

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Tentative Itinerary

Trip 2014-15 Trip D (19 days in Thailand)

Thailand Travel Adventures

Northeastern Thailand

Nov. 25 to Dec. 13, 2014



Note: Itinerary Subject to Change.

November 2014

24

Travel Day
Arrive Bangkok

December 2014

25

Bangkok to Khorat –
Enroute, stop by Muak Lek to walk its market and sample local delicacies. Sightsee a beautiful temple in Sikiu, then visit a fascinating petrified wood museum and a silk factory near Khorat to see how modern Thai silk is made. Walk around Thao Suranaree shrine dedicated to a highly revered heroine and experience the local culture.

26

Khorat –
Explore the most impressive of all Angkor ruins in Thailand – the 10th century stone sanctuary of Phanom Rung perched atop an extinct volcanic hill, flanked by naga staircases and decorated with intricately sculpted lintels. Also tour the nearby ruins of Meuang Tam. Stop by Dan Kwien known for its terra cotta ceramics.

27 **Khorat to Chaiyaphum –**

Graze our way through Khorat's colorful morning market, then head for the magnificent Angkor-era sanctuary of Phimai (10th century – predates Angkor Wat). Learn of the region's history at the excellent museum and see the enormous banyan tree (Thailand's largest and oldest) covering an island. Drive on to Chaiyaphum.

28 **Chaiyaphum to Khon Kaen –**

Walk Ban Khwao village to see how its beautiful "matmee" (ikat) silks in traditional designs are hand-dyed and hand-woven. Drive on to Chonabot village, known for its high quality home-spun silks in bright multi-colors and intricate designs. Also explore the atmospheric Khmer ruin of Peuy Noi in the Khon Kaen countryside.

29 **Khon Kaen –**

Walk the bustling fresh food market and sightsee lovely temples by the town's lake. Visit the well-curated Khon Kaen Nat'l Museum displaying fine NE artifacts. Shop for textiles and handicrafts in women's co-op shops. In the evening, partake of the province's annual silk festival which includes numerous cultural and culinary delights besides silk.

30 **Khon Kaen to Udon –**

Drive through Kalasin province to explore the remains of the 8th century Buddhist Dvaravati culture, the world-renowned Sirindhorn Dinosaur Museum and excavation site, and the ethnic Phu Thai village of Ban Poen known for its absolutely exquisite (now patented) Phraewa silk, intricately woven thread-by-thread on hand looms.

1 **Udon to Nong Khai –**

Journey to Ban Chiang – a UNESCO World Heritage site of possibly the earliest bronze culture. Visit the museum, archeological site and nearby village where replicas of distinctive Ban Chiang pottery are made. Enroute to Nong Khai stop by a village known for "khit" pattern hand-woven fabrics and, if time permits, another silk village. Dinner cruise on Mekong River.

2 **Nong Khai –**

Stop by Si Chiangmai, the world's rice-paper spring-roll wrapper capital, on the way to Phu Phra Baht Historical Park – hike the trails in dry deciduous forest to unusual rock formations, petroglyphs, remains of ancient Buddhist culture and a sacred Lao-style shrine. Sightsee Wat Pho Chai with revered gold-head Buddha and bizarre, cultish Wat Kaek.

3 **Nong Khai to Nakhon Phanom –**

Morning market walk, then head for Nakhon Phanom via Phu Thok – the multi-tiered, red-rock forest monastery where an enlightened monk once resided, his crystallized ashes on display in a shrine nearby. Stop by a weaving village enroute to our riverside hotel in Nakhon Phanom.

4 **Nakhon Phanom –**

Following breakfast at the hotel with sweeping views of the Mekong River and Laos, walk the serene waterfront to the heart of town. Sightsee beautiful temples, visit the fresh food market and shop for local handicrafts. Free afternoon to relax at our comfortable hotel. After dinner, walk the town's night market if you wish.

5 **Nakhon Phanom to Mukdahan –**

Pilgrimage to Wat Phra That Phanom, the most sacred temple in the NE where relics of the Buddha are enshrined in an impressive gold-topped Lao-style chedi. Visit nearby Renu Nakhon's sacred temple in a cotton-weaving village. In Mukdahan along the lovely Maekong, walk the Indochine and Danang markets.

6 **Mukdahan to Khong Jiam –**

Explore the rocky plateau of Phu Pha Theup National Park with its amazing collection of mushroom-shaped rock formations. Then head south for picturesque Khong Jiam, stopping enroute for a Mekong River tour to fascinating, other-worldly rock formations. Stay at a lovely resort with beautiful views of the river and Laos.

7 **Khong Jiam –**

Explore the parklands along the Mekong River bordering Laos, particularly Pha Taem, where awesome oversized petroglyphs dating back 3000+ years grace the faces of tall stone cliffs. Stop by Sao Chaliang to see extraordinary rock formations. If our timing is right, we'll hike in to see the lovely wildflower fields and bogs of carnivorous plants.

8 **Khong Jiam to Ubon –**

On the way to Ubon, stop by an unusual temple made of ceramics, and a village where enormous bronze temple gongs, hide drums and classical musical ensembles are made by hand. In Ubon, sightsee Wat Phra That Nong Bua, Wat Ban Na Muang and the charming Wat Thung Si Meuang. Visit Ubon Nat'l Museum & walk the town's busy night market.

9 **Ubon to Surin –**

Visit a village where traditional bronzeware is still made by the age-old lost-wax process. Walk around the quiet village, stopping by homes where the women still weave traditional matmee silk. Then head east to Surin. Along the way, we'll stop to explore the Khmer ruins of Prasat Hin Wat Sa Kamphaeng Yai in Si Saket and the lovely Prasat Sikhorphum.

10 **Surin –**

The highlight of this trip for textile lovers is the fascinating Thasawang co-op silk village near town. Observe all stages of silk production; see how it takes four or more people to work a loom to weave only a few centimeters a day of the most exquisite silk. Shops nearby sell gorgeous textiles. Visit also Khwaosinarin and Ban Janrom silk villages.

11 **Surin to Khao Yai –**

Enroute to Khao Yai National Park, stop by a park with ancient petroglyphs and if our timing is right, attend the winter Jim Thompson silk fair. At Khao Yai, walk the nature trail by the visitor's center. See deer and monkeys by our cabins and be serenaded by gibbon calls. Night safari with park officials for nocturnal wildlife sightings.

12 **Khao Yai National Park –**

Hike the trails of Khao Yai, Thailand's first national park, wildlife preserve and World Heritage site. Its lush forests are home to the endangered Asian elephants, tigers, leopards, Asiatic bears, serow, different families of primates, deer and many species of hornbills and tropical birds. Optional side trip to see millions of bats stream out from caves at dusk.

13 **Return to Bangkok –**

Optional early morning birding walk in hopes of sighting the great hornbill and other rare birds. Walk a nature trail to a thundering waterfall situated in a deep gorge. On the way to Bangkok, stop by a temple sanctuary for huge flocks of migratory storks from Pakistan.

Farewell Party and Feast!

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Travel Day

Depart Bangkok



Through the entire trip, we'll feast on wonderful Thai meals three times daily! – plus countless snacks!



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