Next Step Travel
a program of the National Peace Corps Association

OPERATED BY DISCOVER CORPS

Explore

THAILAND

*with the **National Peace Corps Association***





MOMENTS THAT MATTER:

- Explore the rich culture & shimmering temples of the northern Thai city of Chiang Mai
- Lend a hand at a local primary school helping to teach basic English
- Care for rescued elephants at a leading elephant sanctuary
- Connect with a pioneering organization called the Wildflower Home that is working to promote women's empowerment in Thailand
- Meet with a monk to learn about Buddhism in contemporary Thai society
- Uncover the beauty of Thailand alongside fellow NPCA members

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TRIP AT A GLANCE

Day 1 - Arrive in Chiang Mai and meet your Discover Corps group.

Day 2 - Explore Chiang Mai on a walking tour and enjoy a Thai cooking class.

Days 3 & 4 - Lend a hand at an org that supports women & children and dive into Thai culture in the afternoons.

Day 5 - Chat with Buddhist Monks and visit a local primary school.

Day 6 - Teach at the school and meet with local current Peace Corps volunteers.

Day 7 - Spend a day at an ethical elephant sanctuary.

Day 8 - Visit a major Thai national park & experience Chiang Mai's famous night market.

Day 9 - Return to the primary school to continue teaching and visit the Buddhist temple Wat Phra That Doi Suthep.

Day 10 - Say your goodbyes and head to the airport for your journey home, or continue on to the Optional Extension.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION: PHUKET & KOH PHI PHI ISLAND

Day 10 - Take a short flight south to Phuket; take a city tour and enjoy free time at the hotel or checking out town.

Day 11 - Travel via speedboat to Koh Phi Phi island.

Day 12 - Enjoy the resort & the island.

Day 13 - Depart for your flight home!





THAILAND WITH NEXT STEP TRAVEL

ITINERARY OVERVIEW

TRIP DATES: December 6 - 15, 2026
Optional trip extension: *December 15-18, 2026*

Enjoy the beautiful city of Chiang Mai - with purpose!

From the hustle and bustle of the city streets to, shimmering temples to serene vistas outside the city, we'll spend 10 days exploring many different facets of Thailand's culture and history. Hike in the breathtaking Doi Ithanon National Park.

Along the way, we'll meet with organizations that are making a difference and lend a hand on their most urgent projects. Care for elephants at an ethical jungle sanctuary, spend two morning with the women and children of Wildflower Home and help out at a local primary school. The best way to know a place is through its people, and the best way to know a person is through collaboration on meaningful projects.

HIGHLIGHTS



CHIANG MAI

The largest city in northern Thailand, Chiang Mai is steeped in history and culture. You'll explore the city's historic old town on a walking tour, taking in historic Buddhist temples and bustling street markets. Charming eateries, speedy tuktuks and colorful streets give it a small-town feel within a big city - and make Chiang Mai one of our favorite cities to explore!



WAT PHRA THAT DOI SUTHEP

Overlooking Chiang Mai from its position high in the green hills outside the city is Wat Phra That Doi Suthep, a magnificent Buddhist temple and monastery dating back to the 1300s – although judging by its gleaming golden stupas, it could have been built yesterday. Legend has it that the site for the temple was chosen when a white elephant carried a relic here, believed to be one of the Buddha's shoulder bones.



WILDFLOWER HOME

Founded in 2005, this facility was created to support the pre- and post-natal care of at-risk mothers from the local hilltribes. Now, the 2.5-acre oasis offers 50+ women a safe space for themselves and their children, as well as job training, medical care and community, including livestock, a garden and space to develop skills or economic ventures to ensure their future livelihood. We will meet with these women and children and help out with projects around their sustainable farm, infrastructure projects and more.



CHANGLAND ELEPHANT SANCTUARY

Spend a day at Changland Elephant Sanctuary in the lush hills outside of Chiang Mai. At this ethical sanctuary, we'll work with mahouts (elephant handlers) to care for the gentle giants that call this refuge home. Roll up your sleeves and dive into life with the elephants: accompany them on a jungle stroll, , collect grass to prepare their meals and feed them lunch.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Arrive and Settle In

A warm welcome awaits you as you arrive in Chiang Mai International Airport, where the Next Step Travel team will greet you with open arms! After bags are collected and everyone is set to go, we'll venture into the historic city center of Chiang Mai to our boutique hotel accommodations.

Upon arrival, check in, relax and enjoy a tasty welcome dinner hosted by your guide. Over the next week and half, we will explore the natural beauty of northern Thailand as well as engage with local schools, a pioneering women's empowerment organization & a leading elephant sanctuary. *(D)*



DAY 2: Take a Walking Tour of Chiang Mai and Experience an Interactive Thai Cooking Class

Enjoy a relaxing breakfast before a morning orientation which will cover the program for the week, a bit of Thailand's history and cultural do's & don'ts. We'll also dive into an introductory Thai language lesson so you'll be equipped to navigate Chiang Mai over the next week!

After lunch, we'll embark on a walking city tour of Chiang Mai, visiting local temples, trying new food at an outdoor market and simply taking in the sights and sounds of this northern Thai city. Along the way, we'll exercise our creative juices with an interactive Thai cooking class with a chef, learning how to make the most important Thai dishes. *(B,L,D)*





DAYS 3 & 4: Wildflower Home & Cultural Exploration

The next two mornings will be spent lending a hand at a very special project called the Wildflower Home. A women's empowerment project that works with single mothers and their children to provide a safe place to live, learn and grow. We'll be assigned to a range of projects with the organization including working on their sustainable farm as well as directly with the women & children at the home. The exact activities here will depend greatly on the needs of the Wildflower Home at that time, the number of women and children at the shelter. This will be an insightful opportunity to learn ways this forward-thinking organization is protecting women & the local communities.

The afternoons will be reserved for cultural exploration. One afternoon, we'll pay a visit to the Elephant Parade House, which creating a global movement through painted baby elephant statues. The life-size statues are exhibited in international cities and raise awareness about elephant conservation. Travelers will also have the opportunity to paint their own "mini" baby elephant!















Another afternoon, we'll take a tour of the markets & temples of Chiang Mai. Each evening, we'll have a delicious group dinner together. *(B,L,D)*

DAY 5: School Visit & Monk Chat

After breakfast, we'll begin our preparation for teaching at a local primary school for the next two days. Along with a visit to the school and introduction to the teachers, we'll learn a bit about the education system in Thailand as well as some of the English language lessons we'll be facilitating.

In the afternoon, we'll venture to a nearby temple for an intimate discussion with a local monk. We'll learn a bit about Buddhism & the important role it plays in Thai society. This will be an open discussion – questions are welcome! Later in the evening, head into Chiang Mai for a charming dinner together. *(B,L,D)*

DAY 6: Teaching & Meet with Peace Corps Volunteers

This morning, we'll be assigned to classrooms to assist local teachers in their daily English activities. This will be a fascinating opportunity to engage with local school children while helping to improve their English through real world exercises. This will also be a chance to see how schools operate in Thailand and be directly immersed in the local culture.

Later, meet with local Peace Corps Volunteers to learn about their service placements & impact on the local villages they support. We'll have dinner together for an enlightening Q&A. *(B,L,D)*

DAY 7: Elephant Sanctuary

After breakfast, we'll venture out to the countryside for a full-day immersion at a local, ethical elephant sanctuary. Upon arrival, meet the mahouts, or elephant caretakers, and learn a bit about elephants, their role in Thai society and their daily routines. Spend the day assisting the mahouts in a variety of tasks including harvesting food, feeding, and bathing elephants. We'll also join the mahouts and their elephants on a walk through the valley. This will be an unforgettable, once-in-a-lifetime experience! *(B,L,D)*

DAY 8: National Park & Night Market

Enjoy a relaxing morning before setting out to Doi Inthanon National Park. Known as "the roof of Thailand", this sprawling park is home to the highest peak in the country, remote villages and cascading waterfalls.

Return to Chiang Mai in the evening for dinner together as well as a visit to the city's iconic Sunday Night Walking Street Market. *(B,L,D)*



DAY 9: Primary School & Doi Suthep

Return to the primary school to finish our English Language exchange with the students.

In the afternoon, we'll venture out to explore beautiful landscape of Northern Thailand. Head into the green hills around Chiang Mai to visit Wat Phra That Doi Suthep, an ornate Buddhist temple which offers breathtaking views. Explore the lush botanical gardens of Doi Pui and visit a local market, getting a sense of the traditions of the Hmong, the ethnic hill tribe community that inhabits the area.



Tonight we'll enjoy a relaxing Farewell Dinner on a riverside boat cruise together. *(B,L,D)*

DAY 10: Departures or Extension

After breakfast, depart for the Chiang Mai International Airport for your flight home or onwards to our extension to Thailand's tropical southern islands. *(B)*

BOUTIQUE HOTEL LODGING

While in Chiang Mai, we'll base ourselves at the Away Resort, a charming 4-star hotel that's within walking distance to the historic streets, temples and markets of Chiang Mai.

The hotel is unique in that it is set back from the hustle and bustle of town but still centrally located for easy access to all that Chiang Mai has to offer. Relax by the pool & enjoy the carefully curated rooms of this lovely boutique property.

Please note that the exact properties are subject to change.





OPTIONAL EXTENSION: PHUKET & KOH PHI PHI





DAY 10: Evening Tour of Phuket and Summit of Rang Hill

Arrive via plane in the beach side city of Phuket and enjoy a relaxing free day to explore nearby markets, local cuisine, or a drink by the pool. In the evening, experience a unique evening tour of the city's historic quarters. Marvel at the mix of old and new buildings, learn about the history of the people, and drive up to the summit of Rang Hill for sweeping views of Phuket by night. Wind down with a traditional Thai dinner amidst terraced gardens. *(D)*

DAY 11: Travel by Speed Boat to Koh Phi Phi Island

Watch the lush mountainside disappear as you boat 1.5 hours to the island of Koh Phi Phi (the journey is as great as the destination!). Experience a free night on the island where you'll find plenty of restaurants, beautiful lookout points, and local performances. *(B)*

DAY 12: Explore Koh Phi Phi Island

Today is a free day to enjoy the beautiful Koh Phi Phi. Your 4.5 star resort offers plenty of options to relax by the pool or sign up for an excursion such as kayaking, snorkeling, or boating to other nearby islands. The choice is up to you! *(B)*

Day 13: Return Home

Today sees the end of your Thailand adventure, and we'll say our goodbyes before your speedboat back to Phuket for your flight home. *(B)*

EXTENSION LODGING

In Phuket, stay at the Old Phuket Resort, a charming 4-star hotel walking distance to Phuket's beaches & markets. Relax by one of the two outdoor swimming pools (poolside bars included!, and enjoy complimentary wifi and a 24-hour fitness center.

In Koh Phi Phi, stay at the Saii Koh Phi Phi Resort. This 4.5-star resort will have you falling asleep to the sounds of the ocean in spacious, secluded bungalows. Just steps to the crystal Andaman Sea, enjoy a half-mile stretch of private white sand beaches.

(Please note the exact properties are subject to change.)







THAILAND TRIP DETAILS

DECEMBER 6 - 15, 2026

PRICING

DOUBLE OCCUPANCY: $3,495 per traveler
Single-room supplement: $500 per traveler

OPTIONAL PHUKET & KOH PHI PHI EXTENSION **DOUBLE OCCUPANCY: $995** + $200 one-way flight supplement

Single-room supplement: $395 per traveler

If you are a solo traveler and would like us to match you with a roommate of the same gender, please book as double occupancy.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 9 nights of 4-star hotel lodging on 10-day itinerary & 3 nights of 4-star lodging on extension
- All meals listed in itinerary
- Transportation in private vehicles
- An immersive itinerary including behind-the-scenes visits to local organizations
- Discover Corps guide that is there to support, guide and inform you throughout the trip
- All scheduled activities and excursions
- $50,000 emergency medical evacuation insurance
- Trip literature and pre-departure support from Discover Corps
- 24-hour Discover Corps emergency hotline while traveling

REFUND POLICY

The amount of your refund is based on how far in advance from the start date of the trip you notify us of your cancellation.

- More than five months prior, everything is refundable!
- Less than five months prior, 75% of program fee is refundable, except non-refundable $30 registration fee. There is no fee to change trip destination or start date.
- Less than four months prior, 50% of program fee is refundable, except non-refundable $30 registration fee. $100 fee to change trip destination or start date.
- Less than three months prior, 25% of program fee is refundable, except non-refundable $30 registration fee. $395 fee to change trip destination or start date.
- Less than two months prior, the program fee is non-refundable. Changes to trip destination or start date are not possible and will be subject to refund policy.

If the balance has not been paid in full, the above percentages apply to all monies paid at the date of cancellation.

BOOKING GUIDELINES

It just takes $365 per person to register for this trip. The remainder of the trip fee is due 30 days after registering for the trip or 60 days prior to departure, whichever comes first. The registration can be completed HERE.

ABOUT DISCOVER CORPS



Discover Corps was founded on the belief that travel can enhance and preserve the character of a place: its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and the well-being of its residents.

Our principles don't just apply to our trips, but to everything we do as a company. **We are a certified B Corporation, which means we have passed a rigorous independent audit of our social, environmental, and legal practices.** B Corporations (or Benefit Corporations) are recognized by the State of California as providing a social good.

By adopting a clear set of responsible travel guidelines, we use our trips to improve the lives of people in the communities we visit and also support the integrity of a place, allowing it to retain the distinctive character that makes it unique. Not only is it the right thing to do, it also provides a richer experience for our travelers.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION

The National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) is a mission-driven social impact organization that encourages and celebrates lifelong commitment to Peace Corps ideals. NPCA supports a united and vibrant Peace Corps community, including current and returned Peace Corps volunteers, current and former staff, host country nationals, family and friends in our efforts to create a better world.

NPCA exists to fulfill three specific goals:

- Help the Peace Corps be the best it can be
- Empower members and affiliate groups to thrive
- Amplify the Peace Corps community's global social impact

