take a public ferry to the island of Koh Lanta, whose beautiful beaches have earned it the name of Pulau Satak by the local people (Island of the Long Beaches). Its white sands and forested hills present the ideal backdrop to our stay amidst the warm waters of the Andaman Sea and on our journey to the island we may even be accompanied by dolphins and flying fish, so keep your eyes peeled. On arrival we will transfer to our hotel and check in, after which the rest of the day is free to explore, or simply relax and take in the tranquil ambience of our idyllic surroundings. Inhabited largely by Muslims who arrived here from Malaysia 200 years ago, this beautiful island is some 25 kilometres long, with a steep ridge forming a forested interior. Parts of its lush interior are cultivated, but most villagers are still involved in the time-honoured occupation of fishing, much as their ancestors have been for generations. There are superb deserted beaches to wander along, or watch the fishermen pull in a catch, while children splash in the golden waters at sunset. This is the spot to forget your worries and relax and a Mai Tai cocktail, whilst watching the sunset offers a perfect end to the day.



**Accommodation: Lanta Casuarina Beach Resort** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 8 - Free day on Koh Lanta

A free day on the island affords a wealth of opportunities to enjoy some optional excursions, including walks in the national park, a boat trip into the warm waters, or perhaps an excursion by bus around the island. The pristine waters of these shores present ideal opportunities for diving and snorkelling.



### Accommodation: Lanta Casuarina Beach Resort (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 9 - Public ferry to Koh Hai; free afternoon

A short boat transfer takes us to the beautiful island of Koh Hai, (sometimes called Koh Ngai), the least developed of the islands we stay on, and a true paradise that is perfect for exploring, with its fine white sandy beaches, clear water and vibrant coral reef. A landscape of ragged limestone outcrops and evergreen forests offer a spectacular backdrop to our stay here. Once we have checked in the rest of the day is free to enjoy as you wish.



### Accommodation: Fantasy Resort (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 10 - From Koh Hai, boat trip to Ko Muk; swim through Emerald Cave; free afternoon

Our first full morning on Koh Hai sees us taking a boat trip to the nearby Trang Andaman Island of Koh Muk, where we stop off to visit the stunning Emerald Cave (Tham Morakot). An 80 metre swim along a limestone tunnel emerges at an inland beach, surrounded by enclosed cliffs covered in vegetation and an open pool of water that reflects the most beautiful emerald colour. This island is the perfect place to relax and unwind - perhaps taking the opportunity for further snorkelling or a walk through the forested interior to the other side of the island. Returning to Koh Hai the rest of our time on this glorious island is free to enjoy as you wish. You may like to take a walk into the forested slopes of the National Park, where crab-eating monkeys and monitor lizards travel down from the mountains to wander through the plantations of palms in search of food. Alternatively you can enjoy more of the spectacular reefs off shore, either from the beach, or by taking boat trips from the island.



### Accommodation: Fantasy Resort (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 11 - Free day on Koh Hai

Another free day affords an opportunity to return to the forested landscapes of the National Park, or perhaps to take a speedboat to nearby Rok Nok or Rok Nai, to enjoy some snorkelling and shopping. Of course you may just prefer to soak up the idyllic majesty of our island paradise and relax by the warm waters of the Trang Sea. This evening there is the option to take a sunset cruise from Koh Hai, a fitting way to spend our final night on the islands, before returning to the city.



**Accommodation: Fantasy Resort** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 12 - Free morning; afternoon public ferry to Trang, and overnight train to Bangkok

After a free morning we take the ferry back to the mainland, from where we take the overnight train from Trang back up to Bangkok.



**Accommodation: Overnight train from Trang to Bangkok**



Simple Overnight Train



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 13 - Free time in Bangkok

After arriving in Bangkok the rest of the day is left free in this vibrant and bustling capital city.



**Accommodation: Royal Princess Larn Luang Hotel** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 14 - Tour ends in Bangkok

Our tour ends after breakfast. If you have time you may wish to wander through Chinatown for a different flavour of the city, or visit one of the many shopping malls and markets.

 Meals Provided: Breakfast



## Why book this trip

This trip to Thailand is a great way to escape our winter months. This is an excellent trip for first-timers to the country as it will give you a flavour of the culture in Bangkok but focus mainly on seeing the beautiful islands and beaches of the Andaman Sea in the south. You will be travelling using a mixture of overnight trains, public ferries and private buses really giving you a flavour of being in the destination, however plenty of free time is built in on the islands for you to fill as you please.

## What's included?



### Included meals

Breakfast: 11



### Transport

Bus  
Boat  
Ferry  
Train



### Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader  
Boat Crew  
Driver(s)  
Local Guide(s)



### Accommodation

2 nights standard bungalow  
2 nights premium hotel  
7 nights standard hotel  
2 nights simple overnight train

## Trip information

### Country information

# Thailand Holidays & Tours

## Climate

Generally hot with high humidity. There is some rainfall from April to September with most days being hot (around 33 Degrees) and a light breeze on the islands. If it does rain, it will be more of a heavy tropical downpour that lasts a few hours. Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at <http://www.explore.co.uk/weather>.

## Time difference to GMT

+7

## Plugs

2 Pin Round

## Religion

Buddhism

## Language

Thai

## Budgeting and packing

## Optional activities

Koh Lanta - Bus excursion US\$45; Boat to Koh Roh US\$45 Phi Phi - Sightseeing, snorkelling with lunch US\$50 Krabi - Thai cookery course US\$55; half day kayaking US\$28 (US\$33 incl lunch); full day kayaking to Koh Hong US\$56 incl lunch Koh Hai - Speedboat to Phi Phi US\$75 Bangkok - Longtail boat excursion on the Klongs includes visit to Royal Barge museum and Wat Arun US\$22

## Clothing

Pack essentially for hot weather. Bear in mind that the region is tropical (humid) and that days can be very hot. Lightweight rainwear or an umbrella is advisable all year. Casual clothes are the most practical (something with long sleeves, and long trousers for evenings), and tight fitting garments should be avoided. Laundry facilities are available on the islands. A swimming costume is a must.

## Footwear

Comfortable shoes and sandals. Flip-flops or Thongs are useful when hopping on and off boats.

## Luggage

20kg

## Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack.

## Equipment

A small torch, insect repellent, water bottle. Bring a beach towel and high factor sunscreen. If you intend to do a lot of snorkelling we recommend you bring your own mask and snorkel, as local equipment is not always top quality. A disposable waterproof camera can be useful whilst snorkelling. Any qualified divers should remember to bring logbooks and certification with them if intending to dive.

## Tipping

### Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

### Local crew

You should allow approximately US\$25.

## Country Information

## Thailand Holidays & Tours

### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

**Dinner price**

£4.00 - 8.00

**Beer price**

£1.5

**Water price**

£0.5

### Foreign Exchange

**Local currency**

Thai Baht

**Recommended Currency For Exchange**

We recommend that you bring your money in GBP or US\$.

**Where To Exchange**

Most major towns and on the islands - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

**ATM Availability**

ATMs are available in Bangkok but are limited on the islands.

**Credit Card Acceptance**

Major stores and restaurants.

**Travellers Cheques**

Can be exchanged at banks and exchange offices throughout the tour although rates may not be as favourable.

## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Bus, Boat, Ferry, Train

### Accommodation notes

**Booking a Single Room**

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

We carefully select the accommodation on this relaxed beach-based trip to ensure a pleasant stay, in some cases the facilities at some of the island hotels are less sophisticated than in the city, with electricity supply and hot water availability being limited in some instances. This may be because of restrictions in the mains supply or the hotels may need to generate their own electricity and do not wish to run their generators 24 hours a day. In the heat and humidity many people prefer a cool shower - note that where the bathing water supply is unheated, it will take on the surrounding air temperature so still be relatively warm!

## Essential information

### FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

### **Under 18 immigration guidance**

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

## **Essential Information**

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

## **Visa Information**

Thailand: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens for a stay of less than 30 days. All passports must have at least 6 months validity remaining on entry to Thailand. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

## **Booking conditions**

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

## **Transfers**

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

### **Booking a land only package with Explore**

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

### **Joining Tour Abroad**

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer click [here](#)

## **Insurance**

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

## **Flight information**

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

### **Flight Information**

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### **Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore**

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare

fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## **Non refundable permits**

## **Thailand Holidays & Tours**

### **Vaccinations**

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and infectious hepatitis. Although not compulsory, travellers may also wish to immunise themselves against Japanese encephalitis. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on Malaria and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

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