

Silk Steps

EXPLORE AND EXPERIENCE



Thailand

Thailand is resplendent, exotic, culturally and historically rich and with a diversity of people and landscapes that are unparalleled in any other country in the region.

Once called Siam and immortalised by 'The King and I', Thailand has had a reputation for being accessible and welcoming for many decades.

Thai people are naturally friendly and trusting, many speak and understand enough English to make conversation easy. Bangkok is the hub for travel to Asia and beyond, so no country could be easier to visit.



WEATHER

Northern Thailand experiences a dry season from November to May and temperatures can drop to 13°C at night. From May to November the monsoon rain falls with increased humidity. The further south you travel the more rain you are likely to get. The dry season is normally from December to May with temperatures around 30°C. The main season for Phuket is October to May and for Ko Samui it is May to September.

WHEN IN THAILAND WHY NOT...?

Spend 2 nights on a converted rice barge, the **Manohra Song**, sailing between Bangkok and Ayutthaya. Travel in luxury on a converted 100-year-old teak rice barge with just 4 state rooms for up to 8 passengers. Relax and sample the Thai cuisine prepared by the on-board chef, enjoy spa treatments and Thai massage and, if you have the energy, disembark to explore the Summer Palace at Bang Pa In and the historical ruins at Ayutthaya.

Spend a four-day adventure in **Khao Sok National Park**. Discover the world of a tropical rainforest, a spectacular location with majestic forest-covered limestone mountains, sparkling streams and waterfalls. Stay in a bungalow high in the canopy of trees and bamboo raft-houses on a superb lake deep in the jungle.

Indulge in **luxury pampering in a spa**. Thailand is world renowned for its spas with its huge range of treatments and massages, many using traditional and natural remedies. Spend a day of indulgence or several



days to help your fitness, peace of mind and stress levels. Choose from a spa on the beach, on a tropical island or even in the mountains.

For a special occasion spend 2 nights travelling on the luxurious **Eastern & Oriental Express** from Bangkok to Ayutthaya, Chiang Mai and the River Kwai. Imagine a journey on a train which recreates the era of great train travel - the Eastern & Oriental Express. Sample gourmet cuisine and fine wines, relax in the Bar Car with its resident pianist, or watch the world go by from the open-decked Observation Car. If you can tear yourself away, tour historical Ayutthaya, explore Thailand's second city Chiang Mai and board a raft to cruise to the Bridge over the River Kwai.

Indulge yourself with an overnight at the **Oriental Hotel**, Bangkok, the hotel of choice for royalty and celebrities, past and present, rub shoulders with the rich and famous in this sumptuous colonial hotel.



Suggested Itinerary

Nights stay at:	
1	Chiang Mai
2	Chiang Mai
3	Hmong Lodge
4	Thaton
5	Chiang Rai
6	Chiang Rai
7	Sukhothai
8	Sukhothai
9	Ayutthaya
10	Ayutthaya
11	Kanchanaburi
12	Kanchanaburi
13	Bangkok

DISCOVER THAILAND

This comprehensive tour of Thailand takes you to the bustling cities of Bangkok and Chiang Mai, the stunning scenery and intriguing hill tribes of northern Thailand, the cultural centres and ancient ruins of Sukhothai and Ayutthaya and the historic River Kwai region.

You start in Thailand's second city, Chiang Mai, whose vibrancy contrasts with its moated old city and many ancient wats. Its most famous temple is the hilltop Wat Prathat Doi Suthep with panoramic views over the city. If time, you can join a cookery class to learn the techniques behind the subtle textures and flavours of Thai cuisine.

From Chiang Mai venture into the stunning mountains surrounding the city and travel by boat to meet and be guests of the hill tribes for 2 nights. They continue to live in much the same way as they have done for centuries and you will have the opportunity to learn about their extraordinary way of life. Spend a night in Chiang Rai, at the heart of the Golden Triangle, the crossroads where Thailand, Myanmar and Laos meet.

Travel south to the ancient capitals of Sukhothai and Ayutthaya. Sukhothai was Thailand's first capital in the 13th century and the ruins of the wats in the walled royal city, much of which have been carefully restored, are particularly picturesque with ponds filled with lotus flowers. Ayutthaya was a major marketplace with merchants converging on it from China, India and Persia. The remains of the imperial capital are a real treasure trove and include a 16th century royal palace, temples, monasteries and stupas, all surrounded by lush rice paddies and waterways.

Continue south to Kanchanaburi, home to the Bridge over the River Kwai and the infamous Death Railway. Here, you stay on rafts in a magnificent jungle setting, ride through the jungle on an elephant or hike to Thimoria Waterfall.

Your final destination is brash Bangkok, a city that never sleeps. Visit the glorious Royal Grand Palace, the delightful Thai house of Jim Thompson, the founder of Thailand's silk industry and cruise the canals in a long-tailed boat. Of course, there will be plenty of time for shopping in Bangkok's many street markets and chic shopping malls.

Cost per person

(based on two people travelling in a twin/double room)

FROM £1,385



Island Getaways



KO CHANG

Ko Chang is a secret retreat, a marine national park that has been a haven to the locals for many years. It is Thailand's second largest island and has some stunning beaches, coves and bays and now there are a handful of lovely resorts where you can stay to enjoy this wonderful island hideaway.

Ko Chang can be accessed from Bangkok by a 45-minute flight to Trat and then a ferry ride to the island.

Panviman Koh Chang Resort is nestled on Klong Prao beach, a tranquil part of the island idyllic for swimming, offering a unique blend of serenity and relaxation within a traditional Thai architectural setting.

All of the 50 deluxe rooms are majestically set in a tropical lush garden reflecting the mood of pure comfort. All rooms feature private spacious balconies, and beautiful back-to-nature style bathrooms.

KO LANTA

Ko Lanta lies on the west coast on the Andaman Sea between Krabi and Phi Phi Island. It comprises over 70 small islands, all with stunning scenery and fantastic white sandy beaches, and offers an appealing escape from the highly popular tourist destinations of Phuket and Phi Phi Island. Once a backpacker's haven, nowadays Lanta sports some exclusive resorts and spas as well. But the friendly locals and unspoiled nature are still Lanta's main attractions.

To reach Ko Lanta, take a flight to Krabi only 70km away and then a boat to the island.

Layana Resort & Spa is an exclusive boutique resort facing a fine white sandy beach and set against a picturesque backdrop of forested hills. Laid out amid tropical gardens and designed to harmonise perfectly with its natural surroundings, the resort comprises low-rise, contemporary Thai-style buildings that combine spaciousness with an open, cool and natural ambience. Here guests have the opportunity to appreciate an idyllic island world far from the pressures of the city. As an exclusive haven of luxury, Layana Resort & Spa aims to offer the ultimate in individualised service. Throughout, guests enjoy Thai hospitality that is unobtrusive to preserve privacy, and yet attentive enough to give a sense of privilege and to fulfil every wish.

KOH YAO

Koh Yao is in fact made up of two islands, Koh Yao Yai and Koh Yao Noi (big and small). Lying in beautiful Phang-Nga Bay, the two islands are only a short distance from Phuket and can be easily reached from both destinations.

A few resorts have started to spring up on Koh Yao Noi, but the overall feel has remained intact. Koh Yao Yai has no accommodation. The two beach areas of Koh Yao Noi, Pasai and Khlong Jaak are beautiful spots to relax and swim or snorkel and transportation around the island is mainly by pick-up taxis.

The **Paradise Koh Yao Boutique Resort & Spa's** 70 studios and villas are set on the beach, in the garden, or on the hillside overlooking the bay. Wood, thatch and stones provide tropical accents to the contemporary design and integrate the architecture into the surrounding natural environment.

Koh Yao Noi Island, conveniently located in Phang Nga Bay between Phuket and Krabi, is the stunning site of this remarkable resort. Away from the major tourist spots of Phuket and Krabi yet less than an hour away by boat transfer, the island is largely untouched and set in lush tropical vegetation

KOH RACHA

Lying about 20km south of Phuket, Koh Racha comprises two islands, Koh Racha Yai and Koh Racha Noi. The islands possess crystal clear waters and white sandy beaches. They are very popular with divers and snorkellers, with challenging dive sites for advanced divers as well as plenty for beginners and snorkellers.

The Racha is Thailand's premier deluxe island hideaway, a place where you can balance body, mind and spirit in an environmentally friendly space. The resort features 70 luxurious villas and aims to be a leader in responsible and environmentally sustainable tourism. All the villas are designed in a minimalist, zen-like nouveau style and feature open-air rain showers and comfortable day beds indoors as well as on the terrace.

Hotel Selection



The choice of hotels in Thailand is endless and those detailed below are recommendations only. We can book most hotels throughout Thailand, so please contact us if you would like alternative hotels.

BANGKOK

Located off the busy Sukhumvit Road, the **Rembrandt Hotel** is very close to the entertainment and shopping areas and within easy reach of two Skytrain stations, Asoke and Prom Phong. The rooms are large with all the facilities you require, the service impeccable and the hotel has a choice of restaurants, including the Rang Mahal, one of the best Indian restaurants in Bangkok. This hotel never fails to disappoint and has been a long-term favourite of Silk Steps.

In a city as brash as Bangkok, the **Banyan Tree** is a true oasis with a well deserved reputation for its standards of traditional Thai hospitality. The hotel is well located on South Sathon Road, offering easy access to the shopping and entertainment areas and within walking distance of Lumpini Metro station. Recover from the exertions of sightseeing in hectic Bangkok with a spa treatment and then enjoy a cocktail on the open-air rooftop bar/restaurant on the 61st floor with breathtaking views of the night-time cityscape.

CHIANG MAI

The impressive **Four Seasons Resort** is a piece of paradise located in the Mae Rim Valley overlooking rice paddies and the mountains. The elegant Lanna-style pavilion rooms each have their own outdoor living room. With the wonderful pool and spa facilities and the excellent Thai cookery school, you will be reluctant to leave this splendid hotel.

Located in the heart of Chiang Mai, the **Empress Hotel** is a first class hotel in terms of amenities and service. It is within walking distance of the famous night market, shops and nightlife. The impressive Lanna-style lobby is stunning and the rooms all have views of the city, river or mountains.

CHIANG RAI

The **Rimkok Resort** is a stylish hotel, built in traditional style surrounded by glorious countryside. Enjoy the view from the swimming pool, relax in the bar overlooking the Mae Kok River or use the jogging track winding through the resort. Just 5km from Chiang Rai, this is an excellent base to visit the city, to venture into the Golden Triangle, go trekking or rafting and visit the nearby hill tribes.

The **Baan Boran Hotel** is located high on a ridge with stunning views over the Golden Triangle of Thailand, Laos and Myanmar and is the perfect base to explore this intriguing region. The rooms are decorated in Lanna-style with local artefacts and modern facilities and the hotel is surrounded by 400 acres of tropical gardens and a bamboo forest. From here you can go elephant trekking, take a long-tailed boat along the river, go mountain biking and birdwatching.

A Silk Steps inclusive holiday price includes:

- Private return transfers between airports and hotels (unless otherwise specified)
- The services of English speaking guides and representatives at each stage of the tour. Between most places you will travel unescorted
- Accommodation in a standard room (shared twin) with private facilities (unless otherwise specified) with breakfast
- Government taxes and compulsory service charges
- All tours and sightseeing as specified, inclusive of entrance fees
- Economy class air travel within all countries on the scheduled services of the national or domestic carrier as specified in each tour
- The services of our local representative

Extras

- International flights - please contact us for up-to-date prices
- Travel insurance
- Meals - unless otherwise stated
- Optional sightseeing other than specified
- International airport departure tax payable overseas
- Visa fees
- Single supplement (on request)

