

Suggested attractions & activities for Chiang Rai

Home to **the Golden Triangle**, where Mekong and Ruak Rivers meet to form the borders of Thailand, Myanmar and Lao PDR, Chiang Rai is a perfect destination for visitors wanting to explore the scenic and cultural attractions.

At an average elevation of nearly 600m above sea level, the area is largely mountainous with peaks (locally called “Doi” or “Phu”) and highlands offering visitors delightful scenic views, hiking trails, hot springs, caves, waterfalls and camping sites. Outdoor attractions for nature lovers include **Doi Mae Salong, Doi Tung, Doi Pha Mon, Phu Chi Fah Forest Park, Khun Chae National Park**. Chiang Rai is also home to some of Thailand’s best tea plantations e.g. **Choui Fong Tea Plantations & Tea House** and **Singha Park**.

Singha Park is a family-friendly attraction, suitable for visitors of all ages. There’s an electric tram which carries visitors to various parts of the park e.g. fruit orchards, tea plantations, zoo. Here visitors can pick their own fruit and vegetables or simply enjoy the walking trails through the meadows. For something more adventurous, zip lining and wall climbing are both available. Both Singha Park and Choui Fong have tea shops and restaurants with a scenic view of the tea plantations.

Just an hour’s drive from Chiang Rai town centre, there are several attractions in Doi Tung worth visiting. The Doi Tung Royal Villa is a Swiss styled chalet built for the late Princess Mother; the beautifully landscaped Mae Fah Luang Botanical Gardens which feature cool-climate plants and colourful flowers; and finally Wat Phra That Doi Tung, a religious site on the mountain where visitors can stop to enjoy the panoramic view of the surrounding countryside. For something more adventurous, try a 300m long and 30m high Tree Top Walk.



Visitors who are interested in history and culture should not miss the unique cultural attractions such as **the White Temple, the Blue Temple** and **the Black House Museum**. Other interesting places for visitors who are keen to learn the history of this region include **Mae Fah Luang Art and Cultural Park, Hall of Opium** and **Chiang Saen Ancient Town**.

The White Temple (or Wat Rong Khun) is a very unique temple and is one of Thailand's most popular tourist attractions. The temple was built and self-funded by Thai artist, Chaloechai Khositphiphat. The exterior and interior architecture of the temple is designed in a contemporary and unconventional style, reflecting the wicked human nature. For example, inside the temple, the decor swiftly moves from pristine white to fiery and bewildering. Murals portray demon faces, mixed with idols such as Michael Jackson, Neo from The Matrix, Freddy Kruger, Harry Potter, Superman, and Hello Kitty.

Wat Rong Suea Ten (or the Blue Temple) is another unique cultural attraction. The murals inside the main hall resemble the ones at the White Temple, except everything is rendered in blue-based colours. The temple is believed to be designed and built by a student of Kositpipat.

The Black House (or Baan Dam Museum) is a park containing a diverse and sprawling series of buildings, displays, sculptures and installations. The exhibits here are the work or collections of local controversial artist Thawan Duchanee and range from animal skulls and snake skin, to rock sculptures.

Mae Fah Luang Art and Cultural Park is the region's largest collection of art items from the Lanna culture or Tai culture. Through purchasing and marketing handicrafts, the Thai Hill Crafts Foundation helped preserve the traditional skills and support the livelihoods of ethnic minorities. The park also provides a relaxing and beautiful atmosphere, which is created by the Northern countryside.

Another attraction near the Golden Triangle is the Hall of Opium Museum i.e. a combination of multimedia and exhibition aiming to educate visitors about the history of the Golden Triangle which used to be infamous for drug trading, the opium war, opium effects, the battle against opium and poppy growing and various Royal Projects in the area.



Near the border with Myanmar and Lao PDR, the town of Chiang Saen offers a charming and serene atmosphere and is the site of an ancient settlement that predates Chiang Rai. The best way to explore these ancient ruins, the old city walls, moats, gateways and temples is cycling. Highlights include **Wat Phra That Chedi Luang**, **Wat Pa Sak** and **Chiang Saen National Museum**. Other temples nearby worth exploring are **Wat Phra That Pha Ngao**, a hilltop temple offering a spectacular view of the Mekong River, Lao PDR and Chiang Saen town.

Visitors looking for a hidden gem should visit **Wat Hiranyawat** (or Wat Phra San) in Mae Sai district. Here you will find Thailand's biggest (and probably the one and only) bamboo woven Buddha statue, housed in a bamboo woven ordination hall.