

CLASSIC THAILAND



TRIP OVERVIEW

Setting off from the neon lights of bustling Bangkok, this comprehensive, 11-day tour travels up through the ancient Siamese kingdoms of Ayutthaya and Sukhothai to the jungle landscapes of northern Thailand. Enjoy the magnificent Grand Palace in the capital and scale the stupa-studded mountain of Chiang Mai. Discover hidden gems including the reclusive hill tribes as you travel this truly unique country.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to Thailand. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important information such as flight details, visa requirements and travel insurance.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

DAY 1: UK to Bangkok

Depart London on your scheduled, overnight flight to Bangkok International Airport.

DAY 2: Bangkok D

On arrival into Bangkok you will be greeted and transferred to your hotel. The day will be at leisure to settle in and explore your new surroundings. Originally a small harbour village, Thailand's vibrant capital infuses grand Buddhist architecture within an ultramodern metropolis interspersed by aromatic food markets and waterways that unite this Venice of the East. In the evening, enjoy a buffet dinner before witnessing the highly acclaimed Siam Niramit, one of the world's largest shows depicting each region's fascinating cultural heritage through music, dance and stunning visual effects.

DAY 3: Bangkok B/L

Today's full-day city tour takes you through Chinatown to the city's colourful flower market where beautifully scented jasmine buds are hand made for temple offerings. Visit Wat Pho, home to one of the country's longest and most impressive reclining Buddha images, before visiting Thailand's most important landmark, The Grand Palace. The royal complex displays European-inspired halls partitioned by tranquil gardens, ornate pavilions representing 200 years of successive Kings and the magnificent golden chedi of Thailand's most sacred temple - Wat Phra Kaew. In the afternoon board a traditional long-tail boat to navigate Bangkok's khlongs, where local wooden-stilted houses line the banks. Pass the domineering Wat Arun temple, encrusted with porcelain mosaics that reflect the sunlight with a lustrous glow, before returning to your hotel for an evening at leisure.

DAY 4: Bangkok to Ayutthaya B/L/D

This morning, leave Bangkok to visit the famous floating market of Damnoen Saduak, a man-made river network populated by wooden canoes piled high with colourful produce. En-route, pass mango and lychee plantations and make a brief stop at a coconut farm to learn how the nuts are harvested and manufactured into a variety of products by hand. On arrival at the floating market, observe local traders paddling their fragile boats whilst preparing fragrant dishes within teetering woks. Continue west to the historical jungle town of Kanchanaburi to visit the humbling war cemetery and nearby Thailand-Burma railway museum which documents the brutal Japanese occupation and harrowing conditions faced by prisoners during World War II. Enjoy lunch at a floating restaurant near

the infamous railway bridge that inspired Pierre Boule's novel and the film - the Bridge Over the River Kwai. Transfer to the city of Ayutthaya for dinner and a well-deserved rest.

DAY 5: Ayutthaya to Phitsanulok B/L/D

Start the day at Ayutthaya's UNESCO historical park, an ancient royal capital that was once considered one of the region's most illustrious cities. Wander the Summer Palace, surrounded by rivers and lakes, the beautifully landscaped grounds boast romantic European style architecture, commissioned by the Royal family and still used on special occasions. After your guided tour, visit the ancient royal monastery of Wat Yai Chaimongkhon to see impressive constructions built after King Naresuan's victory over the Burmese in 1592. Departing Ayutthaya, journey through rural Thailand past typical Thai houses, peanut plantations and farmers working on the verdant rice paddies. A lunch stop will be made before continuing on to Phitsanulok for your overnight stay.

DAY 6: Phitsanulok to Lampang B/L/D

One of Thailand's most impressive UNESCO sites awaits this morning - the ancient Sukhothai Historical Park. The peaceful surroundings contain ancient ruins hidden amongst lakes of lotus flowers, a stunning setting crafted during the country's golden era of religious architecture that formed the blueprint of quintessential Thai style. Continue to Si Satchanalai and cross the river to a local fishing village where women can be seen weaving cotton and men cast nets for the day's catch. Following lunch, journey into the jungle area, stopping at a local hill tribe to learn how native plants are used in traditional cooking. Arrive into Lampang late this afternoon.

DAY 7: Lampang to Chiang Mai B/L

After breakfast, drive to the Elephant Hospital and nearby Conservation Centre. Here you can observe these majestic creatures playing in the water with their mahout keepers. Arriving into Chiang Mai, visit a gem and silk factory to see how these local handicrafts are produced before making a stop at Bo Sang's craft market, known as the 'umbrella village' after its ornate and vivid oil paper creations. This evening you can enjoy some free time to relax or experience a local tuk tuk ride to the nearby famous night market - head out after 7pm to explore the many stalls, restaurants and bars with live music and delicious street food.

DAY 8: Chiang Mai B/L/D

Roll up your sleeves and try your hand at cooking the most famous food and desserts in the country at the Mama Noi Cookery School and Organic Farm this morning. After being collected from your hotel this morning, you will visit a local market to learn how to choose fish, meat and vegetables whilst at the same time learning about the herbs and spices that are needed and used in Thai cooking. From the market you will proceed to the cooking school for your class followed by lunch before returning to your hotel. Late this afternoon, your guide will take you to Doi Suthep, a nearby mountain, for panoramic views at sunset over the

city's vast tropical plains. Near the summit discover Wat Phra That, Northern Thailand's holiest shrine, where kneeling worshipers gather around the dazzling golden dome to light aromatic incense and lay lotus flowers before immaculate icons of the Buddha. As night falls, return to the city to sample a traditional Khantoke dinner and show, where food is served on large platters at low tables as you enjoy a performance by local Lanna dancers.

DAY 9: Chiang Mai to Chiang Rai B/L/D

Today, begin your ascent of northern Thailand's mountainous regions, through mist-coated fern forests to the charming town of Thaton. After lunch, board a traditional long-tail boat for a tranquil cruise along the Kok River; traverse slow moving waters to a chorus of cicadas to observe the thatched bamboo huts of the northern hill tribes dotted throughout the picturesque countryside. Disembark and drive to the infamous Golden Triangle, a mountainous range where Thailand, Laos and Burma converge which was once a prolific area for opium production. Continue to your hotel for a night in the laidback city of Chiang Rai.

DAY 10: Chiang Rai to Bangkok B/L/D

This morning visit the stunning Wat Rongkhun, an art installation in the form of a temple. Designed by visual artist Chalermchai Kositpipat, its striking white exterior is mixed with mirror fragments to create a mesmerising effect symbolising the Buddha's purity. Wander to the temple's entrance over a sea of sculpted hands reaching out in desperation and admire the interior murals, an incongruous mix of traditional Buddhist images with modern icons including Superman, the international space station and George Bush. After lunch head to Chiang Rai Airport for your flight to Bangkok, where you will be met and transferred to your hotel for a farewell dinner.

DAY 11/12: Bangkok to the UK or Extension B

Transfer to Bangkok airport in the morning for your direct flight back to the UK or continue on to your chosen extension.



ACCOMMODATION DETAILS & MAP

Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience, location, comfort or character, and can range from business hotels to guesthouses. Hotel accommodation is generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note there is no international classification system for hotels, and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and Thailand. All group tours hotels have private bathroom facilities and air-conditioning, where needed.

Rest assured that all accommodation used by Mercury Holidays is regularly inspected by our staff and partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

Please note the hotels listed on our website and brochure are provided for guidance only and final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.

If you have booked a triple share please note that your room will be a twin room with a rollaway bed or sofa bed added. This may limit the floor space in the room.

Please note: final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.

Meals

Breakfast is always International Buffet style and served in the hotel each morning. Dinner (when included) will be taken in local restaurants or at the hotel. A variety of restaurants are visited giving you the chance to experience a range of dishes and flavours.



ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On your arrival in Thailand you will be met just after the Customs office by a representative from our local agent, **Tour East**. The Mercury Holidays/**Tour East** representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. If you need to contact Tour East, during your stay the details are:

Tour East Thailand

Address: 18-19th Floor Charn Issara Tower 1, 942/157-159 Rama 4 Road, Bangkok 10500 Thailand
Contact Number: 0066 2 267 1400

24 hour emergency contact information

Bangkok & Hua Hin: Mr. Tanawat 0066 81 8193641 (office: 0066 2 2671400)
Phuket region: Ms. Supawadee 0066 98 670 6783 or 0066 98 909 9463 (office: 0066 76 364158-60)

WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

Visas

A visa is not required before you travel to Thailand; you will be issued with a tourist visa valid for 30 days on arrival into the country. Further advice should be sought from the applicable tourist authority for other nationalities and for general queries. We strongly advise you check your destinations' Tourist Board or Embassy for the most up-to-date guidelines regarding visas and passport validity.

Insurance

We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance with Holiday Extras, please call 0800 781 4237 and quote 'WK830' for preferential rates. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Health and Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to check any health and vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in good time before your departure. Sources of information include; www.fco.gov.uk, www.travelhealthpro.org.uk, www.hpa.org.uk, your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with a good level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves climbing of steep stairs and getting on and off coaches. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties.

All our tours feature a "Tour Pace" to help find the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights, climb stairs and get on and off coaches and boats. Our tour paces are marked with dots out of 3, with the differences being as follows:

- 1 Dot the tour is Easy-Going
- 2 Dots the tour is Intermediate
- 3 Dots the tour is Advanced

Classic Thailand is rated as 2 Dots meaning that the tour pace is Intermediate. A good level of fitness is required as you may be on your feet for approximately four hours in a day, though this will be interspersed with regular breaks and will vary from day to day. You will be walking around the sights, and may be getting on and off coaches, trains and boats and climbing steps which may be irregular. You will stay in variety of hotels throughout the tour.

WHAT TO PACK

- Insect repellent
- Suncream and a hat with a big brim for sunny days
- Comfortable walking shoes such as trainers
- Sunglasses
- Ruck sack or light bag per person
- Personal toiletries
- Personal first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters,

Our guides will always endeavor to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 10, and the maximum will be 40. In the unlikely event there are less than 10 people booked on your tour date, we will endeavour to reduce any disruption to your holiday and try to operate your tour with lower passenger numbers. If we are not able to operate your departure date, then you may be asked to change to a different date and a full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

Tour Guides

This is a fully escorted tour meaning that you will be met by a local guide in each of the cities that you visit, ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times.

Tipping

It is at your customary/discretion to tip both your driver and guide. We would recommend to tip approximately £1-2 per person per day. This is a total of £22 per person to budget for tips on your trip. Tips will be collected at the beginning of your tour. Tips are accepted in the local currency.

Currency Exchange

The currency in Thailand is the Thai Baht (THB). We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK, however cash machines are available in all the major cities to withdraw money in the local currency.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take some extra money with you to cover any dinners where these are not mentioned on your itinerary and personal purchases, such as souvenirs, extra drinks and snacks. Approximately £200-£300 per person should be sufficient for the duration of your tour.

Credit Card Information

As normal practice you will be asked for your credit card details on check-in at the hotel in order to cover any extras incurred during your stay. If you do not have a credit card you may be asked for a cash deposit. American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.

Itinerary changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction and/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however order of events and sightseeing may vary according to the local conditions.

stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc

- Toilet paper/tissues for public toilets
- Travel plug adapter – the electricity supply on board the boat is 220V. You will need a 2 pin round plug adapter.

During temple visits arms and legs must be covered, please bear this in mind when packing for your trip.

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Your flight to **Bangkok Suvarnabhumi International Airport** is with **British Airways (BA)**, departing from **London Heathrow Terminal 5**.

IMPORTANT: Final flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

Baggage Allowance

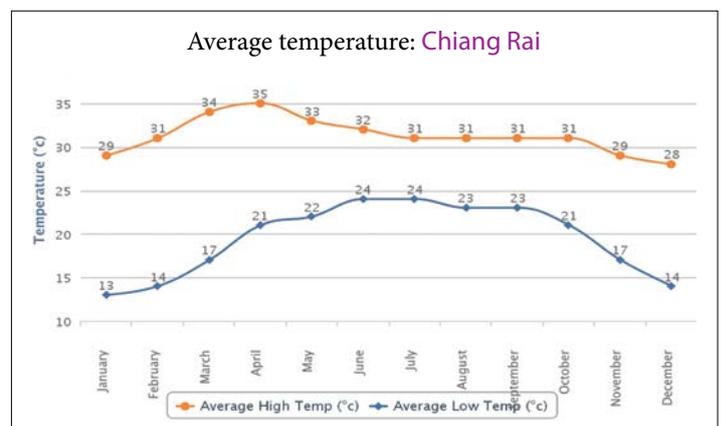
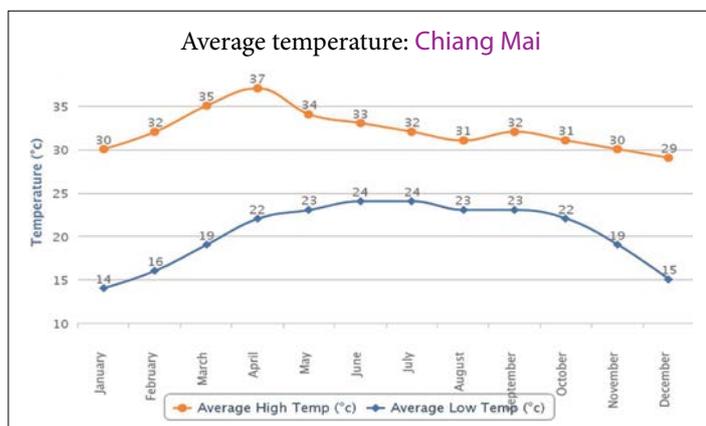
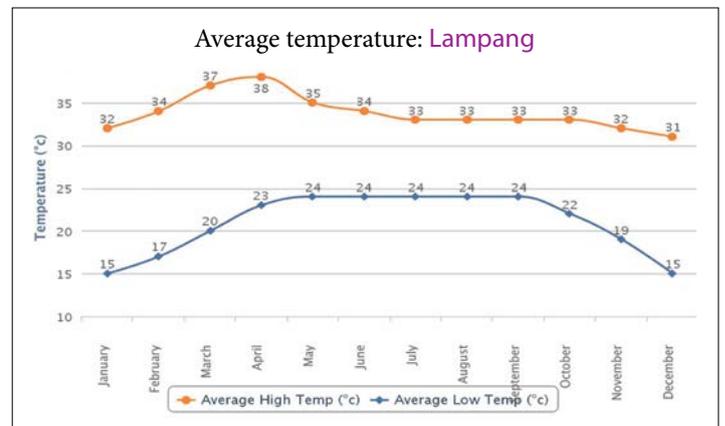
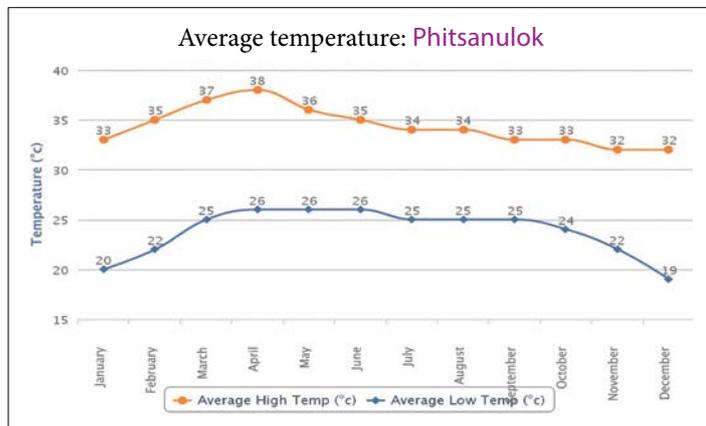
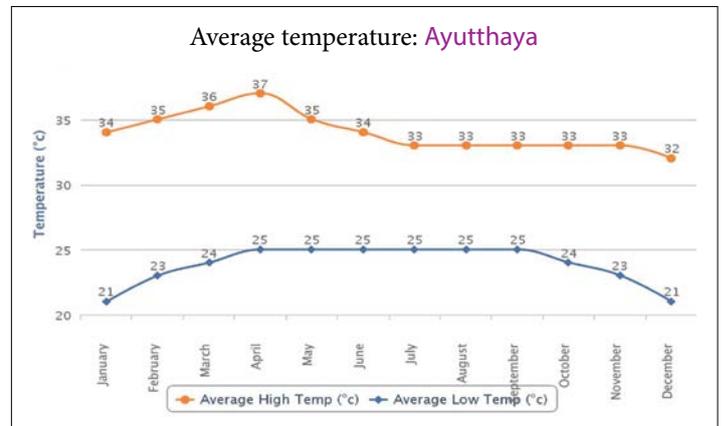
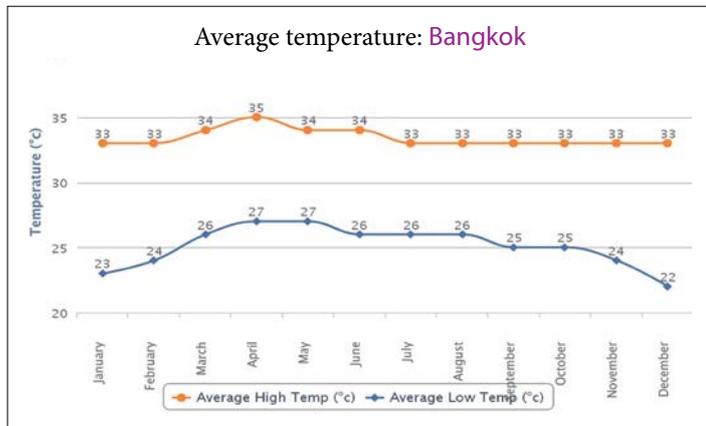
Each passenger is entitled to 20kg of hold luggage. There is also an allowance of one cabin bag not exceeding 25cm x 45cm x 56cm in size and one personal bag not exceeding 45 cm x 36 cm x 20 cm that you can take on the aircraft as hand luggage (maximum 7 kgs). Weight restrictions will be finalized on your e-ticket receipt. Should you wish to take additional luggage you will need to pay an additional fee for this at check-in. Heathrow Airport advises that you should arrive at the airport at least three hours prior to your flight time for international departures. Your flight from Chiang Rai to Bangkok is operated by Thai Smile.

Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange airport car parking, lounges or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras. You can contact them by calling 0871 360 2000 and make sure you quote the following code: HX313.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



HUA HIN BEACH STAY EXTENSION

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0843 224 0723



TRIP OVERVIEW

Famous for its spectacular azures and stunning beaches, tranquil Hua Hin is the perfect destination to unwind and relax in your very own slice of paradise. Your 4 night stay is on Hua Hin's beautiful coast and allows you to explore this area further.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your extension to Hua Hin.

Hua Hin (4 nights)

This popular resort is made up of a vibrant cosmopolitan city brimming with character and, a serene stretch of beach that is perfect for relaxing upon. This extension will allow you to unwind and enjoy Thai culture at your own pace.

Hotel Information

Your stay will take place at either of these hotels:

4★ Novotel Hua Hin on Bed & Breakfast.

The contemporary Novotel Hua Hin commands a stunning coastline location, that is just a 15-minute drive from the popular golden shores of Cha Am beach. Each room is spacious and has a modern décor throughout; hotel amenities include free Wi-Fi, a large pool, waterslide, fitness facility, spa treatments (at a fee), library and a luscious garden.

Hotel information: 854/2 Burirom Road Cha Am Beachfront Petchaburi Hua Hin, Hua Hin District 76120 Thailand, Tel: 0066 32 708 300

5★ Hyatt Regency Hua Hin on Bed and Breakfast.

Nestled on the picturesque beachfront and just a short journey from the nearby vibrant market, lies the luxurious Hyatt Regency Hua Hin. Each beautifully decorated room features a separate sitting area, air conditioning and a satellite TV. The hotel's design and amenities really set it apart and include a large palm lined pool, relaxing treatment room and magnificent outdoor restaurant.

Hotel information: 91 Hua Hin – Khao Takiap Road Khao Takiab, 77110 Hua Hin, Thailand. Tel: 0066 32 521 234

Any alternative hotels or board basis will have been confirmed at booking. Please speak to our reservations department if you are unsure.

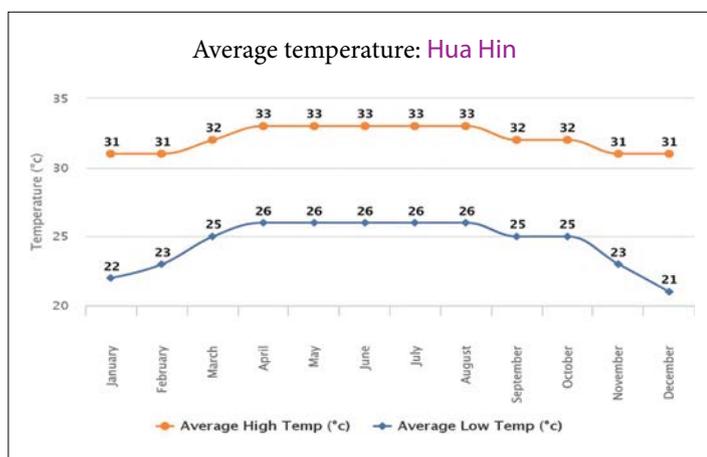
The hotels listed are given for guidance only and final confirmation of your hotels will be sent in a document approximately 10 days before you travel.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any meals that are not included in your board depending on whether you have booked B&B, Half Board or Full Board, as well as personal purchases, such as souvenirs, laundry and drinks.

Tour Guides

Your stay in Hua Hin is not escorted by a tour guide and your time will be free to explore the area at your own pace. Transfers are included.



Hyatt Regency Hua Hin

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on 0843 224 0723

PHUKET BEACH STAY EXTENSION

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0843 224 0723



TRIP OVERVIEW

Famous for its outstanding beauty, spectacular beaches and high-end dining, your 4 night stay on Thailand's biggest island, Phuket will ensure you slip into the local rhythm of life.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your extension to Phuket.

Phuket (4 nights)

Framed by turquoise waters, golden sand and luscious jungles, the 'pearl of the Andaman' boasts vibrant towns brimming with quirky bars and luxurious spas to relax within.

Hotel Information

Your stay will take place at either of these hotels:

4★ Kata Palm Resort & Spa on Bed and Breakfast.

Set amongst verdant gardens, Kata Palm Resort and Spa is located a short walk away from world famous Kata Beach in Phuket. Air-conditioned Superior Rooms have a private balcony and come equipped with Cable TV, Telephone, Mini Bar, Hair Dryer and Safe.

Hotel information: 60 Kata Road, Tambon Karon, Muang District, Phuket 83100, Thailand
Tel: 0066 76 510 063

5★ Mövenpick Resort and Spa Karon Beach Phuket on Bed and Breakfast.

Mövenpick Resort & Spa Karon Beach Phuket is a truly wonderful spa resort. Set amidst lush tropical gardens and just steps away from pristine sands of Karon

Beach. Spend some time enjoying the tropical surroundings in one of the hotels 4 swimming pools or indulge yourself at the Spa. Superior rooms feature stylish surroundings offering 32" flat screen TVs, well stocked minibars (at a fee), FREE Wi-Fi, tea/coffee making facilities and air-conditioning.

Hotel information: 509 Patak Rd, Tambon Karon, Amphoe Mueang Phuket, Chang Wat Phuket 83100, Thailand
Tel: 0066 76 683 350

Any alternative hotels or board basis will have been confirmed at booking. Please speak to our reservations department if you are unsure.

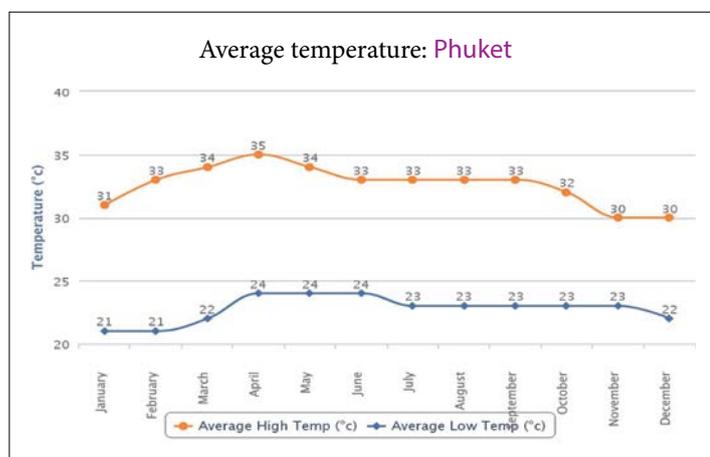
The hotels listed are given for guidance only and final confirmation of your hotels will be sent in a document approximately 10 days before you travel.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any meals that are not included in your board depending on whether you have booked B&B, Half Board or Full Board, as well as personal purchases, such as souvenirs, laundry and drinks.

Tour Guides

Your stay in Phuket is not escorted by a tour guide and your time will be free to explore the area at your own pace. Transfers are included.



Kata Palm Resort & Spa

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on 0843 224 0723