



Travellers Worldwide is a leading International Provider of
Volunteering Programmes, Work Experience Internships
and Cultural Courses Abroad

THAILAND



CARE FOR ELEPHANTS IN AN ELEPHANT CENTRE IN SURIN

Work hands-on with elephants, giving them lots of care. By volunteering with them, you'll also be helping to improve the living conditions of captive elephants in Thailand.

You'll work very hands-on with 12 elephants, but you'll be surrounded by up to 200 elephants. The experience of being in the middle of such a huge number of these majestic creatures is awesome!

The project is based in Surin City approx. 7 hours' drive North-East of Bangkok. This project includes a one-night stay in a hotel in Bangkok on arrival, plus transfers to and from the project.

Thank you for your interest in volunteering on this Project. Below is a description of what you can do and expect. You can volunteer whether you're taking a gap year, on a career break, retired, or on a holiday with a purpose. No matter what your age or experience, we look forward to welcoming you to the team!

WHAT DO YOU GET?

SELF-DEVELOPMENT:

- New skills, more confidence, a greater understanding of a different culture, invaluable personal and professional development.
- The enormous satisfaction of helping to improve the quality of life of elephants by working hands-on with them, and knowing that you made a difference to them.
- An entry on your CV or résumé that will put you head and shoulders above most others in the job market.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

- Your safety is our top priority. We risk-assess all destination countries, projects, accommodation and more to ensure that they are stable and safe.
- We have experienced local staff with 24/7 back-up and support who are there to assist you and look after you, starting with an in-depth induction on your arrival.

AN ADVENTURE!

- An exciting, never-to-be-forgotten adventure into Asia and the Thai culture! And best of all ... **an unforgettable experience.**

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Prices: From **£695** excluding flights.

Please see Full [Price List Online](#).

Duration: From 1 week to 8 weeks or longer, subject to visa requirements

Start Dates: Projects start every Sunday, all year round - you choose your start and finish dates.

Requirements: No qualifications or experience required, but you must have lots of enthusiasm and initiative, and a great love of elephants and their well-being. Minimum age 18 if travelling unaccompanied, but minimum age 16 if accompanied by parent or guardian.

What's Included:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Arranging your Programme, ▶ Payment Protection insurance ▶ Certificate of Completion ▶ Meeting you at Bangkok Airport ▶ 24-hr emergency support. ▶ Free T-Shirt. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Full pre-departure support and assistance, ▶ Accommodation ▶ Transfer to the project location ▶ Local in-country team support and backup ▶ Food (except in on the overnight stay in Bangkok on arrival) ▶ Transfer to a hotel for an overnight stay in Bangkok and transfer to the pick-up point the following day |
|---|---|

What Not Included: Flights, Insurance, Cost of Visa, Food whilst in Bangkok, return transfer to the departure airport

SUMMARY

PROJECT OVERVIEW

WORK CONTENT:

You'll work with 12 elephants, but you'll be surrounded by up to 200 elephants! The experience of being in the middle of such a huge number of these majestic creatures is awesome ... breath-taking ... there are no words to describe it!

Each day that you are on this project supporting the elephants means that the elephants have a day free of chains - and a brighter future. By being there, looking after it, caring for it, bathing it in the river and taking it out on walks, you have an enormous effect on the elephant's daily quality of life. You'll also help plant food for the elephants and work on various other projects that directly help the elephants. You'll work closely with mahouts, helping to change the practice of using elephants for street begging and circus shows to providing an alternative for their elephants that is more natural, less stressful, and is sustainable.

There are over 200 elephants registered in the Surin province and the vast majority of them are trapped in the unfortunate trade of street begging ... and street begging reduces an elephant's life expectancy by at least 50%. This project is helping to develop a sustainable elephant centre. With your support, the goal is to establish sustainably managed alternatives to both street begging and to other forms of tourism, such as circuses and elephant rides.

Your normal daily routine will start with walking to the work site - which is surrounded by hundreds of elephants! An awesome start to the day. During your work, elephants will be allowed to freely interact socially and you'll participate in basic elephant care.

- You'll feed the elephants and generally have lots of hands-on work with them. Elephants love people and they love social interaction. They can be very playful.
- You'll normally help to take the elephants out on walks with the mahouts about twice a day across the local rice fields and forests.
- The elephant's love the water so you will normally take the elephants down to the local reservoir for clean-up. This is not only great fun, the elephants love it too!
- You'll be helping to build a new Elephant Centre. There is a lot of diverse work involved in this, including helping to restore the natural habitat that has been destroyed by over-logging. Thus, you'll also help by planting grass and other vegetation that helps to feed the elephants.
- You'll be asked to take on some community development work, not only to help strengthen ties within the local community but also to learn from them in the process.
- Other duties could involve helping to cut the grass and preparing other elephant foods, as well as actually feeding the elephants.



During the project you will have plenty of opportunities to learn about the elephants and the local communities and how they are trying to become ever more sustainable with local resources, like making paper out of elephant dung!

“I'm gaining hands-on experience that I have never had before of looking after the elephants and their wellbeing. I'm also learning on a daily basis about these wonderful animals”

Charlotte Phillips

“Our trip was amazing and I can't thank you enough for helping us along the way... We are so very appreciative of our lives back home now and would recommend this experience to everyone. It is safe to say that it has changed our lives and we couldn't be happier that we had the opportunity to do it.”

Sarah Licul & Leigh Sutton

ACCOMMODATION

ACCOMMODATION:

For anyone wanting to be surrounded by elephants this truly couldn't be a better project. You'll live on the site in wooden huts surrounded by elephants. One volunteer said that one of the elephants managed to get her trunk through the window and stole her hand cream (Coconut flavour!)

You'll live in home-stay accommodation within the centre and you'll usually be sharing your accommodation with another volunteer. Shared bathrooms with Western style toilets and Thai style bucket showers, but no hot water.

Volunteers will share 2 to a room or have their own room depending on availability, but each room is equipped with mosquito nets and a fan.

Accommodation is basic by most Western standards, but this is Thailand and you'll be expected to be open-minded and adapt as much as possible to village life.

FOOD:

Food is provided on this project.



WHY TRAVELLERS WORLDWIDE?

- Over 20 years' experience of sending thousands of participants overseas, plus the largest variety of flexible projects that are value for money!
- Accredited projects helps appeal to future employers
- Excellent support! And 24/7 emergency helpline for you and your family
- Your own dedicated Project Co-ordinator to answer all questions before, during and after your trip of a lifetime!
- Detailed information on your project and country and suggestions, safety guide, tips and checklists, via our EXTRANET, available from anywhere, 24/7.
- Free pick up from the nearest airport.

HOW YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE:

By joining a Travellers Program you enable us to keep donating money to worthwhile projects around the world; from clothing and feeding school children, building playgrounds or funding vital conservation research - your participation makes these donations possible.

Donations to **Bridge The Gap Foundation**. This Foundation was set up by us to donate directly to particularly worthwhile and necessary projects for children and animals around the world, and partners with other NGO's to raise match-funding for worthy projects.

The price of this project is a reflection of the following costs:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ✓ Accommodation and Food | ✓ Marketing (brochures, website design and maintenance, attending careers fairs, advertising, website listings and presentations) |
| ✓ Full pre-departure support | ✓ Project Research/Site Inspection |
| ✓ Meeting you at the airport | ✓ Staff Training/Equipment |
| ✓ Transport to the placement site | ✓ Donations to worthwhile project |
| ✓ Local in-country team support and backup | ✓ Free T-Shirt |
| ✓ 24hr emergency helpline | |
| ✓ UK administration | |

"Regarding Travellers Worldwide involvement and organization, I can only warmly recommend their professionalism and competence. The information brochures are very complete and detailed; the services provided (pick-up from the airport, transfer, communication, etc...) are outstanding. I am already looking forward to my next adventure with them."

Nathalie Meinecke

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

WHY THE PROJECT NEEDS VOLUNTEERS:

- The more volunteers who can help look after the elephants, the more elephants can be taken in and given a decent quality of life.
- The funds raised from taking volunteers will also help to expand and develop a structure that can take in more and more of the displaced elephants.
- A few reasons one is for the money to help support the work they are doing and support the elephants and Mahouts.
- Having volunteers gives the Mahouts a purpose to their days and an objective - helping the elephants. Volunteers help to engender a positive environment and experience for the Mahouts, which in turn gives them a pride in caring for the elephants and a purpose to their lives
- Volunteers help the elephants! Like people, elephants are intelligent and love interaction. It stops them getting bored (and being chained up). Volunteers help to stimulate the elephants mentally and give them an interest, which is vital to the elephants' wellbeing.
- The Project's goal is to establish sustainably managed elephant tourism. It hopes that the more people who see and learn about the importance of what they are doing, the more this will help bring more support to the region, the community and the elephants.



The impact that this project will have for elephant conservation is huge. There are over 300 elephants registered in the Surin province and the vast majority of them are trapped in the unfortunate trade of street begging. This is a terrible life for elephants. They require literally hundreds of kilos of fresh vegetables and clean water daily ... and street begging reduces an elephant's life expectancy by at least 50%.

ABOUT THE PROJECT AND A LITTLE HISTORY:

Historically, elephants were used to help with labouring work and for nearly 4,000 years the Mahout tribe in Thailand have been responsible looking after and training the King's elephants. However, in the last 40 years the need for elephants has virtually disappeared owing to industrial technology. This meant that many of the Mahouts and elephants were reduced to begging and using elephants for street entertainment.

About 20 years ago, street begging and street entertainment was made illegal. Now there is no income for the Mahouts and no money to feed and shelter the elephants. The Thai government doesn't seem to know what to do with the elephants or the Mahouts other than keeping them in an aimless existence. They created the Surin Elephant Park to accommodate them, but this place can be best described as simply a giant refugee camp for elephants where the Mahouts are given a small amount of money by the Thai government to simply stay alive, but without any direction or purpose to their lives.

The Foundation we work with was created to find a positive solution to this problem. Surin has over 200 elephants, but at the moment the Foundation only looks after twelve elephants, but that number is slowly increasing as funds are raised to cover the costs of looking after the elephants and the mahouts.

The goal is to have families of elephants freely roaming in natural habitat and for their Mahouts (carers) to be provided with a steady income that will replace the income they currently derive from using the elephants for street begging. The Surin Government has already set aside over 2000 acres of land, enough to maintain a breeding population of 300 elephants, which is approximately 10% of the existing population of Asian elephants in captivity in Thailand. In Surin, we have a chance to change history – to save the Asian elephant from extinction and give them a life worth living for generations to come.

Got any questions? Please email us: info@travellersworldwide.com

Once you have applied for a placement, we'll contact you and send you our Welcome Pack. You'll also receive Log-on details and password for our Volunteer Extranet where you'll have access to all the documentation and information which we've put together to facilitate preparations for your adventure! Your Project Co-ordinator for your country will liaise with you throughout the arrangements process, as well as while you're on your placement and on your return home.

The documents you'll have access to also include a Country Fact file, Safety Guide and any manuals that may assist you on your particular programme (for example, Teaching Guide, Sports Manuals, Enrichment Suggestions for Animal Care, etc.). We do all we can to make your stay one that you'll never forget. As with all our destinations, the culture and heritage is different to what you're used to ... which, although one of the most exciting aspects of travelling, should be borne in mind. Self-reliance and independence are highly appreciated in all our destinations and will help you to make the most of this wonderful opportunity! This is a truly awesome, elegant and beautiful country.

On Arrival, your Introduction to the Country:

When you arrive at Bangkok Airport, you'll be met by our Thailand Organiser and taken to a hotel to stay overnight. The following day he'll pick you up and take you to the bus station for the bus to Surin.

In Surin you'll be met by the Project Organiser or one of his staff and taken to the project site.

On arrival there you'll be introduced to all the other volunteers and the local project team. Then you get to meet the elephants! Your adventure has begun :-)



THINGS TO DO IN THAILAND

LOCATION:

Surin City is located approximately 7 hours' drive North-East of Bangkok. This is part of the Isaan Region of North-Eastern Thailand, known for its" spicy and delicious food, farming traditions, and rural culture. Most people of Isaan speak one of several dialects of the Laos language, as well as Standard Thai, and often a local tribal language.

Surin province was once covered with forests teeming with wild elephants, but deforestation throughout the 20th century has left most of the countryside dry and barren or converted to rice paddies. Baan Tha Klang Village is approximately 1 hours' drive North-West of Surin City, located on the Moon River, which flows into the Mekong River.

ABOUT BANGKOK:

Bangkok is not for the faint hearted! This is South East Asia's largest, most frenetic, over polluted, traffic congested capital city. But don't let that put you off! This will all become part of the charm.

By day and night, Bangkok is fast paced - this is a city for indulgence and fun, with action at all hours. One of the best ways to appreciate the beauty of this country is to live and breathe it:

- Visit the traditional floating markets on the outskirts of Bangkok, where traders sell their wares from wooden boats, weighed down by kilos of bananas and other exotic fruits as garlands of jasmine hang off the boats stern.
- Walk through China Town early in the morning and watch stall owners carry boxes of merchandise that tower over them, weighing two or three times their body weight.
- Snack on some fresh pineapple or watermelon carefully sliced by a roadside vendor as you soak in the sights and smells of the city before the midday heat encourages you inside to air conditioned safety.
- Watch tuk tuk's laden with people screech past, weaving in and out of traffic.
- Enjoy some freshly cooked Pad Thai from a street vendor. This is a mixture of noodles and bean sprouts stir fried with an egg and served with a generous portion of chilli sauce, or for the brave, a heaping of additional dried chilli.
- Take in sunset from a river cruise and marvel at Bangkok's diverse skyline, from modern gleaming skyscrapers to the pointed gold roof's of glittering temples.
- Visit the Grand Palace, a decadent spectacle which used to be residence to the King of Thailand and now has a temple for the Emerald Buddha.

The grand palace is one of the most striking pieces of art in Thailand, with gargoyles, dragons and warriors incredibly re-constructed in glittering mosaics.



HOW TO BOOK

TWO EASY WAYS ...

Complete a [booking form](#) online.

Telephone
01903 502595 (UK)
or
1-603-574-4935 (USA)



THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN OUR PROGRAMME!

We hope you'll join us!

Don't hesitate to contact us with any questions.

We're happy to help you plan your exciting adventure!

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