

Trek Northern Thailand – NEW For 2026



Duration: 11 days

Northern Thailand – land of jungle-covered mountains, tumbling waterfalls, dazzling green rice-paddies, golden temples and serene stilt-house villages, home to different ethnic minority groups that have become collectively known as Thailand's hilltribes. Trekking here offers an unforgettable combination of natural beauty and cultural discovery.

Our challenge takes us into the forest cloaking this mountainous area, where we follow trails between remote villages. It's hot, humid and hilly trekking, but we have plenty of time to relax when we reach the small Karen and Lahu villages that host us. These communities have diverse identities, with varied spiritual beliefs, language, food and woven textiles, and it's a privilege to stay with them. We end our trip with a memorable trip down-river by bamboo raft. There's also time to explore the markets and temples of ancient Chiang Mai, often referred to as the 'Rose of the North', and some of Bangkok's highlights.

Watch this space for our extension option coming soon!

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Depart London for Chiang Mai

Day 2: Arrive Chiang Mai We arrive in Chiang Mai, and check into our hotel, where we can relax and freshen up before enjoying a guided walk around this ancient city – a great introduction to the fascinating culture. We'll have the opportunity to witness the evening chanting of Buddhist monks at one of Chiang Mai's many wats (temples). Afterwards, we'll have dinner together, and a trip briefing. Night hotel.

Day 3: Doi Suthep Mountain Acclimatisation Walk

After a free morning to relax and explore, we start our gentle acclimatisation walk. This takes us into the hills, and helps us to adjust to the terrain, heat and probable humidity. Doi Suthep Mountain is just a short drive from the city; we start our walk from a pretty waterfall at its base. Narrow forest trails take us steadily uphill, then we have the challenge of ascending over 300 steps on the approach to Wat Phra That, a beautiful temple on the mountaintop. It's worth the effort: this is one of Thailand's most sacred temples, and a highlight for many visitors to the area. The views over the surrounding hills and down to Chiang Mai are magnificent. We transfer back to the city, and then you're free to explore. Dinner is by your own arrangements tonight, allowing you to visit the night market and enjoy an evening stroll in the Old City without being tied to time. Night hotel.

Drive approx. 1 hour total, trek approx. 2-3 hours

(Lunch and Dinner not included)

Day 4: Chiang Mai – Baan Pong Noi

We transfer out of town to the start point of our trek, heading to the north of Chiang Mai, passing farmland and several small villages, and breaking our journey at the market in Mae Malai to stock up on supplies for the trek. Back on the road again, we head to Mok Fah Waterfall, a picturesque spot surrounded by lush trees and jungle where we can enjoy a refreshing swim. We reach our trek start-point in time for lunch in a local restaurant, and then set off into the hills, making our way through evergreen and deciduous forest. Although it's cooler in the hills, the heat is still the main challenge, so this shorter day allows us to take it steady. We head uphill to the traditional Karen village of Baan Pong Noi, and spend the night in a homestay hosted by local families, gaining a real insight into village life. Night homestay.

Drive approx. 2-3 hours, trek approx. 3-4 hour

Day 5: Baan Pong Noi – Baan Mae Jok

After breakfast, we set off on our trek from the village, crossing mist-covered hills and passing farmers working the terraced rice fields using traditional methods. Heading back into the unspoilt forests, our route becomes hillier and more remote, but we stop at a small village for lunch and a good rest. We continue on undulating trails through rice terraces and more forest, enjoying the varied birdcalls. The forest is home to a wide variety of animal and birdlife, but they're well-hidden amidst the dense foliage! We soon reach Baan Mae Jok, another Karen village, where time with the local people provides a unique opportunity to learn more about traditions which have changed little for many generations. Night homestay.

Trek approx. 5-6 hours

Day 6: Baan Mae Jok – Baan Pa Khao Laam

Setting off from Baan Mae Jok, we trek once more through subsistence farmland, banana plants, and forests of bamboo and teak, marvelling at the fascinating diversity within this region. After a long morning's trek, mostly in shade, we reach the outskirts of Baan Pa Khao Laam, a large Karen village. After a late lunch, we can explore the local community. Many of the villagers are skilled in various crafts, such as weaving and scarf-making, and it's

fascinating to watch and learn these methods. A traditional dinner rounds off a wonderful day. Night homestay.

Trek approx. 4-5 hours

Day 7: Baan Pa Khao Laam – Baan Pong Ngan

After breakfast, we leave our friendly hosts from Baan Pa Khao Laam, and head back into remote forest. Our path takes us across streams and springs, before reaching Baan Pang Paka, a Lahu village, where we stop for lunch. The Lahu customs are noticeably different to the Karen villages we have seen, and it's interesting to see yet more diversity. Continuing onwards, we pass tea and coffee plantations on our way to the Lahu village of Baan Pong Ngan. This is our final homestay in a local village and tonight we're fortunate to enjoy watching their traditional dance. Night homestay.

Trek approx. 4-5 hours

Day 8: Baan Pong Ngan – Bamboo Raft – Chiang Mai

This morning takes an exciting turn, as we journey down the jungle-lined Mae Taeng River by traditional bamboo raft. Aside from a few gentle rapids, we can relax and enjoy the passing riverside scenes. We make our way to Baan Sob Kai, a Shan village, where we meet the vehicles for our journey back to Chiang Mai, stopping en-route for a quick lunch. We should have some free time to relax and enjoy the sights of the city, before meeting up again for an evening of celebrations to mark our achievements this week. Night hotel.

Raft approx. 2-3 hours, drive approx. 2-3 hours

Day 9: Chiang Mai – Bangkok

Today we have free time to enjoy this charming city, with over 300 temples, fascinating ruins and bustling markets to explore. A short transfer then takes us to the airport for our domestic flight to Bangkok. Despite its many historic temples and sites, Thailand's capital has a more modern, lively vibe, and is quite a contrast to Chiang Mai. We head out for dinner, and experience the many lights of the city at night. Night hotel.

(Lunch not included)

Day 10: Bangkok; Flight departs

Bangkok is well-known for its vibrant street life, iconic Buddhist temples and extravagant royal palaces, and this morning we'll enjoy a city tour, soaking up some of the sights, sounds, smells and tastes as we visit some of the city's many highlights of the city, including the impressive Grand Palace and Wat Phra Kaew, also known as the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. Then we transfer to the international airport for our flight home.

(Lunch and dinner not included)

Day 11: Arrive UK

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London to Chiang Mai
- All known airline taxes
- Internal flight departure taxes
- Transport and transfers as part of itinerary
- All accommodation in hotel (twinshare) and homestays
- All meals except where specified
- Discover Adventure crew (number dependant on group size)
- Local guide
- Local support and back-up equipment
- Entrance to sites (eg temples) visited as part of the itinerary
- **We offset 100% of the carbon emissions from your trip, including flights booked with us**

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Travel insurance
- Any meals specified 'not included' in the itinerary
- Personal spending money for souvenirs and drinks, and tips for local guides and support crew
- Fees for optional sites, attractions or activities
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions

GRADE | YELLOW

All our trips are designed to provide a challenge. Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trip lies within the **YELLOW** range.



The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors. Trip duration, accommodation and living conditions are also taken into account. Some sections will feel more challenging than others, but the grade reflects the overall trip. Unusual weather conditions can also have a significant impact.

The Accommodation icon indicates the living conditions while trekking/cycling. While there are usually several factors that present a challenge, the Challenge icon indicates the trip's most challenging element, for most people.

[Trip grading explained](#)

CHALLENGE INFORMATION

DETAILED INFORMATION

Leaders & Trip Support

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure leaders. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader. Usually leaders are based in the UK or other English-speaking countries and lead for us regularly throughout the year in many different countries. In some instances, trips are led by in-country guides with a wealth of knowledge about the region; they have been trained by us to provide the level of support expected on a Discover Adventure trip.

Trip Doctor

An expedition doctor or medic accompanies the group (dependent on group size.) Their role is to look after the well-being of the whole group and deal with any medical incidents. They help the crew to ensure the trip runs smoothly, and encourage you when things get tough. The total number of crew looking after you will depend on the final size of your group.

Local Support Crew

Our local support crew is made up of local guides, assisted by drivers, porters, cooks and other support staff, depending on the type of trip. Local guides know the area well, and are a great source of knowledge about local customs and lifestyles. Not all support crew will speak English well, but are very friendly and approachable. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely.

Your leader will arrange a collection of tips for the local support crew at the end of your trek, and you will be provided with a guideline amount in advance. Tipping is not obligatory, but once you see how hard they work on your behalf you will be happy to donate something! All our local crew are paid wages, but bear in mind that the average wage in many countries may be less than you would spend on an average night out.

Trip Safety

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will be equipped with communication devices (eg phones, radios and/or emergency satellite phones), medical kit and other safety apparatus appropriate to the destination. Our leaders always have access to our 24-hour emergency UK back-up. They are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary, should local conditions dictate. Pre-trip administration - such as medical questionnaires and travel insurance as appropriate - is all done with your safety in mind.

Flight Information

Group flights usually leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick on scheduled airlines and are booked through Discover Adventure Ltd under ATOL licence 5636. By travelling with Discover Adventure you are protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Your journey may involve a transit en route; details of route and flight times will be confirmed several months before departure. We do not always use the same airline for each destination; if you wish to know the probable carrier and flight times, please call for details. You will usually receive confirmed flight details several months before departure. Our itineraries are always based on current flight schedules and are therefore subject to change by the airline. If you prefer to book your own flights please ask us for a land-only cost.

Accommodation

While trekking we stay in traditional-style village homestays which allow a wonderful insight to local culture. They are relatively rustic, though they are designed or adapted for tourists so not as basic as some family homes. We bed down on sleeping mats on the floor in large communal rooms, usually in large groups. We stay in hotels (of a 2-3* standard or equivalent) at the start and end of the trip; standards may vary between different hotels, but they are generally clean and comfortable with good facilities.

Roomshare Arrangements

Our trips are sold on a shared accommodation basis. Some nights are usually twin-share. On some nights we are likely to sleep in more communal rooms such as dormitories, huts, local homestays, etc., depending on the trip, and you may be sharing with a larger number of participants or the whole group; this type of accommodation cannot always be single-sex.

You can tell us if you are travelling with someone else on the trip when you book or within your passenger portal, and we will do all we can to accommodate this request. It is important that each person completes the room share request on their bookings. For customers booking and travelling together, including same-sex couples, a double bed can be requested if available.

If you're not familiar with anyone in the group, rest assured, we always pair you with someone of the same gender (as per the information you provided when booking, or passport markers), and a similar age where possible. We're actively working to improve our system's gender restrictions to be more inclusive, and we've recently made significant strides in this area. If you identify differently from the gender marker on your passport and would like to discuss this before booking, please feel free to reach out to us.

Single Supplements

In most standard hotels, we can usually offer a limited number of single rooms. This is upon request, on a first-come, first-served basis, and additional charges apply. In more communal accommodation, single rooms are rarely an option. We do not charge a single supplement if you are a solo traveller in a shared room.

Food & Dietary Requirements

The food provided is plentiful, often local in style and freshly-cooked, and will give you plenty of energy. Sometimes we

enjoy a buffet-style lunch-stop, other times we might have packed lunches. On some trips we stop at small local restaurants. Dinners are generally eaten at our accommodation each evening. In some regions there may be less variety than you are used to, and in others fresh meat or produce can be harder to come by. Any meals not included are listed in the itinerary and are generally on travel / free days, giving you the opportunity to explore and try other culinary experiences! There is always something to suit different budgets.

Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. Please do not expect as much variety as you would have access to at home – we may be in very rural or remote areas, or among people of a different culture who may not understand your requirements, however willing they are to help. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat we strongly recommend you bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

Luggage

Your luggage, food, water and equipment is transported for you from one night-stop to the next. If there is easy road access this is done by vehicle; if not porters, mules or even camels might carry your bags, depending on the terrain.

Space is limited and hard-sided luggage is not suitable, so it is essential that your kit is packed in a soft bag, rucksack or expedition kitbag. Ask us about our specially-designed low-cost kitbags if you don't have one already. You should also bring a small daypack to carry for items needed during the day as you will not have access to your main luggage until the evening.

PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

Challenge Grading

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[Trip grading explained](#)

Fitness Levels

This is designed to be a challenge, and it is vital that you train sufficiently for it. We will supply you with a thorough training guide once you have registered. We expect all participants to train hard in advance, but we respect everyone's limits and do not expect everyone to maintain the same pace. Inadequate training is likely to have an impact not just on your chances of completing the challenge, but enjoying it too - and we want you to have the time of your life!

Our challenges attract people of all levels of experience, fitness and ability as well as all ages and backgrounds. We design our challenges so that everyone can go at their own pace: this is not a race. If you have concerns about your fitness or if you have reduced mobility please do contact us for a confidential chat about whether this challenge is appropriate for you.

For logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so the front-runners may find themselves waiting for the slower ones. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their personal goals and earn sponsorship.

Terrain

We trek through farmland, bamboo forests and forested-covered hills, mainly on well-trodden paths connecting isolated, self-sufficient communities. The hills are not particularly steep, and the days are relatively short to give you time in each village; this combination makes for the perfect entry-level trek. The walking is more challenging after rain, when the paths can be muddy and slippery. The heat and humidity also adds to the challenge, and could make the terrain feel tougher than it really is. Though you are never far from small villages, much of the area you'll be trekking through has limited vehicle access.

Clothing & Kit

We plan our trips around the optimal weather conditions, but could still be exposed to bad weather at any time. It is vital you are prepared for all conditions. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, with plenty of information, and we are always available if you need advice.

Passport & Visa / Vaccinations

Entry requirements vary depending on your destination and nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure your passport is valid, and any visas are obtained in good time. Check the [FCO's advice](#) on entry requirements for your destination to be sure. Please ensure you allow plenty of time to apply for your visa; we will provide you with all necessary information 6 weeks prior to departure to assist with your application.

Your routine UK schedule of vaccinations should be up-to-date (especially tetanus). We recommend you check [Fit For Travel](#) for further details. You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

Foreign Travel Advice

For the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, check www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance is compulsory on all of our challenges outside of the UK; we strongly suggest that you arrange insurance cover as soon as your booking with us is confirmed, or as soon as you're able to purchase some, and at least 8 months prior to travel. Should you need to cancel prior to departure, you will need insurance to cover the costs involved (registration fee and any trip costs depending on cancellation date).

We all hope never to need it, and thankfully most of the time we don't, but on those rare occasions when you do, you want it to cover you as best it can. Whilst it's a fairly boring admin task relating to your trip of a lifetime, it is really important you ensure that you have adequate cover for the type of challenge you are taking part in as well as medical emergencies, evacuation and repatriation, so make sure you're happy with the level of cover. There are lots of suppliers out there, with a wide range in levels of cover; generally speaking, you get what you pay for! Get and pay for the right level of cover and then you can go on your adventure not having to worry about the what-if's. For more details click [here](#).

Once your travel insurance is arranged, just remember to let us know the policy number and 24-hr medical emergency phone number provided by your insurers.

Cancelling your booking

In the unfortunate circumstance that you need to cancel your booking, we would ask that you notify us in writing either by email or post. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration, administration and amendment fees are non refundable and, depending on your payment option and how close it is to your challenge departure date, you may be liable for a cancellation charge.

Full details of all cancellation charges may be found in the Terms and Conditions of booking.

Group Size

Your booking is part of a group challenge, and the tour costs and fundraising targets listed on our website are based on a minimum number of participants which is shown on the challenge. Our typical groups run with approximately 15-25 participants; however you may find your group is smaller or larger than this.

We will confirm at least 12 weeks prior to departure that your challenge is guaranteed to run. Occasionally it may be possible to still run the challenge with less than the minimum numbers, subject to a small group supplement. If we think a small group supplement may be necessary, we will discuss this with you as soon as possible, usually 5 months before your departure date.

Minimum numbers and groups sizes may vary on Bespoke Charity challenges. If you are booked onto a bespoke challenge please contact your charity for full details.

Passenger Portal

We have a Passenger Portal which will give you more details of the challenge itself. It also enables you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - [Passenger Portal Log in](#).



Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

Please note: This document was downloaded on 28 Oct 2025, and the challenge is subject to change.