

## 4 DAYS NORTH ISAAN AND THE MEKONG

Duration: 4days/3nights



### ITINERARY DAY BY DAY

#### DAY 1 | BANGKOK - LOPBURI - KHAO KHO (450 kms - 6hrs)

Begin the journey with an early **pick-up from your Bangkok City hotel at 07:00 hrs**. Drive to Lopburi to visit Phra Prang Sam Yot, the city's best known landmark and symbol of the province. This former Hindu shrine was built in the 13th century in the classic Bayon style of Khmer architecture. The compound comprises three prangs - or towers - linked by corridors. In the 17th century, the shrine was converted into a Buddhist temple and a hall was built to house a grand Buddha image. Continue towards the north, passing Phetchabun to arrive at the Khao Kho District. Visit Wat Phra Thad Pha Sorn Kaew, located on a hilltop and boasting over five million mosaic tiles. It was founded in 2004 as a Dharma practice centre. This meditation centre is located amid mountains with a peaceful atmosphere. On the hilltop, there is a cave where many villagers used to see a flying marble in the sky that hovered above this cave, which was believed to be Buddha's spirit. Overnight in hotel in Khao Kho. Lunch included.

(start 7:00, finish approx. 17:00)



### DURATION: 4 days / 3 nights



#### Start & finish destination

- |            |               |
|------------|---------------|
| 1. Bangkok | 8. Udon Thani |
|------------|---------------|



#### Destinations

- |             |                |
|-------------|----------------|
| 2. Lopburi  | 5. Loei        |
| 3. Khao Kho | 6. Chiang Khan |
| 4. Phu Ruea | 7. Nong Khai   |



## DAY 2 | KHAO KHO - PHU RUEA NATIONAL PARK - LOEI - CHIANG KHAN (240 kms - 4hrs)

Start today with breakfast at the hotel, followed by a visit to a beautiful British-style flower garden, featuring an idyllic setting with panoramic views of the Great Mountain, 'Pha Sorn Kaew'. Our next stop is the famous Phu Ruea National Park, located in the district of Loei, one of the coldest provinces of Thailand. The northern part of the park shares a border with Laos. Its hills contain the headwaters of many rivers in Loei. The highest peak in the park, Phu Ruea, reaches 1,365 meters above sea level and the summit offers a good viewpoint of the Huang and Mekong rivers. Due to the cool climate, the area is rich in orchids which flower throughout the year. Stop on the way for a coffee break (not included). Continue to Ban Na Aor, the cultural village that preserves the ancient Thai-Loei houses as well as its culture. Then we arrive to the local town of Chiang Khan. Enjoy the beautiful scenery along the Mekong River during sunset and try out the culinary highlight of Chiang Khan with a visit the local market, which comes to life every night at Khaeng Khut Khu to the east of town. This is a great spot to taste ma prao kaew (wok-fried strips of coconut with a sugar glaze) along with other local products, such as dark brown coconut sugar and roasted peanuts. You can also try small, deep-fried river prawns served with cucumber dipping sauce, or mixed in a fiery salad with chili, garlic and lime.

Overnight in hotel in Chiang Khan. Breakfast and lunch included.

(start 8:00, finish approx. 16:00)



## DAY 3 | CHIANG KHAN - NONG KHAI (200 kms - 3.5hrs)

Wake up early this morning to join the locals who practise the Buddhist tradition of offering sticky rice to monks during their morning alms rounds. Ride a bike along the riverside promenade to Chiang Khan Walking Street to be in front of the temple by about 06:00 hrs. Visit Wat Sri Khun Muang or Wat Yai, one of the most important religious buildings, built in 1940s. See the ancient monastery and its descending roof in the Lanna style. The wall paintings in the monastery tell the story of the 10 existences of Buddha. Return to your hotel to enjoy a tasty breakfast and a wonderful sunrise at the river banks. After check-out, we continue on one of the most scenic roads in Thailand along the Mekong River.

We make a stop at Wat Pha Tak Sua to visit the 16-meter-long skywalk, built hanging over a cliff, with glass floors and walls overlooking the River Khong with views of the town of Sang Khom and verdant forest of Laos on the other side of the river. Continue the drive with a photo stop at the viewpoint in Sri Chiang Mai before you reach Mueang Nong Khai, known as Naga City. This bustling Thai town serves as the gateway to Laos and Vientiane, located only 20 kilometres away from the border. Nong Khai is the ideal representation Isaan culture, which dominates northeast Thailand with a distinct identity from the rest of Thailand. A culture respected for its kindness, the culture has evolved from its mixture of Thai and Laotian heritage. Enjoy the relaxed atmosphere of the small city as the sun sets behind Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge.

Overnight in hotel in Nong Khai. Breakfast and lunch included.

(start 05:30, finish approx. 17:00)



#### DAY 4 | NONG KHAI - UDON THANI (70 kms - 1.5hrs)

Begin the day with breakfast at the hotel. Then hop aboard a boat for an approximate 90-minute boat trip along the Thai side of the River Mekong. Make a stop to the Tha Sadet Market, which has become the epicentre for local trade between this region of Thailand and neighbouring Laos. The market here is often called the 'Indochina Market' because goods sold here are primarily sourced from across various regions, but there are also a lot of local products on offer. Departing from Nong Khai, visit the Sala Kaew Ku sculpture park, which contains an impressive collection of Buddhist and Hindu sculptures. Although not a temple, the park is also known colloquially as Wat Khaek ('Indian Temple') and some of the sculptures reach up to a towering 25 metres high. Continue to Ban Chiang, an archaeological site in the Nong Han District, Udon Thani, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Discovered in 1966, the centuries-old site is known for its attractive red painted pottery. The last stop of the day is the Thai-Chinese Cultural Centre, opened in 2013, with an aim to preserve the art, culture, lifestyle and philosophical principles of the ancestors of today's Udon Thani Thai-Chinese community. The delicate central garden mimics the Chinese style and themed as '24 manners of gratitude, the garden of a thousand-year-old morality'. We end the trip with a [drop-off to your selected Udon Thani City hotel or airport](#) to continue with your individual travel plans. Breakfast and lunch included. (start 8:00, finish approx. 18:00)

Recommend departure flight from Udon Thani after 19:30 hrs. or overnight train from Udon Thani to Bangkok departure at 19:59 hrs arrive Bangkok 06:00 hrs on the next day.



## ITINERARY AT A GLANCE

Day	Destination	Activity	Board	Accommodation	Room Type
1	Bangkok - Khao Kho	Roundtrip with visits	L	Imperial Phukaew Hill Resort	SUP
2	Khao Kho-Loei	Roundtrip with visits	B-L	Chiangkhan River Mountain	SUP
3	Loei - Nong Khai	Roundtrip with visits	B-L	Nong Khai Royal Nakhara	SUP
4	Nong Khai-Udon Thani	Roundtrip with visits	B-L	None	-

- **Seat-in coach –Tuesday, on the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) and fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) week of the month, operated with English/Italian/French/German/Spanish speaking guide**