

NORTHERN THAILAND CYCLING ADVENTURE – 11 days / 10 nights

A real Thailand adventure taking you well and truly off the beaten track. With superb quiet roads, incredible mountain passes, remote villages, stunning views and even Tuk Tuks this trip is a must for all adventurous cyclists looking for a unique adventure.

- Minimum group size – 6
- Maximum group size – 10

Dates: 12th June – 22nd June 2022 (note – for private groups we can offer bespoke dates)

Price: £1,795 per person based on sharing a twin room. If you'd like a private single room there is a supplement of £375

Day 1: ARRIVAL AND WELCOME DINNER

Arrive into Chiang Mai International Airport (flights not included) where you'll be met by our team and have a private transfer to your superb overnight riverside hotel. This evening we'll have a great Thai feast by the river and enjoy the surroundings of this fantastic hotel.

Inclusions:

- Airport meet and greet and private transfers to the riverside hotel
- Twin room accommodation at the Rati Lanna Riverside Spa in Chiang Mai. A superb 5* Hotel located right on the river. Large rooms with all facilities, swimming pool and spa
- Welcome Dinner – a traditional Thai feast to get the adventure started

Day 2: RIDE UP TO THE MOUNTAIN PEAK OF MON CHAEM AND THEN TO SAMOENG

An incredible first day of cycling high into the mountains overlooking Chiang Mai. We first transfer by minivan to our starting point of Mae Rim (avoiding the only busy roads we'll see on the whole adventure) and then head up the rural mountain back roads to the community of Mon Chaem. After a gentle rolling first 5km we then take on a stunning 25km climb with 1,110 metres of ascent winding through small communities and forests winding up to the mountain top settlement of Mon Chaem with incredible 360 degree views.



A fantastic and filling Thai lunch awaits in a local restaurant along with some of the best coffee around.

After lunch we head down the 'back' of the mountain through tiny rural roads towards our overnight destination of Samoeng, a market town serving the small mountain communities all around. Passing through very remote villages (don't be surprised if people come out of their houses to cheer you

on!) this is real rural mountainous Thailand which whilst only 40km from Chiang Mai city hardly ever sees Western visitors!



Overnight we'll stay in the very pleasant Samoeng Centre hotel with a welcoming swimming pool. A 30 minute traditional Thai massage is included for all and once you're all refreshed we'll head out for another great Thai feast.

Cycling:

- Total distance - +/-70km
- Total climbing - +/-1,400 metres



Inclusions:

- Transfer to Mae Rim – our cycling starting point
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner
- Twin shared accommodation at Samoeng Centre, Samoeng
- Cycling guide, support team and vehicle (including spare parts / mechanic)
- Water, snacks, fruit to keep you energised throughout the ride
- 30 minute traditional Thai massage in Samoeng on arrival

Day 3: RIDE INTO TO THE HEART OF KAREN HILL TRIBE COUNTRY

A challenging and spectacular day's ride today as we head North along remote roads deep into the heart of Karen Hill Tribe territory. We spend the day on roads almost never travelled by any visitor, let alone by bike. With plenty of stops for superb local coffee, to take in the spectacular views and to meet the local people this is not just an incredible day's riding but also a real adventure. It feels as if we are in another country and in many ways we are – the people here are ethnic Karen, speaking a

different language and with their own unique culture having always lived in the mountain regions of Northern Thailand and Myanmar.



We end the day in the simple but spectacular Karen Hill Tribe Lodge where we'll spend the night. About as remote as you can get this small 'resort' has been set up by the local community to allow visitors to get a real sense of the region and culture. Whilst the rooms are simple they are clean and well looked after and the experience of staying here more than makes up for the lack of modern conveniences.



We'll have a Karen feast in the evening and enjoy the night deep in the mountains.

Cycling:

- Total distance - +/-110km
- Total climbing - +/-2,300 metres



Inclusions:

- Breakfast, lunch and dinner
- Twin shared accommodation at Karen Hill Tribe Lodge
- Cycling guide, support team and vehicle (including spare parts / mechanic)
- Water, snacks, fruit to keep you energised throughout the ride

Day 4: RIDE TO PAI

An easier day on the bike today as we head towards the famous mountain town of Pai and our fantastic resort, our base for the next two nights. Yet again we're on rural but superb roads and after a short climb in the morning it's pretty much rolling and downhill all the way to Pai with as always some stops to experience the local culture and communities.



We'll arrive at Phu Pai Art Resort around mid afternoon in time for a complimentary Thai massage, perfect to ease the body after the last three days, and then time to enjoy the infinity pool overlooking the rice fields and mountains.

In the evening it's yet another great Thai feast and time for a few well earned beers.

Cycling:

- Total distance - +/-60km
- Total climbing - +/-1,100 metres



Inclusions:

- Breakfast, lunch and dinner
- Twin shared accommodation at Phu Pai Art Resort
- Cycling guide, support team and vehicle (including spare parts / mechanic)
- Water, snacks, fruit to keep you energised throughout the ride
- Traditional Thai Massage at the resort

Day 5: A FREE DAY TO REST OR EXPLORE THE LOCAL AREA

A day off the bike today to enjoy the resort and its lovely pool or head out and explore the town of Pai located just 5km away – easy to either cycle into or use the transfers provided by the resort.

In the evening we'll head into Pai for a street food experience giving a great sense of what's on offer in this part of the world

Inclusions:

- Breakfast and street food dinner
- Twin shared accommodation at Phu Pai Art Resort

Day 6: RIDE TO MAE HONG SON

A real challenge awaits today for our last full days on the bikes as we ride to Mae Hong Son. This stretch of the route is an iconic cycling route in Northern Thailand but one only for the adventurous! Incredible views across the mountains, a superb climb to start the day and then rolling roads with the odd sharp climb and descent heading all the way to our destination, the fantastic Fern Resort just outside Mae Hong Son (where Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie used to hang out to avoid the crowds!)



Don't forget the support vehicle is with us throughout not only providing never ending snacks, water and fruit but also on hand should you wish to take some time out and enjoy some well-deserved cool air-conditioning for parts of the route!

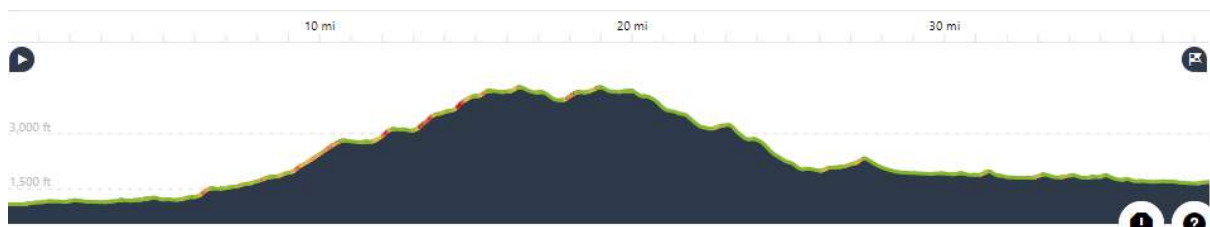


We pass through small communities, market towns, great rural coffee shops and the breath taking views are more than enough to take your mind off any burning thighs as we ride through the mountains.

We'll arrive at Fern Resort in the late afternoon, in time for yet another Thai massage and then cold beers at the superb sunset bar in the resort

Cycling:

- Total distance - +/-115 km
- Total climbing - +/-2,500 metres



Inclusions:

- Breakfast, lunch and dinner
- Twin shared accommodation at Fern Resort, Mae Hong Son
- Cycling guide, support team and vehicle (including spare parts / mechanic)
- Water, snacks, fruit to keep you energised throughout the ride
- Traditional Thai Massage at the resort

Day 7: HILL TRIBES, TEMPLES AND STREET FOOD

A well earned relaxing but adventurous day today as we explore the area around Mae Hong Son. First we'll take a long tail boat down the river to visit a 'long neck' Karen tribal village. A million miles from the world of mass-tourism nearer more famous destinations this gives a fascinating insight into life up here in the mountains and to the 'long neck' tradition.



Then in the late afternoon we'll head to Wat Doi Kong Mu, the most important Temple in the region perched on a mountain overlooking the town, for sunset and then down into the town itself for some of the best street food in Thailand. With dishes from Myanmar, Thailand and many different Hill Tribes a great feast is assured.

Of course throughout the day there's also the chance to enjoy the two swimming pools at the resort and lie back and relax after some serious cycling over the last few days.

Inclusions:

- Breakfast, lunch and street food dinner
- Twin shared accommodation at Fern Resort, Mae Hong Son
- River excursion to a remote Karen village and a visit to Wat Doi Kong Mu

Day 8: TUK TUKS, A STUNNING CLIMB AND A HILL TRIBE HOMESTAY

Today is one of those days you'll never forget! We start off by taking a unique way to travel in the mountains – Thailand's iconic Tuk Tuks. However, these are no ordinary Tuk Tuks having been built specially for the mountain roads with more powerful engines, larger and more comfortable back seats, sunroofs and even blu-tooth speakers! With our expert drivers we head South for around 100km's along a superb stretch of road allowing you to sit back and enjoy the views – and the surprise of the locals seeing Tuk Tuks in this area.

Then, after a late lunch, it's time to get back on the bike for one final achievement – the 25km climb to the hidden village of Ban Lay Oop! A truly spectacular climb with hairpin bends winding up through the mountains and one which almost certainly no visitors have ever ridden. With the support team in place, Tuk Tuks on hand and yet another local feast due on arrival everything is in place for you to head high up into the hills surrounded by simply incredible views.



We're staying in the 'hidden' village this evening. A small community spread along a mountain ridge only recently able to allow visitors from overseas. Incredibly welcoming, totally traditional and a real adventurous experience. We'll eat dinner with the community and then stay in homestays dotted around the village. The accommodation is simple – mattresses on the floor with mosquito nets and shared bathrooms – but a unique and very special experience.

Tuk Tuks, a stunning hidden mountain bike climb and a real homestay experience in a tiny village – travel doesn't get more exciting.

Cycling:

- Total distance - +/-25km
- Total climbing - +/-1,200 metres



Inclusions:

- Breakfast, lunch and dinner
- Tuk Tuk and driver (2 travellers per Tuk Tuk)
- Simple overnight accommodation in the mountain village of Ban La Oop
- Cycling guide and support team including vehicle (including spare parts / mechanic)
- Water, snacks and fruit throughout the day

Day 9: A BACK ROAD TUK TUK ADVENTURE HEADING TO DOI INTHANON

After breakfast we'll ride back down the climb – nothing like enjoying the benefits of the pain heading up yesterday – before jumping back into the Tuk Tuks and heading yet again, deep into the mountains and off the beaten track as we head to the foothills of Doi Inthanon, Thailand's highest mountain at over 2,500m.

Driving along quiet roads passing through remote communities this really is the heart of Northern Thailand. As always, coffee stops and viewpoints are the order of the day along with another

delicious local lunch. Make sure you've got your favourite road trip tunes set to play through the bluetooth speakers, sit back and enjoy the mountains unfolding in front of you.

By mid / late afternoon we'll arrive at the Karen mountain community of Mae Khlang Luang perched overlooking rice terraces and surrounded by forests and mountains. Tonight we'll enjoy a traditional Thai BBQ sitting out over the fields as the sun goes down. Fantastic.

NOTE: The rooms in this community are relatively simple but clean and large. All rooms have en-suite facilities but there's no air-conditioning (not needed at this altitude) and the friendliness of the village more than makes up for the simple nature of the rooms.

Inclusions:

- Breakfast, lunch and dinner
- Tuk Tuk and driver (2 travellers per Tuk Tuk)
- Simple overnight lodge style accommodation in the mountain village of Mae Khlang Luang
- Water, snacks and fruit throughout the day

Day 10: TREKKING, RETURN TO CHIANG MAI AND A FINAL FEAST

You can't come to Northern Thailand and not do some trekking! This morning we'll head out after breakfast to explore the forested foothills of Doi Inthanon. Accompanied by an expert trekking guide we pass through towering forest, swim under waterfalls and have lunch in a clearing. At the end of the trek we head back into the village where we stayed last night enjoying a traditional mountain coffee shop, Starbucks eat your heart out.

Next we're back in the Tuk Tuks winding through yet more stunning mountain roads before transferring finally into minivans to head back into our hotel in Chiang Mai city for a fantastic celebratory riverside dinner.

Inclusions:

- Breakfast, lunch and dinner
- Tuk Tuk and driver (2 travellers per Tuk Tuk)
- Water, snacks and fruit throughout the day
- Twin room accommodation at the Rati Lanna Riverside Spa in Chiang Mai. A superb 5* Hotel located right on the river. Large rooms with all facilities, swimming pool and spa

DAY 11: FAREWELL

It's time to say goodbye Chiang Mai and our team will transfer you to Chiang Mai airport in good time to catch your flight.

Inclusions:

- Breakfast
- Transfer to Chiang Mai airport

INCLUSIONS:

- 10 nights accommodation (see the accommodation section for detailed information on each place we stay)
- 10 breakfasts / 10 lunches / 10 dinners
- Chiang Mai airport meet and greet and private transfers
- Professional guides, support team and native English speaking leaders
- Fruit, snacks, water, electrolytes throughout the trip
- Support vehicle including spare parts (limited), mechanic, first aid
- All activities listed in the itinerary

EXCLUSIONS:

- Flights to / from Chiang Mai
- Travel Insurance
- Bike rental
- Tips / Gratuities
- Bike rental (if required)

ACCOMMODATION

We use a range of accommodation on this adventure but always seek out the best and most interesting places to stay throughout. Three nights are in simple accommodation but this allows us to a) remain well off the beaten track and b) have a unique and very adventurous experience and insight into real life in the mountains.

Nights 1 and 10 – Rati Lanna Riverside Resort, Chiang Mai city

A superb 5* hotel located on the river in Chiang Mai city. Large rooms in a Lanna (traditional Northern Thailand) design, a fantastic riverside swimming pool, an excellent spa and wonderful famous Thai service throughout the resort.



We have our Welcome and Farewell Dinners here sitting right by the river.

Night 2 – Samoeng Centre, Samoeng, Chiang Mai Province

A very pleasant 4* country town resort in the small town of Samoeng. With a small swimming pool set amongst the traditional style buildings this is a lovely place to stay after a tough day in the mountains. Air-conditioning, en-suite facilities all provided.



Night 3 – Karen Hill Tribe Lodge, on the border of Chiang Mai and Mae Hong Song provinces

A 2* 'lodge' in an incredible location deep in the mountains. Whilst it may not have all 'mod-cons' this is a fascinating and unique place to stay – all part of the adventure! Staff by local Karen villagers giving a great insight into life in this part of the world, and of course staying here makes sure our bike route is adventurous and unique.



Nights 4 and 5 – Phu Pai Art Resort, Pai, Mae Hong Son

A fantastic laid back 4* resort set 5km outside the mountain town of Pai. With large individual ‘bungalows’ this is a great place to be based for a couple of nights. All mod-cons and a brilliant infinity pool overlooking the rice fields.



Nights 6 and 7 – Fern Resort, Mae Hong Son

Our favourite hotel anywhere in Northern Thailand and the old hideaway of Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie. Located 7km out of the town on the edge of the forest this laid back resort is the very best of this part of the world. Rooms dotted around the rice fields, the best sunset bar we’ve ever come across, two pools, hearty local food and one of the most relaxing places you can imagine.



Night 8 – Mountain village homestay, Ban Lay Oop, Mae Hong Son

Very simple homestay accommodation – no air-conditioning but not needed at this altitude! – but the experience to stay in this mountain top village more than makes up for the basic housing. We’ll stay in a number of different family houses through the village and eat a super local feast with the

community in the evening. Bathrooms are simple shared facilities but everything is clean and well looked after. A real adventure staying somewhere very few others have been lucky enough to do so before.



Night 9 – Mae Khlang Luang Village, Doi Inthanon, Chiang Mai

Another mountain village but definitely a step up from the night before. Huge beds, large balconies for every room overlooking the rice terraces, en-suite facilities and stunning views. No air-conditioning but again not needed this high in the mountains.



NOTE ON THE TEAM AND YOUR SUPPORT

This adventure is organised by The Tuk Tuk Club, one of Northern Thailand's leading adventure travel companies focussed on delivering real off-the-beaten track travel experiences through the mountains of Northern Thailand. Fully licensed and registered by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and with partnerships with all the major Thai travel companies and many global travel brands we are known not only for delivering unique adventures but also making sure our travellers receive outstanding support and service through our experienced and professional guide team.

This cycling and travel adventure is supported throughout with guides, support crew, mechanics and even a qualified sports masseur! The team is a mixture of local Thai experts and two native English speaking adventure travel experts.

All cycling elements are led by a local English speaking cycling guide making sure you don't take any wrong turns and also helping all to pace yourselves with their knowledge of the route head – and the best coffee stops and viewpoints.

You're followed throughout by a support vehicle well stocked with water, snacks, fruit, a mechanic and spare parts.

For the Tuk Tuk elements of the trip we're accompanied by professional Tuk Tuk drivers highly experienced on the mountain roads.

You really couldn't be better supported meaning you can focus on keeping the pedals turning and getting the absolute most from this incredible adventure.

BIKES

You'll be pleasantly surprised at just how good the roads are here in the mountains of Northern Thailand, particularly if you're used to the lumpy, bumpy, pot-holes of the UK! The vast majority of the roads we ride are incredibly smooth giving you a great ride. There are one or two sections where the road isn't quite billiard table quality but nothing serious to worry about. It's almost as if the roads were laid with cyclists in mind!

If you want to bring your own bike with you then please do, but if not we can arrange to hire bikes locally for you for the trip. Whilst Chiang Mai is fast becoming a cycling hub there are a limited range of bikes to hire (please don't expect a Pinarello Dogma!) but all are in superb condition and 100% fit for the adventure ahead (the norm for aluminium bikes is a Trek Domane or similar and Trek Emonda for carbon frames). You have a choice of aluminium or carbon frame (aluminium frames cost +/- £325 for the trip and carbon +/- £450) and please do let us know as far in advance as possible if a) you'd like to rent a bike, b) frame size and c) aluminium or carbon. And if you are renting please do bring your own pedals and helmet!

We will provide a range of spare parts / inner tubes etc for the adventure but if you have any specialised parts you may require please do make sure you bring them with you!

CYCLING IN NORTHERN THAILAND

A few words about cycling in Northern Thailand.

Safety:

Chiang Mai is quickly becoming the Girona of South East Asia attracting a decent number of cyclists, both Thai and from overseas, who live here purely for the fantastic mountain routes right on our doorstep, and several tier two National teams train here in the winter. This means that local drivers are used to seeing bikes out and about and are generally incredibly courteous to those of us on two wheels giving lots of space, a million miles from the aggressive anti-cycling stories we hear from the UK. However, of course there are always exceptions to the rule and it's important to assume that those on four wheels might do something random just like anywhere in the world. Having said that, traffic is very light on the routes we're travelling and get ready for hoots of encouragement and 'thumbs up' from local drivers!

For reasons of safety we do ask that all riders wear a helmet at all times whilst riding – no arguments, no discussion. Sorry.

The weather:

Surprise surprise but Thailand is considerably warmer than Europe and this won't go unnoticed when you're heading up a mountain climb.. Whilst several of our bigger climbs benefit from the shade of the forest, you're still going to be battling not only with fantastic lengthy inclines but also temperatures in the early to mid 30C's and relatively high humidity. Fluid intake is vital and our support vehicle carries lots of water as well as supplements to keep you hydrated. And taking a break

to cool down is in no way frowned upon – even some of the best riders in this part of the world find themselves taking more breaks than they would in cooler climates.

Speeds:

This is a cycling adventure rather than a competition and the idea is to be able to enjoy the routes rather than just keep your head down pounding the pedals. We're not looking to break any Strava KOM segments – although on much of the route there are no Strava segments anyway – and as such plan to ride at a speed that allows the group to get the absolute most out of the region we're travelling through. We'll identify stops and meeting points throughout each day and if you do fancy a lung busting surge up a climb then please go head – but then do wait for the group to catch up, we don't want to spend the rest of the day looking for you....

We envisage averaging between 25 and 30kmh on the flat / rolling sections of the route and on the climbs we'll see how we go. Do be prepared for some pretty steep ramps here and there – there are some pitches of 25% plus but mercifully not for too long!

NOTE: If at any time you feel you need to take a break from the bike, the support vehicle is always with us to allow you to take a break, cool down in the air-conditioning and relax.

Food:

Thailand is of course famous for its food and rice is everywhere giving us a great source of carbs for each day in the saddle. We've scouted out every eatery throughout the adventure to make sure that not only is the food delicious but also to make sure we can get a great range of dishes to keep everyone happy and fuelled. We also have a huge amount of fruit in the region – even dropping off the trees along the roadside – and the support van will be stocked up with local fruit every day for some great snacks along the way.

Please do make sure you let us know before the trip starts if you have any special dietary requirements / allergies / needs – this way we can plan ahead and make sure we take all into account and can still deliver fantastic food for you throughout.

Hospitals / Insurance:

Not something we really like to bring up – this is a holiday and of course we hope you never need to visit a hospital! – but it is worth a mention. Firstly, it's compulsory that you take out appropriate travel insurance and ensure that it covers you for cycling rather than just sitting on the beach. Some hospitals in Thailand won't start treatment until they've seen your insurance (or credit card) and we will keep a copy of everyone's travel insurance to hand with the support team throughout the adventure.

It's worth noting that whilst Chiang Mai city has several international standard hospitals, once we're on the road things are less 'fancy'. However, medical centres throughout the country – even right in the mountains – are staffed by well-trained, professional medics, the difference being that the rural clinics don't have the same level of equipment as the large private hospitals in the city.

KIT LIST

We know you're adults and don't really need to be told what to bring, but having said that we don't want you to be running around on the first morning trying to find x or y locally. Whilst all your luggage will be transported in our support vehicle we do ask that you limit yourselves to 1 suitcase / large bag and 1 day pack Below is our recommended kit list for the adventure.

- 2 (or more!) x lightweight short sleeved cycling tops – please make sure they are the lightest material you can find, it's hot!
- 2 x cycling shorts
- Cycling socks
- 1 x lightweight rain jacket – in case we hit some rain and to keep you warm on the early morning descents
- Pedals (if renting a bike) and your cycling shoes
- Cycling helmet
- Shorts for evenings / adventure days
- T-shirts
- 1 x long trousers – it can get 'cool' (all relative) high in the mountains in the evening
- 1 x long sleeved top – again, it can get cool in the evening
- Trainers / running shoes
- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Insect repellent – we will provide lots of local mosquito spray throughout the adventure but if you have a favourite brand / are particularly sensitive you may like to bring some with you from home

BOOKING TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

Full Terms and Conditions can be seen on The Tuk Tuk Club's website (<https://www.thetuktukclub.com/terms-and-conditions/>). An overview is listed below:

Payment:

- A deposit of £299 per person is required to save your place on the adventure.
- The final balance payment of your trip is required at least 60 days prior to the start of the trip

Cancellations

If you cancel your trip the following charges apply:

- Up to 60 days prior to your trip – full refund of all money's paid including your deposit
- 59-30 days prior to your trip – loss of deposit
- 29 days prior to your trip – full cancellation charges apply

NOTE: Should your trip be cancelled due to COVID-19 related regulations (ie FCO advising against non-essential travel, Thailand not allowing visitors to the country / banning travel) a full refund including your deposit will be made up to 14 days prior to your trip. Should COVID-19 mean you cannot travel from 13 days or less prior to your start date full cancellation fees apply.