



Information Pack

Volunteer with Elephants

7 – 17 November 2020

Get hands on in Chiang Rai where you spend four days at Elephant Valley Sanctuary getting involved in a range of tasks such as maintenance of the grounds, cleaning, feeding and food preparation for these gentle giants.

You will also explore the stunning Khao Yai National Park with its dense jungle, hidden waterfalls and native flora as you go in search of wild species such as gibbons, deer, macaques and even wild elephants.

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#NotEntertainers

We were known as **WSPA**
(World Society for the
Protection of Animals)

World Animal Protection (Registered Charity No 1081849) is acting as an agent for The Different Travel Company 6706. The flight-inclusive holiday in this brochure is financially protected by the ATOL scheme. When you pay you will be supplied with an ATOL Certificate. Please ask for it and check to ensure that everything you booked (flights, hotels and other services) is listed on it. Please see our booking conditions for further information or for more information about financial protection and the ATOL Certificate go to: www.atol.org.uk/ATOLCertificate.



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Thailand

Thailand offers an irresistible combination of breath-taking natural beauty, inspiring temples, renowned hospitality, exquisite cuisine and ruins of fabulous ancient kingdoms. From the lush jungles and wildlife of Chiang Mai and the verdant limestone islands of the Andaman Sea, to the bustling bazaars of Bangkok and the tranquil villages moored along the Mekong River, the '*land of smiles*' offers something for everyone.



Khao Yai National Park

After arriving in Thailand's capital you travel to Khao Yai National Park where your adventure begins. Khao Yai is the third largest national park in the country with an area of over 2000km² and here you will take part in a jungle walk, go in search of hidden waterfalls, visit wildlife hides, discover native flora and fauna and immerse yourself in the rainforest. The diversity of wildlife at Khao Yai is vast and you may see gibbons, deer and macaques, a spectacular variety of birds and insects and even wild elephants. This is a unique opportunity to see how various species are being protected in their natural habitat and for animal-lovers to get an in-depth insight into the jungle habitat. *NB wildlife sightings can never be guaranteed.*



Elephant Valley Thailand

The next part of your adventure is to take an overnight sleeper train from Bangkok to Chiang Mai, then travel further north to Chiang Rai which is home to Elephant Valley Thailand, an elephant sanctuary that will be your base for two full days and two half days. Here you will get hands-on with a number of volunteering activities such as preparing food for the elephants, planting or harvesting their food, maintaining the sanctuary grounds by cleaning and taking part in refurbishment or other hands-on tasks depending on the sanctuary's most urgent need at the time. You will also observe and learn about the elephants rescued from captivity in the entertainment or labour industries and learn more about the fight of the sanctuary and organisations like World Animal Protection, who aim to protect elephants and other wildlife from exploitation.





Who accompanies us?

You will be accompanied by English-speaking local guides, a Different Travel Company tour manager and a World Animal Protection staff member who together will support you and make your trip memorable.

What is the weather like?

November is considered the 'cool' season in Thailand however you can still expect highs of 32°C during the day, dropping down to 24°C at night. Weather conditions vary and may be unpredictable but in general you can expect hot, cloudy days with a 35% chance of rain and moderate humidity. It's important to be prepared for all weather conditions and temperatures so ensuring you have suitable lightweight clothes which keep your skin protected from the sun. When the sun comes out it can feel very hot so wearing sunglasses and a hat, and keeping well hydrated is crucial.

Please note that the above climate details are based on historical averages and may differ due to climate change and the unpredictable nature of the weather. We cannot be held responsible for weather conditions which differ to this.

Where do we sleep?

In Bangkok, Khao Yai and Chiang Mai you will stay in a hotel with en-suite facilities; 2-3 people to a room. On the journey to Chiang Mai you will sleep in an air-conditioned overnight train, and during your nights at Elephant Valley you will stay in dormitory accommodation.

You are advised to bring ear plugs so you can block out snoring and other noises which may disturb your sleep (e.g. train noises, other hotel guests, wildlife).

Please try earplugs in advance so you know you are comfortable using them as there are a variety of shapes and types. It cannot be overstated how important earplugs are while staying in shared accommodation.



What are the bathroom facilities like?

The bathroom facilities are en-suite at the hotels, and shared on the overnight train and at Elephant Valley. We recommend you bring biodegradable toiletries to minimise your impact on the environment. Lush cosmetics have a wide selection of natural products. There are western style toilets at all accommodation. Toilet paper is usually provided but we recommend you bring a small supply (1-2 rolls). Toilet paper must not be flushed but put into the bins provided. The sewer pipes are not large enough to cope with toilet paper and if you attempt to flush it, you will block the pipes and make the facilities unusable for everyone else.

What is the food like?

The food you will enjoy during this trip comprises traditional Thai meals, freshly prepared and delicious. Thai food isn't always spicy but if you like your food with a kick, chilli or chilli sauce is often available if you ask. Typical dishes include soup, rice, fresh vegetables, meat, eggs, fruit etc. Special dietary requirements can be catered for upon request.



Medical health declaration

We require a medical form to be completed by everyone upon registering, and any pre-existing conditions, medications used and other medical issues must be noted and (if relevant) signed off by your GP. Any conditions that develop must be declared and a new medical form completed and signed.



How tough is it?

The trip is rated moderate for someone of a reasonable fitness level due to the hot and humid climate and active nature of the trip. An ideal candidate would be an open minded person who enjoys trying something new, experiencing different cultures and making a difference.

How can I increase my fitness level to ensure the greatest enjoyment of the trip?

Although the activities will be at a gentle pace you will be doing something different every day, sometimes taking part in physically demanding tasks. Having a good overall level of fitness is recommended to maximise your enjoyment of this trip. General fitness training can include hill walking, running, cycling, swimming, gym workouts, boot camps etc. You can download a number of free apps which help you train and track your progress. E.g. MapMyWalk, C25K (couch to 5k run), MyFitnessPal.

Who can take part?

No experience is required to take part, just an open-minded adventurous spirit, a willingness to get involved and ambition to make a difference. For optimal enjoyment of trip, we suggest that participants have a good level of fitness and are in good health to be able to cope with the hot climate and activities undertaken. This is an adventure trip rather than a holiday so you should expect active days.



Is there an age limit?

You must be at least 18 years old to participate on this trek unaccompanied. It may be possible for you to participate if you are 16 or 17 years old but you must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. There is no upper age limit.



How much does it cost?

There is a £350 registration fee (payable at the time of booking) then you are asked to fundraise £3,700 for World Animal Protection which covers your trip costs and a substantial donation to the charity. Alternatively, there is a self-funded option. For this you will pay the £350 registration fee then pay your own trip cost balance of £1,850 and pledge to fundraise at least £1,000 for World Animal Protection.

What is included?

Trip includes: Return flights from London* (including current taxes and charges), all local transfers and transport, accommodation (twin/triple rooms at hotels, dormitories at Elephant Valley), meals as stated, all entrance fees, conservation fees and permits, activities at Khao Yai, English-speaking local guides, UK tour manager.
*If you are unable to fly from the UK, a land-only travel option may be available upon request.

Trip does not include

Personal expenses (drinks, laundry, souvenirs etc.), kit or equipment, travel insurance, tips (around £20), Thai visa if required, vaccinations or medication required, transport to/from UK airports etc.





Is the trip ATOL protected?

World Animal Protection is acting as agent for The Different Travel Company, ATOL 6706.

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Where do I start with fundraising?

Most people find that the fundraising is far easier than they imagined. World Animal Protection will give you as much support as you need to reach, and most likely exceed your target!

See below for an example of how easy it can be to fundraise even more than your minimum target by dividing your efforts into lots of smaller events.

The fundraising team will support you every step of the way.

- Non-uniform day at local school: £300
- 2x supermarket bag-packs: £500
- Car boot Sale/ eBay auction: £250

- 2 x quiz nights: £500
- Sponsorship (friends, family etc.): £300
- Host a party, charge £10 to attend: £400
- Ask five friends/ family members to raise £100 each: £500
- Dress down day at work/ lunch money donation: £300
- Donate your skills - ironing, babysitting, gardening, DIY: £250
- Karaoke Night: £250
- Sponsored beard-shave/ leg wax: £200
- 4 cake sales at work: £50 a time: £200
- Bucket shake at supermarket: £100

Total: £4,050 (target exceeded)

How do I book?

Complete the registration form and email it to The Different Travel Company with a photo of your passport data page to info@different-travel.com.

When your form arrives, you will be sent an email with details about how to make payment.



Itinerary

Day 1 (Saturday 7 November): London - Bangkok

Depart London on an overnight flight to Bangkok.



Day 2 (Sunday 8 November): Bangkok

Upon arrival in Bangkok we will transfer to a central hotel and enjoy a welcome dinner at a local restaurant this evening. Depending on flight times there may be some time to explore this bustling and exciting city.

Days 3-4 (Monday 9 - Tuesday 10 November): Bangkok – Khao Yai National Park

After breakfast we depart the city for Khao Yai National Park (approx. 3 hours' drive) and check into our hotel. This afternoon we have a briefing on the activities we can take part in such as a jungle trek in search of hidden waterfalls and local wildlife, safari drives, a visit to wildlife hides and more! During our time at the national park there is a good chance of spotting animals such as gibbons, macaques and elephants, as well as a spectacular variety of bird and insect life (please note wildlife sightings cannot be guaranteed).



Day 5 (Wednesday 11 November): Khao Yai National Park – Ayutthaya – Chiang Mai

After another jungle activity this morning we head to Ayutthaya (approx. 3 hours' drive) and take the overnight train to Chiang Mai. We'll take a packed dinner to eat on-board and will enjoy the comfort of an air-conditioned sleeper cabin.



Day 6 (Thursday 12 November): Chiang Mai – Chiang Rai

Upon arrival in Chiang Mai we make a stop for breakfast then start the 3-hour drive north to Chiang Rai and Elephant Valley Sanctuary, our base for the next three days. Over the next couple of days we'll spend time observing the elephants, volunteering and learning about each elephant from the expert guides. We'll also learn about the history of the sanctuary and the challenges facing the species.



Day 7-8 (Friday 13 - Saturday 14 November): Chiang Rai

We spend two further days at Elephant Valley. There will be opportunities such as preparing food for the elephants and helping out with other tasks, such as planting or harvesting their food, clearing the ground, or some light construction projects, depending on the need at the time.



Day 9 (Sunday 15 November): Chiang Rai – Chiang Mai

After a final morning with the elephants we return to Chiang Mai (3 hours' drive), stopping for lunch en-route. This afternoon we check into our hotel and there will be some free time in this fascinating town before a farewell dinner to celebrate your achievements.



Day 10 (Monday 16 November): Chiang Mai - London

Depending on flight schedules there may be some free time this morning before transferring to the airport for the flight home (possibly via Bangkok).

Day 11 (Tuesday 17 November): London

This morning we arrive back into London depending on flight schedules.



NB This itinerary is complex and details may change due to unusual weather patterns, the needs at the sanctuary and so on. We will do our best to keep to the itinerary however we cannot be held responsible for changes that might occur outside of our control. In all such circumstances your guide and tour manager will have the final say in the interest of the health and safety of the group. Adventure travel is often unpredictable so flexibility and an open mind is recommended.

