



Thailand Exploration - r12b

Trip summary	12 days / 11 nights - 2 nights Homestay, 2 nights Khao Sok, 2 nights Cheow Larn Lake, 1 night Chiang Mai, 2 nights Homestay, 2 Nights Resort Mae Hong Son
Getting there	Tour starts in Kuraburi and ends in Chiang Mai
In-country support	International support staff, local guide, bilingual Thai/English translator, visitor's handbook
What's included	Transfers during the tour, accommodation, activities and meals as stated in the program
Availability	All year round

Immerse in the local culture at the Muslim village of Ban Talae Nok on the North Andaman Coast. Enjoy the fantastic nature of the 20 million year old rainforest of Khao Sok and relax in the floating bungalows at the mystical limestone lake. Then jet off to Chiang Mai to experience the Northern culture and way of life by visiting local villages and ancient wonders. Then jet off to Chiang Mai to experience the Northern culture and way of life by visiting local villages and ancient wonders.

Day 1 Cultural Exchange ~ (L,D)

Morning Start the tour in Kuraburi at the Andaman Discoveries office for a pre-trip briefing and cultural orientation. Transfer to Ban Talae Nok village to meet your host family, and be welcomed into their way of life.

Take a walking tour of the community with your local guide to learn about the history and lives of these villagers. See an area of the village that was destroyed by the 2004 tsunami and learn how this event affected the community.

Noon For lunch, enjoy authentic southern Thai food with your homestay family. In the afternoon take part in a handicraft workshop and learn the art of Batik, a technique of hand-dyeing fabrics by using designs drawn in wax. You can create your own design or have your hosts draw one for you, then color in the beautiful designs, and keep your creation as a souvenir. Then learn to weave leaves of the nypa palm with the villagers and help make traditional roofing from a local mangrove plant.

Talk a short walk to the beach where you can relax and bask in the spectacular colors of an Andaman Sea sunset.

Evening For dinner, enjoy a barbeque dinner on the beach with your hosts and feast on freshly-caught seafood, garden-fresh vegetables, and Thai curries (weather permitting, alternative is dinner in the homestay.)

In the evening participate in a cultural activity where you can share stories and experiences with the family and local villagers. Pictures from home are always appreciated! Then try on their traditional clothing to learn more about their Muslim culture.

Overnight: Ban Talae Nok Homestay, comfortable bedding and mosquito net provided.



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Day 2 Village Life – (B,L,D)

Morning Breakfast at homestay house.

Head into nature, and explore the mangrove forest in a long-tail boat, where you have the chance to spot various birds, monitor lizards and monkeys. Take a fascinating journey through the tidal canals and learn how the villagers are active in protecting this amazing ecosystem. Then go fishing with your homestay family and depending on tides and their expertise fish in the canals with nets or poles, spearing shrimp or catch crabs with traps.

Noon Lunch at your homestay. After lunch take part in a handicraft workshop - the women's group, established after the tsunami, makes beautifully hand-crafted soap, using only the finest natural ingredients. Watch an informative demonstration and then make soap for yourself with the expert guidance of the soap ladies, and keep a souvenir.

Return to your homestay and learn to make a local specialty desert. Try your hand grating the coconut and filling the palm leaf with the batter. Then grill and enjoy the delicious snack hot off the fire.

Take a short walk back to the beach to relax and have a chance to see the water buffalo taking a swim and enjoy another colorful sunset.

Evening In the evening learn to cook local Thai food with your host family and enjoy the results for friendly meal.

Overnight: Ban Talae Nok Homestay, comfortable bedding and mosquito net provided.

Day 3 Village Life (B,L)

Morning Enjoy early breakfast with host family before departing the village.

Handicraft workshop - the women's group, established after the tsunami, makes beautifully hand-crafted soap, using only the finest natural ingredients. Watch an informative demonstration and then make soap for yourself with the expert guidance of the soap ladies, and keep a souvenir.

Walk up to the school for a panoramic view of the Andaman coast, Have a personalized cooking class and help make your lunch with your homestay hosts.

Noon Lunch with host family, Pack and say goodbye to your friendly hosts. Transfer to Khao Sok National Park area, along the way take in the scenery of rural Thailand and watch it transform back into the verdant jungle that serves as a home to a vast variety of flora and fauna. Check into your jungle accommodations, stay in authentic tree-houses or bamboo bungalows located on beautiful forest grounds.

Evening Independent dinner at the resort restaurant

Overnight: Jungle resort in Khao Sok; Breakfast and Lunch included





Day 4 Rainforest and Jungle Resort (B)

Morning Awake to the sounds of nature from your jungle accommodation. All meals are independent and can be enjoyed at the jungle resort or one of the many restaurants in town.

Noon After lunch join a local community group for a canoe trip down a gentle river while floating by towering limestone cliffs to take in the scenery. Stop and enjoy a hot drink from a handmade bamboo cup with your local guides. Learn how your trip and these guides help to conserve this local environment.

Evening after your independent dinner go on a scheduled Night Safari included in your program. Explore the jungle at night to learn about the many nocturnal animals and insects that come to life in the dark!

Overnight: jungle resort in Khao Sok; Independent meals; Night safari included



Day 5 Limestone Lake

Morning After your breakfast at resort, transfer by van to the Rajapraba Dam and Khao Sok (Cheow Larn) Lake. This man-made reservoir is one of outstanding beauty with its towering limestone cliffs and jungle-clad hills. Stop at local market in Ban Takun for a briefing at the Khao Sok Lake office to prepare for your days on the lake. Arrive to the pier at the dam and take a long tail boat ride to your floating bungalow accommodations.

Noon Be greeted by your host and check into your rustic floating bungalow. Enjoy a Thai style lunch of local vegetables and fresh fish from the lake. Take a boat ride to a short hiking trail through the jungle to an even more remote lake. Here take a guided tour of a secret cave that is decorated with fantastic formations that look like an underwater coral reef.

Evening Return to the floating accommodation to relax and swim from the footsteps of your bungalow. Take a kayak out to survey the surrounding jungle and view wildlife. Dinner is served at the floating restaurant and includes an array of Thai dishes.

Spend your night in your floating accommodation on the lake, a fairytale experience of unforgettable peace and tranquility.

Overnight: floating bungalows on Khao Sok Lake; Lunch and dinner included; Cave tour included

Day 6 Limestone Lake (B,L,D)

Morning: Awake to the sounds of gibbons calling from the tree tops and the picturesque views from your window. Have a choice of western or Thai breakfast at the lake house restaurant. Spend the morning at your leisure.





Noon: Have lunch at lake house restaurant. Take an afternoon boat ride to Klong Yee, here your boat driver or guide will take you for a short hike to the viewpoint for a bird's eye view of the natural beauty.

Evening: Dinner is served at the lake house restaurant. Spend another night in the tranquility of the floating bungalows.

Overnight: floating bungalows on Khao Sok Lake; All meals included; Viewpoint included

Day 7 Limestone Lake (B,D)

Morning: Awake early to catch the best of wildlife viewing in a longtail boat with your guide. Watch the hornbills fly in the mist rising against a backdrop of colorful limestone cliffs and try to catch a glimpse of the gibbons swinging in the tree tops.

Return to the lake house restaurant for breakfast. Enjoy a guided kayak tour around the shores of the floating bungalow area.

10:30 Check out and say goodbye to your friendly hosts at the floating lake. Travelling back across the lake, your boat driver will show you some of the hidden bays and rock formations that make the lake so special.

Noon: Transfer to Surathani airport for Chiang Mai program Flight 14.50
Arrival at Chiang Mai at anytime best before 06.00pm / transfer to hotel

Evening 19.00 transfer for welcome dinner with traditional Khan Tok Lanna.

Overnight: at Hotel in Chiang Mai

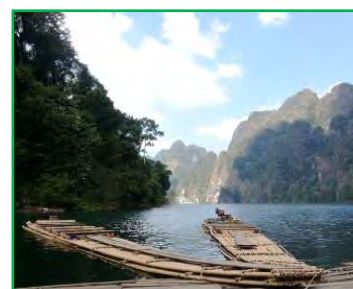
Day 8 Chiang Mai -Black Lahu Community (LD)

Morning: Meet up in Chiang Mai, we drive to Baan Jabo, a Black Lahu village where we are welcomed to the community by local guides who are members of the Ban Jabo Community based Tourism Group. After an orientation, we hike up the mountain to visit local Coffin and Coral caves, considered to be sacred sites by the Lahu people. Our local community guides will explain about local beliefs and how to behave in the caves; and show us their fields, rotational rice farming system, and how local people live in harmony with the forest.

Noon: We will enjoy a jungle lunch en route in the bamboo forest area. We will have the chance to learn how the local people use bamboo as a cooking tool...a tasty jungle food, and even a building material!

Evening: In the evening, we will spend time getting to know our homestay families. A team of 'facilitators' will assist translation (1 per 6 guests).

Overnight: Homestay accommodation in this village is very basic, but the people are wonderful and you will treasure the memory of your stay. Please remember some pictures of home to show your local hosts where you come from.





Day 9: Maehong Son Tour at Mae Lana Shan Community (B,L,D)

Morning: After breakfast, we will continue hiking through the mountains and beautiful paddy fields. In the late morning, we will arrive at Ban Mae Lana where we will meet our host families and check in to our new home-stays. The Shan or Tai Yai people of Mae Lana are originally from Burma. They have interesting legends, a unique culture and spectacular performance.

Noon: We will have lunch together with our homestay families.

Afternoon: After lunch, we will explore Mae Lana village with local community guides. There are many interesting people to meet, including the herbal medicine man, and local groups who make a variety of products.

Evening: We will have dinner with our host families. Afterwards, free at leisure
Overnight: Homestay Mae Lana



Day 10: Merit making - Mae Hong Son (B,L)

Morning: Wake up for a fresh start in the early morning and the opportunity to join in a timeless tradition of daily Buddhist life - making 'merit' by offering foods and flowers to the community's monks. We return to our home-stays for breakfast. After breakfast, then travel by 4wd to visit one of the largest caves in the north Lod Cave. Enroute enjoy the beautiful forest around the limestone mountain area.

Noon: local Thai Restaurant. after lunch exploring one of the biggest Caves in the North of Thailand "Lod Cave". Lod Cave contains three main chambers, first is "a giant pillar cave" with its height of 21 meters, second is a "doll cave" which contains the different kind of stone formation and also looks like doll. The doll cave also contains a very old wall painting aging around 2,000 years. Third is a "coffin cave". Take a bamboo raft from a doll cave then climb up to see the remained wood coffin aging around 2,000 years old then return to the entrance.

Late afternoon, return to hotel or resort. **Overnight: at Resort in Mae Hong Son**

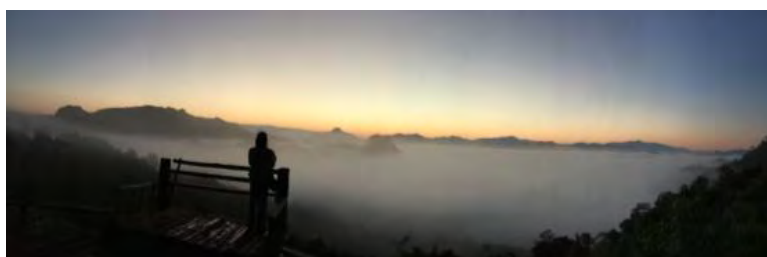
Day 11: Free day in Mae Hong Son (B)

Breakfast at your resort / free at leisure or enjoy a nature walk behind Fern Resort.

Overnight: at Resort in Mae Hong Son

Day 12: Transfer to Chiang Mai (B)

Morning: After breakfast, Free time to relax and check out and transfer to your next destination. End of Service



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