

Rural Community Development in Chiang Mai, Thailand

Thailand- Community Development

Overview

Includes;

- Accommodation in shared room at a guest house
- 3 meals per day throughout program (unless otherwise noted)
- English-speaking, on-site group leader
- Airport transfers
- All transportation to project sites
- Group excursion to Elephant riding tour, cooking class, city tour, Thai language class, old temples of Chiang Mai, local markets,
- US \$3Million liability insurance to protect your University and your participants

Does not include:

- International flights
- Medical Insurance
- Visas (Not required for US Citizens)
- Tips and Gratuities
- Personal expenses and baggage fees

The Project

The project is based on our outside of Chiang Mai city in the mountains surrounding the area. The project is a community development initiative done in conjunction with the locals and their needs. Each day is something new as identified by the community and their leaders. Past groups have participated in many tasks that help to ensure the sustainability and livelihood of the community. Past tasks have included reforestation projects, helping to support teachers in the local schools, after school clubs, school maintenance and community infrastructure.



Itinerary

Day 1: Friday - Arrive in Chiang Mai (L,D)

On arrival in Chiang Mai airport, we will be met by our team leader, who will accompany us to the guesthouse. We will have an initial introduction to the team, commence our orientation into our new host culture and review of our plans for the duration of our stay. We will sample our first Thai meal in a welcome dinner this evening before a well-deserved rest after a long journey.

Day 2: Saturday - Orientation & Thai Cultural Values (B,L,D)

For our orientation day, we will immerse in the local Thai culture to give us a good background understanding of the communities that we will be

working with over the next 2 weeks, including a review of health and safety and Thai cultural values.

We will learn about the different communities and hill tribes that make up the local population, discover some of the local traditions and how the unique Buddhist/animist religion practiced in Thailand shapes the cultural norms.

We will learn more about health and safety in Thailand. Our afternoon will be free for us to explore the area.

Day 3: Sunday - Chiang Mai City Tour (B,L,D)

Today we will head into the city on a walking tour and discover some of the delights of the beautiful and ancient city of Chiang Mai - the largest and most culturally significant city in northern Thailand. We will visit a local Wat (temple) and get our orientation around the central district - full of old building and street markets, surrounded by the original city moats and walls.

This evening we will visit the Old Chiang Mai cultural centre, where we will learn about the northern Thai culture, with traditional fire and sword dance performances and a delicious buffet of northern Thai food.

Day 4: Monday - Local Project Orientation (B,L,D)

In the morning we will check out of accommodation in Chiang Mai, and will then travel into the mountains where our project will be based. The ride will take about one hour and upon arrival we will have an orientation to the local area, meet our local project leaders and check into our accommodation.

We will have the afternoon free to relax.

Day 5-8: Tuesday-Friday - Project Work (B,L,D)

For the rest of the week we will be working on our project. Our daily project will be dependent on the specific needs of the community as indicated by community leaders. A few roles that we may take up include reforestation projects, teaching support at the

local school, classroom repairs for the children and infrastructure maintenance in the community.

We will have breakfast daily at our guest house, lunch will generally be a pack up and we will enjoy a group dinner back at our accommodation each day.

Day 9: Saturday - Trekking (B,L,D)

Today we will be traveling further into the mountains to take a guided hike. Here we will visit local hilltribe communities and learn about how they differ ethnically and culturally from the central Thai communities.

Minority groups in Thailand are discriminated against in a number of ways and are often marginalized and poor. The various tribe have widely different cultures, ways of life, religions and background.

Our trek we will also include travel along the river on a traditional Thai bamboo raft, which participants can learn to navigate downstream.

Day 10: Sunday - Cooking Class & Local Thai Markets (B,L,D)

Today we immerse ourselves in Thai culture through food! We will have a day long cooking class that will start by visiting a local Thai farm and market to buy our ingredients fresh. We will learn how to make five different traditional dishes and of course will get to try all of the food!



Day 11-15: Monday - Friday - Project Work (B,L,D)

For our second week we will continue working in the community. On Monday morning we will discuss the areas of most need for the community and assist locals and support the teachers in the work we do. Our work will really give us an insight and appreciation of Thai culture and the lives of the local community members.

Day 16: Saturday - Golden Triangle Tour(B,L,D)

Today we will head back into Chiang Mai city for a visit of the famous Golden Triangle - which is a meeting point of Thailand, Laos and Myanmar. Along the way we will have an opportunity to see the dazzling White Temple with its inlaid mirrored glass, rolling mountains and bustling markets.

We will enjoy a farewell group dinner together after our trek and reflect back on our time in Thailand.

Day 17: Sunday - Departure (B)

We will have our morning free to do some hopping or pack up our last minute things. In the afternoon (depending on flights) we will be transferred back to the airport and will depart back to the US.

**Accommodation**

Our first night in Chiang Mai will be at a local, city guest house. We will transfer to another guest house outside of Chiang Mai to be closer to our project - both are of similar standards. Participants will be placed in twin or triple rooms with en-suite facilities and wi-fi.

The style of bathroom in Thailand is generally a wet room and while our guesthouse will have western-style toilet basins - the traditional, squat-style basin is still popular, even in modern houses,, and you will learn about how to use Thai toilets in your orientation.

We will travel each day from our guesthouse to our project in public transportation - usually a 'songthew' - a local - style mini-bus with benches.