

Chiang Mai: These Amazing Elephant Camps Await Your Visit



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One of the main attractions in Thailand is the elephants! It's a once in a lifetime experience which includes caring for the elephants, learning about them, bonding with them, feeding them, and even bathing them. A visit to an elephant camp includes much more than simply riding an elephant around and you'll be doing yourselves a huge favor by placing it on your bucket list.

Below are seven of the best elephant camps for you:

Patara Elephant Camp

This is the camp that needs your visit – even if you can only manage to squeeze Chiang Mai in for a day! The main factor behind this amazing initiative is the fact that Patara rescues adult elephants and rehabilitates them for natural breeding as well as into potential parents.

The camp has previously been private focusing solely on the elephants but has now allowed only 12 people per day (2 groups of 6 each) inside its sanctum. The program is called the “Elephant Owner for a

day” so everyone gets one elephant. And in case an elephant is in a bad mood or sick, there are others to allow for a wonderfully unique experience in a very non-zoo atmosphere.

You’ll ride bareback on your elephant through the plantations – a 45-minute hike on your elephant for the day, followed by an old rustic lunch in traditional Thai cuisine, feeding your elephants, and then off again to a beautiful waterfall to bathe your elephant and onwards to home! It costs just 5,800 Baht for the full-day program and the money is surely well spent.

The Four Seasons Triangular Tented Camp

For the luxury lovers amongst us, the Tented Elephants Camp is the most amazing experience out there. You get to stay in luxurious tree houses and step out onto the back of your elephant to go anywhere. However, the price is steep at 80,000 Baht a night (that’s \$2,500) but that’s the price of luxury the elephant way! Upon arrival, you’ll be floated to the tree house via traditional Thai raft made up of bamboo sticks. The tree houses are made of carved wood with a beautiful waterfall style shower outdoors. The site is complete with camp-owned jungle pools as well as a spa!

Elephant Nature Park

Here’s the beauty of this camp: it lets you volunteer for your preferred number of days – anything from a day to seven days! Due to this, Elephant Nature Park was featured on National Geographic channel as well. You don’t get to ride the elephants, though; you get to feed, train, bathe, and even clean the elephants and grounds! Many times, more than five people are assigned to a single elephant. This means that you don’t have to worry about handling an elephant as it’s not as hard as it sounds!

Thai Elephants Conservation Center

Focusing more towards the traditional roles of elephants in the Thai lifestyle, the Elephant Conservation Center is doing an amazing job. The day tour includes a morning swim followed by lunch and elephant “me time.” Then the tourists go for a tour of the forest followed by a longer bath. There are also 10-day long stay programs making it easier for those who want more time with the elephants. Interestingly, they highlight the traditional use of elephants along with the Elephants hospital which is responsible for the rehabilitation of many elephants.

Chai Lai Orchids Elephant Camp

For an authentic eco-friendly resort experience, the Chai Lai Orchids Camp is your best option. It offers an amazing elephant experience such as feeding, washing, and riding along with an overnight stay at a private yurt. Besides this, you can make the most of the bamboo raft river trips while also preserving memories by visiting the Tiger Kingdom. The camp supports the local villages via many avenues – hiring the villagers for jobs, supporting the women via Daughters Rising as well as providing tourists the option to stay with the tribe in their 2-10 day packages!

Baanchang Elephant Park

Day programs at Baanchang Park are based on small groups that ride bareback while spending time understanding the elephants. The overnight program is available for five people only. It lasts from a day to three days. The unique aspect is the nursing program that enables you to take care of elephants – but please note that this program doesn't offer elephant-riding. The only reason some people are wary of the Baanchang Elephant Park is the fact that it keeps elephants inside wooden pens which many of the other parks have now stopped doing.

The gentle creature that is the elephant is meant to be enjoyed at a luxurious slower pace. These camps ensure that you have the opportunity to slow down and enjoy life with the elephants providing you with a once in a lifetime experience that will surely wow others. Of course, who doesn't want to feel the inner happiness they get while caring for elephants?! Visit an elephant camp and feel great to contribute to the well-being of animals as friendly as elephants!

Ran-Tong

Ran-Tong is more suited for tourists who are looking for shorter programs such as half or full-day programs. It only does bareback riding – no wooden planks or seats tied to elephants at all.

So, Which Elephant Camp Attracts You The Most?

All seven of these camps provide a safe haven for elephants. This means that the rule protects them from potential life threatening issues by not indulging in over-zealous riding while ensuring that only bare back riding takes place. These camps have provided a way for elephants to be rehabilitated and ensure that the species is well taken care of.

When choosing a group tour operator, inquire if they help you visit these elephant camps while ensuring that they treat those elephants exactly the way these friendly animals deserve to be treated and cared for. So if you have the love for elephants, elephant camps should be a must-visit place in your travel list.