

# Volunteer Thailand

*Itinerary November 13 - 25, 2009*

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*A note:* All of our itineraries are flexible. Our philosophy at Crooked Trails is to let the country guide our experiences and not to live by a strict itinerary. If unexpected events arise, we may change plans to take advantage of the situation or deal with an issue. However, we will do all we can to offer you everything that is on the schedule. Please be flexible yourself and allow the program to unfold. Meals included in the program cost are listed as B (breakfast), L (lunch) and D (dinner) for each day.

## **Nov. 13**

Leave Seattle at scheduled flight time. You will cross the date line.

## **Nov. 14**

Arrive in Bangkok very late at night. Upon your arrival you will be met at the airport by your Crooked Trails facilitator and transferred to your hotel near the airport.

## **Nov. 15**

You will be up early due to jet lag so we will make use of the early rise and have breakfast and catch a morning flight down to Phuket in the southern part of Thailand. After arriving in Phuket airport we will go to the CBT Guide Training Centre (TREC) in Kuraburi, where we meet our guide and translator. Here we will learn about the program, and our role as well as have some free time in the afternoon to explore the small charming town where will overnight. We will have a welcome dinner with the staff in Kuraburi. (D)

The villages on this portion of your trip have developed Community-based Tourism as part of their post-tsunami recovery process. The trip you will participate in contributes to this process by helping them re-build after the devastating tsunami. The communities are proud of their heritage and traditional way of life, and keen to protect it through CBT and service projects.

## **Nov. 16-20**

Travel from TREC to the pier to take a long-tail boat to Tung Nang Dam. The island although not devastated by the tsunami, suffered heavily from loss of fishing boats and fishing equipment. After the tsunami with the loss of their only livelihood means, village fishermen struggled to feed their families. As the village had been relatively

lucky, with no loss of life or homes, they received little or no support from relief organizations.

It is a short boat ride to reach the island, where the villagers will welcome you and introduce you to your home-stay family. Over the next 5 days you will live with your host family and another volunteer in your group. Your days will be focused on two main projects; mangrove restoration and a bridge repair. Mangrove swamps are an integral part of much of the Thai coastal-ecology. These swamps act as important nurseries for fisheries as well as crab and shrimp. They also play an important role as habitat for monkeys and birds. Much of the mangrove was wiped out by the tsunami and there has been an ongoing need for restoration. During your days you will be working with reforestation. You will be collecting the mangrove seedlings, transferring them to the planting area and then planting them. There is also a small bridge that is in bad need of repair we will be working on as well which is in a different village. Evenings will be spent with your host families. (BLD each day)

### **Nov. 21**

On the morning of the 18th we will head back to Phuket and board an afternoon flight to Bangkok. We will enjoy some shopping and a final dinner together. (D)

### **Nov. 22**

Flights depart early in the morning and you will arrive home the day you left due to the time change.

## **Bangkok Area Extension:**

### **Nov. 22 Bangkok**

Bangkok is a fascinating city of temples, markets and canals. We will be touring the city experiencing as much as we can by boat, train, tuk tuk and foot. Bring your camera! We will visit the oldest and largest temple in Bangkok: Wat Pho and cross the river to see the gorgeous Wat Arun as well. Wat Pho embodies the quintessential Thai architecture of the layered peaked roofs. We will look at the beautiful teak buildings including Vimanek Palace which was constructed by King Rama V of The King and I fame. The restored interiors reflect the transition from traditional architecture to Western-influenced design. We will also visit Suan Pakkad Palace with its beautiful teak buildings. This former upper Royal residence is now a beautiful museum which accurately shows the comfort of well-to-do Siamese at the turn of the last century. We will be sure to visit the temple of Wat Saket and the Golden Mountain as well as visit the National Museum (the largest in SE Asia and a gem of Thai art. (L)

### **Nov. 23     Bike riding on Koh Kret**

Today we will travel 15 miles north of Bangkok along the Chao Phraya River to the island of Koh Kret. In 1722, during the reign of King Thaisa of Ayutthaya, the island was cut from an ox bow in the river and was previously known as "Khlong Lat Kret Noi" which means a shortcut to Kret canal. The island has always been populated by the Mon, a people that dominated the area from the 6th to 10th centuries. The Mon of Koh Kret are famous for their craftsmanship and skills at pottery. The main village is a thriving market place where you can see the pottery making process and shop for pots, mortars, and flowerpots. You will ride alongside the Chao Phraya River, passing numerous small villages, beautiful temples as well as fruit and flower plantations. We then head away from river life and pass into the rural surroundings where we ride among rice paddies and fruit plantations before finishing the first part of our journey back on the banks of the river at Ban Bua Thong. This is a very easy 18 mile ride along nice flat roads and paths. The beautiful thing about riding on Koh Kret is that there are no cars allowed on the island. We will return to Bangkok and enjoy some free time to explore the infamous Khao San Road. (L)

### **Nov. 24     Ayutthaya**

Today we will be up early to tour the ancient capitol of Thailand- Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya or Ayutthaya in short which is one of Thailand's most historical and majestic highlights. Serving as the Thai capital for 417 years, it was once glorified as a center of Southeast Asian civilization. We will have plenty of time to explore by bike or foot this magnificent city which has three palaces and over 400 magnificent temples on an island threaded by canals. Ayutthaya is an impressive World Heritage Site. We will return to Bangkok by train. (L)

### **Nov. 25**

Flights depart early in the morning and you will arrive home the day you left due to the time change.