

A Cook's Tour with Nancy Zaslavsky
<http://www.nancyzaslavsky.com/thailand.html>
THAILAND: Bangkok & Chiang Mai
January 21 - January 31, 2016

After twenty years of leading tours to my favorite food destinations in Mexico, I'm taking a group to exciting Thailand. Thailand is another of my culinary meccas and I'd love to travel through some of its best locations with you.

January is Thailand's ideal travel month. The weather is warm and sunny during the day and balmy at night. January is the least rainy month of the year with the least humidity.

The ten-day tour includes everything! Round-trip air Los Angeles-Thailand-Los Angeles in spacious premium-economy and business class seats, domestic economy air in Thailand and ground transportation with English-speaking Thai guides and drivers.

As a special bonus, the fabulous Mary Tila is joining us as our all-around expert in everything Thai, especially food, as we focus on Thailand's best of everything. Mary and her family opened L.A.'s Bangkok Market in the early 70's where it attracted Thais previously scattered throughout Southern California craving foods from their homeland. L.A.'s Thai Town was born and the market continues to thrive today. Food is ingrained in the family: Mary's son, Jet Tila is a well-known restaurateur and celebrity chef on Food TV.

The culturally rich country of Thailand is known for its historical Thai temples, countryside elephant camps, longboat river rides, fantastic shopping, sunny days, balmy evenings, lovely teak restaurants and the world's greatest street food at renowned Night Markets.

We fly into Bangkok and immediately transfer to a flight to Chiang Mai in the north. The group stays four nights in a 4-star hotel perfectly located near both the Ping River and the Night Market, where a full breakfast awaits every morning. Each day's itinerary promises a bit of down time to relax, rejuvenate at the pool, shop, or get a Thai foot massage (oh, my!).

Have you ever had a Thai (aka Chinese) foot massage? At storefront shops (they seem to be everywhere) you slip off your shoes (keep your clothes on) and sit in a Lazy Boy-type chair. Your feet soak in warm water as a masseuse trained in Chinese acupressure massages your neck and shoulders. You melt. (S)he lowers the chair to lay flat for a back massage. At last your tired feet are massaged at the end of an hour-long bit of heaven—for under ten dollars. Ready?

In mountainous Chiang Mai we visit some of Thailand's most extraordinary temples, dine at traditional riverside restaurants, slurp the world's best khao soi noodles, and eat our way through offerings at the Night Market and along the old walls at the Weekend Market (these markets offer the finest examples of Northern Thai and Burmese handcrafts at the very best prices). We visit an elephant camp to view the tender care and loving respect the animals are given. Another outing is a hands-on cooking class with lunch to learn about Northern Thailand's unique produce, rice, and cooking techniques.

After our return flight to Bangkok we arrive at our 4-star hotel's outstanding location on the Chao Phraya River where we enjoy four nights with a full breakfast every morning. From the hotel base we visit top sites such as the Grand Palace, Temple of the Emerald Buddha, Wat Pho, and Art of the Kingdom at Anata Samakhom Throne Hall.

Great food is our goal! All meals are included. We dine at some of Bangkok's top spots as well as unforgettable street food in Chinatown's Night Market. We eat the very best foods people in Bangkok eat everyday and on special occasions, definitely not what tourists generally choose.

We visit photogenic markets such as the "I can't believe I saw that!" Maeklong (or Rom Hoop, or Rom Hub) train market famous for a commuter train that passes through eight times a day. The vendors know precisely when to fold up their shade awnings and remove trackside produce as the train comes into view. Here it comes—there it goes—what a sight. It leaves you breathless! Within seconds foods are replaced, awnings come down, and people shop as though nothing unusual has happened.

Thai floating markets are known the world over for incredibly picturesque vendors selling wares from boats and from wooden houses hanging over rivers. Colorful produce boats and boats with cooked-to-order food items glide by all day long; a Thai floating market is a sight you'll never forget.

We have a blast at a cooking class in a private home along a canal reached only by longboat. Here we learn specific Bangkok specialties and cook our lunch at a hands-on class.

Top tier shopping includes the famous, stunningly beautiful Jim Thompson House with its gorgeous silks and world-class restaurant. The Jim Thompson House was the home of a self-made American entrepreneur and founder of the Jim Thompson Thai Silk Company. He was awarded the Order of the White Elephant, bestowed to foreigners who rendered exceptional service to Thailand. In 1967 Thompson was on vacation with friends in Malaysia, went for a walk in the jungle and never returned. In the center of Bangkok the Thompson complex of six traditional Thai buildings now include a museum, silk and gift shops, and restaurant surrounded by lush gardens where we enjoy dinner.

One evening we visit the new, fun-filled, Asiatique river view center filled with shops, amusements, famous Thai puppets, and restaurants.

The tour is ten days, including one day/night traveling in each direction LAX-BKK-LAX.

Clothing everywhere on the tour is casual, lightweight, and comfortable: sandals, sneakers, tees, slacks, skirts, and shorts (no shorts in temples). Pack lightly—save room for purchases!

Thailand tour is 10 days, and includes 8 nights at two 4-star hotels (double occupancy), international air Los Angeles-Taipei (premium economy), Taipei-Bangkok (business class) and domestic air Bangkok-Chiang Mai (short economy class flight), ground transportation, meals when taken with the group (except casual food snacks), two hands-on cooking classes, van tours, and site entrance fees. Tour includes beer—and wine at dinner.

Hurry! Air price locked-in until November 6, 2015.

Be sure to get your deposit in early because the group size is limited to ten participants and a possibility of an airfare change after November 6.

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Download an application:

http://www.nancyzaslavsky.com/tour_app.pdf