

Suggested attractions & activities for Chiang Mai

As Thailand's second largest city after Bangkok, Chiang Mai offers a variety of attractions and activities for visitors of all ages and budgets, from luscious natural scenery to cultural attractions, diverse ethnic communities, authentic local cuisines, trendy cafés, art galleries, handicraft villages, festivals, wellness spas, etc. Chiang Mai is also home to some of Thailand best walking streets/ night markets and trendy cafés and bars. Accommodations on offer also range from luxury resorts in the mountains to boutique hotels downtown, guesthouses, homestays and camping in one of the national parks.

Most visitors begin their journeys in Chiang Mai by exploring historic temples in the Old Town. The highlights include the exquisite woodcarvings and northern style murals at **Wat Phra Sing Temple**, the fine Chedi supported by rows of elephant buttresses at **Wat Chiang Man Temple** – Chiang Mai's oldest temple, the grand Chedi of **Wat Chedi Luang Temple** and the elaborated Lanna style carvings on the doors of **Wat Phan Tao Temple**. Every Sunday evening, the roads in the middle of the Old Town will be closed to traffic and turned into **Sunday Night Market** selling handicrafts, hill-tribe crafts, souvenirs, clothes and a lot of food.

Another must see cultural attraction in Chiang Mai is Wat Sri Supan. One of the most unusual temples in Thailand, **Wat Sri Supan (The Silver Temple)** is a temple with its ordination hall covered with alloy and zinc panels hand - carved based on Buddhism legend. In the neighbourhood, visitors can see the local silversmiths working. Every Saturday, Wua Lai Road which leads to the temple is closed for the traffic and becomes **Saturday Night Market**.

Just a short drive from town is Chiang Mai's landmark and one of the most revered temples in Thailand – **Wat Phra That Doi Suthep Temple**. The stunning golden Chedi is situated at 3,520 feet above sea level and can be seen from Chiang Mai town.

Nature and adventure lovers can explore Chiang Mai's rich nature through **trekking experience, mountain biking, river rafting or zip lining**. The area features a lot of national parks including **Doi Inthanon - Thailand's highest peak**. In addition to lush tropical forests and majestic waterfalls, Doi Inthanon National Park is home to a wide range of animal species and it is one of the best places in Thailand for **bird watching**.

Further north is "**Thailand's Little Switzerland**" – **Doi Ang Khang**. The area boasts breathtaking scenery and cool climate all year round. Trekking, mountain biking, Cherry Blossom watching, tea tasting are some of the activities that can be done here.

For culture lovers, try to time your visit to coincide with Loi Krathong or Songkran Festivals. **Loi Krathong** is celebrated every year on the full moon of

November. During the festival, people make Krathongs or lotus shaped floating vessels, which are then released on a waterway to pay respect to the goddess of the river. There will be a lot of fireworks and cultural performance at temples and venues along the rivers. **Songkran – Thai New Year** is celebrated every year on 13 – 14 April. The Songkran celebration is rich with symbolic traditions e.g. Buddhists will visit local temples and offer food to the monks and pour water over Buddha statues. The practice represents purification and the washing away of bad luck. Another common practice is to visit their families and pour small amount of fragrant water over the palms of their senior relatives, when the seniors will then give them blessings. The fun parts are parades along the roads in the Old Town, followed by “water fights”.

For those who want to look deeper into Thai culture and handicrafts, there are workshops on the production of Thai silk, silver and hand-crafted goods. Ban Tawai and Wua Lai Street have a fascinating range of handicraft demonstrations and goods.

For food lovers, **Warorot Market** is one of Thailand’s best markets which offer fresh and ready to eat produces for both locals and tourists alike. For something more trendy, **Nimmanhemin Quarter** is the centre of local designer’s products, unique handmade souvenirs, art galleries, quirky cafés and bars.