

Elephant Trekking in Thailand

Within the first ten minutes at the elephant camp in Pattaya, Thailand, I felt it was just extraordinary. I led "my" elephant, Dokkoon, around a jungle path, telling her to come and stop in Thai. Actually, I may have been saying dog, my pronunciation of Thai being what it is, and the difference is small. The mahout or handler was patient and tolerant and maybe a bit amused. I climbed on Dakkoon for our trek. She stopped for a drink and splashed water all over herself. You can not imagine what it feels like to have an elephant squeeze your legs with it's ears! In the rain this morning, I carried a pink umbrella and felt like a raj.

I am here at the elephant rescue camp with my sister and nephews to learn about these gracious animals by caring for them. We feed, walk, bathe and yes, shovel up after them. I visit my elephant to rub her and adore her. Dakkoon means flower, she is 35 years old. I fed her baby-sized bananas, one at time. She will bow her head each time I give her a banana. Some of the elephants here at the elephant rescue camp are as old as ninety some are under a year. They have distinct personalities, some friendly, some more shy. They have specific likes and dislikes. Our goal here is to learn about the elephants and the mahouts that care for them and life in this area of Thailand. This has been an amazing opportunity. You can see the elephants and camp at www.theelephantmahoutproject.com.