



SMILING
ALBINO



THAILAND

FEATURED EXPERIENCES

BANGKOK, KHAO YAI, CHIANG MAI,
CHIANG RAI, PHUKET



AFTER HOURS ACCESS TO RECLINING BUDDHA AT WAT PHO

Wat Pho, also known as The Temple of the Reclining Buddha, is a must-visit for travelers to Thailand. One of the country's most revered temples and the birthplace of Thai massage, the complex is widely known for its pavilion that houses the Reclining Buddha.

This, however, isn't any visit. Avoiding the crowds, we head to Wat Pho after the doors close for a special exclusive-access visit. Just as the lights turn on for the evening you find yourself alone at Wat Pho - a magical moment. With the pavilion to yourself, your guide will share with you the history of the Buddha and the temple without distraction.



ABOUT DANIEL FRASER

In addition to being Smiling Albino's Co-Founder & CEO, Daniel is an all-around Thailand expert. A natural host, Daniel's energy, fluency in the Thai language, local friendships and in-depth destination knowledge have since made Daniel one of Thailand's - and Southeast Asia's - most recognized travel authorities and personalities.

HEADLIGHTS ADVENTURE WITH LOCAL EXPERT, DANIEL FRASER

We combine this special access with a night on the town in Bangkok, led by cultural expert Daniel Fraser, who will share some of the city's secluded haunts and lead guests on a street food crawl through the back alleys of Chinatown.

A signature Smiling Albino experience, Headlights guides you through Bangkok from a local perspective - getting to see a side of the city that most locals and long-time residents barely know.



PRIVATE ACCESS TO GOLDEN MOUNT TEMPLE AND PRIVATE MONK BLESSING CEREMONY

Our day in Bangkok will begin with an early morning pick up from your hotel, and followed by a drive to the iconic Golden Mount Temple. We will have the temple grounds all to ourselves as we arrive before it officially opens to the public.

Wat Saket, also known as the Golden Mount Temple, is one of Bangkok's most unique temples. Originally built just beyond the city walls of the Old City over 200 years ago, Wat Saket's gilded stupa is perched on top of an artificial mountain which offers amazing panoramic views of the city. The temple's design, atop a hill with surrounding forests and water, is meant to reflect a microcosm of the heavens in traditional Thai cosmology.

This will be a great experience to learn about the intersection of religion and everyday life in Thailand, as well as Buddhist cosmology and architecture. We will arrange to meet some of the resident monks who will perform a private blessing ceremony.

We can elevate this experience to include private access to Wat Saket and Creative District Walk with Smiling Albino art and culture expert, David Robinson.



ABOUT DAVID ROBINSON

David leads Bangkok River Partners, a business collaborative formed to promote the Chao Phraya River for leisure and tourism. David is also a co-founder of Creative District Foundation, a non-profit catalyst for property preservation, creative livelihoods and environmental improvement in the riverside districts of Bang Rak and Klongsan.



A PERSONALIZED DAY WITH ART & TEXTILES EXPERT, JOE CUMMINGS

Joe Cummings, a Thai culture expert with a focus on arts and textiles is one of Bangkok's most prominent residents and hosts, having shown the city to celebrities including Mick Jagger and Steven Tyler.

As the author of more than 40 books on Southeast Asian art, history, design and culture, with a degree in Asian Art History and Thai Language, Joe has called Thailand home for more than 25 years, enabling him to share a fascinating personal introduction to the elaborate and ornate art form that is the Thai temple.

Joe is also an expert on the topic of magic and mastery of Thai sacred tattoos, Sak Yant. For guests interested in this unique Thai art, we are able to arrange personalized trips to renowned Sak Yant artists, accompanied by Joe.



Joe is a good fit for clients that are artsy, intellectual, or guests who are hippies at heart. He has hosted a variety of guests looking for artisanal things, textiles, easel painting, woodwork, unique tribal art and more.

STREET LEVEL EXPLORATION WITH THAI ART & CULTURE EXPERT, PHILIP CORNWEL-SMITH

Philip Cornwel-Smith is a longtime Bangkok resident, former magazine editor, author, and expert on Thai culture, design and style.

Over coffee, join Philip Cornwel-Smith, as he spends roughly an hour introducing you to his top-selling book, Very Thai, which explores a wide range of elements of Thai culture and life. The book has been translated into several languages and is a regular go-to source for all things Thai culture and style. His second book, Very Bangkok: In the City of the Senses, was published in early 2020.

Depending on specific interests Philip may take guests to art galleries, quirky shops or weekend design markets, to explore elements of the Very Thai book at 'street level'. Indulge at one of Philip's favorite restaurants for dinner.



Philip will 'school' guests on elements of his books live, as they are experienced on the street while out exploring the city. This is a rare opportunity for a real insider's look at the City of Angels.





WATER LIMOUSINE CRUISE IN BANGKOK AND PRIVATE TRADITIONAL WATER PUPPET SHOW

Discover the original Bangkok riverside neighbourhoods which are the foundation of the city's early development. Chinese, Portuguese, Muslim and European influences blend with Thai communities along Bangkok's famous Chao Phraya River.

Using the waterway as our launch point, we'll walk in the steps of early Bangkok merchants, exploring the architecture, neighborhood mercantile and commercial identities, as well as significant temples well off the usual beaten track. Several boat starts and stops take us through Thonburi, Thailand's capital between the Ayutthaya and Bangkok periods, visiting old artisan villages, markets and art communities.

The trip will culminate with a private lunch and traditional Thai shadow puppet performance at the so-called Artist's House, located in a Thai-style wooden house right along one of the canals. The highly-acclaimed performers will enact a famous story from the Hindu epic, Ramaya.



EXCLUSIVE AYUTTHAYA

Board a private luxury rice barge and head three hours north of Bangkok to the ancient capital of Ayutthaya.

En route stop at notable locations, including the pottery island of Ko Kred, the royal summer palace of Bang Pa-In, and the Royal Arts Centre at Bang Sai.

The ancient Siamese capital of Ayutthaya was the crowning glory of the kingdom for hundreds of years. Though the city was all but completely destroyed by a Burmese army in 1767, a vast array of temple ruins (some beautifully restored, others still dilapidated) remain scattered across the artificial island wedged between two rivers which once housed one of the most prosperous cities in Asia.

Make your way back to Bangkok via private van.



CYCLING BANGKOK'S "GREEN LUNG" WITH EXPERT URBAN CYCLIST

Explore the hidden jungles of Bangkok on a cycling adventure into the inner city oasis of Bang Krachao. Reached by boat or bridge, this island is often referred to as the "green lung" of Bangkok. A quaint law of allowing no buildings taller than a coconut palm tree have kept property developers at bay.

We'll explore the nature, villages, temples and markets of this laid-back island at a leisurely pace, stopping occasionally to try new tastes, discover artisanal endeavors or if we're lucky, to catch a glimpse of a kingfisher perched in the trees.

The cycling is flat along small paved roads and raised concrete pathways through the cool, green mangroves. This is a perfect day for those who want some light activity and are in search of the hidden secrets of Thailand's biggest city.



MEET YOUR HOST, TEE

Tee is one of Thailand's top amateur cyclists, having won competitions and known for logging hundreds of kilometres on his regular explorations of new trails and routes. Tee has also previously been awarded Guide Award from the Tourism Authority of Thailand in 2008.





MUAY THAI DAY & NIGHT

Today we'll merge the ultimate in Thai sport, relaxation and entertainment. Liberate your energy in a private Muay Thai boxing ring at the gorgeous The Siam Hotel where an experienced pro fighter will teach you ancient techniques in a one-of-a-kind master class. Don your authentic Muay Thai shorts and knuckle straps and your Muay Thai trainer will help you release stress. Today's class will be full of sweat and smiles for students of all skill levels. You'll learn how to strike, kick, punch and elbow like the pros.

Post-training, soothe your tired limbs at The Siam's Opium Spa with an herbal steam followed by a signature 90-minute Muay Thai massage. Then, freshen up and enjoy dinner at the hotel's excellent restaurant or let us take you on a street food safari in Bangkok's old town.

This evening, soak up the electrifying atmosphere watching the professionals fight from ringside seats at Ratchadamnoen Stadium.

Want to heighten the experience: This evening can be enhanced with an introduction to and the (translated) commentary of a retired fighter.



Welcome to the jungle! Located just 3 hours from Bangkok, Khao Yai National Park feels a world away from the big city.

The area is well known for its:

- Trekking & Cycling
- Wildlife & Nature
- Vineyards (yes, vineyards in Thailand!)
- Eco-practices and sustainability, particularly farming

Smiling Albino has been working closely with the local community in Khao Yai and has partnered with a local NGO to deliver exceptional experiences.

Some of our immersive, community-based experiences include:

Khao Yai Life & Legends

Merit making, cycle a local community, private lunch at an organic farm

Wildlife Spotting after Dusk

Join an experienced park ranger and local expert to track local wildlife after the sun sets

Flight of the Bats at Dusk

Watch millions of bat fly at dusk for their nightly feeding with wine and canapes as the sun sets



ETHICAL FASHION & ECO TEXTILES WITH A LOCAL EXPERT

Located in Chiang Mai, Studio Naenna is a community of women weavers, embroiderers, and designers from various ethnic groups around Chiang Mai that create high quality, environmentally friendly and sustainable fabric products.

The aim is to encourage pride in traditional techniques and empower women within their villages. Studio Naena was founded by Patricia Cheesman, renowned textile expert, author, and long-term resident of Chiang Mai. Her and her daughter Lamorna offer fantastic workshops aimed at building an appreciation for northern Thai textiles in a hands-on and engaging way.

Visit the studio with Patricia for a hands-on experience and private learning session to learn about the studio, its meaningful work and also participate in a dying session of your own.

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PEDALING & KAYAKING THE PING WITH WINE & CHEESE SURPRISE

Get ready for a great day in the saddle! The perfect sequel after exploring the vibrancy of Chiang Mai city is a two-wheeled adventure exploring the gorgeous surrounding countryside. Today's ride sweeps through the communities and great outdoors of the Mae Rim valley along the Ping River north of Chiang Mai City. We'll cycle mostly flat roads with mild hills, through rice paddies and lush valleys while viewing wonderful mountain landscapes.

After a satisfying local northern Thai lunch, we'll hop in a kayak and paddle down the river and enjoy the jungle and riverside life as it sweeps by.

Midway during the kayaking our host will guide us to a break area filled with local vegetation. While taking a short break, a bamboo raft fitted with seats, sparkling wine, beer, fruit juice, drinking water, cheese and seasonal fruits will meet us along the river.

Once the guests return to their kayak, we'll offer them to board the raft to enjoy their moment while cruising slowly or continue to kayaking if they wish. Our raft will follow them all along, and acts as a mobile minibar should they prefer any drinks.



EXTRAORDINARY ROAD TRIP FROM CHIANG MAI TO CHIANG RAI

Today we'll drive to Chiang Rai via the scenic route through Fang town. The trip takes about five hours, but we'll break it up with some memorable experiences. This will be no ordinary travel day and no ordinary meal.

We will take the most scenic route, driving along the winding roads that straddle the Thai-Myanmar border. After around three hours we will stop for a special hilltribe jungle lunch.

Taking a short, but worthwhile, detour off the main road, we'll head up to a Lahu hilltribe village where you will enjoy a traditionally prepared meal ingredients are procured locally and made and eaten using bamboo vessels and utensils created on the spot!).

We take a stroll through the village and learn about Lahu ways of life before continuing the picturesque journey east towards Chiang Rai.

Before reaching your hotel, we can stop at some other locations along the way, such as the stunning Wat Tha Ton temple, with a view that stretches deep into Myanmar!



PRIVATE ELEPHANT EXPERIENCE WITH AN EXPERT AT FOUR SEASONS GOLDEN TRIANGLE

Interact and get comfortable with these gentle giants in their own natural habitat. The Four Seasons camp has its own Asian elephants, with training taught by a team of experienced mahouts. As you learn to interact with these magnificent animals, you will discover the unique personality of your elephant, which can range from the brightly curious to the gently mischievous. Then, embark on an exploration of the jungle wilderness, wherein you guide your elephant with your newly acquired skills!

Your elephant's mahout will be by your side the entire time. Guests who are interested in the customary daybreak ritual are invited to join the mahouts as they bathe the elephants in the river or pond, getting them ready for trekking.

Spending time with these kind, majestic creatures leaves a lasting impression on everyone—yet, each guest's experience is different. For some, it is an incredible adventure; for others, the interaction is spiritual and transformative; for yet others, it results in unforgettable friendships. We invite you to create your very own elephant experience.



HIKING THE HILLS OF DOI MAE SALONG

Today we'll drive to one of the Kingdom's most stunning destinations – Doi Mae Salong. This dramatic mountain region was settled first by indigenous hilltribe groups such as the Ahka and Lahu peoples, and more recently by Chinese settlers who fled the Communist Revolution in China in 1949. We'll drive up and over spectacular jungle-covered mountains enroute to this highland retreat. Hiking anyone?

We'll arrive early enough for a nice nature hike through terraced tea and rice plantations, taking in hill tribe villages and rolling mountains around the Doi Mae Salong area. By noon we will have certainly built up an appetite and we will treat ourselves to some delicious southern Chinese (Yunnanese) food for which the village of Doi Mae Salong is renowned.

Doi Mae Salong is also home to Thailand's premier Oolong tea production. We will have a tea tasting set up to try some of the many varieties and learn all about the process and importance of tea growing in Northern Thailand.



COOKING CLASS WITH CHEF PUI AND PHUKET OLD TOWN DISCOVERY

Chef Pui has spent her whole life learning about Thai cuisine, first from her mother and grandmother and then from the top Thai chefs. She graduated from the renowned Le Cordon Bleu Dusit Academy in Bangkok top of her class. She now runs Brass Wok, Phuket's premier Thai Cooking school, where you will enjoy an exclusive cooking class led by Pui.

Afterwards we will take you on a ramble through Phuket's old town.

Phuket Town was the hub of the 19th Century tin trade in Southeast Asia, which brought Hokkien and Hakka Chinese traders, merchants from Malaysia and India, as well as Europeans to get in on the take. The town's ethnic and religious diversity has created a fascinating culture of unique local beliefs, architecture, cuisine, art and lifestyle.



PRIVATE CHARTER AROUND PHANG NGA BAY

Today we'll charter one of Phuket's most exciting and stylish contemporary luxury yachts and cruise into the picturesque seascape of Phang Nga Bay.

We arrive at the labyrinthine of Hong Yai, an area surrounded by dense mangroves that protect a surrounding ecosystem. After a pro briefing from our sea kayaking team, we launch into the waiting kayaks to paddle through the mangroves. Our local marine expert narrates the scenes of local ecology and wildlife of the area, in our own oasis away from the crowds.

We'll be accompanied by the expert sea explorers of John Gray's Sea Canoe and discover some secluded lagoons and beaches via kayak. We'll have lunch privately arranged on a sandy beach far away from any other souls.





THE SMILING ALBINO DIFFERENCE

AT SMILING ALBINO WE DON'T JUST CONNECT THE DOTS, WE CREATE THEM, AND DELIVER UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES.

We understand implicitly that a perfect adventure is much more than nice hotels, great meals and hassle-free logistics. For a travel experience to be perfect, all pieces must work together like a symphony. It is the fine details which our guests appreciate most, like cold face towels after a hike, electrolyte beverages for your day cycling, and wine uncorked when the moment is right. From local maps to bottled water and colorful anecdotes on the areas we visit, a Smiling Albino adventure is a thorough, intimately hosted experience.

You will be treated with executive care during your Smiling Albino adventure. We look forward to hosting you!

mahouts@smilingalbino.com | www.smilingalbino.com

@smilingalbino

