THAILAND - £1,595

17th January 2021 - 30th January 2021 (14 days)
This tour is based half-way down Thailand’s great southern peninsula which is bordered by mountains to the east and the islands of the Andaman Sea to the west. Highlights include the scenic beauty of the tropical islands we stay on, their golden beaches and a boat trip with swimming and snorkelling. The area is probably the best place to cycle in the country, as the roads see few foreign tourists and is often wonderfully scenic, with karst outcrops, rice paddies, forest and jungle to delight the eyes. On arrival we pass briefly through Bangkok, visiting the ‘Temple of the Dawn’ on the mighty Chao Phraya river. On return, we can shop and dine in Bangkok’s highest restaurant before a guided bike ride of old Bangkok avoiding busy roads. Staying two nights at most locations allows for rest days, and cycling at a moderate pace allows for sightseeing. The terrain varies, but the routes avoid serious climbs, and distances are shorter than average to compensate for the heat. Luggage transfer and minibus back-up on moving-on days. Internal flights included.

HOLIDAY TYPE: Guided
TOUR MANAGER: Chris Ellison
GRADE: Moderate
BOOKING STATUS: Places Available
ACCOMMODATION: Hotel
BOARD BASIS: Some Meals
TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS: Land Only
ROAD / OFF ROAD: Road
HOLIDAY STYLE: Multi-centre
VEHICLE SUPPORT: Luggage Transfer
HOLIDAY REF NO: 03443

Holiday Itinerary

Sunday 17th January
The tour starts in Bangkok with dinner on the hotel patio, overlooking the mighty Chao Phraya river. Stay 1 night. Meals: D

Monday 18th January
In the morning organised sightseeing by river bus to the beautiful Temple of the Dawn. Transfer to Don Mueang airport for AirAsia flight FD3245 to Trang departing 1725, arriving 1855. Stay 2 nights. Meals: B

Tuesday 19th January
Sort out bikes and then a short ride to test them and see a bit of the dramatic karst limestone scenery. Cycle to Elephant Cave, Weavers Co-op and possibly ‘waterfalls’ (actually more like a small cataract). Meals: B D

Wednesday 20th January
Cycle to Ban Pak Meng on roads that get more and more rural as we near the coast, famous for its ‘sea-cow’ the Dugong, with palm trees, long golden beach and new pier. Then transfer by boat to Ko Hai Island, an almost perfect example of a small tropical island. Stay 2 nights. Meals: B

Thursday 21st January
Visit the Emerald Cave and other islands by boat, with the opportunity for swimming and snorkelling. You'll see some very colourful fish and possibly sea eagles (there was a nesting pair on the cliffs above the Emerald Cave). Meals: B

Friday 22nd January
Transfer by boat, then cycle via Chao Mai National Park to Kantang, the port of Trang, where the first rubber trees that made the south prosperous were introduced to Thailand. Lunch then, if early enough, take the 1240 train from Kantang to Trang from the perfectly preserved Victorian railway station, a World Heritage Site, or cycle to Trang. Stay 2 nights. Meals: B

Saturday 23rd January
Short ride south of Trang to the Botanical Gardens with its Sky Walk at tree top height, or a long ride to beautiful Lam Plok Waterfall on the edge of the hills to the south-east. Meals: B

Sunday 24th January
Cycle via some pleasant backroads to Tasae Cape, then transfer by boat (dolphins have been seen on the crossing, and mudskippers can be seen near the mainland jetty) to the island of Ko Sukorn with bikes. The island has about 14km of roads and tracks, being farmed and famous for its watermelon. Stay 2 nights. Meals: B

Monday 25th January
Cycle around the island, meet the very friendly locals and observe various different types of farming, visit the village and watch traditional boat building. Swimming and sunbathing opportunities. Meals: B

Tuesday 26th January
Transfer to the mainland by boat, then cycle via Yantakhao and backroads to Trang. Stay 2 nights. Meals: B D

Wednesday 27th January
Short ride to the dramatically located Wat Phu Khao Thong Temple, situated on the edge of the mountains north-east of Trang, with its interesting relics and friendly English speaking Head Monk, or a long ride to Khaokob Caves where guides take you through the caves in punts. There are still a couple of working elephants in the bits of forest around Trang, so we will keep an eye open for them and also songbird contests that are held at this time of year. Meals: B D

Thursday 28th January
Fly to Bangkok on AirAsia flight FD3242 departing 0945, arriving 1125. Transfer to hotel then afternoon free for shopping and sightseeing. Dinner in the highest restaurant in Bangkok. Stay 2 nights. Meals: B D

Friday 29th January
Morning visit to Jim Thompson's historic Thai houses by canal boat. Afternoon cycle ride, guided by members of the Bangkok Bicycle Comany, using bike paths, backstreets and parks to explore Chinatown's narrow alleyways, backstreets and markets as well as the charming local areas of Thonburi, nowadays referred to as the 'living part of Bangkok'. Meals: B D

Saturday 30th January
Tour ends after breakfast. Meals: B

Meals: B = Breakfast D = Dinner

Daily cycling distances: 40-75km, average 50km (with the possibility of longer rides on three or four days)

Holiday Summary
Accommodation & Meals
Staying in 3- and 4-star hotels, two people sharing air conditioned en-suite rooms. Single occupancy is available on payment of a supplement. All breakfasts are included plus dinner on six nights. Vegetarian meals are possible if requested on the Booking Form. The tour may not be suitable for anyone with a severe allergy to shellfish as these are much used in local cooking.

Vehicle Support
Local vehicles will be used to transfer luggage, and a minibus will accompany the group on moving-on days.

Passports, Visa & Health
All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. British passport holders do not require a visa for this tour. Holders of other passports are advised to check whether they require a visa.
There are no compulsory health-related requirements for UK residents, but you are strongly advised to check that your tetanus protection has not expired. Vaccination against hepatitis A and typhoid is recommended. NHS advice is that bite avoidance measures should be taken, but Malaria prophylaxis is not usually necessary. Please consult your doctor or vaccination centre for up to date information.

Travel Insurance
Our Booking Conditions stipulate that, for holidays outside the UK, travel Insurance is mandatory. Details of the level of cover needed and other conditions you should check are stated in the Booking Conditions. CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours Ltd cannot accept responsibility for any costs that may be incurred due to insufficient insurance cover.

Price
The price of £1,595 is based on a minimum number of 7 people taking part in the holiday; please note Booking Conditions, clause 3. If there are
insufficient bookings by 8th November 2020, we will contact you and return all monies paid.

Price Includes
- Internal flights between Bangkok and Trang and Trang and Bangkok
- Transfers between airports and hotels as listed in the itinerary
- 13 nights hotel, sharing room
- 13 breakfasts, 6 dinners
- All other transfers/trips (by boat/rail) as listed in the Itinerary
- Luggage transfer and minibus back-up on moving-on days
- Entry fees to all attractions listed in the itinerary
- CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours costs

Price Does Not Include
- Travel to and from Bangkok
- Meals in transit
- Drinks with dinner
- Lunches or refreshments at morning and afternoon stops
- Entry fees to any other attractions
- Any other personal expenses
- Travel Insurance
- Single occupancy supplement (£460, subject to availability)

Payment Schedule
A deposit of £300 per person is payable upon booking, with an Interim Payment of £500 per person due by 26th August 2020. The final balance of £795 per person is to be paid ten weeks prior to departure, by 8th November 2020.

Cancellations
Should you be forced to cancel your booking for any reason you must notify us in writing. Cancellation charges are as follows:

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<th>Written notice received:</th>
<th>Cancellation charge:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before 26th August 2020</td>
<td>Deposit (£300)</td>
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<tr>
<td>26th August 2020 to 7th November 2020</td>
<td>50.2% (£800)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8th November 2020 through to departure</td>
<td>100% (£1,595)</td>
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Additional Information

Area Covered By The Holiday
Southern Thailand is the great peninsula that is tipped by Singapore and bordered by the Gulf of Thailand, the Andaman Sea, Burma and Malaysia. The peninsula has a width varying from about 100 to 160km in the area we are visiting. Trang province was little affected by the Tsunami of 2004 and is regarded as a peaceful country district by the locals. The terrain has mountains, but the roads will be mostly flat to gently undulating with a few short climbs. Most of the route will follow good quality surfaced roads, but one or two will be in a poor state of repair, and there will be some short sections where we take to forest tracks and cycle paths. This will be the Tour Manager's twelfth trip to this area, and he has used his experience to plan a tour suitable for riders with a moderate level of fitness and a sense of adventure. The itinerary allows you to see tropical forests, rubber and coconut plantations, some very exotic flora and fauna, mountains and golden beaches, ancient cities, Buddhist temples and meet the friendly Thai people. There will be opportunities for swimming, sunbathing and possibly even scuba diving on coral reefs.

Rides & Rest Days
Rides will usually finish before the hottest time of day and there will be plenty of time allowed for sightseeing. It is anticipated that participants will ride in a loose group, around 18kph on the flat, slower up hills, usually meeting up at road junctions and cafes for food and refreshment breaks. The standard rides are mostly short to medium; 40-75km in length. Optional longer rides may be possible on some days, but the tour is not aimed at riders wanting to put their heads down and do high mileages. On moving-on days we will be accompanied by a minibus, and Thai members of Trang's large cycle club, who are friendly and know the area very well, will be acting as guides.

Please note: it may not always be possible to follow the itinerary exactly. Thailand is perhaps the most developed and civilised of the south-east Asian countries with a good transport infrastructure, but things do not always go as planned. In these circumstances the Tour Manager will make alternative arrangements. It must be said that the Thais have a very good attitude: 'We will make it happen' rather than 'We cannot do that', and this has been the experience on previous trips.

Accommodation & Meals
Breakfasts can range from ham, eggs and instant coffee to delicious portions of fresh fruit. Fresh milk is unusual, as is the traditional British cup of tea. European style bread is now fairly common but variable in quality. Rice or noodle dishes with chicken or seafood are common everywhere; potatoes are rarely used. Possibly because the food is very fresh and usually cooked quickly and at high temperature, upset stomachs seem rare in Thailand. The Night Markets (really open-air kitchens) which specialise in low cost meals are an interesting experience. Imported beer and wine is moderately expensive, but the local beer is reasonable, and there is a good range of soft drinks including freshly squeezed fruit juice.

Travel
As no travel is included you must make your own way to and from the hotel in Bangkok. It is very important to note that neither your Tour Manager nor CTC Holidays & Tours are responsible for you in any way until the appointed time at the designated meeting place. Should you fail to arrive at the appointed time for whatever reason, we will not be responsible for any additional expenses you incur in order to meet up with the tour group. Before
Finalising travel arrangements to meet the tour, you should ensure that you have read and understood our booking conditions. Should this tour not attract sufficient bookings to reach the minimum operating size, we may cancel the tour at any time up to 10 weeks before departure. It is therefore recommended that you book fully flexible and refundable transport and accommodation or wait until you have been informed that the tour is going ahead, as in the event of the tour being cancelled, we will not be responsible for any losses incurred.

Group Information
The maximum group size will be 14 excluding the Tour Manager(s).

Weather & Clothing
The weather can be hot and humid, though it should be reasonable at this time of year on the peninsula and islands compared to Bangkok. The sea has been pleasantly warm on previous trips. Skies are usually blue, and we are visiting in the dry season, but there is always a chance of rain. Lightweight clothing, suitable for a tropical climate, is needed and possibly smarter clothing for the more upmarket hotels (though they are usually fairly relaxed about what people wear). Very lightweight waterproof capes can be bought locally for a few baht. High factor sun cream is strongly recommended.

Cycles & Equipment
A hybrid, touring or road bike is recommended. It must be in good working order, especially the brakes. Mudguards are optional. Each participant will be expected to carry sufficient spares (including an inner tube) and tools to deal with punctures and minor repairs. There are small local bike workshops, but they might not be available when you want them. You should have ridden your cycle before the tour to ensure you are happy with its handling. Bike hire may be possible, please contact the Tour Manager for details.

Maps & Guides
Maps of Bangkok and the province of Trang are available. Unfortunately, the best paper maps currently available are missing some major new roads, and Google internet maps don’t do a good job of differentiating between major and minor roads or showing topo detail, but both do give some indication of the area covered by the tour. There are various map apps, some free, available for phones. The OpenStreet GPS map of Thailand has improved a lot in recent years and can be downloaded for free from the Internet. A good guidebook to Thailand such as the latest edition of the ‘Rough Guide’ may be useful but is not essential.

Travel Insurance & Advice
Before booking you should check the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, at www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice or on 0845 850 2829.

Tour Manager’s Contact Details
If you require any assistance, or have any queries, please don’t hesitate to contact the Tour Manager using the information provided below.

Chris Ellison

Email: chris@halchemy.com

Mobile: 07967 584409