

# CHIANG MAI

Chiang Mai is one of the few places in Thailand where it is possible to experience both historical and modern Thai culture coexisting side by side: the city features centuries-old pagodas and temples next to modern convenience stores and boutique hotels. This dichotomy is best appreciated within the moat-encircled old city, which retains much of the fortified wall that once protected the city centre as well as the four main gates that provided access to the former Lanna capital city. Once in Chiang Mai, however, tourists are surprised by the fact that there are so many things to discover other than its beautiful and historic temples.

The old city of Chiang Mai is a showcase of the north's fascinating indigenous cultural identity that includes diverse dialects, a delectable cuisine, distinctive architecture, traditional values, lively festivals, numerous handicrafts workshops, northern style massage, and classical dances. Nowadays there are innumerable activities and attractions both in the city and the surrounding province, including massage instruction and golf. With such a diverse range of attractions and an equally grand selection of dining and accommodation options, Chiang Mai is a place where both backpackers and luxury tourists can enjoy the ultimate Thailand holiday.

## CHIANG MAI



## ATTRACTIONS

### Wat Phra That Doi Suthep

On top of Doi Suthep Hill, over 1,000m above sea level is the most important temple in Chiang Mai – the revered golden Phra That (chedi) of Wat Phra That Doi Suthep, built in 1383 to enshrine Buddha's relics. You can drive uphill to the higher platform but most devout Buddhists choose to pilgrim by walking the 290 steps up to the hilltop. After praying to the Phra That for good luck, visitors should proceed to the terrace to absorb the panoramic views of Chiang Mai town and surrounding countryside. Open 6am to 5pm



Wat Phra Thai Doi Su Thep

### Chiang Mai Night Safari

Chiang Mai Night Safari comprises a trip in a 50 seat open air tram to meet elephants, giraffes, zebras, lions, Asiatic black bears, tigers, hyenas and crocodiles amongst other animals. The Night Safari includes three different zones: the North Zone is a 25 minute trip with the carnivorous animals; the South Zone is a 30 minute trip with animals from the African savanna and there is a Walking Zone entailing a leisurely walk around the lake. There are several evening tour departure times and also day safari and accommodation options.

([www.chiangmainightsafari.com](http://www.chiangmainightsafari.com))



### Wat Phra Sing (Temple)

Located on Sam Lan Road, Wat Phra Sing's Wihan Lai Kham is home to Phra Phutthasihing, Chiang Mai's most sacred Chiang sean-style Buddha image. During the Songkran festival, Phra Phutthasihing is carried in a procession around town so locals can bath the image with scented water which according to a traditional belief, brings good luck. Open daily 8am to 5pm.

### Wat Chedi Luang Varavihara (Temple)

'Luang' means 'large' in the northern dialect, and as the name suggests, Wat Chedi Luang temple is home to Chiang Mai's largest Buddhist chedi which is 98m tall and 54m in diameter. The construction of the original chedi was completed in 1481 during the reign of King Mengrai. The current Chedi Luang is a reconstruction created after the 1545 earthquake. The ordination hall at the front with its carved serpents is a beautiful example of the Lanna architecture. Open daily from 8am to 5pm

### Doi Inthanon National Park

Part of the Himalayan mountain range, Doi Inthanon is Thailand's tallest peak at 2,565m above sea level. Doi Inthanon National Park covers an area of 480 km<sup>2</sup> across three districts of Chiang Mai Province. Cool climate lovers should visit the park during December to February, during the winter and witness the blossom of Siamese sakura flowers.

There are many individual attractions in Doi Inthanon National Park.

- **Namtok Mae Ya** is one of the most beautiful waterfall cascades in Chiang Mai. Water splashes down over 30 tiers of rocks and boulders into small clear pools. Mae Ya is a beautiful, fanning cascade, dropping down about 100m over an ever-widening series of steps.

- **Namtok Mae Klang** is probably Chiang Mai's most visited waterfall. At 30m the waterfall is quite impressive and it is in a natural setting - perfect for a picnic.

- **Tham Bori Chinda** is a large cave located near Namtok Mae Klang, featuring dramatic stalactite and stalagmite formations.

- **Namtok Siriphum** is a splendid waterfall that falls from a steep cliff in two lines and can be seen en route to Doi Inthanon. Named by the Queen who came

to visit the waterfall, visitors can get a good view from a wooden platform in front of the waterfall.

- **Doi Inthanon Royal Project** is in Khun Klang village close to the park headquarters. The project was initiated in 1979 to help the hill tribes to cultivate cash crops (rather than opium) and train them on modern agricultural practices. The flower plantations, a plant breeding research lab and the flower plantations of hill tribes (Hmong) are open to visitors.

- **Phra Mahathat Napha Methanidon and Phra Mahathat Naphaphon Bhumisiri** are twin pagodas located at Km. 41.5. They were built to commemorate the fifth cycle birthdays of King Bhumibol Adulyadej and Queen Sirikit. Sitting on two nearby peaks, both pagodas share similar size, design and colour and are linked by a walking path.

- **Doi Inthanon Peak** is where King Inthawichayanon's stupa is located. The last king of Chiang Mai, he was concerned about the importance of forests and wanted to preserve the forests for future generations. He was so attached to Doi Inthanon that he asked that part of his ashes be kept here.

- **Namtok Mae Pan** might not be the largest waterfall in Chiang Mia, but at 100m long from top to bottom it is considered the longest.

### Chiang Mai Walking Street

- **Wualai Walking Street** – a Saturday night market. Best known for its high quality authentic northern silver and lacquer wares, unique handicrafts, Thai local food and traditional performances. Wualai Walking Street is one of the most popular shopping destination in Chiang Mai. Open daily from 4pm to 10pm.

- **Tha Pae Walking Street** – a Sunday night market. Every Sunday from around 4pm until midnight, the famous Sunday Tha Pae Walking Street runs from Tha Pae Gate along the full length of Ratchadamnoen Road. A vibrant spectrum of art, crafts, music and food – with handmade quality goods and souvenirs that echo the spirit of Northern Thailand, it's the perfect place for souvenir shopping at a reasonable price.



# ACTIVITIES

## Trekking In Chiang Mai

Chiang Mai is a centre for treks into the surrounding mountainous areas - home to the hill tribes. The verdant hills and forests provide the perfect natural for watching birds and wildlife. The most popular trails are in Kiu Mae Pan, Ang Ka Luang, Doi Inthanon National Park, Huai Nam Dang National Park and Chiang Dao Wildlife Sanctuary. There are trek and tour companies offering single and multi-day treks requiring varying levels of fitness.

## Zip Line

There are many companies offering Zip Lining adventure tours throughout Chiang Mai. As well as a fun and adventurous experience, a Zipline ride is a great way to experience Chiang Mai's beautiful scenery first hand. It's extreme outdoor fun for everyone!

- Eagle Track Zipline - [www.eagletrackchiangmai.com](http://www.eagletrackchiangmai.com)
- Flying Squirrels Chiang Mai -
- Flight of the Gibbon - [www.treetopasia.com/thailand-holiday/chiang-mai](http://www.treetopasia.com/thailand-holiday/chiang-mai)
- Zipline Chiang Mai - <http://ziplinechiangmai.com/main/>

## Natural Study Trek on Doi Inthanon

There are many nature trails on Doi Inthanon, each providing different views of the diversity of plants, reforestation, the importance of tributaries, the origin of caves, hill tribe agriculture and bird watching. Walking trails range from 1 to 8km and each trip needs a trekking leader and approval from the Chief of the National Park. The service is obtained at the Park Office at Km. 31, Highway No. 1009.

## Cooking Class

There are several places in Chiang Mai where you can attend a Thai cuisine cooking class and learn the basics of Thai cuisine, its ingredients and method of preparation. Courses usually includes instruction, demonstration and a practical cooking experience in a relaxed informal setting. Often a visit to a local market is included where you can learn to identify and select the required spices for your dishes.

## GETTING TO CHIANG MAI



### By Air

From international destinations, visitors can fly directly to Chiang Mai on a number of domestic and international air carriers. While these routes are subject to their economic viability for individual airlines, it is usually possible to fly directly to Chiang Mai from Kuala Lumpur, Luang Prabang, Singapore, Vientiane, and Yangon. International airlines servicing Chiang Mai from those destinations include Silk Air, Lao Airlines, and Mandalay Air.



## FESTIVALS

### Chiang Mai Flower Festival - February

**Venue:** Suan Buak Hat Park, Mueang District, Chiang Mai

Living up to the name 'Rose of the North,' Chiang Mai organises the Chiang Mai Flower Festival to showcase its beautiful flowers and decorative plants which are in full bloom towards the end of the winter season in early February. Suan Buak Hat Park is transformed into an open-air exhibition centre where you can find a magnificent tapestry of floral splendour that blankets the land, along with agricultural exhibitions and floral displays, contests and sales. Orchid lovers should not miss the opportunity to see the variety of beautiful orchids grown by locals. The festival also features flower-decorated floats that parade around the city exhibiting the vibrantly coloured flowers, as well as dancers in traditional costumes.

### Chiang Mai Songkran Festival – Mid April

**Venue:** Mueang Chiang Mai, Chiang Mai Province

The Songkran – the Thai New Year Festival – originates from Chiang Mai, and it's no surprise that it's celebrated in Chiang Mai with incredible energy. Few will escape the soaking from water pistols and buckets of water thrown in anticipation of the good luck and prosperity it will bring in the coming year.

### Chiang Mai Yi Peng Festival – November

The Yi Peng Festival is a lively and spirited festival which includes the simultaneous launching of coloured, candle lit Lanna style lanterns to worship Phrathat Chulamani. There is also a Yi Peng procession, as well as Lanna cultural performances and various other forms of entertainment.

[www.tourismthailand.org/au](http://www.tourismthailand.org/au)  [HugThailand](https://www.facebook.com/HugThailand)

### By Bus

From Bangkok there are reliable, 2nd class, and 1st class air-conditioned busses leaving throughout the day (8am to 9pm) from Bangkok's **Northern Bus Terminal**.

Private buses, which can be conveniently booked in tourist centres in Bangkok, are also available. The journey takes approximately 10-12 hours, depending on traffic

### By Train

Express and rapid trains operated by the State Railways of Thailand leave for Chiang Mai from Bangkok's Hua Lumphong Station six times a day from 8am to 10pm. The trip takes about 11-12 hours on an express train.



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