



Äventyrsresa i Burma och Thailand



Welcome to Burma!



Adventure Heart has chosen to extend an improved version of our Thailand program with a very different South Asian country. Burma, now officially called Myanmar, has since 1962 been under a military regime where the generals decide the conditions for the 55 million Burmese. This means that it is much harder to travel in Burma than in many other Southeast Asian countries. We have created a program with ample opportunities and experiences, but also with many activities, that all depends on the situation in Burma. How close you come to the locals depends entirely on Burma. Traveling around in Burma is therefore a quite unique experience and each trip will offer new opportunities, which the country slowly but surely, continues to open up to the world. Aung San Suu Kyi, who was under house arrest from 1989 to 2010 and has formed the National League for Democracy, has asked the world nations to travel to Burma and support the locals. We have visited it and you have every good reason to do the same!

Burma

People and cattle wade around in mud to their knees in green rice paddies. Thick bamboo strains in large bundles flow gently down the Pegu River. Trained elephants drag heavy logs from teak and rubber plantations, and Buddhist monks in burgundy red garments walk around the streets with empty bowls, which the people devoutly fill with rice. We have come to Burma, officially known as Myanmar, the large South Asian country that for good or evil has managed to remain somewhat isolated from the international community.

The terrain of Burma consists of stripes of mountain ranges in a north-south direction separated by the fertile flood plains. The largest and most densely populated plain belongs to the Irrawaddy River, and here tobacco, peanuts, sugarcane, cotton and rice in particular are grown. Burma is the world's largest exporter of rice. Large parts of the country's hillsides are covered with teak plantations and vast forests of oak and rhododendron trees. South towards the lengthy shoreline vegetation goes into the jungle where tigers, leopards and gibbons rule. To the north lives wild buffalo, rhino and wild boar. The climate is tropical with a good dose of monsoon rainfall in the



western regions, while the central and eastern parts of the country are drier. The heat peaks in April with approx. 30 degrees Celsius, then the monsoon rains begin to transform small mountainstreams to roaring rivers and rice paddies to popping green larders.

Most residents in Burma belong to the world's oldest form of Buddhism, Theravada Buddhism.

Burma has previously been divided into several warring states and principalities. All of Burma belonged to British India and gained its independence in 1948. A brief period of democracy followed, until the still reigning military junta gained control in 1962. The junta has managed to keep himself in power by e.g. keeping the big winner of the last election in 1990, Aung San Suu Kyi, under house arrest. The country's highly respected Buddhist monks have repeatedly been at the forefront of the people rebelling, for an example by the independence in 1948 and most recently by protests against the military junta starting in August 2007. Burma was in 1989 renamed Myanmar, but not everyone has taken in the new name.

Thailand

Thailand covers an area of 517,000 km² and there are almost 60 million people in the country. Most of the population are ethnic Thais (75%). In addition there are Chinese (14%), Malays (3%) and a mixture of various minorities such as Vietnamese, Khmer and indigenous people such as

Karen and others (8%). The country's official language is Thai, but there are also a large number of minority languages. In total there are 75 languages in Thailand. Thailand is distinguished by being the only country in Southeast Asia that have never been under foreign colonial powers.



The Buddhist life view of the population is experienced in terms of their hospitality, openness, inner peace and harmony. In Bangkok and other big cities experiences are luring around the clock, but you do not have to go far before you find yourself surrounded by unspoiled nature or exotic palm beaches.

If your dream is to explore mysticism of the East, Thailand is the perfect starting point. Green rain forests, isolated tribal villages, vast temple complexes, perfect beaches and a friendly people is just a small part of Thailand. Thailand should be experienced with all of your heart and all your senses when you go exploring in the local markets, ride through the jungle on elephant back, visit the tribes in longhouses or bicycle through the old towns.

Thailand is the only country in Southeast Asia that has never been a European colony. However, there has been a Portuguese trading house in Ayutthaya, and several European colonial powers have tried to gain supremacy in the country. The Thai royal family first attempted meeting the Europeans with diplomacy and courtesy, but when they became too eager in trying to convert the Thai people to Christianity, they tossed the modern crusaders. Together with the monarchy, Buddhism still sets the agenda in Thailand. Monks are highly respected, and it is reputable, that all men at some time in their life try to live as a monk. The royal family is celebrated daily as the national anthem or the royal anthem is played at train stations and loudly over their villages.



Preliminary programme*

Week 1 (Burma)

- 🐾 Fantastic pagodas
- 🐾 Local villages
- 🐾 Shwedagon
- 🐾 Buddhism
- 🐾 Orphanage
- 🐾 Trekking
- 🐾 Markets
- 🐾 Heartwarming People
- 🐾 Monks and spirituality

Yangon, Dala, Kyaikhtiyo and Bago:

You arrive in Yangon, an enchanting city with a wonderful atmosphere and a very heartwarming population, who are only slowly adjusting to a newer and more open environment in their everyday life. You will have plenty of time to experience the city, both on your own hand and with our guide who will show you all that Yangon has to offer. You will experience Shwedagon, one of Asia's most beautiful pagoda collections that stand tall above the city and make you feel very, very small. This incredibly sacred place for the Buddhist population, will show you an important part of the Burmese culture. You will sail with a local ferry to Dala, where you will experience the local village life, visit orphanages and schools, if they allow it or else experience the enormous poverty of the locals and high contrasts to Yangon streets not far away.

Back in Yangon you will blend in with the locals, taking public trains around town and getting a glimpse of an ordinary life in the former capital. You will discover the many areas of old buildings from colonial times, still being used and fantastic markets on sidewalks and in the ancient market halls. You travel to Kyaikhtiyo and trek to the top of a mountain to experience one of Buddha's miracles, the balancing rock. You have plenty of time to see all the temples and pagodas in both Kyaikhtiyo and Bago, before we go back to Yangon.



***Observera att resans ordning och innehåll kan ändras beroende på årstid, väder, deltagares önskemål etc.**

Week 2 (Burma)

- 🐾 Monasteries
- 🐾 Silk factories
- 🐾 Historical Botanical Garden
- 🐾 Wonderful landscapes
- 🐾 Orchards
- 🐾 Local village

Mandalay, culture and mountain landscapes:

In Mandalay, you have time to explore the city on your own before we visit one of Mandalay's main monasteries, which still functions as a monastery school. Here you will experience the characteristic Burmese monk culture and get behind the facade. We visit the cotton and silk factories, pagodas, temples and much more in both Amarapura and Mandalay. You continue to Pyin Oo Lwin, an old colonial town, world famous for its botanical gardens built by war prisoners from the First World War. You travel by train through deep canyons, sailing up rivers in stunning mountain scenery with orange groves along the banks. You take a short trek through the pineapple, papaya and orange groves before you travel back to Mandalay. In Monywa and Sagaing, you will experience completely different sides of Burma.



Week 3 (Burma)

- 🐾 Trekking
- 🐾 Traditional people
- 🐾 Cave temple
- 🐾 Bagan, Inle lake
- 🐾 Fantastic sunsets
- 🐾 Mt Popa.volcano

Bagan, local village life and trekking from Kalaw:

You travel through the tobacco trade city of Pakkoku and sail to Bagan, where you will ride around town to get a different impression of one of Burma's most beautiful cities. You visit one of Asia's most important archaeological sites, Nyaung Oo market, numerous pagodas and cave temple Wetkyi-in-Gubyaukgyi. We visit the extinct volcano Mt. Popa, which in Burmese belief is home to spirits (Nats) and experience life in a village where they still live in the traditional way and weave cotton with their hands. You see the sunset from a carefully chosen location with views over the three Pagodas. After a day on your own in Bagan, where you can experience the many opportunities of the city including hot air balloons, we continue the journey to Kalaw. From Kalaw we trek the Inle Lake through villages of the Danu Tribe and scenic country sides and spend the night either in the old monastery or in a local house.

Week 4 (Burma)

- 🐾 Unique cultures
- 🐾 Floating markets
- 🐾 Orphanage
- 🐾 Villages on Inle lake
- 🐾 Fantastic beaches
- 🐾 Cozy fishing villages

hundreds of fishermen who sail with one leg and floating gardens made of grass and seaweed, which is used to grow vegetables. We visit the local village Mine Tauk where an orphanage bid you in for a chat about local history and conditions. Then we fly to Ngapali Beach, where you can visit local fishing villages and to enjoy the gorgeous beaches and the sea and say goodbye to Burma.

Trekking, Inle Lake and wonderful beaches of Ngapali:

You trek through stunning bamboo forests, along rivers, orchards and canyons and experience many pao-villages en route. Inle Lake offers one of the world's most spectacular cultures where markets are situated on the lake and moves from day to day. We visit those who are closest to us, because the lake is huge. Here you will experience traditional dressed Burmese selling agricultural products such as tea, fruits and vegetables from their boats. As you travel around the lake you will find villages with houses on stilts into the lake, a smithy,



Week 5 (Thailand)

- 🐾 Bicycle rides Bangkok
- 🐾 Massage and relaxation
- 🐾 The Golden Buddha
- 🐾 Life as Thai, Thai lessons
- 🐾 Foretaste of the voluntary work
- 🐾 Rice fields
- 🐾 Buddhism
- 🐾 Learning to cook Thai

Bangkok, Singburi and introduction to Thailand:

You fly from Yangon to Bangkok, where our guides will pick you up and prepare you for your travels around Thailand! At arrival there will be time for massage and leisure, where you can stroll around in the city or stay in the hotel and pamper yourself! We experience the amazing night market in Bangkok, visit China Town and drive around the city on bike cycles to experience the city up close. Traffic in Bangkok's streets is not for beginners! You spend a day as Thai, where you use of local transport as tuk-tuks, sky train and local taxis, where you have to haggle over prices, visit the weekend market and Bangkok's largest shopping malls. Your guide will help you if the challenge seems problematic. After seeing the main attractions we continue on to Singburi where you will be taught in Thai, Buddhism, local traditions, and cultural differences and receive a general introduction to the Thailand that you are about to experience. You will be taught in Thai cooking and have the opportunity to lend a hand in the kitchen gardens, planted with local vegetables and special herbs that make Thai cuisine world-famous for its wonderful flavors. We go on our bike cycles out among the small villages in the ancient Siamese kingdom and of course see the huge rice fields. You spend a night in a temple and do 2 days of voluntary work among orphans. Here you can teach, make simple constructions and play with the children depending on needs.

Week 6 (Thailand)

- Tribe people
- Monkeys in Lopburi
- Historical cities and people
- Trekking in mountains
- Chiang Mai

Chiang Rai, tribe people, trekking, Monkey city of Lopburi and Chiang Mai:

The journey continues through Lopburi, with its ancient ruins from the former kingdoms which are still inhabited by monkeys, to Chiang Rai. Chiang Rai is a stunning lush and mountainous region, home to many of the unknown tribes still living in Northern Thailand. You will be accommodated at a local homestay in the Akha tribe; a mountain tribe who originally lived some of their time as nomads and until recently had no written language and was therefore entirely dependent on their memories to testify about their history. You will trek through several villages in the very traditional area, have a party with the locals and all-in-all have the perfect opportunity to get close to this unique people. You finish the week with a visit to the popular Chiang Mai.

Week 7 (Thailand)

- Tigers and bears
- Trekking
- Riding elephants
- Ancient ruins
- Riverrafting
- Waterfall
- Night safari by foot
- Wang Nam Kieo
- Former capital, Sukotha

Elephant center, trekking in the national park and an opportunity to see tigers:

We arrive at the elephant center, where you the next two days will take care of domesticated elephants that live at the center, as protection against not being abused by the beggars in Bangkok or for shows for tourists around the country. When elephants are tamed, as is the case for many elephants in Thailand, where they also have been used as working animals, they cannot live freely in the wild again. Therefore it is up to this project to take care of the elephants and keep them going, and you will be the one riding them and taking care of them. From Pitsanulok and the elephant center we will travel to Sukothai, one of the ancient Thai capital cities, where you will ride bicycles through traditional streets with the laid-back



atmosphere and experience the impressive ruins. Back in Pitsanulok it is time for rafting and exploring the many waterfalls. We travel to Wang Nam Kieo where we trek through forest areas both day and night to discover Thailand's impressive

wildlife. We have a ranger with us, who will take care of the group and show us up to the waterholes, the animals use most often. Here we have the opportunity to experience some of Thailand's most famous wildlife- from elephants and bears to deer and tigers! You spend the night right at the edge of the forest, and wake up every morning to the sight of the mist and the sounds of the animals that

Week 8 (Thailand)

Koh Samed:

- 🐾 White sandy beaches
- 🐾 Crystal clear water
- 🐾 Snorkeling

The journey ends at one of Thailand's most stunning islands, Koh Samed. The island offers authentic Thai island atmosphere with wonderful beaches, a pleasant and young people and great nightlife. You have much free time to yourself to determine your days on the island, there will be an opportunity to visit the cities together and we offer snorkeling in crystal clear, turquoise water. We throw a farewell party back in Bangkok.



Week 9-12 (Thailand)

Voluntary work in Singburi.

- 🐾 Voluntary work
- 🐾 Village schools and orphanage

Here you can freely choose between orphanages and schools and you live in the same place as when you were taught in Thai. There are also many other volunteers who did not travel with the group from the start and thus you will again meet a lot of young people from around the world.



The voluntary work

Volunteering in Thailand offers you 2 very different options - you can either teach at a school or help out at an orphanage!

You will be accommodated in rooms at the local Eco-House Center, 2-3 volunteers living in each room. There will be served local vegetarian dishes on the location.

Teach English at local village schools

This program consists of working with students at various schools where you will be able to teach English or coach their physical education classes. We have good contacts with several primary and secondary schools and the age of the student vary between 7 and 18 years.

The schools accept an informal approach to teaching. This means that we do not have to be consistent with the local teaching methods or style. Instead, you can choose to teach in your own way and bring your own ideas to life in the classroom. It is important to understand that teaching methods are less important than attitude concerning the students. Showing initiative and being motivated is the most important thing when volunteering.

The Education Program serves a dual purpose: Obviously the main aim is to help children in rural areas of Thailand to have a chance at speaking better English (usually their own teachers are not particularly qualified). The second aim is to give you an insight into the Thai education system while receiving an excellent chance to get close to students and teachers.

It might be nice for you to bring gifts for the students. It is our experience that students are less interested in toys, but pictures of your family /house or pets are always well received, like balloons, inflatable globes and world maps.

Important: There are obviously also school holidays in Thailand (from mid-March until late April, and again throughout October) and a wide range of holidays on which schools are closed. At such times there will be arranged special classes or English camps, and where appropriate, there are also various cultural events organized, which you can participate in.

Everyday Life, Monday-Friday:

Part of your first day will be spent organizing your schedule from a variety of classes. Then your schedule will be quite flexible and you have influence in determining which classes you are going to teach. You will teach 3 -5 hours a day. You eat lunch at school and can expect to be there from 8.30 am to just after 3 pm, giving you lots of time to immerse yourself in the school, its activities, students and staff. Just as American schools start their day by pledging to their flag, Thai schools show their respect to the King of Thailand every morning and may ask you to attend the ceremony from 8:00 am and be a part of the morning exercises, which are common in Thai schools.

What we expect from you:

Volunteering and intercultural travel share a common trait: the more you invest yourself in it, the more you get in return. This means that you must always be ready to take initiatives and prepare yourself for a positive attitude towards your program. Our programs are naturally planned subject to change as there are sometimes local circumstances that affect programs and activities outside our influence. This allows for completely different experiences that neither you nor Adventure Heart is prepared for. It is what creates the most unique adventures and the most enlightening

experiences. Your attitude is crucial to how your experience will be.

The Orphanage

Most of the large orphanages in Thailand has its own integrated school for their pupils and these are also open for poor families. The orphanage provides housing, food and educational materials for these poor students. The classes may seem old and slightly dirty, but the students are lovely and extremely grateful for your efforts every day.

Besides teaching English in a non-formal basis, you get the opportunity to work with children in their vegetable and herbal garden (for own consumption) and to create activities for students or arrange workshops for cultural exchange, environmental and other important issues.

Everyday Life, Monday to Friday:

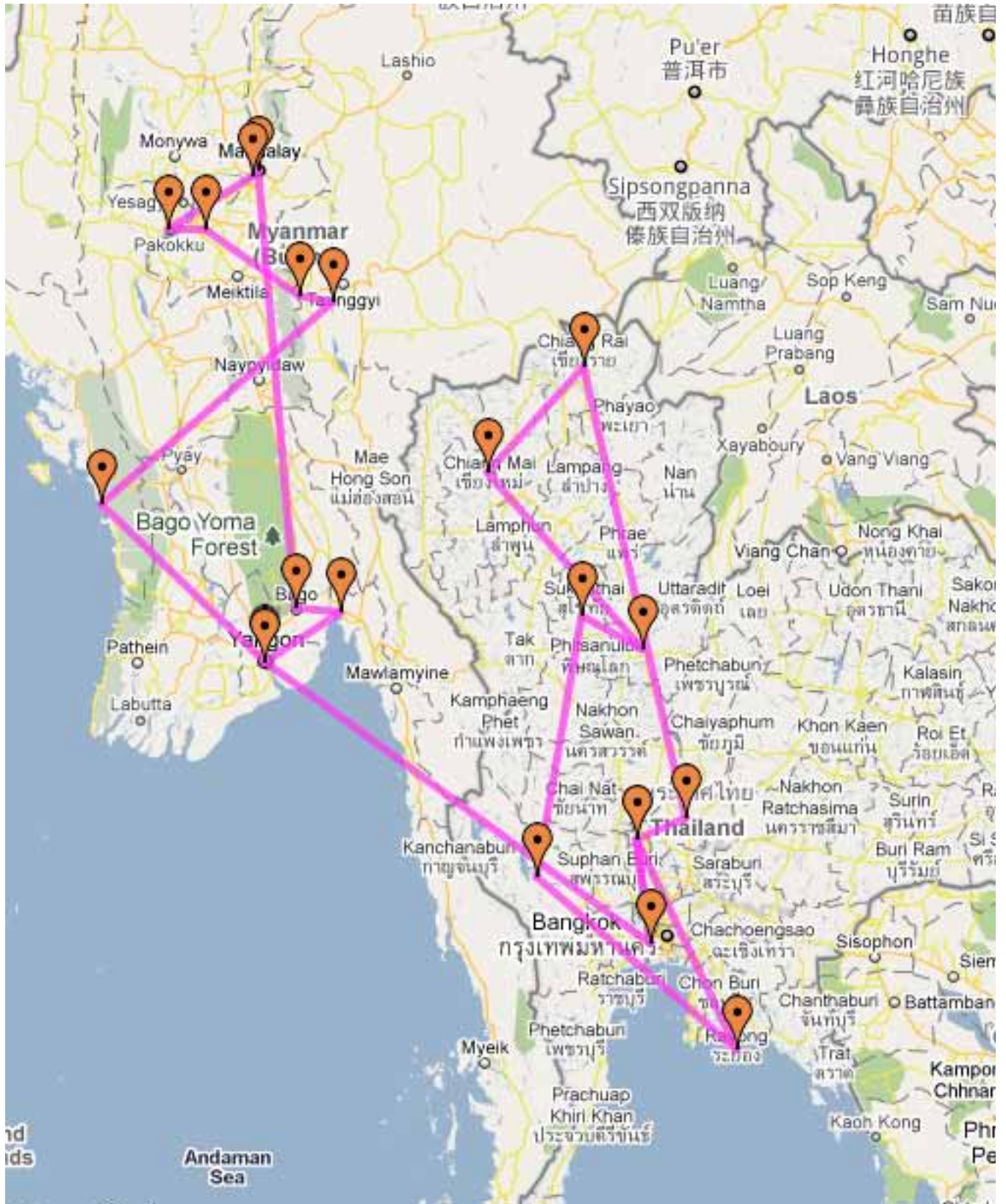
After breakfast you head for the orphanage around 9:00 am. On site you will be organized into groups depending on the various activities you are interested in and the coordinators and school staff will inform you about your tasks. Lunch is always at a nearby local restaurant and if you want to, you can stop by the local town on the way home, to buy what you are in need of.

Every Wednesday, work is only half day. After lunch, we reward your efforts with a trip to the local swimming pool and a special dinner afterwards!

Important: There are naturally school holidays in Thailand (as before the orphanage is from mid March to mid May, and throughout October) and a wide range of holidays on which schools are closed. At such times are arranged renovation work and the opportunity to join special classes or English camps.



Resväg



Bilder från resan



**För priser och datum se
www.blueberry.nu**