Explore Northern Thailand

***Validity for departures before 31 December***

# Introduction

Welcome to Sojourn real life experiences... we hope that you enjoy exploring the world as much as we do.

Northern Thailand is a treasure-trove filled with glittering temples, ancient ruins, exotic markets and sumptuous foods. Explore the capital of Siam's golden age at Sukhothai, ride an elephant through the rainforest of Lampang, browse the bustling markets of Chiang Mai, stay at a special homestay with local friends and enjoy a traditional *khan toke* dinner - there's so much to discover in Thailand's northern kingdom.

This is how it all started; the trips that made us one of the world's leading operators of small group adventures. And they're still as popular as ever! Original trips are all about variety: the places, the people, the activities, and even the accommodation and transport we use. From homestays to market trips to visits to community projects, there's a new experience every day, with many activities included.

# Trip Map



# Itinerary

## Day 1 Bangkok

Sa-wat dee! Welcome to Thailand.

You can arrive at any time on day 1 as there are no activities planned until the important welcome meeting at 18:00 (this time may vary from time to time). Your leader will leave a note at reception telling you where and when this important meeting will take place. Please ask a member of reception for this information.

Bangkok has so much to offer those with time to explore - why not take a riverboat to Chinatown and explore the crowded streets, or wander down the tourist mecca of Khao San Road?

Our comfortable hotel in Bangkok is centrally located near Khao San Rd and the Chao Phraya River and has ensuite bathrooms, air-conditioning and a swimming pool.

## Day 2 Sukhothai

This morning we leave the hustle and bustle heading north by train bound for Phistanulok (approx. 6hrs), where we then transfer to Songthaews (open backed pickups) for the remaining journey to Sukhothai (approx. 1hr).

Sukhothai was the first ancient capital of Siam, established in the 13th century. Located on a fertile plain, Sukhothai means the "Dawn of Happiness" and is now famous as a UNESCO World Heritage Park celebrating the Golden Age of Thai civilisation.

Why not try a local central Thai dish like Sukhothai Noodles at the fascinating local night market, your leader can assist in your selections.

Our clean, comfortable guesthouse in Sukothai is centrally located near the night markets and has air conditioning and ensuite shower.

## Day 3 Lampang

The morning greets us with a bicycle day trip around the historical ruins of Old Sukhothai, set amid beautiful lakes and gardens (it is approx. 30 minutes from the guesthouse by songthaew).

Upon our arrival at the historical park, we hire bicycles and enjoy a few leisurely hours feeling the breeze in our hair and learning about the history of this fascinating place. We enjoy a home-cooked picnic lunch somewhere along the way, and conclude our afternoon with a visit to a ceramics factory and local market.

In the afternoon we head to Lampang (approx. 3 hours) where we stay the night. Our basic twin share fan-cooled rooms are located in the town centre and close to the river, with multi share bathrooms.

## Day 4 Homestay

In the morning, we visit the Elephant Conservation Centre near Lampang (approx. 45 minutes), where we can watch elephants having a communal bathing session as well as young and old elephants being taught the skills in the logging industry. Afterwards, we enjoy an unforgettable ride through the forest on the back of one of these magnificent creatures. After lunch there is time to visit the F.A.E. Elephant Hospital and then it's off to the warm and welcoming home of Sojourn's long-time friends.

We stay the night at a homestay in a small Thai village (approx. 1.5 hours from the Elephant Centre). Although accommodation is multi-share and basic (there will be fold-out mattresses on the floor and shared bathrooms), we experience everyday Thai life - something not many travellers get to do. In the evening, we are treated to a traditional northern Thai khan tohk dinner accompanied by live music and dancing.

## Days 5-7 Chiang Mai

In the morning of day 5 we may have the opportunity to offer alms to the monks as they go about their daily routine. We pack a delicious picnic lunch and visit some hot springs where you can have an optional well-deserved soak in the mineral pools or a massage. Afterwards we travel the short distance (approx. 40 minutes) to Chiang Mai.

Our accommodation provides a return to modernity, a great way to get refreshed before heading out to explore all Chiang Mai has to offer. A great night bazaar with lots of excellent food and plenty of colourful goodies for sale are waiting, and this is the perfect opportunity to unleash your bargaining skills. Later on, you might want to head down to a riverside bar for some live music and a couple of drinks.

The most vibrant city in northern Thailand, Chiang Mai has many famous temples and an interesting old city area. A great way to see the surrounding countryside is our cycling tour, on which you will visit temples and other places of interest. In your free time, you can visit the hilltop temple of Doi Suthep for stunning views over the city, attend Thai cooking classes, try bamboo rafting, shop or indulge in traditional Thai massage.

Our clean, comfortable guesthouse in Chiang Mai is located by the famous night markets and has ensuite bathrooms and air conditioning.

In the afternoon of day 7, we board an overnight train for the trip back to Bangkok (approx. 13 hours). We use soft sleeper class trains for our overnight train journey. Multi share compartments are air-conditioned, with bunk beds; sheets and pillow provided. Our baggage travels in the carriage with us. There is a food and drink service available on board.

## Day 8 Bangkok

Our train is scheduled to arrive into Bangkok early in the morning. We transfer back to the Viengtai Hotel and you are free to depart at any time after that. If you are booking flights or other transport out of Bangkok on this day, please keep in mind that train delays are frequent - we suggest you do not book a flight earlier than 2:00pm.

Please note no accommodation is included in Bangkok at the end of our tour. We have shared day rooms available for our use until midday. Additional accommodation is available - please enquire at time of booking.

# Itinerary Disclaimer

The itinerary attached is correct at time of printing. Please note: occasionally our itineraries are updated during the year to incorporate improvements stemming from past travellers' comments and our own research. Our brochure is usually released in November each year. As such the information given in this itinerary may be slightly different to that in the brochure. It is VERY IMPORTANT that you print and review a final copy of your Trip Notes a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans. For the latest updated trip notes please visit our website: [www.sojourntravel.com](http://www.sojourntravel.com)

# Culture Shock Rating

Expect some culture shock. You will be exposed to signs of poverty and access to services may be sporadic. The food will be quite different and English speakers harder to find. Respecting the local culture will make it easier to fit in and really experience the location.

# Physical Rating

Some easy physical activities included in your trip. No physical preparation is required to make the most of the journey.

## Physical Preparation

A good level of fitness will be expected and will certainly help increase the enjoyment of the trip. Some of the sites we visit involve a fair amount of walking. A good level of fitness will be expected for those wanting to participate in these particular activities.

Long and rough travel days:

There are some long travel days and some rough travelling in areas away from main tourist routes. Windy roads and rough surfaces make for some challenging travel experiences. If you experience travel sickness we recommend you consider medication to help ease the discomfort.

Early mornings:

On some long travel days we depart early in the morning to ensure we optimise our time at our next destination.

# Included Activities

This is a list of included activities on this trip. All other activities are optional and at your own expense. For a list of optional activities and sightseeing available on this trip, see the optional activities section below. If you choose not to participate in the included activities on this itinerary, the cost will not be refunded.

* Day trip cycling around historical sights - Sukhothai
* Elephant Conservation Centre show and elephant ride - Lampang
* Visit local Northern Thai village, dinner and cultural show
* Entry fee to hot springs - en route to Chiang Mai

# Optional Activities

We list the following optional activities for your information. This is not an exhaustive list and should be used as a guide only.

They are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by Sojourn nor included in price of this trip. If you do any of them, you do so at your own risk and it must be clearly understood that your participation is your own decision and does not form part of your contract with Sojourn.

The receipt of commissions or kickbacks in exchange for recommending particular shops or services is ingrained in the culture of the Thai tourism industry. Rather than turn a blind eye to this unavoidable issue in some areas Sojourn has established a centralised fund whereby contributions from recommended suppliers are distributed between The Sojourn Foundation and local staff. Details of these arrangements will be provided by your leader at the commencement of your trip.

A priority in establishing this fund is that the experience of you our traveller is not compromised in any way. Please let us know via the feedback form completed after your trip if we are successfully meeting this objective.

Please note the following are approximate entrance costs and do not include transport to the sites if required, unless specified below.

* Bike ride, Bangkok – US$25
* Thai kickboxing exhibition, Bangkok - US$50
* Grand Palace, Bangkok - US$12
* Thai massage, Bangkok and Chiang Mai - US$9 p/h
* Bicycle tour, Chiang Mai - US$25
* Bamboo rafting, Chiang Mai - US$10
* Thai cookery course, Chiang Mai - US$25
* Doi Suthep Temple, Chiang Mai - US$2

Got extra time before or after your Sojourn adventure? Maybe there is an URBAN ADVENTURE in one of the cities that you're visiting on your trip?

# Spending Money

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping, participating in optional activities and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

# Tipping

If you are happy with the services provided a tip - though not compulsory - is appropriate. While it may not be customary to you, it is of great significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels, inspires excellent service, and is an entrenched feature of the tourism industry across many Sojourn destinations. Please note we recommend that any tips are given directly to the intended recipient by a member of your group as our group leaders are prohibited from collecting cash for tips.

The following amounts are based on local considerations and feedback from our past travellers:

**Restaurants:** Local markets and basic restaurants - round your bill up to the nearest THB20. More up-market restaurants we suggest 10% to 12% of your bill.

**Local guides:** Throughout your trip you may at times have a local guide in addition to your leader. We suggest TBH100 per day for local guides.

**Porters:** Throughout your trip you may at times have a porter in addition to your leader. We suggest THB80 per day for porters.

**Drivers:** You may have a range of drivers on your trip. Some may be with you for a short journey while others may be with you for several days. We would suggest a higher tip for those more involved with the group however a base of THB50 per day is generally appropriate.

**Local transport:** For a city tour we suggest THB50 per day.

**Your Group Leader:** You may also consider tipping your leader for outstanding service throughout your trip. The amount is entirely a personal preference; however as a guideline THB100 per person, per day can be used. Of course you are free to tip more or less as you see fit, depending on your perception of service quality and the length of your trip. Remember, a tip is not compulsory and should only be given when you receive excellent service.

# Important Notes

A Single Supplement is available on this trip. The following days are excluded from the Single Supplement:

Days 2 & 3 - Guesthouse, Day 4 Homestay, Day 7 Overnight Train

Alternative transport can be arranged if you do not wish to cycle around the Sukhothai Historic Park.

# Group Size

Maximum of 12 travellers per group

# Accommodation

Hotels/guesthouses (5 nts), homestay (1 nt), overnight train (1 nt)

Some of the accommodation along the way is very basic, staying in local guesthouses and homestays with limited facilities. Some facilities are shared and some accommodation has cold water only.

The style of accommodation described in the day to day itinerary is a guideline. On rare occasions, alternative arrangements may need to be made due to the lack of availability of rooms in our usual accommodation. A similar standard of accommodation will be used in these instances.

Accommodation on this trip is on a twin/multi share basis. Please note there may be times when you share a room with passengers travelling on different Sojourn trips than your own.

Throughout the trip we request that our hotels prepare rooms in time for our arrival, especially if we are arriving prior to normal check in time. However this is not always possible which means we will not be able to check-in immediately on arrival at some hotels. Instead, we can store our luggage and explore our new destination.

If you have purchased pre or post trip accommodation (if available), you may be required to change rooms from your trip accommodation for these extra nights.

We use soft sleeper class trains for our overnight train journey. Multi share compartments are air-conditioned, with bunk beds; sheets and pillow provided. Our baggage travels in the carriage with us. There is a food and drink service available on board. Please note that on occasions the overnight trains may be covered by an overnight bus rather than train.

# Meals

While travelling with us you will experience the vast array of wonderful food available in the world. Your group leader will be able to suggest favourite restaurants during your trip. On our camping trips we often cook the region's specialties so you don't miss out. To give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat generally not all meals are included in the trip price. This also gives you more budgeting flexibility. As a rule our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though. Please check the 'meal inclusions' section of these notes for details of meals included.

Allow USD $160 for meals not included.

# Meal Inclusions

1 Breakfast, 2 Lunches, 1 Dinner

Please note that breakfasts are often simple (eggs, bread, jam and coffee/tea would be most common).

Compulsory Christmas and New Years' Eve Dinners may apply.

# Transport

Overnight train, local bus, taxi, songthaew, elephant, bicycle

There are some long travel days and some of the transport can be quite cramped and without air conditioning.

# Group Leader

All Sojourn group trips are accompanied by one of our group leaders. The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. Sojourn endeavours to provide the services of an experienced leader however, due to the seasonality of travel, rare situations may arise where your leader is new to a particular region or training other group leaders.

Your leader will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the places visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. At Sojourn we aim to support local guides who have specialised knowledge of the regions we visit. If you were interested in delving deeper into the local culture at a specific site or location then your leader can recommend a local guide service in most of the main destinations of your trip.

# Joining Point

**Viengtai Hotel**42 Rambuttri Road  
Banglamphu  
Bangkok  
10200  
Thailand  
Phone: +66 (0) 22 805 434  
Fax: +66 (0) 2 281 8153

The Viengtai, our base in Bangkok, is in a great location. Although not new, the rooms are clean and comfortable, with all amenities such as air-conditioning, tv, telephone, fridge, minibar, room service and private bathrooms. There is even a swimming pool. The hotel has a formal lobby and reception area, which is attended 24 hours a day so you can come and go at any time. On the ground floor is a restaurant or you can head to the nearby streets to sample the gastronomic delights of the local food hawkers. There is also an abundance of restaurants and money changers in nearby Khao San Road, Bangkok's backpacker area. Within walking distance of the Viengtai Hotel are many of the main tourist attractions in Bangkok - the Grand Palace, the National Museum, the National Library and Wat Po to name a few. The streets surrounding the Viengtai Hotel are overflowing with colourful stalls and local activities and are great to explore. Local area maps are available from reception.

## Joining Point Instructions

Metered taxi ranks are located outside the airport entrance on the ground floor. Go out of the customs hall and walk outside the airport where there is a table with a sign saying "metered taxis". The cost is the metered fare plus a THB50 surcharge. If the taxi uses the toll way it is up to an extra THB70. The total fare should be about THB400 (US$13). Non-metered taxis are also available, where you will be given a docket to pay the driver a set price of THB700 (US$20). It will take about 1 hour drive to the hotel.

An arrival transfer from the airport is available if purchased at the time of booking. Transfers cannot be arranged on arrival. Please advise your flight arrival details at least 14 days prior to your departure. If you have pre-booked an airport transfer you will be met on arrival. On your arrival after taking all your luggage and walking through the custom counter to go outside, please look for the INTERNATIONAL ARRIVALS DOOR B or DOOR C and look for the SOJOURN sign with your name. If for any reason you cannot locate the person please go to the INFORMATION COUNTER near the EXIT DOOR 6 or contact ATTA Counter (Association of Thai Travel Agents) to call our 24 hours service phone contact 081 658 2727 or 089 776 7492 and wait at this counter until our staff come and take you to the van.

Normal check in time is 14:00. Look for the Sojourn information board on the 2nd floor for suggestions of what you can do while waiting for the trip to start.

# Arrival Complications

We don't expect any problems (and nor should you!) but if for any reason you are unable to commence your group trip as scheduled, please contact your starting point hotel, requesting that you speak to or leave a message for your trip leader.

If you have pre-booked an airport transfer (where available) and have not made contact with our representative within 30 minutes of clearing customs and immigration, we recommend that you make your own way to the Starting Point hotel, following the Joining Instructions in the Trip

Notes. Should this occur, please apply to your travel agent for a refund of the transfer cost on your return.

No refund is available on missed transfers or portions of your trip owing to a different flight arrival or delayed flight arrival. Any additional cost incurred in order to meet up with your group is at your own expense.

# Finishing Point

**Viengtai Hotel**  
Bangkok

The Viengtai, our base in Bangkok, is in a great location. Although not new, the rooms are clean and comfortable, with all amenities such as air-conditioning, tv, telephone, fridge, minibar, room service and private bathrooms. There is even a swimming pool. The hotel has a formal lobby and reception area, which is attended 24 hours a day so you can come and go at any time. On the ground floor is a restaurant or you can head to the nearby streets to sample the gastronomic delights of the local food hawkers. There is also an abundance of restaurants and money changers in nearby Khao San Road, Bangkok's backpacker area. Within walking distance of the Viengtai Hotel are many of the main tourist attractions in Bangkok - the Grand Palace, the National Museum, the National Library and Wat Po to name a few. The streets surrounding the Viengtai Hotel are overflowing with colourful stalls and local activities and are great to explore. Local area maps are available from reception.

## Finishing Point Instructions

Please note no accommodation is included in Bangkok at the end of our tour. We have shared day rooms available for our use until midday. Additional accommodation is available - please enquire at time of booking.

If you are booking flights or other transport out of Bangkok on this day, please keep in mind that train delays are frequent - we suggest you do not book a flight earlier than 2:00pm.

A departure transfer is available - please enquire at time of booking.

A taxi to the airport should cost between THB400-700 (US$13-20) depending on time of day and use of toll ways. It will take about 1 hour drive to the airport.

Normal check out time is 12 noon. If you are departing later, you can arrange luggage storage at the hotel.

# Emergency Contact

In the case of a genuine crisis or emergency, Sojourn's Thailand Office can be reached on Tel: +66 898 103 722 (Thailand, Laos, Malaysia, Borneo & Indonesia) contact Tel: +855 92 555 969 (Cambodia). For all other enquiries please contact our Reservations department which is open 24 hours, 6 days per week (excluding Sunday). For further contact details please use the following page: <http://www.sojourntravel.com/ourtrips/contact/>.

# Emergency Funds

Please also make sure you have access to an additional USD$400, to be used when unforeseen incidents or circumstances outside our control (eg. a natural disaster, civil unrest or an outbreak of bird flu) necessitate a change to our planned route.

# Visas

Please note that visas are the responsibility of the individual traveller. The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as much as possible, but rules do change. It is important that you check for yourself.

Make sure your passport is valid for at least 6 months after your return date. Be sure to check the date you require a visa from and the length of time you will need to cover, especially if you change countries during your trip.

Thailand: Citizens of Australia, NZ, UK, USA do not need visas to visit Thailand as a tourist. If entering by air you will be granted a 30 day stay. If entering by land you will be granted a 15 day stay only. In addition for those coming overland into Thailand you will require an onward ticket out of the country to obtain the visa. A visa extension can be obtained in Thailand at an immigration office and the cost is 1900 THB. Alternately you can obtain a visa before departure at your local Thai Embassy or Consulate that will allow a 30 day stay when entering at an overland border. Citizens of other countries should check with the relevant consulates as to whether a visa is required.

# Laundry

Laundry facilities are offered by some of our hotels for a charge. In addition, laundry services can be found outside our hotel in all major cities. There may be times when you may want to or have to do your own laundry so we suggest you bring non-polluting/biodegradable soap.

# What to Take

What you need to bring will vary according to the trip style you have chosen, the countries you are visiting and when you are travelling. Generally speaking you should pack as lightly as possible. On the vast majority of our trips you are expected to carry your own luggage and although you will not be required to walk long distances with your luggage (max 30 minutes) we recommend keeping the weight under 10kg/22lb.

Most travellers carry their luggage in a backpack, although an overnight bag with a shoulder strap would suffice if you travel lightly. Smaller bags or backpacks with wheels are convenient although we recommend your bag has carry straps. You will also need a day pack/bag to carry water and a camera etc for daytrips.

# Local Dress

When packing be aware that dress standards are conservative throughout Asia, especially outside major cities. To respect this and for your own comfort, we strongly recommend modest clothing. This means clothing that covers your shoulders and knees. Loose, lightweight, long clothing is both respectful and cool in the predominantly hot Asian climate. In many rural areas in Asia women will need to wear modest clothing even to swim. Singlets, tank tops and topless sun bathing are all unacceptable. When visiting religious sites men often need to wear long trousers and women a long skirt or sarong.

# Checklist

* The following checklist is to be used as a guide only and is not intended to be a complete packing list. Any other items that you wish to pack are at your own discretion however you should attempt to comply with the suggested luggage weight limit.
* Travel documents: passport, visas, travel insurance certificate, air tickets, Sojourn voucher
* Health requirements arranged
* Money: traveller's cheques/cash/credit card and money pouch
* Day pack to carry your personal needs during the day
* First aid kit (including Antihistamines)
* Medication/prescriptions (it is a good idea to have a doctors letter if you are carrying a large amount of medication), travel sickness tablets if required
* Prescription glasses and contact lens solution if required
* Alarm clock
* Torch/flashlight
* Travel plug/international adapter
* Insect repellent
* Refillable water bottle and water purification method
* Sunscreen, hat and sunglasses
* Swimming costume
* Lightweight travel towel
* Ear plugs/eye mask
* Comfortable walking shoes
* Local language phrase book
* Camera, film and/or memory cards with spare batteries
* Personal audio player with spare batteries
* Raincoat/umbrella
* Waterproof jacket
* Sleep sheet
* Waterproof bags for clothing (May-Oct)
* Light sweater or jacket for the evenings when it gets cooler (Nov-Feb)
* Clothes for temples - long pants or long skirts, long sleeve tops

# Money Exchange

Currency exchange rates often fluctuate. For the most up to date rates please visit [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com)

Generally, the most convenient and cheapest way to obtain local currency in Asia is via an Automated Teller Machine (ATM) or Bancomat - this can draw from your home account or from a credit card (debit card). Most ATM's will also give you a cash advance on your credit card. Check with your bank for information on their international fees. When leaving home don't forget your PIN and make sure you know the telephone number for cancelling your card if it is stolen. Please ensure you have advised your bank of your intended travel and withdrawal locations. While traveller's cheques have security advantages exchanging them can be a lengthy process, commissions can be high and they can be difficult to change in rural areas, on weekends and public holidays. If you choose to bring travellers cheques, make sure they are a major brand and major currency.

Please note that most establishments in Asia will not accept foreign currency notes that are old, torn or faded and they can be very difficult to exchange or extra fees added when exchanging at banks. Please ensure that you have new, clean notes.

The official currency is the Thai Baht (THB). Traveller's cheques can be difficult to change. The use of credit cards in businesses is restricted; however ATM's are now available just about on every corner.

# Departure Tax

All departure taxes should be included in your international flight ticket.

# Keeping in Touch - communication while on the road

If you need to be contacted while travelling we recommend email. Email cafes are generally available throughout the regions we visit, although it is possible you may be without email contact for several days on some itineraries. If someone wishes to contact you in an emergency while you are on one of our trips we recommend that they contact your local booking agent, or refer to our emergency contact details. We don't recommend that family and friends try to contact you through hotels, as they are subject to change and the reception staff may not speak English.

# Issues On Your Trip

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local partner straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader/local partner may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction - if this is the case please ask the leader if you may speak to their direct manager.

You may also choose to provide details in your online feedback which we ask you to complete within 30 days of the end of your trip but we do ask you to be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is complete.

# Health

All Sojourn travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully in the group travel experience. If in the opinion of our group leader or company representative any traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, Sojourn reserves the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund. We therefore ask that you read the itinerary in these trip notes thoroughly and then realistically self-assess your physical ability to complete the trip as described. Please consult with your doctor if you have any doubts.

There are no specific health requirements for this trip. However, you should consult your doctor for up-to-date information and prescriptions before your departure. We recommend that you carry a first aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements. Please be aware that for legal reasons any leaders/guides are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets and antibiotics.

Please contact us at help@Sojourntravel.com should you require any clarification on what is involved on your itinerary. For travellers over 70 years a completed Sojourn Self-Assessment Form is required.

Sojourn is very aware of the health issues raised by bird flu and SARS and these have been taken into consideration for all aspects of the trip you are about to take. Sojourn reserve the right to make changes to any itinerary in the very unlikely occurrence that an area should suddenly be deemed to be unsafe because of an outbreak of bird flu, SARS or other disease.

# Safety

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. Please refer to our website's Safety page for links to major travel advisories and updates on safety issues affecting our trips: [www.sojourntravel.com/safety](http://www.sojourntravel.com/safety).

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of our hotels have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Your leader will accompany you on all included activities however during your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your group leader will assist you with the available options in a given location, please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your Sojourn itinerary, and Sojourn makes no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time. Please also note that your group leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

For more details on the type of conditions and safety standards you can expect on your trip, please refer to Sojourn's operational safety policy.

We recommend that you take a moment to read through this information before travelling, and would appreciate any feedback on how well it is being implemented in the field.

Please be aware that local laws governing tourism facilities differ from those in the western world and not all the accommodation which we use on this trip has fire exits, smoke alarms or fire extinguishers.

While life jackets are available on water craft in Asia, there may be occasions where child size life jackets are not readily available. If travelling with children and this safety issue concerns you we will be able to advise alternative methods of transport (where available) for you to travel to the next destination. You can choose to travel independently for this leg of the journey. This would be at your own expense.

Elephant riding is great fun and should not be missed. However please note that we strongly advise against riding on the elephant's neck. Though some find this challenging it can be dangerous and if you choose to do so, the activity is undertaken at your own risk.

The rafts are about 1.5 - 2 m. wide x 15-18 m. long and can carry approximately 7-8 persons. The rafting can take longer in the summer when the water level is shallow and the current is slow. Along some parts of the river there are a lot of snags (dead trees, large rocks, broken wood, etc.) which can sometimes upset the raft. A life jacket is essential as it will not only keep you afloat if by chance you should fall off the raft but will also help prevent injury if the raft hits any of these snags.

During the rainy season (or in the dry season following heavy rainfall) the current will be quite strong and the guide will decide whether the rafting should proceed or not. Their advice on this matter should be strictly followed.

Please note that helmets are not provided for the sightseeing on bicycles.

# Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all our trips. We require that, at a minimum, you are covered for medical expenses including emergency repatriation. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects.

When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance and the insurance company's 24 hour emergency contact number has been seen by your leader.

If you have credit card insurance your tour leader will require details of the participating insurer/underwriter, the level of coverage, policy number and emergency contact telephone number rather than the Bank's name and credit card details. Please contact your bank for these details prior to arriving in-country.

Please go to [www.sojourntravel.com/insurance.php](http://www.sojourntravel.com/insurance.php) for links to various travel insurance providers.

# Your Fellow Travellers

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. Your fellow travellers will probably come from all corners of the world and likely a range of age groups too. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience. Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on your part.

Please note that due to privacy reasons we are unable to provide you with contact details and any personal information about your fellow travellers booked on your trip prior to departure.

# Single Travellers

Our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a compulsory single supplement. Single travellers share with people of the same gender for the duration of the trip, in accommodation ranging from twin to multi-share. Please note some of our itineraries have accommodation booked on a mixed gender share basis - where applicable this will be specified in our Trip Notes. On a selection of our Comfort and Original style trips you have the option to pay a single supplement to ensure that you will have your own room (where available). Please refer to the important notes if this trip has a single supplement and any accommodation on the trip that the single supplement will not apply to. Please note that this only applies to accommodation during the tour, pre- and post-trip accommodation will be booked on a single room basis.

# Departure Dates 2020

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Start | Price |
| Mon 22 Aug 18 | AUD $1000 |
| Mon 29 Aug 18 | AUD $1000 |
| Mon 05 Sep 18 | AUD $1000 |
| Mon 12 Sep 18 | AUD $1000 |
| Mon 19 Sep 18 | AUD $1000 |
| Mon 26 Sep 18 | AUD $1000 |
| Mon 03 Oct 18 | AUD $1000 |
| Mon 10 Oct 18 | AUD $1000 |
| Mon 18 Oct 18 | AUD $1000 |
| Mon 24 Oct 18 | AUD $1000 |
| Mon 02 Apr 18 | AUD $1000 |
| Mon 09 Apr 18 | AUD $1000 |
| Mon 18 Apr 18 | AUD $1000 |
| Mon 23 Apr 18 | AUD $1000 |