

# Bikexplore

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Southern Thailand 9 – 22 January 2022    £1780

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## **An introduction to Southern Thailand**

This will be my 18th trip to this area, I have been organising rides there since 2002 and have used my experience to plan a tour suitable for riders with a moderate level of fitness and a sense of adventure. The itinerary allows you to see tropical forests, rubber and coconut plantations, some very exotic flora and fauna, mountains and golden beaches, ancient cities, Buddhist temples and meet the friendly Thai people. There will be opportunities for swimming, sunbathing and snorkeling on coral reefs.

The tour is based half-way down Thailand's great southern peninsula, about 480 miles from Bangkok in Trang Province, which is bordered by mountains to the east and the islands of the Andaman Sea to the west. Highlights include the scenic beauty of the two tropical islands we stay on, their golden beaches and a boat trip with swimming and snorkelling. The area is one of the best place to cycle in the country, as the roads see few foreign tourists and is often wonderfully scenic, with karst outcrops, rice paddies, forest and jungle to delight the eyes. On arrival we pass briefly through Bangkok, visiting the 'Temple of the Dawn' on the mighty Chao Phraya river. On return, we can shop and dine in Bangkok's highest restaurant before a guided bike ride of old Bangkok avoiding busy roads. Staying two nights at most locations allows for rest days, and cycling at a moderate pace allows for sightseeing. The terrain varies, but the routes avoid serious climbs, being mostly gently rolling, and distances are shorter than average to compensate for the heat. There is luggage transfer and minibus back-up on moving-on days. Internal flights included. The tour is a collaboration with a local bike shop and we are assisted by Trang Cycle Club; this means you will get plenty of chances to meet and interact with the friendly local people.

## **Area Covered By The Holiday**

Southern Thailand is the great peninsula that is tipped by Singapore and bordered by the Gulf of Thailand, the Andaman Sea, Myanmar and Malaysia. The peninsula has a width varying from about 100 to 160km in the area we are visiting.

The terrain has mountains, but the roads will be mostly flat to gently undulating with a few short climbs. Trang province has many country back roads that make for enjoyable cycling. Most of the route will follow good quality paved roads, but one or two will be in a poor state of repair, and there will be some very short sections where we take to forest tracks and cycle paths.

## **Rides & Rest Days**

Rides will usually finish before the hottest time of day and there will be plenty of time allowed for sightseeing. It is anticipated that participants will ride in a loose group, around 18kph on the flat, slower up hills, usually meeting up at road junctions and cafes for food and refreshment breaks. Because of heat and humidity, the standard rides are mostly short to medium; 25 - 45 miles in length. Optional longer rides may be possible on some days, but the tour is not aimed at riders wanting to put their heads down and do high mileages. On moving-on days we will be accompanied by a small minibus, and Thai members of Trang's large cycle club (Cycling for recreation is currently extremely popular in Thailand), who are friendly and know the area very well, will be acting as guides.

Note that while we always provide emergency support, we expect cyclists to complete the ride each day. Also it may not always be possible to follow the itinerary exactly. Thailand is perhaps the most developed and civilised of the south-east Asian countries with a good transport infrastructure, but things do not always go as planned. In these circumstances we will make alternative arrangements. It must be said that the Thais have a very good attitude: 'We will make it happen' rather than 'We cannot do that', and this has been the experience on previous trips.

## **Provisional Itinerary**

Sun 9 Jan Tour starts in Bangkok with evening meal at the hotel. Stay 1 night.

Mon 10 Jan Organised sightseeing to the Temple of the Dawn by river 'bus' in the morning. Transfer to Don Mueang

airport for AirAsia flight to Trang, departing at 1705 and arriving at 1830. Stay 2 nights.

Tue 11 Jan Sort out bikes and cycle out to Elephant Cave and Weavers Co-op.

Wed 12 Jan Cycle to Ban Pak Meng, then transfer by boat to Ko Ngai. Stay 2 nights.

Thu 13 Jan Visit emerald cave and other islands by boat, swimming & snorkeling trip.

Fri 14 Jan Transfer by boat, then cycle via Chao Mai National Park and Kantang back to Trang. Stay 2 nights.

Sat 15 Jan Long (Lam Plok Waterfall) or short circular cycle rides, sightseeing south of Trang.

Sun 16 Jan Cycle to Tasae Cape, then transfer by boat to Ko Sukorn, Stay 2 nights.

Mon 17 Jan Cycle around Ko Sukorn on roads and tracks; swimming and sunbathing opportunities.

Tue 18 Jan Transfer to mainland by boat, then cycle via Yantakhao and back roads to Trang. Stay 2 nights.

Wed 19 Jan Long (Khaokob Caves) or shorter circular cycle ride to Wat Phu Khao Thong and 1,000 year old Reclining Bhuddha.

Thu 20 Jan Fly to Bangkok on AirAsia flight departing at 1145 and arriving at 1305.

Transfer to hotel, then afternoon free. Meal in the highest restaurant in Bangkok. Stay 2 nights.

Fri 21 Jan Trip by canal bus to Jim Thompson House Museum and organised cycle ride around backstreets and cycle paths of 'real' Bangkok,

Sat 22 Jan Tour ends after breakfast.

## Accommodation & Meals

Staying in 3- and 4-star hotels and beach resorts, two people sharing air conditioned en-suite rooms. Single occupancy is available on payment of a £450 supplement. All breakfasts are included plus dinner on six nights. Vegetarian meals are possible, however most of the restaurants and cafes do not cater for special diets. The tour may not be suitable for anyone with a severe allergy to shellfish as these are much used in local cooking. Breakfasts can range from ham, eggs and instant coffee to delicious portions of fresh fruit. Fresh milk is unusual, as is the traditional British cup of tea. Good quality coffee is now common in the better cafes. European style bread is available but variable in quality. Rice or noodle dishes with chicken or seafood are common everywhere; potatoes are rarely used. Possibly because the food is very fresh and usually cooked quickly and at high temperature, upset stomachs seem rare in Thailand. The Night Markets (really open-air kitchens) which specialise in low cost meals are an interesting experience. Imported beer and wine can be expensive, but the local beer is reasonable, and there is a good range of soft drinks including freshly squeezed fruit juice.



## Vehicle Support

Local vehicles will be used to transfer luggage, and a small minibus or people carrier will accompany the group on moving-on days. The tour is not suitable for people who dislike travel by boat as both the islands are reached by this means.

## Cycles and Equipment

It is possible to do all the rides on a lightweight road bike or hybrid with road tyres and we have had people come with small wheel folding bikes. bike hire is possible and the bike shop can supply aluminum road or hybrid bikes providing they know your size well in advance. The second island is big enough to cycle on and we take the bikes over to it by boat. and we transfer from Bangkok to Trang and back, by internal flight with the bikes. We have never had more than small scuffs and scratches on the bikes due to transporting them, but you may not want to bring a expensive bike if you are worried about damage.

## Travel

As no travel is included you must make your own way to and from the hotel in Bangkok. It is very important to note that we are not responsible for you in any way until the appointed time at the designated meeting place. Should you fail to arrive at the appointed time for whatever reason, we will not be responsible for any additional expenses you incur in order to meet up with the tour group. (In practice the hotel is easily and safely reached by licenced taxi (£15) or, very cheaply, by airport bus (£1) for a twenty mile trip - and we will supply instructions on how to do this).



## Travel Insurance

We strongly recommend that suitable insurance is taken out to safeguard against risks such as cancellation charges, personal injury or lost property, **as soon as you book** so you will then be covered if you have to cancel due to injury or illness before the tour starts. If coming with a partner consider insurance that covers both of you cancelling if one of you is injured or ill.. If you already have an annual policy, you may need to confirm that it will cover a holiday in Thailand and **cycling every day** or make provision for it to do so. If a participant signs up and has to cancel, any refund will be determined based upon whether a replacement is found, as well as the impact of any unrecoverable costs incurred in the cancelling participants name. Hence the need for good travel insurance.

## Passports, Visa & Health

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. As rules and regulations regarding visas occasionally change, you are advised to check whether you require a visa and what conditions are currently in force. There are no compulsory health-related requirements, but you are strongly advised to check that your tetanus protection has not expired.

Vaccination against hepatitis A and typhoid is recommended. Thai Government advice is that bite avoidance measures should be taken, but anti-malarial drugs are not usually necessary in Trang Province or Bangkok. Please consult your doctor or vaccination centre for up to date information. Be warned that some anti-malarial drugs have serious and unpleasant side effects.

## Cancellation Policy

.Refunds of tour payments will depend upon whether a replacement rider signs up, and on costs that can be recovered. The amount refunded will be based on the principle that the tour's remaining participants will not incur any additional cost as a result of cancellations. If the canceling participant is replaced, a refund will be made at that time. If the canceling participant can't be replaced, any refund will be determined after the ride and final expense report are completed. If a participant that is sharing a room cancels and another roommate cannot be found, in addition to other costs that cannot be recouped the cancelling roommate may also be liable for the supplement for a private room of the roommate remaining on the tour.

**Corona-Virus:** Your safety on and off the bike is our number one priority. Should the this tour have to be cancelled due to the virus, you will receive a full refund.

## Price

The price is £1780 is based on a minimum number of 7 riders. If there is insufficient bookings by September 26th, 2021, we will contact you and return all monies paid. The price is calculated at a rate of 41.19 Thai Baht to £1 (based on exchange rates published on [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com) on 5 February 2021). **Depending on currency exchange rates, there may be an adjustment in the amount of the final payment.**

A deposit of £600 is required when booking .



### Price Includes

Internal flights between Bangkok and Trang and Trang and Bangkok  
Transfers between airports and hotels for the internal flights as listed in the itinerary  
13 nights hotel, sharing room  
13 breakfasts, 6 dinners  
All other transfers/trips by boat or bus as listed in the Itinerary  
Luggage transfer and minibus back-up on moving-on days  
Entry fees and boat hire to all attractions listed in the Itinerary  
Local tourist tax

### Price Does Not Include

Travel to and from Bangkok  
Meals in transit  
Drinks with dinner  
Lunches or refreshments at morning and afternoon stops  
Any other personal expenses  
Travel Insurance  
Single occupancy supplement (£450, subject to availability)



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