

THAILAND TRAVEL SERIES

Thailand: North to Islands

Our 18-Day Journey Through Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Phuket & Phi Phi

TEMPLES. MOUNTAINS. MARKETS. ISLANDS. ONE UNFORGETTABLE THAILAND ADVENTURE.



Our final island view — the perfect visual ending to an 18-day journey.

Why We Chose This Thailand Route

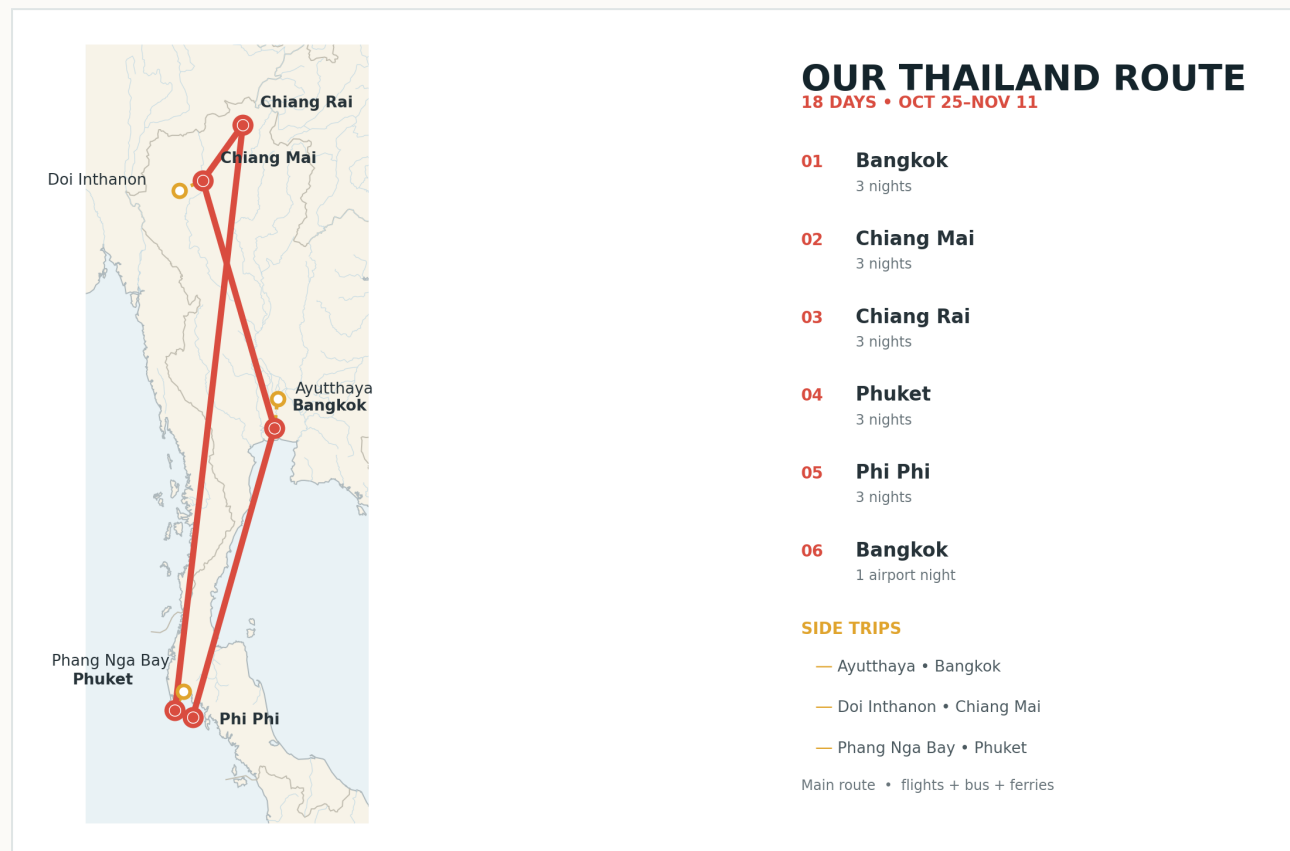
We wanted a Thailand trip that felt like more than a beach vacation. The itinerary deliberately combines the energy and history of Bangkok, the temples and mountain scenery of northern Thailand, and a final stretch of island life in Phuket and Phi Phi.

The route gives each region a different job: Bangkok introduces the culture and history, Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai take us deeper into northern Thailand, and the Andaman coast provides the beaches, boats and slower finish.

It is a busy itinerary, but that variety is exactly what makes it work.

The Route We Took

Vancouver → Bangkok → Chiang Mai → Chiang Rai → Phuket → Phi Phi → Bangkok → Vancouver



The trip runs from October 25 to November 11, with three-night stays in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Phuket and Phi Phi, plus a final airport night in Bangkok.

“The magic of this itinerary is the change of scenery: one day you are exploring temples and royal history, and a few days later you are in a longtail boat surrounded by turquoise water.”

Stop 1: Bangkok

Temples, palaces, markets and Bangkok after dark

Where we stayed: Alley and Pier — 3 nights



Bangkok is the perfect high-energy opening to this trip. We arrived late on October 26 after leaving Vancouver on October 25, then gave ourselves a full day to experience the city's temples, royal landmarks, museums, riverfront and famous street-food culture.

Bangkok's Big Cultural Day

The October 27 itinerary starts at 8:00 a.m. and packs in many of the city's most important sights: Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, Wat Benchamabophit, Bangkok National Museum, the Grand Palace, Wat Phra Kaeo and Wat Pho.

The afternoon continues at Wat Arun, Wang Lang Pier and the Royal Barge Museum before the evening changes completely with a Bangkok-by-night tuk-tuk experience through temples, markets, Chinatown and local food.

The evening tour includes the 24-hour flower market, street food, dinner and desserts — a very different side of Bangkok from the grand temples of the daytime.



Ayutthaya: A Day Among Thailand's Ruins



October 28 begins with a 7:30 a.m. pickup for a full-day visit to Ayutthaya Historical Park. The itinerary includes Bang Pa-In Palace, Wat Mahathat, the historic city, Wat Phra Sri Sanphet, Wat Chaiwatthanaram and Vihara Phra Mongkhon Bophit.

This day provides an important contrast to Bangkok. Instead of the modern capital, the focus is on Thailand's former royal capital, temple ruins and historic landscapes.

Stop 2: Chiang Mai

Ancient temples, mountain views and northern Thai atmosphere

Where we stayed: Moondragon Hotel — 3 nights



Chiang Mai slows the pace slightly while adding mountains, temples and a very different atmosphere from Bangkok.

A Full Day of Chiang Mai Temples

October 30 starts at 9:00 a.m. with Wat Phra That Doi Suthep, followed by Wat Umong, the Magical Garden and Wat Suan Dok.

The afternoon continues through Wat Ched Yot, Wat Phra Singh, Wat Chedi Luang, Wat Phan Tao and Wat Chiang Man before finishing at Warorot and the Night Bazaar.

Doi Inthanon National Park



October 31 is the major nature day in Chiang Mai. A 7:30 a.m. pickup starts the trip to Doi Inthanon, including Wachirathan Falls, a hilltribe village, a Hmong market featuring Royal Project

products, lunch at a local restaurant, Thailand's highest point, a nature trail and the Twin Royal Stupas.

The itinerary expects a return to the hotel around 6:00–6:30 p.m., making this one of the longest days of the trip.



Stop 3: Chiang Rai

White Temple, Blue Temple, tea country and the Golden Triangle

Where we stayed: Nak Nakara Hotel — 3 nights



November 1 begins with a 7:00 a.m. bus from Chiang Mai, arriving in Chiang Rai around 11:00 a.m. The afternoon is intentionally open for independent exploration before the Night Bazaar.

The Big Chiang Rai Day

November 2 starts at 7:30 a.m. with a sightseeing tour covering Wat Rong Khun — the White Temple — followed by Wat Rong Suea Ten, the Blue Temple, Baan Dam Museum, Union Hilltribe Villages, Choui Fong Tea, the Golden Triangle and the House of Opium.

It is one of the most varied cultural days of the itinerary, moving from contemporary temple art to northern landscapes, tea country and the history surrounding the Golden Triangle.



A Slower Chiang Rai Day

November 3 is intentionally left flexible: explore Chiang Rai independently and inquire about a massage through the hotel. After several intensive sightseeing days, the breathing room is welcome.

Stop 4: Phuket

Old Town, local food, temples and Phang Nga Bay

Where we stayed: Burasari Phuket — 3 nights



November 4 moves the trip south. The flight from Chiang Rai leaves at 10:20 a.m. and arrives in Phuket at 4:30 p.m., leaving the evening for the night market.

Old Phuket Town & Island Highlights



November 5 starts at noon and combines Phuket's history, food, culture and viewpoints. The itinerary includes Old Phuket Town, a local street-food market, a traditional A-Pong tasting, Bukit Elephant Park, Wat Chalong, Big Buddha and Windmill Viewpoint.

It is a deliberately varied day — historic streets and food at the beginning, then wildlife, temples and panoramic scenery.

Phang Nga Bay by Kayak & Loy Krathong



November 6 is one of the most memorable experiences of the southern portion. A noon pickup begins an afternoon and evening in Phang Nga Bay, including a powerboat ride, sea-cave kayaking, emerald lagoons and wildlife viewing.

After the daytime adventure, the itinerary continues into the evening with a Loy Krathong experience and seafood dinner.

Stop 5: Phi Phi

Longtail boats, Maya Bay, snorkelling and a slower island finish

Where we stayed: ChaoKoh Phi Phi Hotel & Resort — 3 nights



November 7 begins with the 1:30–3:30 p.m. ferry from Phuket to Phi Phi. After checking in, the island becomes the final beach chapter of the trip.

Phi Phi's Seven-Island Adventure

November 8 starts at 9:15 a.m. near Ao Ton Sai Pier. The full-day longtail boat itinerary includes Monkey Beach, Bamboo Island, Pi Leh Lagoon, Shark Point and other famous Phi Phi locations.

The day is designed to stay on the water into the evening, with sunset views followed by a night swim with luminous plankton.



A Day With Nothing Planned



November 9 is deliberately simple: beach and pool time. After a full day on the water, having nothing scheduled gives the trip room to breathe.

The Journey Home

November 10 brings the trip back toward Bangkok. The speedboat leaves Phi Phi at 1:30 p.m. for Phuket, followed by the 5:10 p.m. flight to Bangkok, arriving at 6:40 p.m.

The final night is at Gold Airport Suites, making the early departure straightforward. The JAL flight to Vancouver leaves Bangkok at 8:05 a.m. on November 11 and arrives in Vancouver at 10:45 a.m.

How We Structured the 18 Days

01 • BANGKOK

3 nights

Temples, palaces,
Ayutthaya and food

02 • CHIANG MAI

3 nights

Temples and Doi
Inthanon

03 • CHIANG RAI

3 nights

White Temple, Blue
Temple and Golden
Triangle

04 • PHUKET

3 nights

Old Town, food and
Phang Nga Bay

05 • PHI PHI

3 nights

Island tour, beach and
pool

06 • BANGKOK

1 airport night

Easy final departure

What We Loved About the Route

The variety

Few Thailand itineraries offer this much contrast in 18 days: royal landmarks, ancient ruins, mountain temples, waterfalls, tea country, historic streets, sea caves and tropical islands.

The northern half

Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai add depth to the trip. The itinerary is not just about famous beaches; it gives northern Thailand several days of dedicated exploration.

The beach finish

Ending with Phuket and Phi Phi means the trip gets progressively more relaxed. After the early starts and sightseeing days, the final stretch is built around boats, beaches, sunsets and a completely open day.

Trip Cost Breakdown

Our actual Thailand trip cost was **CAD \$4,387 per person**, based on the spending breakdown below. This gives a realistic picture of what we spent on this 18-day trip, excluding travel insurance and any expenses not listed here.

Category	Cost per person
Flights	CAD \$1,258
Hotels	CAD \$1,208
Food	CAD \$500
Nightlife	CAD \$450
Activities	CAD \$470
Interflights	CAD \$322
Transportation	CAD \$100
Boats	CAD \$79
TOTAL PER PERSON	CAD \$4,387

For two people, the same breakdown totals CAD \$8,774.

Final Thoughts



Thailand works beautifully when you give yourself time to experience more than one side of the country. This route starts with Bangkok's energy, moves through the temples and mountains of northern Thailand, and ends with the islands and beaches of the Andaman Sea.

The itinerary is ambitious, but every stop has a purpose. Bangkok delivers the big cultural introduction. Chiang Mai brings mountain temples and Doi Inthanon. Chiang Rai adds the White Temple, Blue Temple, tea country and Golden Triangle. Phuket shifts the focus to food, history and the sea. Phi Phi lets the trip finish slowly.

From Bangkok's temples to Phi Phi's turquoise water, this is Thailand as a complete journey — not just a beach vacation.