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Elephant Hills Luxury Rainforest Camp Khao Sok Thailand

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Your experience with Elephant Hills begins the moment you see your name being held up by your driver. Elephant Hills provides complimentary transport to all customers from several key points in the region. Mine was Surat Thani Train station. About 1.5 hours from the camp. As you travel through this beautiful region of Thailand, you quickly realize you've left behind the hustle of Bangkok or touristic resorts of the Thai islands. You're entering into an entirely different eco system which is truly something to behold.

As you pass through the elephant emblazoned gates, a sense of solitude washes over you. Elephant Hills Rainforest Camp is truly an oasis. The sweet smell of incense fills the air as guests are serenaded by native birds in the distance. An imposing mountain range watches over you as the staff introduces guests to this impressive park in Khao Sok Thailand. For the next three days you're treated to a truly unique and life-changing experience. Here's my wonderful Experience Elephant Hills Rainforest Camp.

DAY 1: CANOE SAFARI DOWN SOK RIVER AND ELEPHANT EXPERIENCE

Tent Move In and Lunch

Upon arrival we were given some conduct and insurance forms to look over and fill out. Standard hotel stuff. We were then shown the grounds and our tents by individual tents. Which I found was a nice touch. It gave us a chance to chat a bit with our guide. After settling in for a couple hours we heard the lunch bell sounding.



Lunch consisted of an assortment of fruits and Thai dishes. One thing bothered me personally. The dishes that were usually spicy were definitely toned down to a western palette. I totally understand why they did it, but I don't come to Thailand to taste food like it is at home. All in all though, very good lunch. After lunch it's canoe time.

Canoe Trip

After a short break we were ushered to the Sok River where canoes and paddlemen were waiting. All guest are given life vest and let in the capable hands of experienced river guides. As we glided effortlessly down the river, pass Limestone mountains and lush tropical vegetation, our guides pointed out several local animals. Quite impressive given how well hidden these creatures were. After a bit over a hour, we are taken to shore where a truck awaits to drive us to visit the Elephants.



Note: PLEASE tip your Paddlemen. These guys more than earn it but won't ask.



Elephant Experience

After a small snack provided by Elephant Hills, we head over to their amazing elephant sanctuary. Take a look at my previous coverage of this phenomenal experience.

<http://minoritynomad.com/elephant-experience-elephant-hills-thailand/>

Little could prepare us for what was in store. All of us came away from this experience with bigger hearts and personally, I've vowed to ensure the welfare of elephants in any way I can. Wait until you meet their baby Elephant named HA-HA. Pure joy.



Thai movie presentation, Dance, and Cooking Demonstration

I was a bit drained after such an eventful morning. Luckily, Elephant Hills gave us quite a bit of time to relax at the Main Camp before evening festivities began. Some guest attended the movie presentation, while others, like myself, rested a bit longer. I arrived near the end of the film and just in time to see the adorable dancers. Through this dance program, Elephant Hills supports three schools in the area. Wat Tham Wararam, Baan Bang Pru and Baan Yaa Phlong School. Elephant Hills consults with each schools headmaster on their needs and tries to provide them. Over the last few years they have built a library, a playground, installed water filter systems, bought an internet connection & computers as well as lots of classroom stationary, sports equipment and music instruments for the students. The traditional Thai dances these students perform shine a light on Thai culture as well as reminds us of the importance of properties being involved in sustainable programs in their own communities. After the dancing we were treated to a cooking demonstration by a local chef.



Our guide and the chef prepared Som Tam (Green Papaya Salad) and sate skewers. Two of my favorite dishes. Once finished guest were not only given samples of the finished product but served dinner immediately as well. After dinner guest were free to have drinks at the bar or retire to our tents. I chose the later as I knew Day 2 would be something grand.



DAY 2: MARKET VISIT, CHEOW-LAN LAKE CRUISE, AND RAINFOREST HIKE



Begins around 9am. After a delicious buffet breakfast we loaded all of our luggage into a bus and headed off for a day of sightseeing. The first stop is a small market in a local town. Nothing special but is a decent introduction into everyday Thai life. Visiting the local market is a daily occurrence in Thailand.



Visiting Praphaphirom View Point

We were then taken to see Cheow-Lan-Lake which is also known as Rajjaprabha Dam Reservoir. We visited a beautiful overlook which offered a full view of the Dam and Reservoir. The lake is an 64 sq mi artificial lake, created in 1982 by the construction of Rajjaprapha Dam. This project is unique because it not only was one of the largest in SEA at the time, but required a massive relocation of 385 families and local farmers. One village is fairly well preserved under water and is frequented by divers. After taking in the views we all boarded a long tail boat to the Rainforest floating camp.



Cruising the Cheow-Lan Lake

Long tails are a fun way to see rivers and lakes in Thailand. A highly recommended experience. You can sit back and enjoy the Cheow-Lan Lake tour for a couple hours while listening to the local Gibbon calls and observing the massive limestone mountains which now make up this man made wonders boundaries.

The Floating Rainforest Camp

Personally, I haven't seen anything like the Elephant Hills Rainforest Camp. Only descendants of original inhabitants of Cheow Lan village and officials of the national park are allowed licenses to own and operate these bungalows and for good reason. What makes these place so special is their solitude, with only 17 camps operating today. Elephant Hills has ten tents connected to a main housing. The tents are almost identical to what we had at the main camp. Did I mention their free floating on the lake?



The entire complex is solar powered with each tent responsible for their own consumption and charging. We also received a private Canoe to explore the area in. After a 1pm lunch Elephant Hills outstanding guides take guest on a Jungle Trek in the area surrounding the camp. Although it was pouring rain during my stay, the professionalism and positive spirits of our guides made the experience special. After a rain soaked trek, we had the rest of the night to enjoy the quiet surroundings of Cheow-Lan. One final thing, there is NO internet or cell service. This is one of the few times I was perfectly content with this fact. Complete isolation and solitude.

NOTE: Children under 7 years old are not allowed to stay overnight at the floating camp. Families are able to visit and enjoy the facilities and area but must leave for the main camp later.



DAY 3: GIBBON WATCHING, CANOEING, AND DEPARTURE

Gibbon Watching and Canoeing

After what was possibly the best night of sleep I had in Thailand, it was time to tour the lake after breakfast. Accompanied by two guides we were shown three families of Gibbons and a group of monkeys. All freely playing and interacting on the rainforest surrounding the camp. We were free to explore on our own which several of us did.



Departure

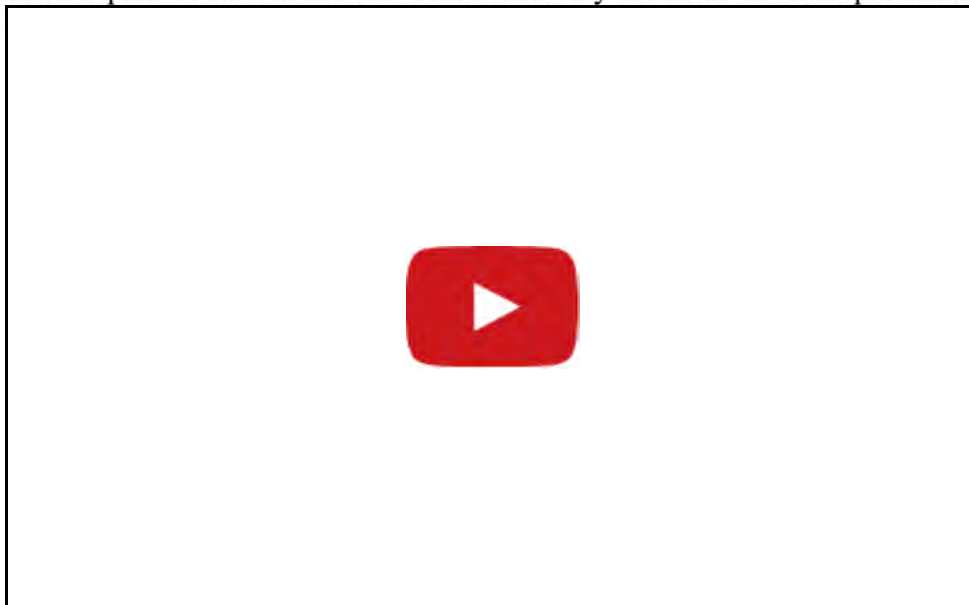
Unfortunately we had to check out at 12. Lunch was served shortly after and we boarded our boats back around 1pm. Elephant Hills provided return transportation to Surat Thani and Koh Samui for us. They have transport options for Phuket, Khao Lak, Krabi, and Phang Nga also.



OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

I'll begin by saying some activities at Elephant Hills aren't going to be for everyone. But they offer such a variety of activities that if you enjoy the outdoors then you'll have plenty of options. I especially want to congratulate Elephant Hills on their responsible tourism push. Too often, companies lose sight of the importance of maintaining the communities and environment which they benefit from.

Elephant Hills prides itself on providing guest with a unique experience, great fiscal value, and outstanding customer service. All of these things were accomplished and more. Special thanks to our guides, Tik and Bua. These two young women LITERALLY took us by the hand and guided us through this experience. The Elephant Hills staff and Mahouts are truly the stars of this experience.



This experience brought to you by [Elephant Hills](#)

Erick Prince-Heaggans is the creative force behind MinorityNomad.com. After visiting 71 countries, on five continents, Erick still has a passion for exploration and travel that he wants to share with you. He believes that true self-actualization can only be achieved by challenging what you have come to believe. And that travel is the perfect catalyst for personal growth and change.

Erick focuses primarily on travel access for low income students and cross cultural exploration. He has written for such publications as Yahoo Travel, US Weekly, and the Daily Texan.



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