

Thailand: Cultural Kaleidoscope™

Find yourself in a potpourri of saffron robes, green mountains, golden temples, & technicolor markets.



Highlights

- Volunteer at an orphanage for displaced children
- Experience Thai food, arts, & music
- Help care for elephants
- Trek through the jungle to remote hill tribes
- Zip-line through the rainforest
- Discover Bangkok, home of the giant reclining Buddha

Thailand: Cultural Kaleidoscope

Journey to enchanting Thailand –a kingdom rich in culture, arts & tradition.

In this program, we'll volunteer at a local orphanage, making a difference in the lives of hill tribe refugees. We'll also bathe and care for elephants at a local preserve.

In our off-time, we'll go white water rafting, zip-line through the lush rainforest, and trek in the mountains. We'll also learn how to cook Thai food, and visit the bustling city of Bangkok and the temples of Ayuthaya.

Community Service

Service is an integral part of the program. You will volunteer at an orphanage, helping refugee hill tribe children who trace their roots to Burma and Laos. Volunteer work ranges from building new facilities to teaching English and playing soccer. You'll make a difference at a battered woman's shelter. Finally, you'll work at an elephant camp and gain hands-on experience bathing, training, and caring for elephants.

Hands-On Learning

You'll experience the diversity of Thai culture. You'll have the opportunity to connect with community activists, get an authentic Thai massage, visit the morning market to gather fresh ingredients for a Thai cooking class, learn Muay Thai boxing, and hear about Buddhism's influence on Thai culture and society. Chiang Mai, where we will be based, is a hot spot for groundbreaking NGO activity. You'll have the opportunity to visit a hill tribe refugee village and converse with leaders of grassroots organizations.



Adventure

This program is filled with adventure, as Thailand is complete with not just culture but also beautiful landscapes. We'll go white water rafting down a roaring river, zip line through lush vegetation, ride a bamboo raft, and shop for handicrafts at the Chiang Mai night bazaar. At the end of the program, we'll visit the bustling city of Bangkok and see the longest reclining Buddha in the world and Ayuthaya, the ancient capital of Thailand and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Lodging

We will spend most of the program based in a small hotel on the outskirts of Chiang Mai, nestled among lush-green rice paddies. Two to three students will share a room with a private bathroom, western-style toilets and hot water showers. Food will primarily be fresh, healthy Thai food with Western food occasionally served. The program will begin and end in Bangkok, where we will also stay in a small hotel.

Tuition

Tuition includes all in-country expenses including lodging, meals, hotel in Bangkok, transportation, all activities and entrance fees, community service materials, all excursions, backup medical insurance, and experienced program leaders. Tuition includes laundry service twice during the 21-day program, and once during the 14-day program.

Tuition does not include the following: international airfare, souvenirs, snacks, laundry, phone calls, or medical expenses.

21-Day Flagship Program

July 2 – July 22, 2012
July 25 – August 14, 2012

Duration: 21 days

Tuition: \$4,399

Max. group size: 30 students

Service hours: 50

Location: Chiang Mai

14-Day Program

June 17 – June 30, 2012

Duration: 14 days

Tuition: \$3,199

Max. group size: 24

Service hours: 20

Location: Chiang Mai

Program Schedule

Disclaimer: Actual order of activities will vary by program session. The day by day itinerary detailed below is typical for what you can expect to experience, but not set in stone as work and activities vary depending upon the needs of our local community partners, various celebrations and customs, as well as the weather. This itinerary is designed to give you an example of what a day to day schedule would look like and provides a clear idea of the program experience. It may be changed during the summer as staff see fit and on the ground circumstances and opportunities change our course. Thailand will challenge you as students are expected to work hard and really be present for all that we do. You will get hot, dirty and bug bitten along the way, but your contribution to the community and to each other will positively impact everyone involved.

Overview: Start and end the program in Bangkok. Spend the majority of the program in Chiang Mai, volunteer for three to four hours in the mornings and do cultural activities in the afternoons. Weekend excursions to spectacular rural villages and fun adventure activities.

Day 1: Students will arrive at Suvarnabhumi Airport (airport code: BKK) in Bangkok. GLA staff will meet the students at the airport, since most flights arrive in the evening we will have dinner and check in at a nearby hotel and get some rest.

Day 2: The next day we'll spend the day exploring Bangkok and overcoming jet lag. We'll visit all the important sights of the city including Wat Pho, home of the largest reclining Buddha, the Grand Palace and an authentic floating market. Over the course of the day, you'll also receive a basic orientation to the culture and to the program.

Days 3-7: We'll travel up to the northern city of Chiang Mai and get settled into our Home Base. Each morning we'll volunteer at a rural school to improve the education and living conditions of the local children. Many of the children are the sons and daughters of hill tribe refugees from Laos and Burma who came to Thailand seeking a better life.

In the afternoons we'll do a workshop on Thai cooking, a crash-course on Thai language, witness a Thai boxing "Muay Thai" match and visit a local non-profit organization that is operating micro-credit programs to help women lift themselves out of poverty. We'll even venture out on a night safari, and go zip-lining through a nearby jungle.

Days 8: We'll spend the day at a refuge for elephants. You'll have a chance to help take care of the elephants. We may wash, feed, or clean the elephants. We'll also have a chance to ride these great beasts. But most importantly, you'll learn first-hand about the issues facing the elephants and about the work of the rescue center.

Day 9: A fun, active yet relaxing day! We'll ride bikes through rice paddies and fruit orchards against a beautiful mountain backdrop through a national park. We'll then jump off our bikes and into kayaks to paddle across a lake in the middle of the national park. We'll paddle along the jungle's edge looking for monkeys and colorful birds.

14-Day Program

Days 10-12: We'll wrap up our service project in Chiang Mai and say goodbye to our new found friends. In the afternoons we'll visit ornate temples and meet inspirational local leaders.

Days 13-14: We'll arrive in the ancient town of Ayuthaya in the morning and spend the day exploring this fascinating place. After a day in Ayuthaya, we'll drive two more hours to Bangkok and check into our hotel. The next morning, most students will depart for their home countries. Students with evening flights will have the opportunity to do last-minute shopping.

21-Day Flagship Program

Day 10-14: We move into phase two of our community service project. This week you'll begin to develop deeper friendships with the local children. We'll engage in cultural exchange activities with them and also learn more about cross-cultural communication, managing cultural differences and what being a global leader really means.

Days 15-17: These few days will take us trekking through the jungle to some remote villages where hill tribes live. Besides living among the hill tribes and learning about their culture, we'll also spend a day doing community service with them as a way to give back. In the evenings, we'll learn about their unique traditional way of life. This promises to be an unforgettable experience!

Days 18-19: We'll spend our final days in Chiang Mai volunteering at a local orphanage. You'll have a chance to develop educational games for the children, engage them in arts & crafts and play sports with some of the older children. Besides bringing your energy and warmth, you'll be a friend and a role model. On our final night in Chiang Mai, we'll have a farewell banquet with delicious Thai food. We'll bid farewell to this mountain city that has been our home for this life-changing experience. We'll travel overnight back to the southern part of the country.

Days 20-21: We'll arrive in the ancient town of Ayuthaya in the morning and spend the day exploring this fascinating place. The sacred city, Ayuthaya is complexly intertwined with Thai history and religion. As the former royal capital, Ayuthaya earned the emerging Thai nation a place among the great empires of Southeast Asia. After a day in Ayuthaya, we'll drive two more hours to Bangkok and check into our hotel. The next morning, most students will depart for their home countries. Students with evening flights will have the opportunity to do last-minute shopping.

About Global Leadership Adventures

Global Leadership Adventures, established in 2004, is the premier international community service-learning program for high school students. Students come back transformed.

GLA is unique because of its focus on leadership development and first-hand learning about global issues. Students learn first hand from social pioneers around the world who are creating positive social change in their communities.

Students are taught to use their heart, as well as their head, to become agents of positive change across borders.

GLA has been featured in:

The New York Times

The Boston Globe

seventeen

BALTIMORE TIMES ONLINE

