



## **Tamarind and Spice**

*Journey around Thailand*

*Special set departure (2-week escorted group tour)*

### ***Introduction:***

What better way to discover a country than through its food?

This 2-week trip is a mixture of culture, cooking (novices welcome!), sightseeing and relaxation too! Escape to Thailand and you'll return not just refreshed, but with skills and recipes to entertain effortlessly or knock up a mouth-watering meal in minutes.

Tamarind & Spice is a special itinerary for those who'd like to take a Tell Tale trip but would like to join with other people (rather than take a private tour).

### ***Overview:***

This is a journey around Thailand taking in 4 areas. You will start your tour in Bangkok with some sightseeing, exploring and a kick-off lesson in Thai cooking. Then you'll head to the Central Plains, its vibrant green ricefields are a backdrop for experiencing traditional Thai life. Then you'll take an overnight sleeper train to the north of Thailand where you will pick your own at an organic farm and explore the town of Chiang Mai and try the 'Lanna' cuisine of the north. Then you will fly to the south of Thailand for the final part of your trip to enjoy the spicy food of the Andaman Coast.

### ***Trip Style:***

As all our holidays, Tamarind & Spice is a soft adventure. This means it is different from mainstream tourism, but not as physically demanding as a typical adventure holiday.

Accommodation is also more intimate than massmarket hotels but more comfortable than a typical adventure trip (boutique inns and a small resorts, rather than say guesthouses). There is no single supplement but you do not have to share a room with someone you don't already know. You will have a private room throughout the trip with the exceptions of a 1 night village stay (see Day 5) and 1 night on a sleeper train.

As this is a group trip, it is clearly not possible to have the sorts of insider experiences or one-on-one activities you can in a Tell Tale private tour, and cooking needs to be run more at schools than in local homes. We do the best to provide the best experiences we can within the constraints.

### ***Who this trip for:***

This trip is ideal for those who are interested in local culture and people. If you are looking for a trip with luxury hotels and cocktails, it's not the right fit (unless you combine with your own beach extension, either arranged with us or independently). The trip is ideal for those who go with the flow - whilst our detailed itineraries are more so than ones we've seen from other companies, on a Tell Tale trip, 'serendipity' is a word to bear in mind. In terms of cooking, it is suitable for all levels of cooks from novice (whether in Thai food or generally!) to professionals who'd like to expand their repertoire. Vegetarians and vegans are welcome, however, please note others will be cooking and enjoying meat.

Tell Tale Travel  
96 Kensington High Street  
London  
W8 4SG



Telephone us:  
0800 011 2571 or 0207 060 4571  
International + 44 207 060 4571  
9am – 9pm, 7 days a week

***Tour escort:***

As this trip has been designed for people who don't know each other already, it does need to be escorted. However, we do want you to discover each area through the people who live there, so in each area you visit, you will meet people local from there. Please note your 'escort' is there to see that the group gels, things runs smoothly and be the contact person for our network of local people and our local office, she/he is not a guide. She/he will usually be Tell Tale Travel staff from the UK, or one of our special friends. We may occasionally have one of our Bangkok guides as a tour escort.

**The maximum group size is 12. However, if the first 9 places are booked by solo travellers, the trip will be closed as we prefer to support smaller accommodation (one of which only has 9 rooms). For the same reason, we can only accommodate one set of sharers who have a requirement for twin beds (rather than double).**

**Early booking is advised. It is possible to book with a deposit and we have a no surcharges guarantee.**

Tell Tale Travel  
96 Kensington High Street  
London  
W8 4SG



*Telephone us:*  
**0800 011 2571 or 0207 060 4571**  
**International + 44 207 060 4571**  
9am – 9pm, 7 days a week

### **Day 1 – Saturday**

Fly overnight from London Heathrow with Eva Air or Thai Airways. *If you are arranging your own flights from another country, you can join the tour in Bangkok on Day 2 (one of our drivers will pick you up from the airport).*

### **Day 2 – Sunday D**

Welcome to Thailand!



The group from the UK will be met at Bangkok airport and whisked away in an air-conditioned minibus to a centrally-located boutique inn. Ban Pra Nond is a converted old family mansion, tastefully designed by Tasma, who lives here with her husband Jason and supported by their staff. It has just 9 guest rooms for guests. You will have a little time to unpack and get settled in and have a quick dip in the small pool. Later on, take a stroll through the local area for a welcome dinner at a traditional Thai restaurant which is popular with middle class Thai people. This will give you a good introduction to Thai food, and a contrast to other meals you will have throughout your trip.

### **Day 3 – Monday B L**

A beautiful breakfast before you head off for your lesson to introduce you to Thai cooking.



You'll walk to the river where you will take a boat trip. When you arrive at the waterside cooking school, you'll have a welcome drink and snack on edible flowers, before a walk in the herb garden. Then you'll have a cooking demonstration before trying your hand at classic Thai dishes such as *Tom Yum Goong* clear hot and sour soup with fresh prawns and *Gai Phat Met Ma Muang Himmaphan* chicken with cashew nuts and dried chili.

In the afternoon, you'll have some time to relax and get over the jet lag. Sit by the small pool with a book or go shopping. In the evening, one of our guides will take the group to Bangkok's Chinatown where you can have a wonder around and sample the streetfood.

### **Day 4 – Tuesday B**

Today, you'll visit Bangkok's main sights. One of our expert guides will pick you up and take you on a boat trip along the Chao Praya river which winds through this sprawling city. You'll see Wat Arun (Temple of Dawn), which is covered in pieces of porcelain, before crossing the river and having a tour of the Grand Palace with its grand ceremonial gardens as well as the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. The river is a hive of activity and the klongs (side canals) give a glimpse into people's lives in this area.



A bit of free time before an evening out. You'll visit the Asiatique night market on the river where you can browse at your leisure or bargain at the bazaar to pick up lightweight clothes for your trip. There are plenty of restaurants for you to choose from.

Tell Tale Travel  
96 Kensington High Street  
London  
W8 4SG



Telephone us:  
0800 011 2571 or 0207 060 4571  
International + 44 207 060 4571  
9am – 9pm, 7 days a week

### Day 5 – Wednesday B D

Time to pack up and leave Bangkok. You're heading off to the Central Plains, the 'rice bowl of Thailand'.

First, you will make a stop at Bangkok's largest farmer's market where you can browse the stalls and choose from regional delicacies for a snack/lunch. Then you'll have a 1-1.5 hour drive to the Central Plains, the rich and fertile agricultural heartland of Thailand. Rice is the staple food here, but you will also enjoy fresh vegetables like bok choy, snow peas and straw mushrooms, along with fish caught in the waters of the Chao Praya river which heads north through this area. On your way, you'll stop at a community handicraft centre, originally set up by the Queen of Thailand.



You will arrive at a sleepy, canal-side village, surrounded by paddyfields where the way of life has been relatively unspoilt by modern ways. You will meet some stalwarts of the community, including the village headman, Prachim and his wife Pao, who is an expert cook. Time to enjoy the quieter pace of life by the canal. Later on, you'll be taken out on a traditional wooden boat. As you drift down the canal, you will see everyone from fishermen to housewives and visit the local temple.

After a traditional Thai rural dinner, Pao will show you how to make Thai desserts. These are extremely sweet and the perfect end to a spicy meal. Real Thai desserts contain only three main ingredients, flour, sugar and coconut which are mixed, cooked and decorated in different ways. It would be a lifetime's journey to learn the thousands of mouth-watering combinations but tonight Pao will show you some of her secret family recipes.

Then it's time to bed down for the night, the headman's house is beautiful, spacious and lined with teak, airy from being by the canal. *Please note this is one night you won't have a room to yourselves. The group will share the top floor of the house and you will have to sleep on Thai-style mattresses and share a bathroom. It will be the most basic of your accommodation of your trip though this village would be considered fairly prosperous for rural Thailand (the other end from say hilltribe villages which can be very challenging). Please do have an open mind and do make the most of your time here.*

### Day 6 – Thursday B L

An early start this morning, you will visit Pao's local market to pick up some fresh ingredients. The market is just a short distance away but if you want the best of the seasonal produce, you have to get there early and jostle with the locals. When you get back to the village, Pao will give you a cooking demonstration (it isn't possible for you all to cook in a home kitchen). This afternoon, you'll be heading to nearby Ayutthaya, the main city in this area before taking the overnight sleeper train to the north of the country.



You'll have a guided visit around the beautiful remains of the UNESCO world heritage site in Ayutthaya. In its heyday in the seventeenth century after the fall of the Khmer Empire, it must have been a spectacular sight. Around one million people lived here, many on canal boats, and the city was full of ornate temples. You will explore the site on a gentle bicycle ride (if you do not want to cycle, let us know).

Tell Tale Travel  
96 Kensington High Street  
London  
W8 4SG



Telephone us:  
0800 011 2571 or 0207 060 4571  
International + 44 207 060 4571  
9am – 9pm, 7 days a week



You will have the opportunity to shower and change in Ayutthaya before you get on the overnight sleeper train to Chiang Mai in the north. Travelling by train is not just environmentally friendly, but a great way to see local life and admire the lush landscape rolling past the window. It's a bit of an adventure though (we recommend wearing ear plugs) and as we use the air conditioned carriage, have some extra clothes handy to wrap up in.

### *Day 7 – Friday B D*

This morning, you'll arrive in Chiang Mai, the 'Rose of the North'. Lanna is the name for the ancient kingdom of 'a million ricefields' which is now northern Thailand and the food has Burmese, Lao and Chinese influences in its modern-day Thai cooking. As well as the rice, herbs and vegetables grown by Thai people who are traditionally lowland farmers, Chiang Mai is surrounded by hills inhabited by tribes from other countries who now grow crops as exotic as asparagus and strawberries.

You will be picked up at the train station and taken to a small quaint family-owned inn, designed combining Chinese and Lanna architecture. Tri Yan Na Ros is in the old town of Chiang Mai and is furnished with antiques. You'll have the day to relax by the small pool, although you could take a tuk tuk to town to go shopping or a spa for a massage.

This evening, you'll have dinner together, either at your accommodation or at a riverside restaurant.

### *Day 8 – Saturday B L*



Now you've had a flavour of both central and northern food, you will get hands-on with Lanna cuisine. Today, you will visit an organic farm where you can pick your own before being taught how to make northern Thai dishes, you'll all have your own workspaces. From lemons to Kaffir lime leaves, you will find plenty of ingredients on the farm for traditional Lanna dishes like *Phad Ka Prau* a type of stir fried dish made with chilli and holy basil.

You'll have some free time this afternoon, have a dip in the pool or visit a local spa for a traditional Thai massage (not for the fainthearted!). This evening, there is a special weekend market right in your street.

### *Day 9 – Sunday B L*

This morning, you will visit one of our friends, Mae, a retired nurse who lives just outside Chiang Mai, with her husband Por who loves tending his jungle-like garden and one of their children Art and his family. Mae is absolutely potty about pottery, don't worry if your efforts aren't up to much, she's very good-humoured.

We have arranged with Mae to give you a demonstration of vegetarian cooking (she became a vegetarian a few years ago after an extended stay at a Buddhist nunnery, though she isn't any more) and you'll have lunch

Then you'll head off for some sightseeing around Chiang Mai. You'll visit the ancient part of the city and some of the famous temples. Later, you can explore the vast Sunday market, this is full of handicrafts made by both the local Thai and hilltribe people who live in and around Chiang Mai.

### *Day 10 – Monday B L*



Now we know you can stand the heat in the kitchen, but would you be able to survive in a jungle? Don't worry, you're staying where you are, not off to survive in an actual jungle! You'll be with an expert who will teach you how to cook in the open – you will learn how to put together rudimentary cooking equipment from what you can find in the wild such as bamboo and banana leaves and how to cook over an open fire.

Mid afternoon onwards and evening at leisure. You are welcome to join your tour escort if you wish .

### *Day 11 – Tuesday B*

Time to start the next part of your holiday!

This morning, you will be taken to the airport at Chiang Mai where you will take a short flight to Bangkok then connect to another short flight to Krabi in Southern Thailand. You'll be picked up and on your drive from Krabi airport, you will see the famous rock formations of the Andaman Coast, rising like cliffs and covered with tropical jungle plants. This breathtaking landscape has served as backdrops in Hollywood films ranging from Star Wars to James Bond's 'The Man with the Golden Gun'.

You will soon arrive at a mini-resort, Phu Pha Ao Nang. It is a 10-15 minute local taxi ride from the main tourist area of Ao Nang itself, but is away from the hustle and bustle of the beachfront. Settle into your air-conditioned room and have a dip in the pool.

Krabi is a province (not just a town) which despite the attraction to tourists is a place where the people mainly make their living from smallscale farming. You will get a glimpse into this and life in Southern Thailand during your stay. Unlike most of Thailand, the people are mainly Muslim in this area, and as well as the abundance of tropical fresh fruit, you'll be able to savour regional specialties like curry and roti. **Tell Tale Tip** see the article in the Focus section of our website called 'Destination Krabi'.

### *Day 12 – Wednesday B L*

Time for some relaxation! A break from the cooking but not the food. You will go on a private boat trip to explore the uninhabited islands that dot the Andaman sea, with our coordinator for the Krabi area, Elizabeth (she lives in Krabi with her Thai husband, Sun and their young son).

Drifting along on a long-tail boat is a great way to experience the stunning scenery and is extremely relaxing, although you will stop to snorkel in coral reefs full of colourful fish and have a picnic lunch, prepared in advance by Sun, an excellent cook. You will discover the Hong archipelago, considered by some to be the most beautiful place in the region - it is home to islands with pristine white beaches and a hidden emerald lagoon.



Tell Tale Travel  
96 Kensington High Street  
London  
W8 4SG



Telephone us:  
0800 011 2571 or 0207 060 4571  
International + 44 207 060 4571  
9am – 9pm, 7 days a week

### ***Day 13 – Thursday B L D***

This morning, you'll learn to cook the food of Southern Thailand. Influenced by neighbouring Malaysia and blended with the tastes of people originally from China and Thai-style cooking, it has a delicious and distinctive taste. Well-known regional dishes include the delicious *Kaeng Massaman* (Massaman curry), and *Pad Thai*, where flat rice noodles and prawns are combined with tofu, egg and peanuts. As you are a group, this is at a local cooking school (rather than a home) in order for you all to have facilities. The lady who owns is a friend of ours and as you'd have learnt so much already, she will focus your lesson on the dishes of southern Thailand (rather than the general introductory Thai cooking lesson she usually does).



Mid afternoon onwards, you'll have time to relax by the pool. This evening, you'll visit Krabi town to graze from the food stalls at the night market.

### ***Day 14 Friday B D***

Today is your last day. You'll be driven to Tubkaak beach (30-40 mins) away which we think is the nicest on the mainland to relax and have a swim and sunbathe.

You'll also visit a local village where you can buy some souvenirs, choices range from pineapple pulp stationery to batik and coconut shells handcrafted into items that are useful around the home.



In the early evening, you will visit a local village where our friend, Eh is the deputy headman. Eh will take you for a walk around the village, stopping to show you his own rubber plantation as well as various smallholdings producing crops common in southern-style cooking, such as cashewnuts. Then, you will meet Eh's sister Pah, known for miles for the fantastic food she makes and serves in their family's café and have dinner with the family. Pah's *Kaeng Massaman* is legendary.

### ***Day 15 Saturday B***

This morning, you will be driven to Krabi airport to take a short internal flight to Bangkok to connect to your international flight. You will get back to Heathrow at approximately 7pm UK time (same day).

---

### ***Dates for 2014 and 2015***

1 February to 15 February 2014

31 January to 14 February 2015

Tell Tale Travel  
96 Kensington High Street  
London  
W8 4SG



Telephone us:  
0800 011 2571 or 0207 060 4571  
International + 44 207 060 4571  
9am – 9pm, 7 days a week

***Inclusions:***

Direct flights between London Heathrow and Bangkok with Eva Air or Thai Airways  
Accommodation  
Meals as referenced by a B L D  
Activities including cooking lessons and excursions  
Transport in private air-conditioned minibuses, sleeper train and internal flights

***Exclusions:***

Entrance fees for sites and national parks  
Expenses of a personal nature such as laundry, internet access and drinks  
Tips for guides and drivers (discretionary)  
Meals not referenced by a B L D

***Costs:***

This trip costs £2,225 per person for all departure dates including direct flights from the UK. There is No Single Supplement and you get your own room.

*If you are travelling with another person and will share a room throughout, please contact us.*

If you are joining the tour in Bangkok and arranging your flights separately from your country, the trip costs GBP1,425. We are happy to pick you up at Bangkok airport if arriving at a different time and also cater for separate departures. Please note that this price excludes internal flights (which we combine on international tickets for those travelling from the UK). We are happy to provide details for you to purchase yourself from your airline local travel agent. You can also purchase them through us.

***Spending money guideline per person to include the exclusion £225-300***

Tell Tale Travel  
96 Kensington High Street  
London  
W8 4SG



*Telephone us:*  
**0800 011 2571 or 0207 060 4571**  
**International + 44 207 060 4571**  
9am – 9pm, 7 days a week