

Thailand Elephant Sanctuary

At this sanctuary you can learn about the challenges facing elephants in Thailand and be part of the solution through hands-on work and by getting up close and personal to these gentle giants.

Home to several elephants, this refuge is located in Kanchanaburi, approximately 150 kilometres east of Bangkok and offers a sustainable existence to rescued elephants that have been domesticated and previously forced to work on the streets and in the forests. As they are ex-working elephants, they are unable to survive in their natural habitat unassisted, but forests near to the refuge allow them to roam freely from late afternoon until early morning giving them the chance to display natural behaviour and to forage for their own food.

Thailand is home to both wild and domesticated populations of Asian elephants, characterised by their smaller ears in comparison to African elephants. Sadly, wild populations continue to dwindle and finding safe refuges for ex-working elephants can be difficult. You can contribute towards the care of these rescued elephants by taking a hands-on but ethical approach to their care. Tasks can include assisting with feeding times, helping to collect and forage for food, walking with the elephants and guiding them to nearby water sources so that they can swim and also cleaning their enclosure and shelter.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- Get a comprehensive introduction to Thailand with a Cultural Introduction Week
- Contribute to the care of ex-working elephants in an ethical, sustainable environment
- Visit Erawan National Park and admire the spectacular scenery around Kanchanaburi

FAST FACTS

Location	Thailand
Activities	Assisting during feeding times Guide elephants to wash in the lake Shelter & garden maintenance Working directly with locals
Transport	Airport pick-up from BKK
Accommodation	Shared volunteer house

WHAT WILL I BE DOING?

Cultural Introduction week:

This placement will ensure you get the most out of your time in Thailand with a wide range of experiences, and you will take away a multitude of lasting memories. Those of you joining the project for more than one week will begin with the Siam Culture Week in Singburi. During this week you will receive culture, language, cooking lessons and more, which will help you to settle and feel more at home, whilst the temple and museum visits will give you a taste of the history of Thailand and the development of its national identity.

Elephants:

According to estimates by the World Wildlife Fund, there are only between 2,000 and 3,000 wild elephants remaining in Thailand, and this number continues to decline. Much of this trend can be attributed to the competition for land between local communities and the elephants, while domesticated elephants continue to roam throughout Thailand with their mahouts and are seen begging for food by performing tricks for tourists and taking them on their back.

Kanchanaburi manages a delicate balance between tradition and tourism. It's surrounding limestone hills create an unimaginably beautiful landscape enhanced by its numerous bamboo-style buildings, stunning meandering rivers and unique temple caves. Kanchanaburi is truly one of Thailand's natural gems and the perfect place to indulge in nature and spend time with elephants in our project.

The project takes place in a sanctuary where old, sick, disabled, previously abused or illegally-owned elephants now call home. Here, we work for the elephants, not the other way around. This means there will be no elephant riding in the program. However, you will get the chance to experience and bond with these gentle giants by watching them bath and preparing their food, which typically comes in the form of Bana grass, sugarcane and banana plants. There are set activities for one week, and these will then repeat for subsequent weeks. You will usually be spending time alongside experienced mahouts, who invest their entire lives gaining an understanding of the elephants and how best to care for them.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I ARRIVE?

You will be met at Bangkok airport (BKK) by a friendly local staff member before being transferred to your accommodation in Singburi, where you will be based for the culture week. You will then make your way to Kanchanaburi, where the elephant sanctuary is located. Volunteers are required to make their own way back to Bangkok, with the assistance of local staff.

The project will finish on a Saturday, so you should either book your flight for Saturday evening or Sunday. You will need to organise your own accommodation in Bangkok if you choose to fly out on the Sunday.

WHERE WILL I BE STAYING?

Volunteers stay in the shared volunteer house, with usually 2 to 4 people per room. The majority of rooms have an attached western style bathroom with hot water. WiFi is available in public areas of the accommodation and bed linen is provided, though you will need to BYO towel. The rooms are equipped with fans, but no air-conditioning and mosquito protection is provided.

WHAT WILL I BE EATING?

Clean water, tea and coffee are included in your project contribution so bring a water bottle to fill up

with fresh water as this reduces the amount of plastic you're using. Breakfast, lunch and dinner on weekdays and brunch and dinner on weekends will be provided by local staff. Meals are typically Thai and vegetarian-friendly. Lunch and dinner, are prepared and served by staff, which is mostly Thai food, with occasional western nights. At all meal times there are meat and vegetarian options. There are storage areas for volunteers who wish to buy their own food.

Thai is one of the world's best known cuisines, and if you're willing to experiment, you'll be richly rewarded. Contrary to popular belief, not all Thai food is fiery hot and there are plenty of tasty dishes suited to the Western palate. This hybrid cuisine has been influenced by soups and noodle dishes from China, curries from India and satays from Indonesia. Most dishes incorporate four elements, sweet, sour, salty and hot flavours, and many of the dishes are rice or noodle based.

COSTS

1 week	US\$ 895
2 week	US\$ 1,195
3 week	US\$ 1,995

Longer durations may be available on request

DEPARTURE DATES

Weekly. You must arrive at BKK between Saturday 00:00 and Sunday 15:00 for airport pick up . Otherwise, you will be required to make your own way to a meeting point on the Sunday.

This project is available throughout the Christmas period.

DURATION

From 1 week

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Before you go

- Pre-departure support
- Travel & medical advice & documentation
- Equipment advice
- Discounted medical kit
- Free Frontier t-shirt

In-country

- Food (3 meals on weekdays, 2 on weekends)
- Accommodation
- Airport pick-up from BKK
- Transfer to project site & in-transit accommodation

- Local orientation
- Project training
- In-country emergency support
- 24-hour international HQ back-up

AIRPORT INFORMATION

Nearest airport(s): Bangkok (BKK)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Call us on 020 7613 2422 (UK) / 1 949 336 8178 (US)

Mail us on info@frontier.ac.uk

Check out our social media here:

Project details were correct at the time this document was generated. Price, dates and other details are subject to change. Please see our website for current details for this project.