

CHIANG MAI

Thailand



CHIANG MAI

Thailand's Northern Shangri-la

Chiang Mai, Thailand's principal northern city, some 700 kilometres north of Bangkok, was founded in 1296 and is located in a fertile valley 300 metres above sea level.

Chiang Mai was the capital of Lan Na Thai (Kingdom of One Million Ricefields), the first independent Thai kingdom in the fabled Golden Triangle. Chiang Mai flourished as a major religious, cultural and trading centre until 1556 when a Burmese invasion reduced it to a vassal state. The Burmese were expelled in 1775 and Lan Na Thai once more became part of northern Thailand.

Many lowland Thais regard the city, and province of the same name, as being a national Shangri-la thanks to beautiful women, distinctive festivals, historic temples dating from the 1300s, arresting scenic beauty, temperate fruits such as apples, peaches and strawberries, and a crisp, invigorating cool season climate.

Mountains surrounding Chiang Mai form lower extremities of Himalayan foothills and host several hill tribes of Tibeto-Burman origin. Forests still worked by elephants, waterfalls, caves, gorges, cultivated orchards and plantations adorn mountains that invite detailed exploration.

Until the late 1920s, Chiang Mai was isolated from Bangkok and could be reached only by an arduous river trip or an elephant-back journey through jungled mountains that took several weeks.

Such isolation accounts for much of Chiang Mai's present charm. The people of Chiang Mai have their own lilting dialect, their own customs, a wide range of indigenous handicrafts, their own architectural traditions, their own dances and their own cuisine.

As countless travellers have discovered, Chiang Mai's manifold attractions enthrall, delight, and to visit this northern city merely once is to remain forever enchanted.



Typical mountain scenery



Akha village



Roadside scenery to Mae Hong Son



Wat Suan Dok



Wat Chiang Man



Wat Chet Yot

CITY ATTRACTIONS

Temples

Northern Thai religious architecture is a flamboyant mixture of Mon, Burmese, Sri Lankan and Lan Na Thai styles, and liberal use of accomplished woodcarving, Naga staircases, leonine and angelic guardians, gilded umbrellas and pagodas laced with gold filagree.

Major city temples include **Wat Chiang Man**, Chiang Mai's oldest temple; **Wat Chedi Luang**, site of a massive pagoda partially destroyed during a 1545 earthquake; **Wat Phra Sing**, founded in 1345, where the lovely Lai Kham chapel houses the revered Phra Sing Buddha image; **Wat Chet Yot** (Temple of Seven Spires); **Wat Ku Tao** with its porcelain-studded, exotically bulbous pagoda; **Wat Suan Dok**, built in a 14th-century Lan Na Thai monarch's pleasure gardens; and the ancient, extensive forest temple of **Wat Umong**.

Chiang Mai's most important, and visible, temple is **Wat Phra That Doi Suthep**, (15 kms. from town) a major landmark overlooking the city from its forested mountain backdrop (atop which Thailand's royal family maintains a winter palace). The temple's 16th-century golden pagoda contains Buddhist relics and attracts visitors and Buddhist pilgrims throughout the year. A 12-kilometre switchback mountain road trip -- which begins beside **Chiang Mai's lovely zoo** (6 kilometres from town) -- precedes a steep climb up a Naga staircase (the less energetic can ascend by funicular cars) to the temple's compound from where an exhilarating view of Chiang Mai and surrounding countryside can be enjoyed.



Wat Phra That Doi Suthep

Handicrafts/Shopping

Chiang Mai is, quite simply, Thailand's major centre for quality handicrafts.

The visitor need merely visit the nearest city emporium or night market to purchase an extraordinary variety of antiques, silver jewellery, hilltribe opium pipes and embroidery, Thai silks and cottons, basketry, celadon, silverware, furniture, lacquerware, woodcarvings and parasols.

A major advantage of shopping in Chiang Mai is that the visitor can watch artisans working within the city and several outlying villages, particularly along the **Bo Sang - San Kamphaeng** road where, in genuine cottage industries, parasols, silk and cotton weaving, jewellery, woodcarving, silverware, celadon and lacquerware are manufactured and number among popular purchases.

A soothing bonus, particularly after an extended shopping trip, is to visit **San Kamphaeng's Hot Springs** (36 kilometres from town) where water with a high sulphur content possesses curative and restorative properties.



Hot spring at Pa Pae



Parasol decorating at Bo Sang



Chiang Mai silversmith



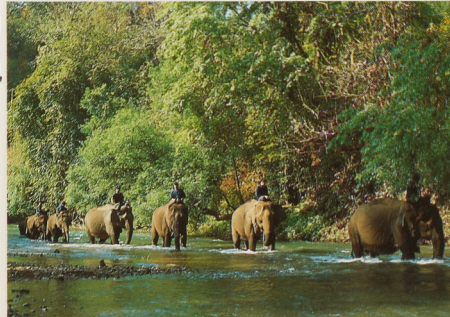
Hilltribe finery



Inthanon forest



Mae Klang waterfall



Elephants at Chiang Dao

OUT-OF-CITY ATTRACTIONS

Seven major hill tribes, the Meo, Lisu, Lahu, Yao, Akha, Lawa and Karen, live in Chiang Mai's mountains. The tribes share animist beliefs and honour innumerable forest and guardian spirits. Each have distinctive courtship rituals, games, dances, agricultural customs, puberty rites, languages or dialects, aesthetic values and hygienic habits.

Popular 2 to 7-day "jungle treks" include visits to remoter high-altitude hilltribe settlements and often feature elephant rides. Best guides are hilltribe youths who commonly speak Thai, English and at least three tribal dialects.

Sedentary travellers may visit more accessible hilltribe villages by road, such as during a full-day visit via route 108 to **Doi Inthanon National Park** (47 kilometres from town) on Thailand's highest mountain. The beautiful Mae Klang, Wachirathan, Siriphum and Mae Pan waterfalls share the mountain with Meo and Karen villages and work elephants, while exotic ferns and lichens decorate cool, silent forests cloaking the 2,554 metres summit.

Further hilltribe settlements can be visited along the Mae Sa Valley where major attractions include an Elephant Camp, orchid nurseries, the Mae Sa and Mae Yim waterfalls, and increasingly numerous, artfully landscaped hillside resorts catering to those who want to experience rural Chiang Mai at its most bucolic.

Yet other hilltribe villages can be seen on the highway linking Chiang Dao and Fang. The road passes the **Chiang Dao Elephant Camp** where elephants display their forestry skills, the sacred, Buddha-image filled caves of **Wat Tham Chiang Dao**, (72 kms. from town) and spectacular mountain scenery before entering Fang, famous for hot springs and Yao settlements in surrounding mountains.

FESTIVALS

Chiang Mai celebrates many annual festivals. Three are particularly lively and lovely. These are the Flower Carnival, the first weekend of every February; **Songkran**, 13 - 15 April each year; and **Loi Krathong**, on the full moon day of the twelfth lunar month, generally mid-November.

The **Flower Carnival** celebrates the period when Chiang Mai's temperate and tropical flowers are in full bloom and is characterised by colourful floral floats and parades.

Songkran celebrates the traditional Thai New Year. Chiang Mai celebrates Songkran with special elan in a 3-day carousel of religious merit-making, pilgrimages, beauty parades, dancing and uninhibited, good-natured water throwing.

Loi Krathong is Thailand's loveliest festival when, under the full moon, people float away onto rivers, canals, lakes and streams banana-leaf boats bearing a lighted candle, incense, a flower and small coin to honour water spirits and float away the past year's sins.

Visitors fortunate enough to be in Chiang Mai during either of these festivals will see the city at its vibrant, joyous best.

Songkran merit-making



Floral float vignette



Buddha-image bathing during Songkran



Loi Krathong festival



Songkran water festivities



Chiang Mai Khantok dinner



Night bazaar



Traditional northern meal

FACILITIES

Accommodation

Comfortable airconditioned accommodation is available at first-class and economy-class hotels. Budget travellers prefer clean, inexpensive guest houses. Accommodation outside Chiang Mai is largely concentrated in the Mae Sa Valley where guests are housed in hillside resort bungalows and cabins. Comprehensive listings of Chiang Mai's accommodation are featured in complimentary tourist publications such as **Tourist Guide To Chiangmai**, available in major tourism outlets, including the Tourism Authority of Thailand's Chiang Mai office.

Dining/Nightlife

Besides excellent Thai and Chinese food, visitors can enjoy Italian, French, German and Muslim food in specialty restaurants. American-style steakhouses, sandwich bars, fast-food outlets, English-style pubs and vegetarian restaurants offer a broad range of cuisine, and international fare is widely available in teahouses and coffee shops. Local culinary specialties include highly spiced **Naem** sausages and mildly curried **Khao Soi** noodles. Most visitors enjoy a traditional **Khantok** dinner which is often accompanied by a display of northern dances.

Chiang Mai's nightlife is less varied and boisterous than Bangkok's but no less satisfying, revolving mainly around night clubs, discotheques, bars, massage parlours, cocktail lounges, coffee shops, skating rinks and open-air restaurants with singers and live music.



Fown Lep dancer's hands

Transportation

Chiang Mai city is compact enough to explore on foot. Visitors may use an urban bus service, minibuses which average 5 baht per urban ride, or pedicabs (tricycles) where fares must be bargained in advance. Transportation is included in all guided tours. Automobiles may be hired on a daily or weekly basis for provincial exploration.

How To Get There

Chiang Mai and Bangkok are linked by daily, regular rail, bus and air services. Flying time aboard a Thai Airways Boeing jet is 55 minutes. Bus time, from Bangkok's Northern Bus Terminal on Phahonyothin Road, is approximately 12 hours. Rail time from Bangkok's Hualamphong Station is approximately 14 hours.



Thai Airways' jet



Mae Hong Son hillside



Mae Hong Son Burmese-style temple



Mae Hong Son mountain scenery



Wat Phra That Lampang Luang



Wat Phra That Hariphunchai, Lamphun



Mae Hong Son temple

NEIGHBOURING PROVINCES

Chiang Mai's central location allows for convenient exploration, either by road or air, of other northern provinces.

These include **Mae Hong Son** to the west, nestling against the Burmese border with spectacularly rugged mountain scenery, innumerable hilltribe settlements and Burmese-style temples; **Chiang Rai** to the northeast, the very heart of the fabled Golden Triangle with majestic mountains and many high-altitude hill tribe villages; **Lampang** to the southeast, home of many Burmese-style temples and sole remaining provincial capital in Thailand where horse-drawn carriages are used for daily urban transport; and **Lamphun** (26 kms.) to the south, seat of the ancient Hariphunchai kingdom, famous for beautiful women, woven cloth, bountiful lamyai orchards and stunning temples such as **Wat Phra That Hariphunchai**, a supreme example of classical northern Thai religious architecture.



Buddhist festival at Mae Hong Son

RECOMMENDED 6-DAY ITINERARY

DAY ONE

Morning visit to *Wat Phra Sing*, *Wat Chedi Luang*, *Wat Ku Tao*. After lunch, visit *Wat Phra That Doi Suthep* with its commanding view of Chiang Mai. Late afternoon visit to *Wat Suan Dok* and/or *Wat Umong*. Evening: Khantok dinner.

DAY TWO

Full-day trip to *Mae Sa Valley* to visit *Elephant Camp*, *orchid nurseries*, *waterfalls*, *hilltribe villages*, and to enjoy an entertaining cultural show at *little Chiang Mai*. Evening: leisure/nightlife.

DAY THREE

Morning visit to *Bo Sang Umbrella Village* and *Daytime Bazaar* on Bo Sang - San Kamphaeng road. After lunch, visit *San Kamphaeng Hot Springs* for refreshing bath, relaxation in garden setting. Evening: leisure.

DAY FOUR

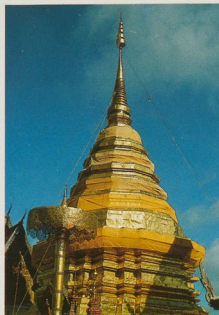
Early morning departure for full-day trip to *Doi Inthanon National Park*. Visit *Mae Klang*, *Wachirathan*, *Siriphum* and *Mae Pan waterfalls*, *Meo* and *Karen villages* before reaching forested summit. Evening: shopping in Chiang Mai's Night Bazaar.

DAY FIVE

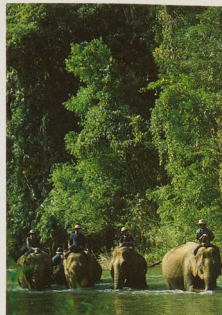
Full-day trip to *Lamphun* and *Lampang*. Visit *Lamphun's Wat Phra That Hariphunchai* and *Lampang's Wat Lamphang Luang*. Lampang's major urban Burmese-style temples can be conveniently visited by horse-drawn carriages. Evening: leisure/Chiang Mai nightlife.

DAY SIX

Early morning visit to *Chiang Dao's Elephant Camp* and *Buddha-filled caves of Wat Tham Chiang Dao*. From this point, the visitor has the option of travelling north to *Fang* and *Tha Ton* to travel by boat into *Chiang Rai*, or of returning to Chiang Mai -- to extend his northern sojourn or return to Bangkok.



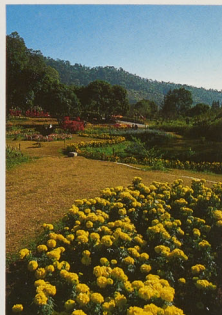
Wat Phra That Doi Suthep



Elephants at Chiang Dao



Bo Sang Umbrella village



Erawan Resort, Mae Sa valley



Lampang river rafts



Akha girls



TOURISM AUTHORITY OF THAILAND

HEAD OFFICE

Ratchadamnoen Nok Avenue, Bangkok 10100, THAILAND
Tel. 2821143-7 Cable: TOT BANGKOK Telex: 72059 TAT BKK TH Fax: (662) 2801744

LOCAL OFFICES

CENTRAL

KANCHANABURI :
Saeng Chuto Rd., Amphoe Muang, Kanchanaburi 71000.
Tel. (034) 511200
PATTAYA :
382 / 1 Chaihat Rd., South Pattaya 20260.
Tel. (038) 428750, 429113

NORTH

CHIANG MAI :
135 Prajani Rd., Amphoe Muang, Chiang Mai 50000.
Tel. (053) 235334, 252812
PHITSANULOK :
209 / 7-8 Surasit Trade Center Boromtrailokan Rd., Amphoe Muang.
Phitsanulok 65000.
Tel. (055) 252742, 252743

NORTHEAST

NAKHON RATCHASIMA :
2102 - 2104 Mittraphap Rd., Tambon Nai Muang
Amphoe Muang, Nakhon Ratchasima 30000.
Tel. (044) 243427, 243751

SOUTH

PHUKET :
73-75 Phuket Rd., Amphoe Muang, Phuket 83000.
Tel. (076) 212213, 211036
HAT HAI :
1 / 1 Soi 2 Niphat Uthit 3 Rd., Hat Yai, Songkhla 90110.
Tel. (074) 243747, 245986
SURAT THANI :
5 Talat Mai Rd., Ban Don, Amphoe Muang,
Surat Thani 84000.
Tel. (077) 282828, 281828

OVERSEAS OFFICES

ASIA & PACIFIC

SYDNEY :

12th Floor, Royal Exchange Bldg., 56 Pitt Street, Sydney 2000, AUSTRALIA.
Tel. (02) 277-549, 277-540 Cable: THAITOUR SYDNEY.
Telex: 23467 THAITC AA, Fax: 61 2 2512465

Area Responsibility :

Australia and New Zealand

HONG KONG :

Room 401 Fairmont House, 8 Cotton Tree Drive Central, HONG KONG
Tel. (518680732, 518680854 Cable: HK THAITOUR Telex: 63092 HKTAT HK
Area Responsibility :

Hong Kong, Taiwan, Philippines, Macau and People's Republic of China

TOKYO :

Hibiya Mitsui Bldg., 1-2 Yurakucho 1-Chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100, JAPAN.
Tel. (03) 580-6776-7, 508-0237 Cable: THAITOUR TOKYO
Telex: 433964 TATTVO, Fax: 81 3 5087808

Area Responsibility :

Northern Japan, Korea

OSAKA :

Hirano-Machi Yachiyo Bldg., 5th Floor, 2-8-1 Hirano-Machi, Higashi-Ku
Osaka 541, JAPAN
Tel. (06) 231-4434 Telex: 364675, Fax: 81 6 2314337

Area Responsibility :

Southern Japan

KUALA LUMPUR :

C/O Royal Thai Embassy, 206 Jalan Ampang, Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA.
Tel. 2480958, Telex: TATKLI 31089 (MA)

Area Responsibility :

Malaysia and Brunei

SINGAPORE :

C/O Royal Thai Embassy, 370 Orchard Rd., Singapore 0923, SINGAPORE.
Tel. 2357694, 2357901 Cable: THAITOUR SINGAPORE.
Telex: 39428 TATSIN RS, Fax: (65) 7335653

Area Responsibility :

Singapore and Indonesia

EUROPE

PARIS :

Office National du Tourisme de Thaïlande, 90 Avenue des Champs Elysées,
75008 Paris, FRANCE.
Tel. 4562-8656, 4562-8748 Cable: THAITOUR PARIS. Telex: 650093 TATPAR F

Area Responsibility :

France, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands

ROME :

Ente Nazionale per il Turismo Thai, Via Barberini, 50
00187 Roma, ITALY.
Tel. (06) 4747410, 4747660 Telex: 626139 TAT I

Area Responsibility :

Italy, Portugal, Spain, Greece

LONDON :

49 Albemarle Street, London W1X 3 FE, England U.K.
Tel. (01) 499-7670, 499-7679
Cable: THAITOUR LONDON. Telex: 298706 THAI TRG, TAT/LON

Area Responsibility :

United Kingdom, Ireland, Finland and Scandinavia

FRANKFURT :

Thailändisches Fremdenverkehrsbüro, Bethmann Str. 58/IV D-6000
Frankfurt/M.1, WEST GERMANY.
Tel. (069) 295-704, 295-804, Fax: 49 69 281468

Area Responsibility :

West Germany, Austria, East Europe and Switzerland

NORTH AMERICA

NEW YORK :

5 World Trade Center, Suite No. 2449, New York, N.Y. 10048, U.S.A.
Tel. (212) 4320433 Cable: THAITOUR NEW YORK.
Telex: 667612 TOT LW, Fax: 1 212 4320435

Area Responsibility :

Eastern U.S.A., and Eastern Canada

LOS ANGELES :

3440 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1101, Los Angeles, CA 90010, U.S.A.
Tel. (213) 382-2353, 54-55 Cable: THAITOUR LOS ANGELES
Telex: 686208 TTC LSA, Fax: 1 213 3806476

Area Responsibility :

Western U.S.A., Latin America, Western Canada



This Emblem of Standard is issued by the Tourism Authority of Thailand to souvenir shops and restaurants which have been screened by the Sub-Committee to Promote Souvenir Shops Standard and the Sub-Committee to Promote Restaurant and Foodshop Standard, certifying to their standard and services. It is listed that establishments displaying this Emblem be patronized.

YOUR TRAVEL AGENT



Thai Airways

Bangkok Reservation - 2811633
Chiang Mai Reservation - 211044-6

State Railway of Thailand

Rail Travel Aids
Bangkok - 2237010, 2237020
Chiang Mai - 245363

Bus Terminal

Bangkok - 2796221-5
- 2794484-7
(for Air-conditioned Coach)
Chiang Mai - 221586, 242664



Road Distance in kilometers
Bangkok - Chiang Mai..... 697
(Highway No. 32 to Uthai Thani,
No. 1 to Lampang and No. 11 to
Chiang Mai)
(Rail Time 14 hrs.)
(Flying Time 1 hr.)
Chiang Mai - Lamphun..... 26
(Highway No. 106)
Chiang Mai - Lampang..... 96
(Highway No. 11)
(Rail Time 2 hrs.)
(Flying Time 25 Mins.)
Chiang Mai - Chiang Rai..... 268
(Highway No. 11 to Lampang and
No. 1 to Chiang Rai)
(Flying Time 40 Mins.)
Chiang Mai - Mae Hong son... 362
(Highway No. 108)
(Flying Time 35 Mins.)