Dear CTY Families,

Notable for its rich history, dramatic landscapes, and vibrant cultural life, Thailand is the perfect place to go for an exotic learning experience. This comprehensive program, designed to foster deeper cultural understanding, will offer a discerning survey of historical and modern Thailand.

Discover many distinct sides of this truly magical land on one of our newest travel programs. Travel around Bangkok by Tuk-Tuk and long-tail boat to photograph colorful flower markets and goldenroofed temples. You will learn how to train a majestic elephant at Elephant Camp and hike through the astonishing forests and ancient ruins of Doi Inthanon National Park. You’ll see the 150-foot, gold-gilded statue at the Temple of the Reclining Buddha and the mesmerizing emerald and teal waters of Phang Nga Bay in Phuket.

This trip is designed to showcase Thailand’s wealth of cultural and natural wonders. This unique itinerary offers a sensory feast sure to create a lifetime of memories for adults and students alike!

Brian Fitzek  
Director, Family Academic Programs  
Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth
**ITINERARY**

**July 16 — Arrive Bangkok, Thailand**
As you arrive in Bangkok, a member of our team will assist you with your luggage and your transfer and check-in at your hotel. You can take some time to relax and rest after a long flight or get your adventure started right away with a tour of Bangkok's Chinatown. This is the beginning of an exotic trip for you and your family!

*Accommodations: Ramada Plaza Menam Riverside Hotel, or similar.*

**July 17 — Bangkok**
You'll start your first full day in Bangkok with a boat journey down Chao Phraya River to Wat Pho, the Temple of the Reclining Buddha. This statue of Buddha is 150-feet long and is coated in gold leaf. The feet alone are nine feet long and adorned in mother of pearl!

After lunch, you'll board a long-tail boat for a cruise through the klongs (canals) of Bangkok, where you'll witness the daily life of the Thai people making their way down the river and bartering at floating markets. There's no better introduction to Thai culture than taking in the royal grandeur of Bangkok's Grand Palace and Wat Phra Kaew (Temple of the Emerald Buddha). These are both strong symbols of the Thai people's reverence for their King and Queen and their peaceful Buddhist faith. Both of these places are incredible works of art and architecture that will leave you in awe.

There will be a welcome reception and dinner tonight, so you can really get to know your guide and fellow travelers!

*Accommodations: Ramada Plaza Menam Riverside Hotel, or similar.*
*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

**July 18 — Bangkok / Chiang Mai**
Transfer to the airport for your flight up to Chiang Mai, known as the "Rose of the North," and eat lunch in a local restaurant before checking into your hotel. After a bit of relaxation get ready for one of the most exciting parts of the trip – pen pals! As part of our Friends Across Borders program, your children will finally meet the Thai kids they've been exchanging letters with and you'll watch them develop a special bond that can't be hindered by language or cultural differences.

Then take a short ride through the city to play the popular Southeast Asian game, Takraw. This is most easily described as "kick volleyball." A Takraw player will run a short and informative training session before splitting the group into two teams for a friendly game of Takraw - you'll be pros by this point!

After getting back to your hotel you'll be able to relax and enjoy an evening to yourselves. You can eat at the hotel or ask your guide for a recommendation to eat at a local restaurant.

*Accommodations: Siripanna Villa Resort and Spa, or similar.*
*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch*

**July 19 — Chiang Mai**
A 90-minute drive brings you to Doi Inthanon National Park, loaded with forests, waterfalls, and the ruins of ancient temples. A moderate hike in the refreshing cool air takes you and your family by some fascinating flora and fauna, including 300 species of birds. You may even spot the green-tailed sunbird, found nowhere else on earth.

While in the area, visit a traditional hill tribe village to witness a time-honored way of life nearly lost. Many of the residents of the Karen hilltribe village work at a local coffee plantation. Your hike will continue from there on different forest paths where you'll come across small streams and waterfalls.

Lunch today will be at Wachiratharn Waterfall, a 200 foot waterfall that will serve as a great view while you eat! This day is packed with great opportunities and locales to take family photos at that you'll cherish forever.

After a little rest and relaxation, you'll enjoy a hands-on Thai cooking class, where you'll learn to make some traditional Thai dishes and taste the delicious results!

*Accommodations: Siripanna Villa Resort and Spa, or similar.*
*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*
July 20 — Chiang Mai
The trip to Patara Elephant Farm is always a Thomson Family Adventures favorite! Learn from the experts how to be a mahout, or elephant caretaker. After learning the ins and outs of guiding, riding, and feeding these gentle giants, you’ll put your new skills to use and ride your elephant through a rice paddy field to a nearby waterfall where a picnic will be waiting for you.

You’ll head back to Chiang Mai from the Patara Elephant Farm and make a stop at a local Thai restaurant for dinner. From there, your guide will take you to Chiang Mai’s most colorful night market. The sights, sounds, and smells of this night market are exotic and captivating. There are stalls of silk, local crafts, imitation goods, and excellent works of Asian silver jewelry beads.

**Accommodations:** Siripanna Villa Resort and Spa, or similar

**Meals Included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

July 21 — Chiang Mai
Head out early in the morning to go into the Old City and to Ton Payom Market, where you can buy dishes that you’ll need for joining the locals for a daily alms giving ceremony to the monks. This experience is a true honor, giving boiled rice and condiments to the monks who will be in their distinctive saffron robes and will give you their blessings in return. When you’re done offering alms, visit the Buddhist temple Wat Phrathat Doi Suthep, one of the most sacred sites in all of Thailand, and highly revered by Buddhists across the globe. The temple sits atop a mountain named Doi Suthep, offers stunning views of Chiang Mai, and contains a model of the Emerald Buddha and a statue of the Hindu god Ganesh.

Next you’ll have a fun, exciting, and thrilling experience at the Flight of the Gibbon. You’ll climb to the top of the rainforest canopy and take a zip-line back down to the bottom. The thrill of flying through the air, above the trees, is a feeling that your kids will always have and be able to look back on and smile!

**Accommodations:** Siripanna Villa Resort and Spa, or similar

**Meals Included:** Breakfast, Lunch
**July 22 — Chiang Mai**
Your last day in Chiang Mai will be an exciting one. You’ll head off to the spectacular Sri Lanna National Park. As you enter the park, you’ll head straight to the Bua Tong limestone waterfall and then continue on to Mae Ngat Dam. Next is kayaking on Mae Ngat Lake. You’ll paddle out to a bamboo floating raft house where you’ll eat a traditional Lanna lunch out on the lake. The rest of the afternoon is free for you to explore the park with more kayaking, swimming, or finding a nice spot of beach to sunbathe and relax.

The night will start with visiting a local temple to join the monks in their prayer chants. That will be followed by tonight’s dinner at a local restaurant offering Lanna, Burmese and Shan cuisines. The end of the night will be at Waroros market, where you can get some classic and tasty Thai sweets to finish off the evening!

*Accommodations: Siripanna Villa Resort and Spa, or similar
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

**July 23 — Chiang Mai / Phuket / Koh Yao Yai**
After an early breakfast you’ll transfer to the airport to fly south to Phuket. This day will be an enormous treat for your family as you’ll be heading to one of the most scenic, picturesque, and most sought after locations in the world- Phang Nga Bay. Phang Nga Bay is famous for a reason. It has clear emerald and teal waters that are almost too beautiful to be real. The surreal nature of the bay is only magnified by the limestone islands that stand tall out of the water. You’ll take a private long-tail boat on a tour around the bay before having some free time to explore for hidden lagoons, pristine mangrove forests, and dramatic karst formations by kayak. Your Phang Nga Bay adventure will end with lunch on a privately owned island.

*Accommodations: Koh Yao Yai Village, or similar
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

**July 24 — Koh Yao Yai**
Today is full of fun at Hong Marine National Park. The natural beauty of the park is right in line with the rest of Thailand. It’s exotic and tropical and offers plenty of exciting underwater activities. Swim with schools of colorful fish and snorkel down to find deep and shallow sea corals. You can swim around in the water or find a quiet area of soft white sand to rest on.

After spending the morning at Hong Marine National Park you’ll head back to your hotel for a free afternoon. Relax by the pool or take advantage of the entertainment and different activities that your hotel offers.

Tonight comes to a close with a farewell dinner with your guide and fellow travelers. Say goodbye to your friends with one last meal together and reminiscing about the memories you’ve all just made!

Afterwards enjoy a Krathong ceremony where all families light a candle in a banana leaf and let it float on the water.

*Accommodations: Koh Yao Yai Village, or similar
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

**July 25 — Koh Yao Yai / Return Home**
After breakfast, you and your family will be picked up by boat and brought back to Phuket where you’ll visit the Gibbon Rehabilitation Project. This is a great project that is reintroducing Gibbons to their natural habitat in the rainforests of Thailand. The Gibbon was near extinct due to poaching in the 1980’s. It’s a great feeling to meet the people are that are working tirelessly to save the Gibbon monkey!

The Gibbon Rehabilitation Project will unfortunately be the last part of your adventure in Thailand and will be followed by a transfer to the airport for your flight home! Of course, if you want the adventure to continue please ask about the ways we can extend your vacation!

*Meals Included: Breakfast*
Why choose Thomson Family Adventures?

Because we know families… we were the first and remain the only company devoted exclusively to family travel. Adult tour companies have imitated us, but we are still – as we were in 1998 – the only one to offer strictly family adventures.

We offer meaningful family experiences like horizon-broadening encounters with local children.

Our **Friends Across Borders, or pen pal program**, has proven to be one of the most memorable components of our adventures for all who participate. We invite your children to write ahead to local children whom they will meet on your adventure for a game of soccer or a community service project.

Our **Guides** are all native to the country you are visiting, so you gain real knowledge of local life from the get-go—something a non-local, no matter how scholarly, could never match.

Our **rafikis**, in addition to our guide, travel with almost all of our groups of eight or more. Their job is to engage the kids in fun games and activities to help break the ice among families and make sure everyone’s entertained.

**Grandparents and Family Reunions**—nothing can bring a family together like a shared travel experience. No matter the age difference—be it a parent and child, grandparent and grandchild or multiple generations—observing how we each see the world is not only remarkable but a sweet reminder that certain things in this world are, and will always be, totally ineffable.

**Relax—you’re with Thomson**—our expertise in this specialized field is unmatched, and we spend every minute of every day coming up with new ways to make family travel more fun, eye-opening and safe.

**Accommodations**—We’ve personally visited every ship, hotel, and campsite to be sure they all meet our family travel standards.

**Meals**—We know hungry kids and fussy eaters can make travel difficult, so our meals and buffets are carefully selected.

**Transportation**—It’s all taken care of: airport transfers, ground transportation, plenty of snacks on the vehicles, and no overly long drives—because nobody wants to hear, “Are we there yet?”

**Included travel insurance**—If the unexpected should arise—no worries, we have you covered.

**Guaranteed departures**—It’s tough to find time out of your busy schedule; school vacation is when it is, the kids’ summer camp is not going to move to a different week… Once you’ve confirmed a trip that works for your family, we won’t cancel on you.

Let us take care of all the details for you.

Parenting is hard work—vacationing doesn’t need to be.

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**ACCOMMODATIONS**

**Ramada Plaza Menam Riverside Hotel**
Situated on the banks of Bangkok’s Chao Phraya River, the Ramada Plaza Menam Riverside Hotel offers a traditional Thai experience amid all the modern conveniences of a luxury hotel in a bustling business district.

**Siripanna Villa Resort and Spa**
Newly built in the traditional Lanna style, historic symbolism blends effortlessly with innovative design at the Siripanna Villa Resort and Spa Chiang Mai. Guests will experience the authentic culture of the North with the luxury amenities expected by the modern traveler. The hotel is also just a 5 minute tuk tuk ride from all the exciting sights and sounds of the Night Market and other attractions.

**Koh Yao Yai**
Koh Yao Yai Village is located on the quiet and serene island of Koh Yao Yai. This tropical escape sits on 32 acres of beachfront land. The infinity pool is idyllic, the meals at the restaurants are fresh and local, there are exciting activities for the kids, plus comfortable rooms and free Wi-Fi.

**CLIMATE**

Thailand has three seasons: cool, hot, and wet. The cool season runs from December to March, with temperatures typically in the upper 70s to low 80s. The hot season is in April and May, and temperatures then range from the middle 80s to lower 90s, with lots of humidity. June through November is the wet season, with temps in the middle to upper 80s with lots of rain. We tour around these possible heat and humidity distractions by timing events right and by using fans, shade, and air conditioning. You can help by wearing loose clothing, a hat, and drinking lots of water. Rain showers are always possible, but if you are prepared, you will find that experiencing rain in such a rich country will be one of the many wonderful memories you and your family will bring back with you.
TRIP DETAILS
Included
* All entrance fees per the itinerary
* Accommodations based on double and triple occupancy at comfortable and distinctive tourist level hotels
* Meals per the itinerary
* Internal flights
* Tips for porters, drivers, wait staff and guides
* Services of a national guide who will accompany you throughout your trip
* All excursions as listed in the itinerary
* Services of one of our rafikis, whose primary jobs include: providing kid-friendly enrichment activities; providing organized fun for kids that helps them get to know each other; providing things for kids to do during delays, flights, and long bus rides
* Bottled water, coffee, tea, and soda for the land portion of the tour
* Snacks and local fruits while doing activities
* Airport transfers
* Travel Insurance for your family

Not Included
* Fees for passports and immunizations
* International flights
* Meals and expenses en route
* Beer, wine and liquor during the trip including the welcome and farewell meals.
* Laundry, phone/fax/email and other items of a personal nature

Prices

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Before registering, please review CTY’s Educational Travel Policies, Terms, and Conditions found at http://cty.jhu.edu/family/travel/travel-policies.html