Overview
This unique tour of Thailand's rural north is an 8-day adventure into the region's remote hill tribe communities. The north of Thailand is a wild frontier that stands in stark contrast to the popular beaches of the south and the bustle of Bangkok. Setting out from the beautiful city of Chiang Mai, we will travel through the country's magnificent mountainous jungle regions where you will visit ethnic minority artisans to learn about their textiles, traditional dress and way of life. You will participate in cultural textile workshops including: batik with the Hmong; applique with the Akha; fabric manipulation with the Lisu; back strap weaving and embellishment with the Dara-ang.

Please note that there are only 8 places available and this is a women’s only tour. This tour’s on-ground operations and logistics will be managed by our partner Local Alike.
Location
The tour begins and ends in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The nearest international airport is Chiang Mai International Airport CNX. Flights are not included in this tour. From Chiang Mai the group will travel to villages surrounding Chiang Mai, Thaton and Chiang Rai, before returning to Chiang Mai city.

Price and Payment structure
The tour price is £1800 GBP for 8-nights in a shared room. Single person occupancy can be purchased for an additional £330 but this fee does not include the nights you will spend in shared rooms at the homestays.

Option 1: Email subscribers that pay their non-refundable deposit of £500 GBP during the early bird discount period from 11th July - 10th August 2019 will be entitled to a 10% discount off the total tour price.

Option 2: Email subscribers that pay their non-refundable deposit of £500 GBP after the 10th of August 2019 will be entitled to a 5% discount off the total tour price.

Please note: The non-refundable deposit of £500 and your signed booking form are required together in order to secure your place. The full balance of the tour must be paid before August 14th 2019, which is ninety days before the tour’s start date. We require all the participant’s funds to clear in order to confirm that the tour will go ahead as planned. All payments made on or
after August 14th 2019 are non-refundable unless Haute Culture cancels the tour, in which case you would receive a full refund. Should you decide after August 14th 2019 that you no longer wish to join the tour, your full tour fee will be forfeit as all funds are used to pay for tour operation services after this date. Clients wishing to sign up for the tour after the 90 days payment deadline must pay the full balance at the time of the booking which will be non-refundable. *Any additional bank and/or PayPal fees will be billed separately as many of our clients live in different countries and these fees can vary greatly. If any of this information is unclear to you please email us before booking your place.

How to book your place
Please click this link to download the booking form which contains information on how to pay your deposit.

Accommodation
We will be staying 5 nights in hotel accommodation and 3 nights in local village homestays. Please click the links in the day by day itinerary below to view the hotel's individual websites and see if this style of accommodation is suitable for you.

We love to stay in places that exhibit a country's character and charm. All the guest houses and hotels that we choose have a more traditional feel to them. We believe that although accommodation is an important element to every excursion we plan, it should not be the primary financial expense of our tours. Participants that do not book together and have in shared rooms will be rotated with different room partners every time we move hotels; that way everyone gets the opportunity to share with each other.

What’s included

- Overland transportation in a comfortable air-conditioned minibus.
- Accommodation is 5 nights in 3-star hotels and 3 nights in traditional village homestays.
- 8 breakfasts, 6 lunches and 5 dinners are included. The food is a combination of traditional Thai seasonal cuisine and local village food with simple vegan and vegetarian options available. Drinking water is included during meal times.
- Workshops, demonstrations and all materials for batik, embellishment, weaving, and applique.
- Tickets and entrance fees into museums and other sites listed in the itinerary.
- Expert and experienced local and international guides.
- Haute Culture’s Thailand travel journal including step-by-step instructions for each textile workshop.
- £90 donation towards our social enterprise textile projects in Thailand. Click here to read more about these.

What’s not included

- International or national airfare
- Travel Insurance (which is compulsory)
Day 1, Tuesday 12th November: Arrival day in Chiang Mai (meals included: Dinner)
All guests must arrive at BanThai Village hotel in Chiang Mai by 2pm. After checking into our
rooms we will enjoy a few welcome drinks over the group member introductions before our team
will present a brief overview of the activities coming up in the itinerary. Late-afternoon we head
out for an orientation tour of Chiang Mai’s charismatic walled city and finish the day with an
early welcome dinner at our favourite restaurant.

Day 2, Wednesday 13th November: Explore Chiang Mai’s museums and Markets (B, L)
Spend the morning exploring the Tribal Museum in Chiang Mai where you will receive a guided
tour on Thailand’s Hill Tribe cultures and their textiles. After a group lunch we’ll be taking you to
Warorot and the Hmong market for a spot of textile shopping before heading up to the
mountain to Wat Phra That Doi Suthep to enjoy the spectacular views at sunset. In the evening
Loi Krathong festival will be in full swing all over the city. During this colourful celebration, known
as ‘the festival of light,’ the city, its waterways and the sky is filled with candle lit lanterns carrying
wishes and prayers of gratitude. This beautiful festival marks the end of the rainy season and
pays homage to the Thai Goddess of water, Phra Mae Khongkha.

Day 3, Thursday 14th November: Weaving with the Dara-ang (B, L, D)
After breakfast we transfer to the pretty village of Ban Mae Chon in Chiang Dao province. The
drive time is around 3 hours depending on traffic. There we will meet a fabulous community of
weavers from the Dara-ang ethnic group and participate in our first workshop of the tour: back
strap weaving your own bag. After dinner with our artisans around the bonfire and under the
starry sky, we will also enjoy our first homestay experience. The group will sleep together in a
simple but solid and well-suited bamboo barn. Individual mattresses, sleeping bags, pillows and
mosquito nets will be provided.
**Day 4, Friday 15th November : Learning with the Lisu (B, L)**
After breakfast the group will have time to enjoy a relaxed morning in the village or finish your bags Dara-ang style by adding various embellishments. After lunch we transfer to a Lisu village close by to learn about the evolution of their traditional dress and see how they construct one of the most popular fabrics seen throughout Thailand, by hand. In the mid-afternoon we will transfer to [Maekok River Village Resort](#), around 3 hours away, where we will spend the night.

**Day 5, Saturday 16th November : Applique and couching with the Akha (B, L, D)**
Enjoy some downtime in the morning by hanging at the river, the pool or in the hotel’s beautiful gardens. After check-out the group will transfer to an Akha village on the outskirts of Chiang Rai city, around 2 hours away. There, we will spend the following 2 nights at [Armue’s Homestay](#). After lunch, the Akha artisans will come over to introduce all the different features and textile techniques used in their unique traditional dress before we begin the applique and couching workshop. After dinner, the evening is yours to relax or explore the village at your leisure.

**Day 6, Sunday 17th November : Akha continued (B, L, D)**
After breakfast the group will depart on a nature walk to a local waterfall and swimming pool where we can take a refreshing dip or just explore the surrounding foot paths for a few hours. Later that afternoon we will participate in our second Akha workshop using embellishment techniques derived from their traditional headdress to make some unique jewellery. At night, we will again gather around a bonfire to enjoy a private performance from the local women’s choir, a tradition maintained in the village for special occasions.
Day 7, Monday 18th November : Temples and transfer (B)
After breakfast, the group will transfer to Chiang Rai city to see the famous landmark Wat Rong Khun, the White Temple, a stark but fascinating culture contrast from the quiet rural villages we will have been staying in. From here we transfer back to Chiang Mai city to Banthai Village Hotel, a 5 hour drive away, stopping off for lunch on route. Enjoy Saturday evening in Chiang Mai at your leisure.

Day 8, Tuesday 19th November : Hmong Heritage (B, L, D)
After breakfast we will head to the Hmong village of Ban Mae Sa Mai to attend a batik workshop using traditional techniques and motifs. After lunch with the artisans we will take a walk around the village to meet different members of the community and learn about the different projects in place to promote cultural and environmental sustainability. After transferring back to Chiang Mai city, the group will attend our final dinner together and share highlights of the experience.

Day 9, Wednesday 20th November : Farewell (B)
Enjoy a final group breakfast together, say our farewells and check out of the hotel. Return home or travel onwards to your next destination.

All items listed in the itinerary are subject to change.

Is a Haute Culture Textile Tour right for you?
So you love the brochure, our website and ethos? That’s awesome, but it’s really important to us that you are going to have a great time so please, before filling out the booking form, read the following posts by clicking the links below to make sure we are the right tour company for you so that this experience can meet your expectations and desires.

1. IS A HAUTE CULTURE TEXTILE TOUR RIGHT FOR YOU?
2. FAQ
3. WELCOME TO THAILAND
Preparing your visa
Your visa must be organised in advance of your departure to Thailand. Most airline operators will require to see a Thai visa in your passport (obtained by your country’s local Thai embassy) or an acceptance letter before they will let you board the flight. This process can be easily done online via ivisa.com depending on your nationality.

Flying to Thailand / Bangkok & Chiang Mai
There are many airline companies flying directly to Thailand. You can check this list on skyscanner for your reference. We suggest you fly in and out of Chiang Mai unless you wish to extend your stay past the specified dates of our tour. Participants of most nationalities will likely need to fly into Bangkok first and then transfer to Chiang Mai from there. You can also get the train to Chiang Mai from Bangkok, click here for details of train travel in Thailand. We request that participants do not book their flights until all the funds have been collected from all the participants and the tour has been confirmed, this will be around 85 days before departure.

The season
November marks the end of the rainy season in Chiang Mai and it is a very popular time to visit. This is due to the milder temperature and drop in humidity levels. At times it might be very busy. You should be in good physical shape and have a patient nature to enjoy this tour.

The weather
Chiang Mai is dry and hot at this time of year, but it can get colder in the evenings. The weather in the mountains can be unpredictable so it is a good idea to bring some clothes suitable for most climates.

Buying travel insurance
Travel insurance is compulsory on all Haute Culture tours. Participants must purchase insurance and send a copy of the policy document to us via email before the tour starts. We personally use and recommend worldnomads.com.

Packing for your adventure
No specialist sewing or hiking equipment is required. We will send out a packing list in advance of the tour which is full of advice and suggestions on what to bring.
About Our Thailand Guides

**Donna Bramhall: Founder of Haute Culture**

Originally from the UK, Donna has lived all over the world and worked in the fashion and textiles industry since the age of 15. Obsessed with all things colourful and patterned, and armed with degrees in both Fashion Knitwear Design and Life-Long Learning Education, Donna moved to Southeast Asia in 2013 after selling her vintage textiles business to work as a full-time fashion and textiles lecturer in Hanoi, Vietnam. Her curiosity, adventurous spirit and passion for cultural fashion have led her to travel Myanmar, Indonesia, Thailand, Japan, the Philippines, Taiwan, South Korea, Laos, Cambodia, Brazil, Peru, Mexico and Colombia in search of sewing stories and experiences to share with her readers at Hauteculturefashion.com

**Ja Thanasa: Tour Guide from Local Alike.**

Ja has been a guide since 2016. She loves to guide because she enjoys presenting her country to tourists and really enjoys meeting clients from all around the world. Her hobbies outside of work are swimming, singing, dancing, chatting and listening to music.
Thailand Participant Testimonials

Mimi Galvez, Production Manager, USA

“Every part of the textile tour in Thailand far exceeded my expectations. The home stays were my favorite part of the tour and helped us get to understand and collaborate with the artisans in their communities, allowing us to really study under them, and experience a small glimpse of their lives... I have gained so much more appreciation for artisan products that support communities such as these, after seeing all the time and effort it takes, plus the history behind each pattern, dying technique, weaving methods etc.... I highly recommend this tour for anyone who has been waiting for an opportunity to go on a textile adventure, exploring Thailand with a group of like minded women was such a wonderful experience.”

Brenda Sharpe, Textile Design Student, Australia

“I couldn’t have asked for a better tour leader or a better introduction to Thailand. Donna is well researched, ethical, organised, friendly, capable and very down to earth. I felt like I wasn’t on a prescriptive group tour, but rather getting together with a bunch of new friends to go explore and learn. I would definitely do a tour with Haute Culture again, it really is an amazing way to get to know a culture, and make new friends.

Highly recommended.”

Thanh Duong, house wife & textile enthusiast, Australia

“It was my first (very exciting) time visiting hill tribes and joining Haute Culture Textile Tours in Thailand 2018. I enjoyed visiting the friendly tribes and artisans in their homes and the home stays gave us a great insight in to their simple but happy lives. We have learnt different crafts such as batik with Hmong, backstrap weaving with Dara-Ang, applique and earring workshops using chicken feathers with Akha tribe, the red collar from Mien, and fabric folding with Lisu. I will never forget the welcoming smiles, the tribes performances by the bonfires, the beautiful, simple and tasty home cooked meals, and most of all the opportunity see all that beautiful nature. Thank you Donna for being a wonderful tour guide and taking care of us all. I had an amazing time.”
*Haute Culture Textile Tours is a women’s only tour company. This is due to the close proximity that our participants have to physically get to our artisans in order to learn textile techniques from them, 90% of these artisans are female. In many of the communities we visit it is not yet considered appropriate for local or foreign men to sit closer to women. Although the Frida and Folk Art Tour of Mexico City does not feature any of these communities we have decided as a company to continue to operate this way (for now) based on feedback from our previous clients that state one of the main highlights of the tour was the fact they got to spend quality time connecting with other like-minded women.

*Please Note: Although Paypal is considered one of the most reputable and convenient payment gateways, they can also charge the most fees. Because our clients join us from all over the world, fees can vary anywhere between 0-7% per transaction. Whilst we are happy to accept your payment in this way, we cannot cover the additional fees, this service charges us, or you. Haute Culture Textile Tours is a part-social enterprise company, this means that it is our ethos to make significant financial contributions to community projects with our artisans, therefore any additional charges and/or fees accrued by such services compromises our ability to do this. We hope that you understand why we have to pass this cost back to you. We can not advise you on how much an international bank transfer with your bank will cost. Please contact your bank in advance to find out this information.