

March 3 – 15, 2007

Uncommon Journeys, LLC Temples, Tribes and Treasures of Thailand

There is something transcendent about Thailand, beginning with an exotic glimpse into Bangkok's past, present and future. Even as the world closes in around it, as Bangkok rushes headlong into the future, it manages to retain its sense of history, spirituality and cultural richness. And of course, one of the treasures of any country is its people. In this respect Northern Thailand, home to a myriad of ancient ethnic groups, is well endowed. Six major tribes have migrated there in the past 150 years from China, Tibet and Myanmar. They are generally animists who believe in heavenly, natural, ancestral and house spirits. These tribes have hewn an existence of cultural solidarity out of the modern world that surrounds them. As privileged guests of this exotic country, we will do more than just enjoy their customs, life ways and traditions. We will celebrate cultural identity, and honor extraordinary people living in the remnants of time.

Tour Highlights

- Explore the waterways, floating market and Grand Palace of Bangkok
- Experience the elegance of classical Thai dance
- Visit the ruins of Ayutthaya, former capital of Siam
- Meet members of the Akha, Lisu, Mien, PaLaung & PaDaung tribes
- Explore centuries old Buddhist temples

Tour price: \$TBA

Single supplement: \$TBA

The tour price, based on a minimum of 6 participants, **includes** 11 nights of hotel accommodations, all meals beginning with dinner on March 4, domestic flights, ground transportation, airport transfers, entrance fees and the services of a photographic guide and local bilingual Thai guide. The tour price **excludes** international airfare to Bangkok, extra hotel accommodations if required, beverages, tips to local guides and airport departure tax (\$13).

A deposit of \$500 is required to register and secure a place on the Thailand tour. This down payment is fully refundable if notice is given 60 days prior to departure. The balance of the tour cost is due 60 days prior to departure.

Note: If your itinerary requires an outbound overnight stay in Bangkok, Uncommon Journeys can book your room at the Amari Airport Hotel, at the discount rate of \$165 per room per night, based on single, twin or double occupancy.

Passport Requirement

A passport with six months validity is required to enter Thailand.
No visa is required for US passport holders.

Tour Leader

Debbie Jefkin is a travel photographer and tour guide who specializes in remote and exotic cultures. Although Debbie's photographic interests include history, architecture and landscapes, she finds photographing indigenous people to be the most challenging and rewarding. She is equally at home with Ethiopia's Karo, Bolivia's Quechua, Guatemala's Maya or Thailand's Akha. Her extensive travels in Thailand, knowledge of the customs, and profound appreciation for the people ensure a very rewarding journey.

Waiver of Liability

Uncommon Journeys, LLC assumes no responsibility for accidents or injury to tour participants. You will be required to read, accept and sign an agreement which releases Uncommon Journeys, LLC from any responsibility of liability.

Uncommon Journeys, LLC
Temples, Tribes and Treasures of Thailand
2007 Itinerary

Day 1: Saturday, March 3 Departure to Bangkok

Depart from USA or Europe to Bangkok.

Day 2: Sunday, March 4 Arrive in Bangkok

Arrive in time for dinner.

Day 3: Monday, March 5 Bangkok

Until the late 19th century, Bangkok was largely a floating city. This morning we explore the *klongs* (canals) of the Chao Phraya River. The life of Bangkok is on its waters, and it is here that one senses the real heart of the country. This afternoon we visit the Grand Palace, built for the coronation of King Rama I, who reigned from 1782-1809. This evening, enjoy a classical dance performance in the hotel, set against a backdrop of the river.

Day 4: Tuesday, March 6 Bangkok

Two hours from Bangkok, the Damnoen Saduak floating market in Ratchaburi Province recalls a bygone era, when commerce was conducted almost exclusively on water. Proceed to the ruins of Ayutthaya, an island-city situated at the confluence of 3 rivers. Founded in 1350 and destroyed in the 18th century, the ruins evoke the splendor and majesty of its 417 year reign as the capital of Siam.

Day 5: Wednesday, March 7 Bangkok → Chiang Mai

Enjoy the morning at leisure before our afternoon flight to Chiang Mai and arrival in time for dinner. Not ready to call it a day? You'll find great bargains at the night market, just a few minutes stroll from our hotel.

Day 6: Thursday, March 8 Chiang Mai

You won't want to miss the 6:00 a.m. visit to the local market to see the monks and novices receiving alms, for it is a moving sight, indeed. We visit several shopping emporiums for those interested in jewelry, wood carvings, umbrellas, silk, lacquerware, celadon or jade. This afternoon we visit the Buddhist temples of Wat Suan Doke, Wat Phra Sing and Wat Phra That Doi Suthep.

Day 7: Friday, March 9 Chiang Mai → Mae Hong Son

Our morning flight takes us to Mae Hong Son, where we begin with a visit to a Pa Daung village. The Pa Daung are originally a Mongolian tribe that has been assimilated into the Karen tribe. The women are known for the practice of "stretching" their necks.

Day 8: Saturday, March 10 Mae Hong Son → Chiang Mai → Chiang Dao

Board a long tail boat to another Pa Daung village, where we will find women at their looms and children in the schoolhouse. After lunch and a stop at another village (time-permitting), we fly to Chiang Mai and drive to Chiang Dao.

Day 9: Sunday, March 11 Chiang Dao → Thaton

Begin today at the elephant training camp. Since logging was outlawed, these extraordinary animals must make their living from tourism. We'll walk 20 minutes into the Lisu village, nestled in an Eden-like jungle glade. The women and children wear brightly colored tunics and pants, and their ceremonial hats are festooned with rainbows of ribbons and flowers. Continue to Thaton, to photograph picture perfect, grand white and gold Buddhas against a clear blue sky.

Day 10: Monday, March 12 Thaton/Ang Khang

We head up Doi Ang Khang Mountain to a Pa Laung Village. The women's costumes are striking: red sarongs and brightly colored jackets adorned with silver. Men and women alike decorate their teeth with gold caps, as a symbol of wealth, and for aesthetic effect.

Day 11: Tuesday, March 13 Thaton

Today we visit a village that is home to the Akha tribe. These animists believe in hundreds of spirits, including those of the sun and moon, field and livestock, trees and mountains and the spirits of people, both good and bad. They are one of the most recent arrivals to Thailand, having migrated there from Burma during the past century. Exotic headdresses and embroidered garments and leggings make the Akha women's costumes among the most exotic and impressive. Continue to the Doi Mae Salong Market for lunch, then to a Mien Village.

Day 12: Wednesday, March 14 Thaton

Visit a hill tribe village, then enjoy a BBQ lunch aboard a bamboo raft as we cruise the Maekok River.

Day 13: Thursday, March 15 Thaton → Chiang Rai → Bangkok

Drive to Chiang Rai and fly to Bangkok for international departure. **Note:** If an overnight stay in Bangkok is required, Uncommon Journeys, LLC will book your accommodations at the Amari Airport Hotel at the discount rate of \$165 per room per night, based on single, twin or double occupancy.