



THAILAND: ELEPHANT & EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Chiang Mai, Thailand

14-DAY PROGRAM



HIGHLIGHTS

- Responsible care for elephants living at a sanctuary for rescued elephants
- Learn about cultural, social, and environmental issues related to elephant tourism
- Meet enthusiastic Thai youth and make a difference in their lives
- Teach English in a primary classroom Visit colorful night markets filled with local cuisine and handicrafts



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Journey to enchanting Chiang Mai in northern Thailand, where you'll connect with Thai youth through community service at a rural primary school and a cultural exchange at a local high school. Build meaningful relationships with local students while experiencing the warmth and culture of the community.

Then, live alongside Asian elephants at a sanctuary and learn how to care for these incredible animals, which play an important role in Thai culture, conservation, and tourism. Cook delicious Thai cuisine, explore bustling markets, and discover the rich history and culture of Thailand's beautiful temples.





PROGRAM ITINERARY

Activities and the daily schedule may vary based on weather, local events, and group needs.

DAY 1: WELCOME TO THAILAND!

Meet the GLA Groups staff at the airport and transfer to Home Base for a brief orientation. Settle into your rooms, get comfortable in your new surroundings, and enjoy your first delicious Thai dinner together as you begin your experience in Thailand.



DAY 2: CITY TOUR & COOKING CLASS

Explore Chiang Mai through a guided city tour, a visit to a local museum, and a walk through a vibrant market, gaining a deeper understanding of the city's culture, history, and everyday life. The experience will continue with a hands-on Thai cooking class, where you can learn about traditional ingredients, techniques, and flavors while preparing authentic dishes. In the evening, reflect with the group on the day's experiences and discuss how travel, cultural immersion, and new perspectives can shape personal growth and leadership.

DAY 3: ELEPHANT SANCTUARY

Learn about the challenges faced by wild and captive elephants, including conservation concerns, habitat loss, and animal welfare. Participate in caring for elephants and observe their feeding routines at an ethical sanctuary while gaining a deeper understanding of responsible elephant tourism. Explore the cultural significance of elephants and discover how ethical tourism practices can help support their well-being and contribute to their long-term protection.



DAYS 4-6: SANCTUARY WORK & GUEST SPEAKER

Take part in the daily activities of the sanctuary by helping plant and harvest fresh food, assisting caretakers with their routines, and preparing and feeding food to the elephants. Gain hands-on experience while learning more about the responsibilities involved in caring for elephants and supporting the sanctuary. You will also hear from a guest speaker about life as an expatriate, including their experiences adapting to a new culture and community. In addition, visit local markets to shop for personal items and supplies needed by the sanctuary, providing an opportunity to experience the local community, interact with vendors, and learn more about everyday life in the area.





DAY 7: THAI CULTURE & NIGHT BAZAAR

Visit historic Thai temples and meet with an elder monk to learn more about Buddhist traditions, cultural values, and philosophies that have shaped daily life in Thailand. Through conversation and reflection, gain a deeper understanding of the role of spirituality and community in Thai culture. In the evening, explore a lively Night Bazaar filled with local textiles, handmade crafts, souvenirs, and a variety of traditional street foods. Enjoy the opportunity to browse local goods, experience the atmosphere of the market, and immerse yourself in the sights, sounds, and flavors of Thai culture.

DAY 8: MUAY THAI & DOI SUTHEP TEMPLE

Learn the fundamentals of Muay Thai with a local instructor while gaining hands-on experience with one of Thailand's most well-known traditional sports. Develop an appreciation for the discipline, techniques, and cultural significance behind Muay Thai. Continue exploring Thai culture by visiting local markets and parks, where you can experience everyday life, sample local foods, and observe community traditions. Visit Doi Suthep temple as well, taking time to appreciate its beautiful architecture, spiritual significance, and scenic surroundings while learning more about Thailand's rich cultural heritage.



DAY 9: LEARN SOCIAL ISSUES & PREPARATION

Learn about important social and educational issues affecting communities in Chiang Mai, with a focus on the experiences and needs of students in rural areas. Work together to plan engaging lessons and activities that are appropriate for the students' age, learning levels, and local context. Prepare for the upcoming service project by developing teaching materials, practicing lesson activities, and discussing ways to build meaningful connections with the students and community. This experience will provide an opportunity to better understand local challenges while preparing to contribute thoughtfully and respectfully through education.



DAYS 10-13: TEACH ENGLISH AT LOCAL SCHOOL

During the day, we will teach English at a local primary school, engaging students through interactive lessons, educational games, and fun activities. This will be a great opportunity to connect with the students, learn about their school experience, and share our own knowledge and culture. In the evening, we will reflect on the differences between Thai schools and our previous educational experiences, discussing what we learned and how the experience changed our perspectives. We will also visit a final temple and explore a local market, giving us one last chance to experience the culture and traditions of Thailand. To finish our trip, we will gather together for a farewell dinner, celebrating the memories, friendships, and experiences we gained throughout our time in Thailand.





DAY 14: DEPARTURE

We will travel to Chiang Mai International Airport with assistance from GLA Groups staff, where we will check in for our flight and prepare for the journey home. Before departing, we will have time to gather our belongings, say goodbye to Thailand, and reflect on the experiences and memories we made throughout the trip.





PROGRAM SAFETY



**SAFE
TRANSPORTATION**



**CARING SUPERVISION
& EXPERT LOCAL
KNOWLEDGE**



**24/7 SUPPORT &
EMERGENCY RESPONSE**



**GLA HOME BASE:
SAFE & SECURE
LODGING**



**HEALTHY MEALS &
PURE WATER**

**GLA'S
5 POINT
SAFETY
SYSTEM**



GLA HOME BASE

Stay in two small resorts on the outskirts of Chiang Mai that are clean and safe. Students sleep in gender-segregated rooms with roommates, and have access to a pool and bathrooms with hot-water showers.



CLIMATE

Thailand is warm and humid year-round, with seasonal variations in rainfall. Even during the wetter months, showers are often brief and refreshing, offering a break from the heat. Travelers can generally expect hot, sunny days with occasional rain, making it easy to enjoy outdoor activities throughout the year.



FOOD

Thai cooking is known for its strong, aromatic components and a spicy edge. Dishes prepared at Home Base will be healthy and balanced, commonly including rice and noodles.



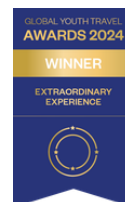
PROGRAM INCLUSIONS

Inclusions:

- Healthy Meals and Drinking Water
- Accommodations in a trusted GLA Home Base
- Safe Transportation - private and public
- Activities and entry fees
- Expert Staff to guide the group
- Secondary medical insurance & emergency evacuation insurance for every traveler

Exclusions:

- Airfare to and from the program
- Additional snacks or drinks outside of mealtimes
- Travel Insurance (lost luggage, etc)



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