



## THE TUK TUK CLUB

### RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL POLICY

The Tuk Tuk Club believes passionately that travel, in particular grass roots, adventure travel, can and should be a force for good, not only for those travelling but also for the people, communities and environment that we come into contact with on our adventures and who, of course, are one of the most significant reasons that people choose to explore and travel.

The very reason we exist is to give travellers the opportunity to see Thailand at it's best, away from the crowds of the more famous (infamous?) destinations, and to experience the warmth, hospitality and stunning environment that we fell in love with 30 years ago when organised travel to Thailand was still in it's infancy and the laid back, friendly atmosphere was far more common.

Whilst our core focus is of course on meeting and exceeding our travellers expectations, and providing the adventure of a lifetime, we also have a very strong focus on the positive impact we can and do have on the people and places we spend time with.

Our Responsible Travel Policy has three core components, **Economic**, **Environmental** and **Social**, each of which is outlined below:

#### **ECONOMIC**

The Tuk Tuk Club is based in Thailand and we all live, work and play in the beautiful province of Chiang Mai. All of our guide team are Thai and passionate not only about what we do but also helping people see, experience and learn about the best of their country.

- Throughout all of our adventures we exclusively use local providers, based in the village / town / community that we are staying in / passing through. For example, all of our accommodation is owned by people from the local area, they employ staff from the village / town the accommodation is based in and they source produce from the local area wherever possible.
- We partner with local communities for every activity we do on our adventures. For example, when trekking near Doi Inthanon we hire local Karen guides from the village we stay in to lead the trek, not only to assist in the creation of employment but also to ensure that the absolute best possible experience is given to our travellers. When we go rafting we use the skills of local villagers to guide the rafts, this creating employment opportunities that otherwise wouldn't exist in the area.
- All meals on our trips are at small, locally owned restaurants delivering not only the best food in each location but also creating a solid source of income for the local community.
- Our adventures are all about experiencing the 'real' Thailand and by following the above course of action, not only do we ensure that the money spent on our adventures remains very much in the local community but that our travellers get to experience and feel the 'real' country and have a much more unique experience.



## **ENVIRONMENTAL**

We are very aware of the environmental impact that travel has on the world, both in terms of the travel itself and our office function.

### *Head Office:*

- We don't send out paper brochures – everything is available online and in PDF format
- We use recycled paper
- We encourage all our team to cycle to work wherever possible – it's far more fun than sitting in a car and of course keep us trim so we can eat more of the great food in the area

### *Adventures:*

- We actively support a local elephant home and through our collaboration it has been able to stop all elephant riding and lead the way in its local area in providing a much better life for its elephants. Whilst riding still takes place in other 'camps', more and more are following the lead of the home we support and understanding that the welfare of the elephants is the most important element.
- Single use plastic is a major problem in Thailand and we are doing all we can to reduce and remove the use of single use plastic water bottles on our adventures with our target to be single use plastic free by the end of 2019. Whilst remaining hydrated is very important in our climate and a suitable source of water throughout any adventure is vital, we are seeking to replace all single use plastic water bottles with personal drinking bottles which will then be refilled from large tanks of fresh, clean water that we transport.

## **SOCIAL**

Our Adventures take part very much 'in' the country rather than simply viewing places as one passes by. Whilst we are very conscious that our travellers are on 'holiday' and are travelling to enjoy themselves, our team are passionate about people gaining a proper understanding of Thailand and the areas as travel through and work to ensure that this is part of the enjoyment of the experience. As such, learning about the country and the positives and challenges for communities, people and the environment makes us a large part of every adventure. Guidance on arrival, and throughout all adventures, is provided on social norms and how to behave / dress when visiting important places, interacting with communities and our guides work hard to provide translation to ensure that travellers can talk, share and learn from the people we meet along the way.

A highlight of our longer adventures – 3, 5 and 11 days – is staying in a small Karen community where members of the village spend the evening with our travellers talking about their culture and lifestyle as well as sharing their local food and drink.