



2009 Discover Thailand : **Volunteer, Immerse, & Explore in Thailand**

Location	Orientation near Bangkok; sites vary depending on project/activities selected
Start Dates	All year round. Minimum 2 weeks. Maximum 6 months. Volunteer projects start every 1 st Monday of the month in Singburi (near Bangkok)
Program Fees (in US\$)	2 weeks: \$1210 1 week Orientation + 1 week Volunteer \$1365 1 week Orientation + 1 week Trek \$1365 1 week Orientation + Elephant Work 3 weeks: \$1465 1 week Orientation + 2 weeks Volunteer \$1660 Orientation + 1 Wk Volunteer + 1 wk Trek or Beach Extra Weeks: \$255 -Volunteer, Cultural activities \$450 – Trekking, Beach, Elephant
What's Included	All-inclusive orientation + volunteer, cultural or adventure travel Pick-up/drop-off and transfer to/from project site Accommodations (homestay or volunteer center) All meals during program Pre-departure and bi-lingual local support Traveler's Medical Insurance
What's not Included	International airfare
Accommodations	Safe, comfortable, clean basic accommodations in volunteer housing or host family. Shared bathroom. 2-3 meals per day available with projects or homestay.
Country Facts:	
Capital city	Bangkok
Population	~61.5 million
Currency and exchange rate	Thai Baht (BHT) http://www.xe.com/ucc/

Cultural Embrace's "Discover Thailand" program consists of an exciting way for you to customize your own way to explore this beautiful country. A minimum of two weeks includes a week orientation to help you familiarize yourself with Thai culture, lifestyle, language, people, food, attitude, habits, and environment. Then choose to volunteer with a

variety of different type of projects such as: teaching/tutoring English, environmental/eco work, orphanage assistance, hilltribe volunteer projects, or elephant work; or decide to continue with learning more traditional Thai cultural activities such as: Buddhism, eco-tours, Thai boxing; or opt to go on a trekking excursion. All options are available for at least one week (except hilltribe volunteering is a minimum of 2 weeks), so you can mix and match the different options so it will match your preferences and skills.

Projects & Activities Description

Orientation

Our orientation and training are the first step for a successful stay in Thailand. Therefore the first week is dedicated for you to familiarize yourself with Thailand and meeting the other participants. You will engage in the following activities: learn about Thai culture, language and cooking lessons, visit the famous Buddhist Temple, Wat Phranon Jaksi, the old capital of Ayutthaya, including a visit to the elephant village, Lopburi's museum and pagoda, and a cruise along the Chaopraya river.

You will also have time to meet the local people, taste the food and learn about the Thai customs. Additionally, you will be informed about the details of your program and the different projects and activities.

Volunteer

If you are interested in volunteering during your time in Thailand, *Cultural Embrace* can organize week-long projects to: teach/tutor English, work on environmental/eco projects in the forest and hillside, provide assistance at local orphanages, or volunteer at hilltribe villages.

Elephant Work

During this week, you will be able to help the mahouts (elephant trainers) at the elephant sanctuary as they take care of the elephants and join them for their daily exercises. You will also learn about the place of elephants in the culture in Thailand, their needs and the social problems involved. Daily chores include washing and feeding the elephants, learning some gardening and working with the people of the center.

Cultural & Adventure Activities

Thailand is rich in history and culture, and now is your chance to learn and improve your skills for the following activities: Buddhism, Muay Thai boxing, or eco-tours. Or opt to go on a trek through the hilltribe villages or jungle, which will give you a first-hand look at how many Thai minorities live and how pristine and beautiful these areas are.

Program Details & Highlights

Volunteer in Thailand Offers:

- A first-hand experience to see and improve Thailand.
- A broader perspective on world views.
- Opportunity to learn the Thai's lifestyles and community initiatives as well as other cultural activities (ie: language, crafts, dance, etc)
- Memorable experiences while traveling and seeing exotic sites
- Lifelong friends from all around the globe
- International work and cultural experiences that strengthens your resume
- Support and development of self-confidence and personal skills

Cultural Embrace Offers:

- **Guaranteed Program Placement Prior to Departure**
Cultural Embrace pre-arranges your complete program before you leave home to ensure an easy and hassle-free transition to your new life abroad.
- **Room & Meals**
All accommodations and meals are included during the program. Housing will be located at either host family or volunteer sites.
- **Arrival Assistance**
You will receive an airport pick-up and transfer to an eco-house, which will be your home during the Orientation week.
- **International Traveler's Insurance: Basic Major Medical Coverage**
Our policy provides basic medical coverage. *Cultural Embrace* highly recommends additional travel insurance, which is available at extra cost.
- **Arrival Orientation & Training**
An one-week all-inclusive comprehensive orientation will be included. The orientation introduces the local community, Thai cultures, basic Thai language, and Thai cuisines/cooking.
- **Volunteer, Cultural Activities and/or Excursions**
Choose from one-week options to volunteer, take cultural activities and/or go on local excursions. You may mix and match these options to maximize your time in Thailand, or opt to spend more time at a specific location to become familiar and involved with the activity
- **Visa Assistance**
Cultural Embrace will assist you with the information to obtain a visa, but we have no control nor the ability to guarantee of government issuances and visa availability.
- ***Cultural Embrace's* Culture Kit**

Useful tips, advice, and information to prepare you for the amazing adventure of living and working abroad.

- **Full-time Representation**

Cultural Embrace provides English-speaking representation in the United States and Thailand before, during, and after your time abroad.

Program Requirements

- Volunteers must be at least the age of 18. Or, if younger than 18, you must have parental or guardian consent
- Minimum commitment of 2 weeks, maximum 6 months
- Enjoy working and serving others in an underprivileged and struggling environment
- Open to foreign cultures and living abroad.
- Responsible and dedicated to full-term of commitment

2009 Schedule & Fees

Program	Length	Price
Orientation (1) + Volunteering (1)	2 wks	\$1210
Orientation (1) + Trekking (1)	2 wks	\$1365
Orientation (1) + Elephant Conservation (1) + Beach (1)	3 wks	\$1720
Orientation (1) + Volunteer (2)	3 wks	\$1465
Orientation (1) + Volunteer (1) + Cultural (1) + Elephant (1)	4 wks	\$1465
Extra week – Volunteer, cultural activities	1 wk	\$255
Extra week – Beach, Elephant, Trekking	1 wk	\$450

**Prices listed in US Dollars*

***Please note-prices are subject to change according to world currency exchange rate.*

How to Apply

- 1) Obtain Volunteer Program Information and Application Forms.
-Download the forms on our website. - OR -

-Fill out our easy online application request form and the forms will be mailed to you within 7-10 days. - OR -

-Call 1-512-469-9089/1-888-214-8570 (US toll-free) to have the forms mailed to you in 7-10 days.

2) Read the instructions carefully and complete all forms.

3) Submit your completed application packet to:

CULTURAL EMBRACE
7201 Bill Hughes Road
Austin, TX 78745 USA

- Completed packet should include
 - Volunteer Application
 - Signed Volunteer Program Agreement
 - Copy of your passport - information page only
 - Copies of diploma or certificates related to field of interest (if applicable)
 - Resume/CV
 - Cover Letter explaining why you want to join this program, and provide a service in Thailand.
 - Two references: preferably professional references and/or character reference
 - Doctor's certificate verifying that you are in excellent mental and physical health
 - Copy of Police Clearance (obtainable from your community's local police station)
 - Two 1½" x 2" official passport style photos (with name printed on each photo's back)
 - One smiling full-length picture of yourself
 - \$200 Non-refundable application (credited towards your program fee)

Upon receipt of your application, a *Cultural Embrace* coordinator will contact you for a 20-30 minutes phone interview. Once we accept you in to our program, you will receive an invoice for the remainder of your program fee. In order for us to contact our local partners to start your placement process, we require at least 50% of your program fee.

We recommend submitting your application and program fee at least 12-16 weeks prior to your desired start date in order for us to organize and arrange your volunteer placement.

**Cultural Embrace* requires an expedited application fee for those applying 12 weeks or less before the desired date of departure. Applications received 8-12 weeks prior to desired departure date will be charged \$150. Applications received less than 8 weeks before the desired departure date will be charged \$250.

Frequently Asked Questions

1) *Why should I pay Cultural Embrace to volunteer?*

Cultural Embrace and our local partners specialize in arranging a guaranteed volunteer placement, housing and insurance prior to your departure. This will alleviate the troubles and stress of getting everything organized in a new country, so you will have more time and energy to spend on your volunteer project. Your time abroad will still be an independent and memorable one, but we are here to guide you to a safe, healthy and comfortable experience before, during, and after your adventure.

Fees vary according to project, destination, and length of stay. Most of the costs go toward operational project and field expenses, (ie: housing, food, transportation, supplies, etc) plus the administrative fees to cover office and local support (ie: legal, accounting, insurance, advertising, etc) and donations to the local project communities. **Cultural Embrace** does not add on any profits on their volunteer programs

2) *What are the living conditions like?*

Accommodations vary with each project and location. The orientation home is a beautiful eco-friendly facility that can house up to 50 people. All houses have single gender shared dorm rooms with 3 to 12 beds. All houses have western style toilets and one even as an Asian toilet. Each bathroom has a shower and the water is always cool, which is nice and refreshing from the Thai heat. All houses have a communal area where you can eat, relax and meet up with other participants.

Other project and cultural activities' accommodations vary, but expect basic standards. Some of the hilltribe regions have poor living conditions (ie: straw and padded mattress, non-flushable toilets, limited running water, etc), but they still maintain a clean and safe environment.

3) *What are the meals like?*

All food during your "Discover Thailand" program is included. Thai food is delicious and tasty, for those that have a knack for spicy and flavorful dishes. Vegetarian and dietary meals may be met, however, if you have specific allergies, you may need to provide your own food. Please list any special dietary requirement on your application.

4) *What type of visa assistance does Cultural Embrace provide?*

A tourist visa can be used for this program, and many countries do not need anything to enter the country. Please check with your local consulate.

Please note, that any visa fees are the responsibility of the applicant. And, while **Cultural Embrace** can assist you during the process, ultimately it is your responsibility to ensure that you have obtained the appropriate visa for your volunteer experience. **Cultural**

Embrace has no control over the visa process and cannot guarantee that your visa application will be accepted.

5) *How long will it take to make my placement?*

We ask applicants to apply at least 12-16 weeks in advance of your desired start date. The placement may take less time than this, but we want to ensure that we have enough time to find a great placement for you! There are additional administrative fees if you apply less than 12 weeks in advanced, and we do not contact our local partners until we receive at least 50% of the program fee payment.

6) *What should I wear and bring to Thailand?*

Depending on the time of year and location of your placement, you will need to dress accordingly. Since space is limited at volunteer sites, we ask that you keep your luggage to a minimum. We strongly recommend safety work boots with protective toe caps, and clothes that are loose and comfortable that will also fight out the harsh sun rays. Please note that shopping in Thailand is a highlight for many participants, and clothes as well as other crafts are inexpensive and easily available. **Cultural Embrace** will provide you with more details in your **Cultural Embrace** pre-departure kit.

7) *Can I volunteer and/or live with a friend or partner?*

Yes, you can enroll in this program with other people, and we encourage it since it will enhance your experience and memories. Additionally, you will receive a discount for referring friends and family to join you on the same or other CE programs. Although you may state your preferences for shared housing, you will need to be flexible and respectful of local customs.

8) *When should I buy my plane ticket and does **Cultural Embrace** provide any resources to help with plane tickets?*

Plane tickets should not be purchased until after your placement has been confirmed. **Cultural Embrace** volunteers with consolidators and discount travel agencies that can help find cheaper tickets than those that are available to the general public.

9) *What do I do when I get to Thailand?*

Cultural Embrace will provide you with a handbook prior to your departure with the names and contact information of your local representative, company, and other useful resources for your time in Thailand. You will be picked up from the airport on a Sunday, and transferred to the orientation home, located in Singburi (outside of Bangkok). You will attend a week-long orientation at this site, with more specific details of what to expect at the other locations you opt for. If you plan to arrive earlier than the program start dates and need assistance in Bangkok, please contact your CE coordinator, and we will assist you with more local options. Additionally, you will have an on-site local supervisor for any questions.

10) *What do I do if I have a problem or complaint within my volunteer placement?*

You must speak to your local bi-lingual volunteer coordinator or representative to give

them an opportunity to explain or investigate the situation. If the complaint still exists, please let **Cultural Embrace** (Austin office) know so we can mediate on your behalf.

*11) Why should I pay to volunteer abroad, and where does my money go to with **Cultural Embrace**?*

Cultural Embrace and our local partners in Thailand specialize in arranging a guaranteed volunteer placement, housing and insurance prior to your departure. This will alleviate the troubles and stress of getting everything organized in a new country, so you will have more time and energy to spend on your internship and living abroad. Your time abroad will still be an independent and memorable one, but we are here to guide you to a safe, healthy and comfortable experience before, during, and after your adventure.

Your program fee includes your customized volunteer placement, comfortable, clean, and safe accommodations with all meals, comprehensive international traveler's health insurance, orientation, training, cultural activities and excursions, and all of the administrative and logistical costs to set up your placement in the States and Thailand. **Cultural Embrace** also pro-rates the expenses for marketing, advertising, and site visits/communication among all of our programs within our fees.

For any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at info@culturalembbrace.com or you can call us at 1-512-469-9089 or 1-888-214-8570 (US/Canada toll-free)

*Discover the Similarities. . .
Share the Differences. . .*