



TRIP CODE:
TNTBC4

TOPDECKER, meet Asia (TD)

TRIP VIBE = iconic sights and in-depth adventures with a local Trip Leader. Northern Thailand: home of serene temples, unreal scenery, epic histories, food that slaps. And So. Much. More. Want to embrace the new? Jump headfirst into the unknown? Immerse yourself in the extraordinary? This is THE place to do it. We'll go beyond those all-star attractions and delve deep into the local culture. Grab your camera and pull on those elephant-print pants 'cos it's time to get started.

WORTH NOTING...

New trip alert! Book one of our first departures and you'll get a sweet price.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Delve Deep



Nights



Download app



Meals

Thanks for choosing to holiday with Topdeck

Ready for the time of your LIFE?

The countdown's on...

ABOUT YOUR TRIP NOTES

These Trip Notes contain everything you need to know before your trip departs – from where to meet your Topdeck fam to what we suggest you bring.

Read them on the train, in the supermarket queue or on the loo – we don't mind, just look through them carefully so you know what to expect on your trip. We recommend you download this document so it's with you when you travel (and give a copy to your MVPs so they know what you're up to).

IMPORTANT: please refresh this doc as close to your departure as possible. This means you'll have the most up-to-date info available.

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

- Visit Mae Klong Railway Market
- Visit Damnoen Saduak Floating Market
- Longtail boat to floating raft accommodation
- Overnight stay in floating raft accommodation
- Visit Hellfire Pass Memorial Museum
- Train ride on Death Railway
- Visit Wat Mahathat
- Visit Wat Phra Sri Sanphet
- Bike tour of Sukhothai temples
- Visit Elephant Poo Poo Paper Park
- Traditional Hmong dance show
- Overnight stay in a hill tribe lodge
- Tour of local tea garden
- Visit Tham Lot Caves

YOUR TRIP WILL START

PICK UP:

Bangkok
Thailand

YOUR TRIP WILL FINISH

DROP OFF:

Chiang Mai
Thailand

TRIP CURRENCIES

- Thailand - THB

YOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1 | BANGKOK (THAILAND)

Let's kickstart this adventure in Thailand's temple-stuffed, neon-lit, food-loving capital. Say sawasdee (sah-wah-dee) to your new travel fam before tucking into your first group dinner. Thought the pad thai from your local takeout was good? Wait 'til you try the real, authentic thing. Afterwards, the evening is yours for the taking. Need recs? Tick off your souvenir shopping early at a night market. Have a few bevs at a swanky rooftop bar. Or watch a live Muay Thai boxing match. It's your trip, your way.



MEALS:

- Dinner

DAY 2 | BANGKOK – DAMNOEN SADUAK – RIVER KWAI

Pack an overnight bag (we'll store the rest of your luggage until we reach Kanchanaburi) and wave goodbye to the city's locals. Today, we're making tracks for the legendary River Kwai. First though, a duo of awesome markets. Arrive at Mae Klong Railway Market just in time to see the locals pack up their stalls and make way for the train (yep, an actual train) to pass through. Next up: Damnoen Saduak Floating Market. This colourful maze of canals (khlongs in the local lingo) is the place to pick up everything from fragrant spices to awesome artwork. Your water journey isn't quite finished yet. Hop on a traditional longtail boat and hightail it (see what we did there?) to tonight's accommodation: a floating hotel. Sweet dreams...



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Visit Mae Klong Railway Market
- Visit Damnoen Saduak Floating Market
- Longtail boat to floating raft accommodation
- Overnight stay in floating raft accommodation

DAY 3 | RIVER KWAI – KANCHANABURI

After waking up to dreamy waterside views and the sound of chirping cicadas, it's time to get your history hat on. No lie, today's gonna be tough. We'll start by soaking up one of the region's most famous sights: the Bridge Over the River Kwai. The railway bridge - part of the so-called Death Railway that ran from Thailand to Burma - was built by thousands of POWs during WWII, including many Australians. We'll learn more about the railway's construction and the grim working conditions the POWs endured at the Hellfire Pass Memorial Museum. Then, it's time to take a train ride along what's left of the Death Railway's tracks. The evening is up to you. Relax and reflect on the day while watching a spectacular sunset over the river. Then, ask your Trip Leader for some local food recs - they know all the best spots.



MEALS:

- Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Visit Hellfire Pass Memorial Museum
- Train ride on Death Railway

DAY 4 | KANCHANABURI – AYUTTHAYA – PHITSANULOK

Take one last look at the River Kwai before we head east to Ayutthaya. Never heard of it before? That's because it's one of Thailand's hidden gems - and it is truly special. Once the capital of ancient Siam (the old name for Thailand), Ayutthaya now has UNESCO World Heritage status. The Indiana Jones in you will love touring around its magical temples. We'll head to the site of the old Royal Palace to view two INCRED structures: Wat Mahathat and Wat Phra Sri Sanphet. Then, it's time to make tracks to Phitsanulok just in time for dinner.



MEALS:

- Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Visit Wat Mahathat
- Visit Wat Phra Sri Sanphet

DAY 5 | PHITSANULOK – SUKHOThai – CHIANG MAI

Tums filled with another tropical fruit-laden breakfast, today we've got the super-stunning Sukhothai in our sights. Another ancient capital of Siam (there's a few), Sukhothai certainly lucked out in the beauty department. Jump on a bike and glide your way past some of its most breathtaking ruined temples on a guided tour. Once your camera roll is full and your calves are aching, we'll hop back on the bus and make tracks for Chiang Mai - Northern Thailand's biggest city. Tonight: gather the fam and find a local haunt for some seriously fiery green curry, or panang if you actually *don't* want to spice up your life.



MEALS:

- Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Bike tour of Sukhothai temples

DAY 6 | CHIANG MAI

Chiang Mai. Eye-popping architecture. Awesome night markets. And a fascinating fusion of cultures and traditions. This city's got it going on. After getting your bearings, there's a heap of optional activities up for grabs. Delve deep into the local culture during an almsgiving ceremony with the resident monks at a tranquil temple. Or explore the city on two wheels during a guided Vespa tour, including a pitstop at Wat Phra That Doi Kham. It's that big golden Buddha perched on the hill southwest of the city - you can't miss it. Hungry? There's an optional cooking class this afternoon if you fancy upgrading your chef skills. Or practice your foot jabs and switch kicks in a Muay Thai boxing class.



MEALS:

- Breakfast



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Almsgiving ceremony with temple walking tour in Chiang Mai: prices available locally
- Half-day Vespa tour of Chiang Mai: prices available locally
- Chiang Mai cooking class: prices available locally
- Muay Thai training class in Chiang Mai: prices available locally

DAY 7 | CHIANG MAI – HMONG HILL TRIBE STAY

After another included brekkie, we'll wave goodbye to Chiang Mai (for now). Press your nose to the coach window and soak up all the stunning views racing past as we make our way to our first stop of the day - the Elephant Poo Poo Paper Park. This place is exactly what it says on the tin: a park where they make paper out of elephant poo. And it's not as stinky as it sounds, promise. Once you've had a masterclass in making paper out of poo (aka the ultimate souvenir for your friends back home), we'll head for the Hmong Hill Tribe Lodge. This BEAUTiful location is tonight's stopover. Soak up the lush views of the Chiang Mai Valley before a traditional dinner complete with Hmong dancing. This is what you came for.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Visit Elephant Poo Poo Paper Park
- Traditional Hmong dance show
- Overnight stay in a hill tribe lodge

DAY 8 | HMONG HILL TRIBE – PAI

Rise and shine! Today we'll be heading further into the hills to try the region's local bevvy: tea! Learn how to pluck tea leaves and roast them during a guided tour of a local tea garden. Then, slurp on some award-winning concoctions in the tranquil tea house. Next up: Pai. This town might be tiny but it's surrounded by holy sh*t-worthy scenery. We're talking tangled rainforests, tumbling waterfalls and Thailand's answer to the Grand Canyon. Tonight, get your bearings with a stroll down Pai's Walking Street. Shopping street by day, lively food market after dark - it's the ideal spot to dig into some delish street food. Our pick? Khao soi: a regional coconutty noodle soup.



MEALS:

- Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Tour of local tea garden

DAY 9 | PAI – CHIANG MAI

Remember how Pai's home to Thailand's version of the Grand Canyon? Well, today you'll be seeing it for yourself. Fuel up at breakfast before we head for the spectacular Pai Canyon Lookout. Hope you're not scared of heights. Then, we'll swap sweeping views for subterranean wonders with a visit to Tham Lot Cave. What's that? Something just brushed past your ear? Probably just a bat - the cave's home to hundreds of them. Emerge back into the daylight and hop back on the coach for one last journey. Before we return to Chiang Mai for our final evening together though, we'll tuck into steaming bowls of noodles with yet another eye-popping view. Memories = made.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Visit Tham Lot Caves

DAY 10 | CHIANG MAI

You've toured the temples, soaked up all the views, made paper out of elephant poo. All that's left to do now is swap deets with your travel fam and say your goodbyes. Not quite ready for the fun to be over? Fly back down to Bangkok to join our Southern Thailand trip for a week of island-hopping and jungle adventures. Or meet us in buzzing Hanoi - the starting point of our epic Delve Deep: Vietnam & Cambodia adventure.



MEALS:

- Breakfast

OTHER INFORMATION

TOPDECK APP

Feeling appy? Download the Topdeck app and get PUMPED for the adventure ahead. Best bit is: from 45 days before departure you'll be able to chat with your soon-to-be tripmates.

Plus, get your itinerary at your fingertips – so you know where you'll be going and what you'll be doing on each day of your trip. Nice!

Links:

Apple <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/topdeck/id994727866>

Android <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.FlexiTechSolutions.TopDeck&hl=en>



YOUR SAFETY

NIGHTS OUT

We love a good night out – experiencing the nightlife and entertainment places have to offer is a big part of travelling. But alongside the fun it's important to be aware of your surroundings and personal safety.

When you're out late, remember to avoid walking alone – particularly through deserted areas like beaches and back streets. Always stick together, take a registered taxi where possible, and keep a note of your accommodation so you can find your way back to your fellow Topdeckers if you become separated. Make sure you have your trip mates' mobile numbers in case you need to get hold of them while out and about.

In some countries, alcoholic measures can be considerably larger than what you may be used to. Try to keep track of what you're drinking – and if you see one of your trip mates looking a little worse for wear, take them back to your accommodation. Never leave your drink unattended.

It's also important to be aware that what you might consider harmless flirting may be interpreted differently in some countries. Be yourself and have fun, but stay savvy – you don't want to find yourself in an uncomfortable situation.

DRUG USE

Topdeck has a strict zero-tolerance drug policy. Customers should not bring any illegal substances onto the Topdeck coach or into any of the accommodation we stay in on our trips. This includes marijuana – even if it is legal in some of the states your trip passes through. If you are found in possession of drugs, you will be removed from the trip immediately. All instances of drug possession will be reported to Topdeck Head Office, who may consider alerting the relevant authorities.

REMEMBER: if you are found in possession of drugs, not only do you risk getting in trouble with the local police, but our Driver will also be held responsible if they are found on the Topdeck coach. Trust us, you don't want that to happen to any of our Drivers – they're awesome.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Culture shock, homesickness, random periods of feeling down – these things happen and are totally normal. You can rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Topdeck crew will do their utmost to cheer you up.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call home. Sometimes it's nice to hear a familiar voice and have a good old-fashioned catch up with your loved ones
- Eat well. Never underestimate the power of a good, wholesome meal. Nobody feels at their best when they're hungry!

- Drink responsibly. Not only will you swerve the dreaded hangover, but by keeping an eye on what you drink you could also avoid getting into any potentially uncomfortable situations
- Talk to your Trip Leader. Don't forget, they're probably far from home too – so they're sure to know some tried- and- tested ways to beat the blues
- Integrate with your fellow Topdeckers. This one is key! The more fun you're having on your trip, the less likely you are to feel homesick (fact!)

TRAVEL SINCE COVID-19

Travel looks a bit different since COVID-19. That's why we've put some new procedures in place to help keep you safe on the road.

What remains the same? Your Topdeck trip will be run hygienically, responsibly, and with your safety at the forefront of everything we do. End of.

Here's the info: <https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/travel-safely>

RESPECT ON THE ROAD

RESPECTING FELLOW TRAVELLERS

Our trips are for everyone. We're a family – and we want every Topdecker to have an incredible time.

What we're not about is excluding people or making them feel like they don't belong. That's why we always encourage Topdeckers to be kind and courteous to their fellow tripmates . The golden rules? Respect each other's space, be mindful of causing excessive noise in shared accommodation, and treat others how you'd wish to be treated. Easy!

HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE TRAVELLER

Responsible travel isn't difficult to achieve. With a little conscious thought and preparation, you can have an awesome adventure AND a positive impact on the places you visit. Sweet!

Here are five things you can do to ensure you're travelling responsibly:

- Conserve water. You know the drill – reuse your room towels, take short showers and remember to turn off the tap when you're brushing your teeth
- Reduce your waste. Ditch the plastic bag, refuse unnecessary packaging, dispose of your waste responsibly and recycle as much as possible
- Go local. Hunt down locally owned and operated restaurants and bars, shop in local markets, and book tours and activities run by local guides
- Consider the wildlife. Avoid any attractions that involve closely engaging with wild animals
- Respect local people and culture. Obeying local laws is a given – but also remember to dress and behave in a manner appropriate to the community. Be polite and keep an open mind!

INSURANCE

Before your trip departs, it's compulsory for all passengers to take out comprehensive travel insurance covering cancellation, medical expenses (including repatriation), loss or damage to baggage and personal belongings, money and personal liability.

Head to our FAQ for more info: <https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/faqs-0>

Got more Qs? Chat with our Customer Service team: <https://www.topdeck.travel/about-us/contact>

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Please make sure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your trip. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your trip's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling. Check out our handy interactive map showing global visa requirements:

<https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/latest-border-restrictions>

PLEASE NOTE: some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure, as requirements do change periodically.

TIPPING

Basically: it's not necessary.

Your Trip Leader and Driver don't expect tips, and they won't ask for any either. Meaning? More dollar to spend on optional activities (and a souvenir for your nan).

WHAT TO BRING

Based on our experience, these items are key. Everyone's different though – so if you want to bring more or less, go for it (as long as you don't exceed your 20kg allowance, that is!).

Off to Japan? Your luggage must be no bigger than 160cm in total (height x width x length). So maybe leave the hairdryer at home.

Psst: this is a packing list for Topdeck trips in general. Obv you'd look silly splashing around the Greek islands in a snowsuit.

- 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes + 1 pair of smart casual shoes
- 1 pair of thongs/jandals/flip-flops
- 2 pairs of jeans/trousers
- 2 pairs of shorts/skirts
- 4 shirts/T-shirts
- 2 sweaters/jumpers
- Smart casual evening wear
- 1 warm jacket + 1 rainproof jacket

- Underwear and socks + swimwear
- Towel
- Toiletries
- Hat and sunscreen
- Basic medical kit (including plasters, aspirin etc)
- Adaptor plug
- Reusable water bottle
- Snow gear



THAT'S IT!