

Thailand Jungle Safari



Highlights

Southern Thailand contains some of the last -and oldest- old-growth rainforest on the planet. Visit the largest such area near Khao Sok, staying in a luxury tented camp and get up close and personal with elephants on this three day jungle safari!

After the 1989 logging ban in Thailand, thousands of working captive elephants went from being a source of income for their owners to being a prohibitively expensive pet, virtually overnight. Fortunately, tourism has come to the rescue of these animals, which now play a part in helping to educate visitors about the priceless and delicate forest ecosystems they were once used to exploit. The Elephant Hills experience offers a comfortable, low-impact way to come into contact with one of Earth's truly unique places, while helping the elephants and those whose livelihood depends on them to survive in a new, more ecologically-conscious world.

On this mini adventure you'll get to meet and learn all about elephants and their historic, and changing, role in Thai culture up close. You'll have the chance to help feed, groom and look after elephants and find out all about the interrelationships between people, culture and the Natural environment from their mahouts. After, you'll go on a canoe safari down the Sok River, where you'll be stunned at the sheer variety of flora and fauna along its banks.

You'll take a boat trip on the enormous Cheow Larn Lake, with the chance to canoe there as well, visit a village market to find out about local rural life, and finally be introduced to the jungle on foot, coming into contact with countless tropical species and discovering some of the secrets of the forest with your trained guide.

Is it for me?

This tour is a "soft" adventure, meaning it should be suitable for anyone in good health. Indeed, children of four years of age and older are welcome, a fact which will no doubt meet with approval from many four-year-old elephant enthusiasts and budding explorers. The camp itself is well-established and very comfortable, offering a stable base for forays into the forest, and the organization has strict environmental policies designed to limit the negative impact potentially inherent in running excursions in such a sensitive area. There is also a real emphasis on sharing information about the elephants, the forest, and the culture of the region, and learning how all three are interconnected.

Accommodation

Elephant Hills Camp is a luxury tented camp taking the African model of a tent-based community in the heart of Nature and moving it to the Rainforest of one of Thailand's most beautiful places. There are 30 spacious tents, each with twin beds, lights, fan and kettle, and each with its own bathroom with hot and cold showers and toilet. They also offer ample protection against biting insects and other unwelcome guests. The camp is arranged around a central semi-open area with a restaurant, where resident cooks will not only cook you the most fabulous food, but also be more than happy to share cooking tips for you to try yourself. There is a fully-stocked bar, and also a newly-completed swimming pool with a view that will take your breath away.

Itinerary

Day 1: Khao Sok Elephant Camp

Prices from

313 GBP (3 days) per person

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Pick up from hotels in Phuket, Khao Lak, Phang Nga, Krabi and Surat Thani and transfer to Khao Sok. En-route glimpses of tropical rural life here in southern Thailand can be seen along the way. Arrive at the elephant camp, here you can see, touch and find out about the life of Thai elephants and about the elephant project the company is running. Also the guide will explain about the mahout, the man who takes care of the elephant.

During our Elephant Experience you will get close to and experience hands on these magnificent animals, you will have the chance to interact with them and learn the secrets of their mahouts. You must prepare and feed them one of their daily meals, scrub and clean and watch them bathe. Feed them their dietary supplements that help with digestion and overall well being and plant some of their food which will be ready for next year's crop. A once in a lifetime chance to experience the Asian Elephant, the largest land animal in this part of the world.

Returning from the jungle with a huge appetite you will appreciate the buffet lunch that is served, a variety of Thai dishes cooked not too spicy. After lunch take a jungle river canoe trip down the Sok River. The canoes are very stable and safe; life jackets are provided as well as a local river guide to paddle the canoe. Drift along the jungle river passing Limestone Mountains and cliffs covered with exotic tropical vegetation. Some times hornbill can be seen flying high overhead or reptiles basking in the sun on the riverbanks. From the canoe you can experience a world that has changed little in thousands of years, some of the last areas of primary rainforest. After all this activity close to nature it is time for a hot shower and what better place than in the unique bathroom of your luxury safari tents. Relax and enjoy the panoramic views of the surrounding jungle covered mountains, 100% real nature. A wide selection of cocktails, wines, and spirits are available at the "Jungle explorer's club bar". Afterwards its time for dinner in this unique location beside the rainforest, the sounds and atmosphere will make this a memorable experience. Overnight in luxury safari tents with comfortable beds, reading lights, hot water and western style toilets. Real luxury close to the heart of the rainforest. The tents doors and windows are covered with mosquito netting as well as canvas flaps so insects and reptiles are not a problem. Temperatures at night drops, the tents are well ventilated; blankets keep you snug in the cool of the night.

Day 2: Around Khao Sok Elephant Camp by Boat

Wake up to the sounds of nature and birds calling from the bushes close to the tent. When the sun comes up and clears the mist over the mountains and jungle to the south of Elephant Hills the gibbons start to make their morning territorial calls that echo down the valley. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the tent for early risers; breakfast is at your leisure. The activity planned for today is to explore a lake in the jungle by local boat. The lake is surrounded by limestone mountains and cliffs covered in tropical rainforest that rise up from the shore of the lake and disappear into the far distance. The scenery has been compared to Qualin in China or Halong Bay in Vietnam. Few people know of the lake and even less have visited it. There are over one hundred islands in the lake and it is over 60 km from north to south. In the 70's the area was a hide out for communist and students opposing the military dictatorship. We will see some of the spectacular scenery from the boat and have time for a swim depending on the weather. Please bring swimwear and a towel. A packed lunch will be provided. In the late afternoon return to Elephant Hills for dinner and overnight in your luxury tents where a good night's sleep is assured after all your jungle exploring activities. The jungle bar will be open for people wanting to exchange stories of their day's experiences on the lake.

Day 3: Around Khao Sok Elephant Camp on Foot

After a good nights rest lulled to sleep by the back ground symphony of insects and frogs its time for a wholesome breakfast before coming face to face with the jungle by exploring it on foot. You have seen it from elephant back and from your canoe on the river but nothing compares to actually walking yourself inside the jungle. It is not an army survival exercise, there are no prizes for the fastest, snakes and spider do not jump out at you, it is just an opportunity to explore the ecology of the rainforest, to see a great variety of exotic plants, tropical hardwood trees with huge roots, orchids, palms, ferns, bamboos, mosses; the variety is unlimited. Birds such as the hornbill live high up above, gibbon can often be heard calling to their mates, a macaque or leaf monkey may be heard swinging through the branches, every day is different but it is truly wonderful to discover the great variety of life forms that co-exists together, this can only be experienced on foot, take it slowly, look, learn and listen then you too will start to discover some of the secrets of the rainforest. Weather permitting lunch will be served in the rainforest cooked in bamboo, a tradition of jungle explorers for centuries past. Sadly in the afternoon its time to return to Elephant Hills then onward transfer to your hotel or the airport but you will always know how it feels to be close to nature in the jungle, some thing you will never forget.

Details

Getting there

You need to get to one of the following places in Thailand: Phuket, Krabi, Khao Sok, Koh Samui or Surat Thani. Transfers to the Camp run directly from hotels in all these locations.

Price includes

Transfer from hotels in Phuket, Krabi, Khao Sok, Koh Samui or Surat Thani, tour with activities as specified (including one of either Elephant Trekking of Elephant Experience), meals as described in the itinerary, canoes, boat and transport between activities where required, fully trained guides.

Comfort level

Reasonably comfortable (Inns, B&Bs, luxury camping etc.)

Experience required

Not relevant

Travellers should bring

Please wear non-slip shoes, loose comfortable clothes, sun protection and a rain coat (disposable raincoats are available to buy at our camp), swim wear for use at the pool or in the river.

