

A group of people, including children and adults, are walking alongside a line of elephants on a dirt path in a forest. The elephants are in the center, and the people are on either side, some walking towards them and others away. The path is reddish-brown and surrounded by lush green trees and bushes.

Walking With Elephants

Project Summary

Location: Surin Elephant Sanctuary, Thailand.

Duration: 5 days, 4 nights

Highlights:

- Explore the impact of tourism in Thailand on its elephants.
- Help in food preparation and feeding of elephants.
- Walk alongside the elephants as they are taken for daily exercise around the reserve. Use this time for learning some of the tools used in the science of animal behaviour.
- Help in construction projects such as providing sun shades for the elephants or take part in bigger projects like created fenced areas in which elephants can roam freely.
- Teach at a local primary school.

About the Project

Despite being an endangered species, elephants have long been used in the tourism industry in Thailand. For many people a trip to the country is incomplete without an elephant ride or show. This project aims to help students examine the bigger picture of elephant tourism in Thailand by bringing students up close with not only elephants, but also the mahouts who struggle to make a living whilst escaping the tough conditions of life on the streets of Bangkok.

This programme is run in partnership with The Surin Project –a charity which aims to provide an alternative income for mahouts whilst allowing their elephants to live a more natural life, away from the chains and discomfort of street begging or circuses.

Accommodation and Food

Students and faculty are housed on the project site in mahout-style building. Accommodation is on a twin share basis and is very basic! Bathroom facilities are situated in out-buildings behind each mahout house and consist of one western toilet and one cold shower.



Mahout –style housing at the Surin Project

Breakfast is western style –toast, scrambled/ fried eggs and fruit are the usual fare. Lunch and dinner are Thai style but aimed at a western palette. A variety of dietary requirements can be met including vegetarian, halal, Jain and non-dairy. Please enquire in advance to ensure these needs are met.

Transportation

Transport to and from the project is by licensed tour bus from Bangkok and this is included in the package price. Please ask us for quotes if you require transport to and from any other parts of Thailand. After arrival on the project site, transport is either on foot or by licensed tour buses.

Flights to and from the destination are not included. We recommend that you purchase your flights through a reputable travel agent.

Health and Safety

The health and safety of your students are our top priority. All activities take place under the watchful eye of our programme facilitators and we will never let students take part in any activity that is overly risky. However, working with animals will always contain an element of risk and we ask that students and faculty follow instructions carefully at all times to minimise this risk.

Day 1

	Activity	Learning Outcomes
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arrival at Surin Elephant Project -Safety Briefing -Allocation of rooms and settling in 	
Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Dinner at nearby restaurant -Baseline Survey -Welcome ceremony and Project introduction by Surin Project staff -Games/ ice breakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Gain an insight into the work that goes on in Surin and the role that the students are here to play.

Day 2

	Activity	Learning Outcomes
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Walking tour of the Surin Project area. View some of the 200 elephants at the centre and meet the elephants currently on the Surin project. -Group 1 (12 people) –walk the elephants -Group 2 (12 people) help in food preparation/ planting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Learn about Asian elephants, their behaviour, and their use in the Thai tourism industry. -Get to know some of the individual elephants and their mahouts. -Learn about elephant diet
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group 1 –help in food preparation/ planting. -Group 2 –walk the elephants 	Student groups focus on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. communication between elephants 2. physical adaptations 3. association with humans
Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Consolidation activity- What have we learned today? -TRAFFIC presentation (wildlife trade) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The student groups present their findings to larger group to arrive at a generalised group understanding about the species - Introduction to one of the reasons that has put elephants on the endangered list

Day 3

	Activity	Learning Outcomes
Morning	<p>Group 1 – Work in the poo paper factory</p> <p>Followed by personal impact activity (tree planting/ enclosure building/ shelter construction/ fencing –as required by the project and subject to change).</p> <p>Group 2 –Feed and Walk the elephants</p>	<p>-Learn how to make waste (elephant dung) into a saleable product (paper)!</p> <p>-Students become stakeholders in the Surin Project by making a tangible personal impact.</p> <p>- Students observe a different aspect (communication, human interaction, adaptations) from what they did the previous day</p>
Afternoon	<p>Group 2 –Work in the poo paper factory Followed by personal impact activity.</p> <p>Group 1 –Feed and Walk the elephants</p>	-As above
Evening	<p>- Planning for the school session tomorrow</p> <p>-If time, watch elephant DVD</p>	<p>- Students get to share what they learned about elephants or focus on basic literacy with school students. Cultural and knowledge exchange</p> <p>- a look at natural life in the wild for large elephant herds</p>

Day 4

	Activity	Learning Outcomes
Morning	<p>-Visit to local school. Students take part in providing lessons for the Thai children about animals/ conservation issues/ the Surin Project etc</p> <p>-Each student to donate one used book to the Thai school</p>	-an exchange of knowledge and culture.
Afternoon	<p>-Group 1 feed and walk the elephants (to the river)</p> <p>-Group 2 Personal impact work / help out where needed.</p>	Becoming an elephant scientist – students groups learn to estimate age, measure height of elephant and help develop a simple ethogram based on all they have observed and learned.
Evening	Farewell BBQ with the mahouts.	

Day 5

	Activity	Learning Outcomes
Morning	-Group 2 feed and walk the elephants (to the river) Group 1 –personal impact activities/ help out where needed.	-Fill in an ethogram. Pool data on all observed elephants to see what the pie charts reveal.
Afternoon	-Consolidation Session: students will be asked to represent the voices of a tourist/ mahout/ conservationist or elephant in a debate over the use of animals in tourism. -Final goodbyes	-Pull together learning about elephants, mahout communities, tourism and conservation. -Apply this to another iconic endangered species.
Evening	-Depart	

<p>Logistical Inclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet and Greet - 4 breakfasts - 4 lunches - 4 dinners - 4 nights' accommodation - Overland transfers indicated in programme 	<p>Project Inclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wild At Heart (WOX) file & stationery - Factsheets and datasheets - All tools and equipment - Personal Impact activity - Habitat restoration: reforestation, seedling collection, maintaining nursery, clearing of invasive species - Contribution to Surin Elephant Project
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Please note the above itinerary is a guideline only and activities and the locations may be subject to change as a result of weather, animal/wildlife, community or logistical considerations. Learning outcomes will be met.

Terms and conditions apply.

Logistical Considerations

The project site for WILD Orangutan Adventure is part of the Surin Elephant Project in Surin Province, Thailand. The project can be reached by an approximate 7 hour drive from Bangkok.

We recommend that you fly to Bangkok International Airport (BKI) from where you will be met and driven overland by bus to the Surin Elephant Project.



WILD

This education programme is brought to you by

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