

# EXPLORE!

## Family Ancient Jungle and Tropical Beaches 13 days

Thailand - Trip code FTTE



## Family Ancient Jungle and Tropical Beaches

Southern Thailand is blessed with warm clear waters, tropical islands, dense jungles and generous hospitality, making it a perfect introduction to South East Asia. Try out Thai boxing and spend time in lively Bangkok before visiting one of the regions oldest rainforests, Khao Sok to admire a spectacular landscape of limestone cliffs soaring out of tranquil lakes with an abundance of wildlife. In the second week we swap land for sea and travel to Thailand's famous tropical islands with white sandy beaches, easy going villages and the chance to spot pink dolphins in a marine park.

## Trip highlights

- ★ **Bangkok** - Take part in a Muay Thai boxing training session and absorb local life on a long-tail boat journey through Bangkok's canal network
- ★ **Khao Sok National Park** - Enjoy a canoe trip through this ancient jungle
- ★ **Koh Phangan** - Stunning bays, beautiful beaches, waterfalls and forests
- ★ **Ang Thong National Marine Park** - Stunning limestone islands home to dolphins, sea otters and monitor lizards
- ★ **Koh Samui** - Coconut plantations and perfect palm fringed beaches

### 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:****14 - 20**

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 Bangkok. Optional trip to interactive museum

After arriving in Bangkok, we will check-in to our conveniently located hotel. The rest of the day is free. You may choose to visit the Rattanakosin Exhibition Hall - just a ten-minute walk from our accommodation. This interactive museum is regarded as one of the best in Thailand and helps to bring Bangkok's history and culture to life. Another option is a visit to Wat Saket, known as The Golden Mount. Here, a Buddha relic is housed in a gleaming gold temple, attracting worshippers throughout the year.



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



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: None

### DAY 2 - Muay Thai boxing session and long tail boat cruise. Overnight train to Surat Thani

This morning, we visit the Sor Vorapin Gym - the famous Muay Thai training camp, where we will watch Thai Boxing experts in action. Afterwards, we will have the chance to learn training techniques of this traditional martial art ourselves in a training session. This afternoon, we head to Tha Tien Pier, where we will travel on a traditional long tail boat for a cruise along Thonburi's klongs (canals). This is the ideal way to explore Bangkok's network of meandering waterways that continue to serve as an important thoroughfare in the city. Along our route, we watch local life taking place around us - vendors pass by on small wooden boats, filled with vegetables and noodles to be sold to canal-side homes; locals laze on the porches of old teak houses and children throw food to the catfish. We may even see the postman making his deliveries in his engine-powered banana-boat. Returning to our hotel by tuk-tuk, we have some free time to relax before catching the night train to Surat Thani. There will be plenty of time to enjoy dinner at the station before we board our train.

Berths are not in compartments, but are arranged open plan either side of a central aisle. During the evening and morning part of

the journey, pairs of seats face each other on each side of the aisle. At night, each pair of seats pulls together to form the bottom bunk, and an upper bunk folds out from the wall. The attendant will make up your bunk with a proper mattress and a pillow, bedding and blanket. There's plenty of luggage room. A steward or stewardess from the restaurant car may come round and take your food or drink order, offering you a set menu with several choices, around 180 baht for dinner and 100 baht for breakfast. The meal will be delivered to your seat although you may want to have this in the restaurant car. Toilets and hand wash sinks are located at the end of each carriage.



## Accommodation: Overnight Train from Bangkok to Surat Thani



Simple Overnight Train



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 3 - Walks in Khao Sok National Park with canoe ride through the park

Arriving in Surat Thani (Punpin) early this morning, there should be time to purchase breakfast at one of the small cafes near the station, before we transfer to our jungle lodge in Khao Sok National Park. Covering an area of some 65000 square kilometres, the park is one of the oldest and most bio-diverse jungles in South East Asia. In fact, it boasts lush rainforest that is older than that found in the Amazon or Central Africa. Set against a spectacular backdrop of towering limestone mountains, the park is home to a rich diversity of wildlife, including elephant, tiger and the Malaysian sun bear. Some 180 species of birds are also in residence - a delight for both keen birdwatchers and novices alike.

This afternoon, we will enjoy a canoe ride along one of the tributaries that snake through this natural wonderland. Here, the sounds of gibbon calls mingle with the flowing river. The park is also a haven for a wide variety of exotic plants, including bamboo, fig, palms and the carnivorous pitcher plant, which gruesomely consumes its prey in its specially adapted 'bag'. Our jungle lodge will be our base for the next two nights. In this magical setting, we can look forward to the sight of monkeys descending from the surrounding canopy to drink from the river.



## Accommodation: Morning Mist Resort (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 4 - Included guided jungle walk with time to relax and swim in the river

Our second day in the jungle sees us enjoying a guided walk through the dense jungle keeping our eyes peeled for mischievous monkeys playing in the canopy above and watching out for colourful hornbills and kingfishers as they dart amongst the trees. The rest of the day is then free to indulge, explore or relax as you see fit. Our lodge is set close to the river, so a swim in this idyllic and unique setting is a welcome possibility. It is also possible to hire a canoe to explore a bit further afield. This evening, there is the option to go on a walking jungle safari, to witness the jungle bursting with life at night.



## Accommodation: Morning Mist Resort (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 5 - Ferry to Koh Phangan, where we transfer to Salad Beach for a free afternoon

Transferring back to Surat Thani this morning, we board a ferry for the short crossing to Koh Phangan Island, nestled like a jewel among the warm turquoise waters of the Gulf. On arrival, we will be met by songthaews (distinctive Thai minibuses, converted from trucks), which will take us to Salad Beach on the north-western side of the island. This afternoon is free to enjoy the peace and beauty of this bay.

Salad Beach is a perfect spot to base ourselves for the next few days. Renowned as one of the best swimming beaches on the island, it is a 'protected' bay, with no loud music permitted. With white beaches, warm seas and an abundance of marine life, it is an ideal location for a tropical family adventure.



**Accommodation: Haad Lad Prestige Resort and Spa** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 6 - On Koh Phangan with included boat trip around the island

We have two full days here to enjoy this tropical paradise. Our first day includes a boat trip around the island, stopping at a few of its secluded bays and waterfalls, most of which are only possible to reach by boat.



**Accommodation: Haad Lad Prestige Resort and Spa** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

## DAY 7 - On Koh Phangan with optional snorkelling

Our second day in this island paradise has been left completely free. You may choose to spend your time exploring the area with mask and snorkel. The clear waters of this region, combined with the coral reefs that ring the island make for fabulous snorkelling. All manner of colourful reef fish, rays, turtles and small reef sharks call these rich waters their home. Your Tour Leader can also arrange taxis to visit fisherman's villages, waterfalls, markets and Had Rin Beach - home to the famous full moon beach parties.



**Accommodation: Haad Lad Prestige Resort and Spa** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 8 - Ferry to Koh Samui with its white sandy beaches and coral reefs

Today, we take a fast ferry to Koh Samui, arriving late in the morning. This is the largest and most developed of the islands in the Sumai Archipelago, with a distinctive mix of quiet palm-fringed beaches, backpacker resorts and coconut plantations.

The rest of the day is free for you to relax and explore at your own pace. You may choose to take to the waters with mask and snorkel again, or simply wander the palm-fringed beaches and trails around the island. Koh Samui has a slightly different feel to many of the other islands in southern Thailand, owing in some part to the influence of the Hainan islanders who first settled the island 150 years ago. The Chinese influence is still visible in some of the building in Na Thon, and some descendants of the original settlers still live in the area.



**Accommodation: Samui Palm Beach** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 9 - Visit Ang Thong National Marine Park by boat

Today we have the opportunity to visit the beautiful chain of islands that make up the Ang Thong National Marine Park. Once renowned as a haven for pirates, this stunning archipelago's reputation now centres on its pristine beaches, remote bays and virginal rainforest. These limestone islands are home to sea otters, monitor lizards, dolphins and wild pigs, and offer the perfect setting for some aquatic exploration.



**Accommodation: Samui Palm Beach** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

## DAY 10 - Free day to snorkel or relax on the beach with optional cookery course

Today has been left free to spend as you wish. You may choose to relax on the beach, or enjoy a snorkelling trip around the island.

Another option is to take part in a Thai cooking lesson, where an expert cook will teach you the fundamentals of Thai cookery, so that you can recreate this fabulous cuisine back home. There are five basic flavours to Thai cuisine - sweet, sour, salty, creamy and spicy and the lesson will show you the best way to combine the rich tastes with the freshest ingredients, to conjure up a feast.



### Accommodation: Samui Palm Beach (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 11 - Boat trip to see Pink Dolphins and overnight train back to Bangkok

Today's boat tour takes us to Khanom, where we hope to spot the famous and rare pink dolphin. Travelling by long tail boat, we will pass through the spectacular South Sea Island National Park, with its 11 islands. Known officially as Indo-Pacific humpback dolphins, the dolphins are born grey, turning pinker as they get older. The species is incredibly endangered, but it is thought that around 60 of them can be found in Taled Bay, where our tour takes us. En route, we are likely to see Khanom fishermen going about their daily work. We then drive to Ban Tha Sathon hot spring where we can relax and enjoy the surroundings and get a chance to meet Thai children who use the springs to bathe. Continuing onto the station, we catch our overnight train back to Bangkok.



### Accommodation: Overnight Train from Surat Thani to Bangkok



Simple Overnight Train



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 12 - Free in Bangkok. Optional Tuk Tuk ride to the Grand Palace, Emerald Buddha and Wat Po

After arriving in Bangkok try a traditional Thai breakfast of Jok Moo (rice porridge), Khanom Kluk (coconut pancake) or Khao Neow Moo Ping (grilled pork and sticky rice) or similar before transferring to our hotel, the rest of the day is free to use as you wish. One option is to join a sightseeing tour. Travelling by tuk-tuk, you will head for the magnificent Grand Palace, where a local guide will show you around. Regarded as the most impressive site in the city and dating from the 18th century, this huge edifice represents the re-emergence of the Thai nation, after years of Burmese oppression. Its unrivalled collection of palaces, golden stupas, Wats (temples) and ornately decorative statues are definitely worth exploring. The tour continues by foot to the rambling complex of Wat Po. Older than the city itself, this is home to the fabulous reclining Buddha - a 46-metre golden plated statue, depicting Lord Buddha as he enters Nirvana. Those who choose to join this tour will return to the hotel by tuk-tuk and have the rest of the day to spend as they wish.



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



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available

## DAY 13 - Tour ends Bangkok

Tour ends after breakfast. If you have time you may wish to wander through Chinatown for a different flavour of the city.

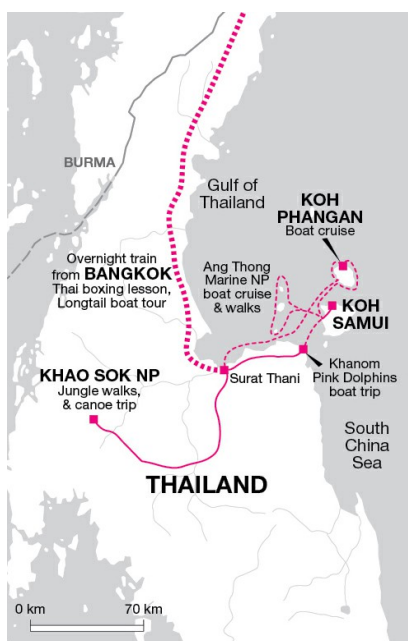
## Family information

**Triple Rooms:** This trip allows the option for triple rooms to be included within the booking on a selected number of night stops within the holiday. If you would like this option, a discount may be applicable on the cost of the trip - please ask our Sales team for further information.

**Average Age:** As a guide we have identified the actual average age of the children who have travelled on this trip over the the last 5 years, to help you decide whether it's the right one for your family. The average age on this trip is 12 years old, this trip is suitable for children of all ages.

### Minimum age

7



## Why book this trip

This tour is designed for families who want an a relaxing holiday with a few added activities which are varied and sometimes unusual - how about jungle walks, a Thai boxing lesson and a canoe ride in the jungle !. The holiday also provides a number of beach stops and overnight stays with plenty of time to relax and snorkel in the crystal clear waters of the Gulf of Thailand.

# What's included?



## Included meals

Breakfast: 12  
Lunch: 2



## Transport

Bus  
Boat  
Ferry  
Train



## Trip staff

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



## Accommodation

2 nights premium hotel  
6 nights standard hotel  
2 nights standard lodge  
2 nights simple overnight train

# Trip information

## Country information

### Thailand

#### 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

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Khao Sok NP - Night Safari US\$ 25

Koh Samui - Thai cookery course £40 (3hrs)



## 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. When visiting temples men and women will need to cover their shoulders (shawls over clothing are not accepted) and shorts are also not appropriate for either sex.

## Footwear

Comfortable shoes and sandals. Flipflops are useful when hopping on and off boats.

## Luggage

20kg

## Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

## Equipment

A small torch, insect repellent and water bottle. Bring a beach towel and high factor sunscreen. If you intend to do much 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

In this region, tipping is a recognised part of life across the service industry. Local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided.

To assist with this your Explore Leader may organise a group tips kitty for included activities and meals, they will then account for kitty use throughout the tour.

For this we suggest \$20 per family member.

For all non-included services and meals on your trip please tip independently at your discretion.

## Country Information

### Thailand

#### 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

### Family swimming

The hotels have pools plus you can swim when staying on the islands.

## 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.

### Price Guarantee

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 and Passport 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.

You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

### 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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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**

#### **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. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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 [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.