

Day Nine: Chiang Mai – Elephant Camp



We had an early start because the elephant camp is a popular destination our guide wanted to be there first so we didn't have to wait in line. So we departed the hotel at 7.15am for the 40 minute ride to the camp.

The camp has 75 elephants including several babies of which the youngest is only 9 months old. Elephants have a 2 year pregnancy – wouldn't THAT suck, ladies?

Elephants also eat 650 lbs of food and drink 65 gallons of water a day! That makes for a lot of elephant poop! Elephants weight between 2 and 4 tons!

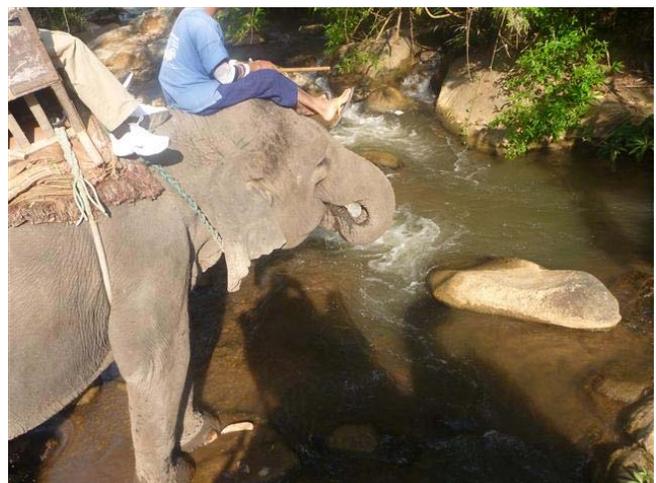


The trip started with an hour long ride on an elephant through the jungle, they've built a platform so they are easy to climb onto.

You sit 15 feet up in the air, but when that elephant takes a big step down a slope, you lean pretty far forward which makes it quite interesting.



We waded through a stream...



And the elephants got thirsty...



After the saddles were removed the elephants had to go for a bath and be cleaned.



They seemed to enjoy the bath a LOT!!



We were then treated to a show where the elephants performed a variety of very clever and funny tricks. There was no dialogue or explanation; it was all about the elephants.



The elephants even created paintings! The trainer would select the color and place the paint brush in their trunk. The elephant would paint perfectly, you could see the trainer guiding the elephant by tugging on its ear.



We then got to play with them up close.



And we got to feed the babies!!



The afternoon was spent pub crawling – first an American bar where we met some French guys to chat to.



Then a British bar where we met an Australian to chat to – we’re going back for lunch tomorrow because they have MEAT PIES!



On the way we saw these two monks carrying bowls. Well, here is how it works. First thing in the morning the junior monks take bowls out into the streets and people give them food and even sometimes money. This is how they live; they are supported by the community and are not paid a salary like Western ministers or pastors.

They then take the food back to the temple where all the monks live and share it with the other monks. They do this again at lunch time. Monks do not eat dinner. They also are only allowed to walk barefoot when they do this, other times they can wear sandals. Oh, by the way, they also roll “commando” (no underwear, HEHEHEHE!!).



Really???????



Barricades mean business!!!