



Thailand Vegan Food Adventure

Overview & Itinerary

Start	Bangkok, Thailand
Finish	Chiang Mai, Thailand
Destination	Thailand
Style	Original
Theme	Food
Code	TTZV
Validity	01 Jan 2020 to 31 Dec 2020



Is this trip right for you?

- Veganism is about more than just food, of course. It's an entire movement, a shift away from animal products generally. Being the sustainable-minded bunch we are, we'd love to offer trips that visit vegan hotels and use only vegan alternatives to products such as leather, but the logistics of doing so make it impossible at this stage. Perhaps we can offer this one day! But for now, the focus of our vegan trips is of the epicurean kind – quality, local, authentic vegan cuisine done by those who do it best, in some of the most incredible places around the world.
- We've put a lot of research into putting this new trip together. However, that doesn't mean it will run perfectly. In fact, because it's a new itinerary we expect a few bumps along the way. In our experience, a little detour here and there can make things more interesting if you approach the adventure with flexibility and an open mind.
- Anyone who has an interest in local vegan cuisine is welcome on our Vegan Food Adventures.
- This trip includes an overnight train between Ayuthaya and Chiang Mai. Accommodation is simple but comfortable – soft sleeper class multishare compartments with air-conditioning and bunk beds, with sheets and a pillow provided. Overnight trains are a real Intrepid experience and one of the best ways to come face-to-face with the country and its people.
- There is a night at a homestay on this trip, a wonderful opportunity to witness everyday Thai life. Facilities can be basic, with fold-out mattresses on the floor and shared bathrooms. The rewards of such an authentic local experience are immeasurable.

Physical rating



Joining point

Nouvo City Hotel (Canal Wing)
2 Samsen 2, Samsen Road, Pranakorn
Banglumphu
Bangkok
10200
THAILAND
Phone: +66 22827500

Joining point description

The Nouvo City Hotel is within walking distance of many of the area's main attractions, such as the Grand Palace, National Museum and Wat Po. We use the Canal Wing and rooms are equipped with a private en-suite. Breakfast is not included but a buffet breakfast can be purchased in the hotel's restaurant. Please also note that no alcohol is served in this hotel, but there are lots of great bars across the road.

Joining point instructions

Intrepid can assist with pre-booking an arrival transfer from the airport - enquire with your agent. Please advise your flight arrival details at least 14 days prior to your departure.

If you have pre-booked an arrival transfer you will be met after exiting the Customs Hall. A transfer representative holding an Intrepid sign will meet you at Exit Door 4. If you cannot find your transfer representative, please go to the ATTA Counter (Association of Thai Travel Agents) near Exit Door 6. Ask them to call our transfer provider, World Travel Idea, on +66 81 658 2727 or +66 81 566 9324. Please note that neither the driver nor any representative should ask you for additional payment.

Metered taxis are available outside the airport entrance on the 1st floor. Exit the Customs Hall, go down to the 1st floor and leave the airport at Gate 3, 4, 7 or 8. You will find a table with a "metered taxis" sign. The taxi fare will be the metered fare plus a surcharge of THB50-THB75 (depending on the driver's use of toll roads). The total fare will be approx. THB400. Pre-paid taxis are also available, where you will be given a docket to pay the driver a set price of THB700. Please avoid taxi touts who tell you that they have a metered taxi parked outside the airport.

Problems and emergency contact information

GENERAL ISSUES ON YOUR TRIP

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip, it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local representative straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader/local partner may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction - if this is the case, please ask the leader to speak to their direct manager.

You may also choose to provide details in your online feedback, which we ask you to complete within 30 days of the end of your trip. But we do ask you to be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is complete.

For general contact details please use the following page: <http://www.intrepidtravel.com/ourtrips/contact/>

In the case of a genuine crisis or emergency, please contact our local office:

PEAK Thailand: +66 898 103 722

Itinerary

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Day 1: Bangkok

Sa-wat dee! Welcome to Bangkok. Thailand's bustling capital is famous for its tuk tuks, khlong boats and roadside vendors serving up mouth-watering street food – some of the best in the world. Your adventure begins with a welcome meeting at 6 pm on Day 1, the details for which can be found at the hotel reception. Bangkok has a lot to offer those with time to explore – from Chinatown to the Grand Palace to the sleepy canals – so perhaps arrive a day or so early to take advantage. This evening the group can dine at Thamna, a small local restaurant making excellent use of ingredients like mushroom and tofu. Don't miss the grilled mushroom balls with cashew nuts.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Bangkok - Chinatown street food tour

Meals Included

- Dinner

Special Information

If you're going to be late to the welcome meeting, please inform the hotel reception. We'll be collecting your insurance details and next of kin information at this meeting, so please have these on hand.

It's also important to be mindful that treatment of animals in Thailand can be different than in the West; you may see some things throughout the trip that you're not used to seeing. An example of this is wild dogs in the street, meat being prepared in certain ways in street markets, or live animals being kept in unfavourable conditions.

Day 2: Kanchanaburi

Head to Mae Klong Railway Market (approximately 1.5 hours) to sample some of the delicious vegan delights on offer. Savour some khamnom krok (coconut rice pancakes), a traditional Thai dessert made from rice, flour, sugar and coconut milk. Grilled sticky rice stuffed with banana or taro is another great vegan option for the sweet tooth out there. If it's savoury you're after, keep it simple with some fried tofu or vegetable spring rolls. Afterwards it's off to the Tha Kha floating market (for a palm sugar demonstration) and the Talaad Rob Hoob railway market. Snacks along the way might be khnom gui chai (Chinese chive dumplings), or khao lam (a beautifully gooey sticky rice with red beans wrapped in bamboo – vegan-friendly because it's made with coconut milk). Finally, as we move on to historic Kanchanaburi by the river, visit the night market there, which is packed with locals and a is great place to mingle. Your leader can help you seek out a market-fresh vegan-friendly dinner.

Accommodation

- Guesthouse (1 night)

Included Activities

- Bangkok - Tha Kha Floating Market tour
- Bangkok - Palm Sugar Demonstration
- Bangkok - Mae Klong Railway Market tour

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Day 3: Kanchanaburi

Try your own hand at some vegan Thai cuisine today. Partake in a cooking class with a local chef and feast on your creations for lunch. On the agenda will be a good mix of some of the classics and more: red, green, massaman, penang and yellow curries; plus zesty tom yum soup, tofu soup with coconut milk, pad thai, and fried rice sticks with tofu and mushroom. Afterwards, enjoy some free time to relax and unwind, or explore the town some more. This is a good opportunity to explore the World War II history in the area if you haven't already; the Death Railway Bridge and war cemetery are both important to see while you're in town.

Accommodation

- Guesthouse (1 night)

Included Activities

- Kanchanaburi - Market Tour and Central Thai Cooking Class

Meals Included

- Lunch

Day 4: Ayutthaya

Rise early and travel to Ayutthaya (approximately 3.5 hours), the second capital of Siam after Sukhothai. It was once one of the most powerful capitals in Asia, with over 1 million residents by AD 1700. Stop at a street food stall for a demonstration and tasting of roti sai mai, a dish synonymous with the Kingdom of Ayutthaya. Delicious and vegan-friendly, it consists of a thin pancake wrapped around fine strands of thin-spun cotton candy. While here you'll see the remains and reminders of Ayutthaya's golden age, with a guided tour of the picturesque ruins and temples spread across the town. The rows of headless Buddhas at Wat Phra Mahathat, sacked by the Burmese in the 18th century, are very atmospheric, and a Buddha head surrounded by Banyan tree roots is perhaps the most photographed site in all of Ayutthaya. This evening you'll head north to Chiang Mai on an overnight train, accommodated in soft sleeper class air-conditioned berths (approximately 13 hours). There will be ample time beforehand during the day to stock up on snacks for the journey.

Included Activities

- Ayutthaya - Temple Ruins entrance & guided tour
- Ayutthaya - Roti Sai Mai demonstration & tasting

Meals Included

- Lunch

Special Information

Notes: Multishare compartments have bunk beds with sheets and a pillow provided. Your baggage travels in the carriage with you.

Day 5: Chiang Mai

Arrive in Chiang Mai by mid-morning. The most vibrant city in northern Thailand, Chiang Mai has many famous temples and an interesting old city area. It's also renowned for dazzling beauty and extremely welcoming locals. Lunch today is at a local vegan restaurant, either Free Bird Cafe or Amrita Garden. Your day is free thereafter; perhaps use the downtime to check out spectacular temples, the massive night market, the riverfront or the many shopping precincts. Join your leader on a walk through the old city, hire a bicycle, or simply loosen those muscles with some traditional Thai massage. Another good option is to visit one of the country's most stunning temple complexes, Doi Suthep (it's a 45 minute drive away). Here a 300-step naga-guarded stairway leads you to the temples, and the climb is well worth the effort. The hypnotic atmosphere of chanting Buddhist monks and sweeping views of the city make for a memorable experience. In the evening, we head to the Chiang Mai Night Bazaar, full of local handicrafts and fabulous northern street food dishes.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Meals Included

- Lunch

Day 6: Homestay

Wake early to offer alms to local monks. Later in the morning, meet Aoi, your gracious host, for an incredible homestay experience in a small Thai village. Stop by a restaurant specialising in the local delicacy of fermented rice noodles for lunch. Next, head to the homestay via some producers, including a mushroom farm, where you'll pick up ingredients for a northern Thai cooking class. Journey on to Aoi's home and get ready to cook up a feast yourself. Over the years, a khantohk dinner has become a traditional way to welcome guests. Khantohk technically refers to a raised tray used for serving food in northern Thailand. Eleven dishes are featured on this traditional khantohk menu, so roll up the sleeves and spend a fun afternoon learning the ins and outs of this northern Thailand cuisine. The extensive menu includes yum tua plu (wing bean Thai-style salad), hor mok (steamed curry mousse in banana leaves), hed choop paeng tord (mushroom tempura), nam prik noom (northern green chili dipping paste) and khao niaw moon (sweet sticky rice). Local musicians will sing and dance throughout the evening.

Accommodation

- Homestay (1 night)

Included Activities

- Homestay - Khantohk Cooking Class

Meals Included

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner

Special Information

You can leave your main luggage at the Chiang Mai hotel and pack an overnight bag for the homestay. As we will be staying in a traditional rural community, please be mindful to pack and wear conservative dress. The accommodation tonight is multi-share and basic, but the atmosphere is warm and welcoming. Beds are fold-out mattresses on the floor and bathrooms are shared.

Day 7: Chiang Mai

For breakfast here at the homestay, you'll likely enjoy some of the local style cereal that uses ingredients such as butterfly pea, sweet corn and raisins. Bid farewell to your hosts as you return to Chiang Mai. Back in town, there may be the chance to visit, as a group, the Warorot Market. One of Chiang Mai's largest markets and a thriving social hub, this is the perfect place to get a glimpse of daily life in northern Thailand (though vegan options are limited here). There will also be time for some final shopping, eating, a Thai massage – whatever you need to sneak in before the trip draws to an end. There's the chance to meet up again as a group in the evening for a final dinner at a restaurant along the Mae Ping River, to toast the end of this vegan Thai food adventure with a beautiful view across the water.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Day 8: Chiang Mai

The trip comes to an end this morning, with no further activities planned.

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Finishing point

Ratana Hotel
3/5 2, Mueng Charoenprathet Road Chang Klan Mueang Chiang Mai District, 50100
Chiang Mai
THAILAND
Phone: 66 53272716

Finishing point description

Ratana Hotel is ideally located in the centre of Chiang Mai and surrounded by restaurants and shops. From the hotel it is only a short stroll to the Chiang Mai Night Bazaar and other attractions in the city. Rooms at this hotel include an en suite bathroom, air conditioning, wifi and a mini fridge. The hotel also offers a pool.

Finishing point instructions

Chiang Mai Airport (CNX) is approximately 20 minutes drive from the Ratana Hotel. We are happy to arrange a departure transfer for you at an additional charge. Please ask your booking agent if you would like to add this service and provide your flight details at least 14 days prior to the start of your tour.

If you would prefer to arrange a taxi, please ask the hotel reception for assistance making a reservation.

Itinerary disclaimer

ITINERARY CHANGES:

Our itineraries are updated regularly throughout the year based on customer feedback and to reflect the current situation in each destination. The information included in this Essential Trip Information may therefore differ from when you first booked your trip. It is important that you print and review a final copy prior to travel so that you have the latest updates. Due to weather, local conditions, transport schedules, public holidays or other factors, further changes may be necessary to your itinerary once in country. The order and timing of included activities in each location may also vary seasonally to ensure our travellers have the best experience. Your tour leader will keep you up to date with any changes once on tour.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

A selection of optional activities that have been popular with past travellers are listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This isn't an exhaustive list and should be used as a guide only for some of what might be available. Prices are approximate, are for entrance only, and don't include transport to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated. All activities are subject to availability. It may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination, so some pre-planning for what you are most interested in is advised. When it's recommended that travellers pre-book these activities, look for a note in the Special Information section of the day-to-day itinerary. For most, they can either be organised independently on the day, or let your leader know you are interested and they can assist.

Where activities are considered medium or high risk, we work with operators whose safety and credentials we have sighted and assessed. Although it is possible that you may find the same activity cheaper with another operator on the ground, we cannot vouch for the safety or quality of that operator. Medium and high risk activities not listed above have not been assessed by us and as such our staff and leaders are unable to assist you with organising these activities. Activities that contravene our Responsible Travel policies are also not listed. Please remember that the decision to partake in any activity not listed is at your own discretion and risk.

Feedback

After your travels, we want to hear from you! We rely on your feedback. We read it carefully. Feedback helps us understand what we are doing well and what we could be doing better. It allows us to make improvements for future travellers.

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/feedback/>

Essential Trip Information

Important notes

A single supplement is available on this trip with exception of Day 4 (Overnight Train) and Day 6 (Homestay).

Passport and visas

Visas are the responsibility of the individual traveller. Entry requirements can change at any time, so it's important that you check for the latest information. Please visit the relevant consular website of the country or countries you're visiting for detailed and up-to-date visa information specific to your nationality. Your consultant will also be happy to point you in the right direction with acquiring visas. Visas can take several weeks to process, so familiarise yourself with any requirements as soon as you have booked your trip to allow for processing time.

THAILAND:

If entering by air most nationalities will be granted a 30 day stay on arrival. If entering by a land border, you will be granted a 15 day stay only (some exceptions are citizens of the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, France, Italy, Germany and Japan who are eligible for 30 day visa at land borders). A visa extension can be obtained in Thailand at an immigration office for approx. 2000THB or alternatively you can apply for a Thailand visa in advance from your embassy or consulate that will allow a 30 day stay when entering at an overland border.

If planning to enter Thailand via a land border multiple times during your travels, we recommend you pre-obtain a 60 day multiple entry visa from your embassy or consulate before you travel rather than attempting to obtain a visa at the border on multiple occasions which may result in being denied re-entry into the country.

Medical and health information

All travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully on this trip. When selecting your trip please make sure you have read through the itinerary carefully and assess your ability to cope with our style of travel. Please note that if, in the opinion of our group leader or local guide, any traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, Intrepid Travel reserves the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information or for any necessary vaccinations before departure. We recommend that you carry a first aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements as they may not easily be obtained at the locations on this trip. Please ensure that you are adequately prepared.

DENGUE FEVER:

Dengue fever occurs in Thailand, and is particularly common during the rainy season (November-March in Koh Samui and the south-east of the Thai peninsula and May-October in the rest of Thailand, including Phuket), peaking in July and August. There is no vaccination or specific treatment available for dengue fever.

MALARIA:

Malaria can be contracted throughout the year in rural areas, particularly near the borders with Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar. Speak to your doctor about preventative medication if you are concerned about malaria.

OTHER:

Other mosquito borne illnesses, such as Japanese encephalitis also occur in some areas.

Always take preventative measures to protect yourself against mosquitoes such as wearing long clothing, using repellent and being indoors particularly around dusk and dawn.

AIR POLLUTION AND SMOKE HAZE:

Bangkok and other Thai cities experience high levels of air pollution, which may aggravate bronchial, sinus or asthma conditions. These can be particularly high between the months of December and February. Smoke haze, which usually occurs across parts of north and north-east Thailand during March to April, can also aggravate these conditions. Regular air quality reports are available from the following website <http://aqicn.org/city/bangkok/>

Food and dietary requirements

Animal product free options are available for all included meals and we are able to make efforts to accommodate other dietary requirements. However, while do our best to ensure complete vegan eating and cooking on these itineraries, we cannot make a 100% guarantee – it is also up to the individual traveller, especially when it comes to their personal definition of veganism. While we have done our research and briefed our teams, you'll be travelling in countries where veganism may be new to the local people and efforts to prevent cross-contamination may not be as diligent as in your home country. We make best efforts to ensure meal preparation and utensils are careful of this and you will have your local leader to translate during group time, but if you're really worried, this trip might not be for you. If you are willing to pack your patience, due diligence and some humour, you'll fit right in! For more information on our Vegan trip range, please see the full list of FAQ on our Vegan adventures home page:

<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/us/vegan-food-adventures>

Meals & Beverages:

Please refer to the inclusions section for the included meals and food activities. Beverages (alcoholic and non-alcoholic) are not included with meals unless specified or part of a beverage tasting activity.

Accommodation

Hotel (3 nights), Guesthouse (2 nights), Overnight Sleeper Train (1 night), Homestay (1 night)

OVERNIGHT TRAINS

We use soft sleeper class trains for all of our overnight train journeys. Multi share compartments are air conditioned, with bunk beds; sheets and pillow provided. Our baggage travels in the carriage with us. There is a food and drink service available on board. Please note that on occasion the overnight trains

may be covered by an overnight bus rather than train.

OCCASIONAL ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION

The style of accommodation indicated in the day-to-day itinerary is a guideline. On rare occasions, alternative arrangements may need to be made due to the lack of availability of rooms in our usual accommodation. A similar standard of accommodation will be used in these instances.

TWIN SHARE / MULTI SHARE BASIS

Accommodation on this trip is on a twin/multishare basis. Please note there may be times where facilities will be shared rather than ensuite and rare occasions when you share a room with passengers travelling on a different Intrepid trip than your own.

CHECK-IN TIME

Throughout the trip we request that our hotels prepare rooms in time for our arrival, especially if we're arriving prior to normal check-in time. However this isn't always possible which means we won't be able to check-in immediately on arrival at some hotels. Instead, we can store our luggage and explore our new destination.

PRE/POST TRIP ACCOMMODATION

If you've purchased pre-trip or post-trip accommodation (subject to availability), you may be required to change rooms from your trip accommodation for these extra nights.

Transport

Private vehicle, Tuk-Tuk, Overnight sleeper train, Songthaew

OVERNIGHT TRAINS

Overnight sleeper trains in Thailand are air-conditioned and have sleeping berths down both sides of the carriage. The carriage is multishare, with are curtains that close over the beds. A sleeping sheet and a pillow are provided, and our luggage travels in the carriage with us. There is a western and Asian-style toilet located at the end of the carriage, but no showers. Carriage lights staying on during the night, so an eye mask is a good thing to bring with you, as is warm clothes as the air conditioning can be cold. For more on overnight trains in Thailand and around the world:

<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/overnight-train-travel-around-...>

Money matters

SPENDING MONEY:

When it comes to spending money on the trip, every traveller is a little different. You know your spending habits better than we do, so please budget a sensible amount for things like meals not included, drinks, shopping, optional activities and laundry. It's always better to bring a little more than you think you'll need. Also make sure you've read your trip details thoroughly so you know what's included in the trip price and what isn't. This should make budgeting a little easier. You'll find this info in the Inclusions section of your Essential Trip Information (that's this document).

The official currency of Thailand is the Baht (THB). The most convenient and cheapest way to obtain local currency is via ATMs which are available in most towns and cities. Foreign currency notes that are old, torn or faded can be very difficult to exchange. Clean bills in small denominations are most useful. The use of credit cards is restricted, mainly to major hotels and more upmarket shops and shopping centres.

BUDGET:

Please budget for additional meals and expenses while on your trip. We suggest USD100.00 for meals not included on this trip. Our suggestion is based on past traveller feedback but you may choose to spend more or less.

The receipt of commissions or kickbacks in exchange for recommending particular shops or services is ingrained in the culture of the tourism industry. Rather than turning a blind eye to this unavoidable issue in some areas, we have established a centralised fund whereby contributions from recommended suppliers are collected and distributed back into the business. We aim to provide the best value trips in the market, and this fund assists in keeping operating costs and trip prices low to you.

A priority in establishing this fund is that the experience of our traveller - you - is not compromised in any way. Please let us know via the feedback form completed after your trip if we are successfully meeting this objective.

If you are happy with the services provided a tip - though not compulsory - is appropriate. While it may not be customary to you, it is of great significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels, inspires excellent service, and is an entrenched feature of the tourism industry across many Intrepid destinations. We recommend that any tips are given to the intended recipient by a member of your group, rather than collected and passed on by the group leader.

Restaurants: Local markets and basic restaurants - round your bill up to the nearest US\$1. More up-market restaurants we suggest 10% to 15% of your bill.

Your crew: Tipping is entirely voluntary. The crew may be travelling with you for many weeks and usually they become good friends with most members of the group. It is sometimes easy to forget that they do work hard to ensure that you do have a great trip. If you feel you would like to tip them, they certainly would appreciate it. On a number of our trips, we also use a local guide as well as our own crew. These guides live and travel with you through their home country and it is usual to tip them when they leave. We recommend USD10 to USD15 per person

All departure taxes should be included in your international flight ticket.

CONTINGENCY FUNDS:

We try to plan for every eventuality, but there are still some things beyond our control. Please make sure you have access to an extra US\$500 for emergencies (e.g. severe weather, natural disasters, civil unrest) or other events that result in unavoidable changes to the itinerary (e.g. transport strikes or cancellations, airport closures). Sometimes these things necessitate last minute changes to enable our trips to continue to run, and as a result there may be some extra costs involved.

Packing

What you need to bring will vary according to the trip style you have chosen, the countries you are visiting and when you are travelling. Generally speaking you should pack as lightly as possible. On the vast majority of our trips you are expected to carry your own luggage, although you won't be required to walk long distances with it (max 30 minutes).

Many travellers carry their luggage in a backpack, although an overnight bag with a shoulder strap would suffice if you travel lightly. Smaller bags or backpacks with wheels are also convenient although we recommend your bag has carry straps. You'll also need a day pack/bag to carry water and a camera etc for day trips.

Below we have listed the essentials for this trip:

<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/packing-list>

WATER BOTTLE:

Consider bringing your own water bottle to refill along the way. We recommend at least a 1.5litre capacity. The sale of bottled water contributes to an enormous environmental problem around the world. In addition to the water in bottles, the production of a 1 litre plastic bottle takes 2 litres of water and 200ml of oil. A large proportion end up in limited landfill or discarded in waterways and natural environments.

OVERNIGHT TRAIN JOURNEY:

We recommend that you pack some light warm clothing for the overnight train as it may get a little cold through the night with the air-conditioning. An eye mask and ear plugs are also recommended.

Group Leader

All Intrepid group trips are accompanied by one of our group leaders. The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. Intrepid endeavours to provide the services of an experienced leader however, due to the seasonality of travel, rare situations may arise where your leader is new to a particular region or training other group leaders.

Your leader will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense, you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the places visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. At Intrepid we aim to support local guides who have specialised knowledge of the regions we visit. If you were interested in delving deeper into the local culture at a specific site or location then your leader can recommend a local guide service in most of the main destinations of your trip.

Safety

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure and ensure that your travel insurance covers you for all areas your itinerary covers. Please refer to our website's safety page for links to major travel advisories and updates on safety issues affecting our trips.

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe-keeping of your passport, flight tickets, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of our hotels have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Your leader will accompany you on all included activities, however during your trip you'll have some free time to pursue your own interests or relax and take it easy. While your leader will assist you with the available options in a given location, please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your Intrepid itinerary, and Intrepid makes no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgement when selecting an activity in your free time. Please also note that your Leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it's deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

For more details on the type of conditions and safety standards you can expect on your trip, please refer to Intrepid's operational safety policy on our website. We recommend that you take a moment to read through this information before travelling, and would appreciate any feedback on how well it's being implemented in the field:

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/contact-us/safety>

FIRE PRECAUTIONS:

Please be aware that local laws governing tourism facilities in this region differ from those in your home country and not all the accommodation which we use has a fire exit, fire extinguishers or smoke alarms.

PETTY THEFT AND PERSONAL SAFETY:

While travelling there is always the risk of pick-pocketing and petty theft, particularly in the more touristy cities. We recommend that you exercise caution when walking alone at night and encourage you to walk together and only on main, well-lit thoroughfares. Be particularly vigilant on public transport. Simple measures like carrying your day pack on your front, not hanging your bag over the back of your chair or on the floor and wearing a money belt will reduce any chance that your valuables should go missing.

SWIMMING POOLS:

You may stay at hotels with unfenced pools and no life guard on duty.

HERITAGE HOTELS:

On this trip you will be staying in some heritage hotels and traditional guesthouses, and these are one of the charms of this trip, but occasionally staircases, balconies and passages etc don't always comply with western safety standards. Please don't expect elevators in these properties as they are preserved to their original state.

A couple of rules

Everyone has the right to feel safe when they travel. We don't tolerate any form of violence (verbal or physical) or sexual harassment, either between customers or involving our leaders, partners or local people. Sexual relationships between a tour leader and a customer are strictly forbidden.

Use or possession of illegal drugs will not be tolerated on our trips. If you choose to consume alcohol while travelling, we encourage responsible drinking, and expect that you'll abide by the local laws regarding alcohol consumption.

The sex tourism industry is known to exploit vulnerable people and have negative consequences on communities, including undermining the development of sustainable tourism. For this reason, patronising sex workers will not be tolerated on our trips.

By travelling with us you are agreeing to adhere to these rules. Your group leader has the right to remove any member of the group for breaking any of these rules, with no right of refund.

If you feel that someone is behaving inappropriately while travelling with us, please inform your tour leader or local guide immediately. Alternatively, contact us on the emergency contact number detailed in the Problems and Emergency Contact section of this Essential Trip Information.

Travelling on a group trip

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. Your fellow travellers will probably come from all corners of the world and likely a range of age groups too. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience. Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found

time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on your part. Due to privacy reasons we are unable to provide you with contact details and any personal information about your fellow travellers booked on your trip prior to departure.

SINGLE TRAVELLERS:

Our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and don't involve a compulsory single supplement. Single travellers share with people of the same gender in accommodation ranging from twin to multishare. Some of our itineraries have accommodation booked on a mixed gender share basis and where applicable this will be specified in our Essential Trip Information. On a selection of our trips, you have the option to pay a single supplement to ensure that you have your own accommodation (where available). Please note that this only applies to accommodation during the tour - pre-trip and post-trip accommodation will be booked on a single room basis.

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:

A single supplement is available on this trip, please refer to your booking agent for further information.

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all our trips. We require that, at a minimum, you are covered for medical expenses including emergency repatriation. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects.

When travelling on a trip, you won't be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance and the insurance company's 24 hour emergency contact number has been seen by your leader.

If you have credit card insurance your group leader will require details of the participating insurer/underwriter, the level of coverage, policy number and emergency contact number rather than the bank's name and credit card details. Please contact your bank for these details prior to arriving in-country.

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/insurance.php>

Responsible Travel

We believe strongly in low impact or rather positive impact tourism. Broadly speaking this means that we try to minimise the negative aspects of tourism on the local cultures and environments that we visit and highlight the positive aspects. Please visit our website for further details and suggestions on how you can be a responsible traveller.

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/ourtrips/rt/responsibletraveller>

ELEPHANT PERFORMANCES & ELEPHANT RIDING:

While we respect each individual's decisions while travelling, Intrepid does not include elephant rides or unnatural performance activities on any itinerary, and we recommend you bypass these activities should they be offered to you during your stay. Professional wildlife conservation and animal welfare organisations, including World Animal Protection advise that contrary to common belief, captive elephants remain wild animals and despite good intentions, unfortunately many venues are unable to provide the appropriate living conditions elephants require and this ultimately impacts their well-being. While there is some merit in the argument that the money you pay for the activity goes towards keeping the elephants and their mahouts employed, we know that it also fuels demand for elephants to be captured in the wild or captive bred. We thank you for your support in improving the welfare of these majestic creatures. Further information is available on the below link:

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/au/elephants-welfare>

LOCAL DRESS:

Dress standards are conservative throughout Asia, especially outside major cities. To respect this and for your own comfort, we strongly recommend modest clothing. This means clothing that covers your shoulders and knees by wearing sleeves and long trousers. Loose, lightweight, long clothing is both respectful and cool in areas of predominantly hot climate. In many rural areas women will need to wear modest clothing even to swim. Singlets, tank tops and topless sun bathing are all unacceptable. When visiting religious sites men often need to wear long trousers and women a long skirt or sarong.

The Intrepid Foundation

Help us change thousands of lives by creating meaningful work and supporting skills training in communities around the world.

The Intrepid Foundation is the not-for-profit for Intrepid Group. We work with local organisations around the world to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable individuals and communities through sustainable travel experiences. With our travellers' help, we've contributed more than AU \$6 million to over 100 community organisations since 2002.

Did you know that tourism is one of the biggest contributors to the global economy, making up 1 out of every 10 jobs? That's why we support local projects that create meaningful jobs and give people the skills they need to work in the destinations we take you to. And it's why we exist – to make it easy for travellers to give back to the communities and places they've been in an effective and meaningful way.

All donations to The Intrepid Foundation are matched by Intrepid Group dollar for dollar (up to AU\$10,000 per donor and AU\$500,000 in total each financial year, excluding emergency appeals). And because Intrepid Group covers all administration costs, every cent goes directly to the projects. Donating is simple and secure. Please ask your leader for information about the projects we support through The Intrepid Foundation or visit our website:

<http://www.theintrepidfoundation.org/>