

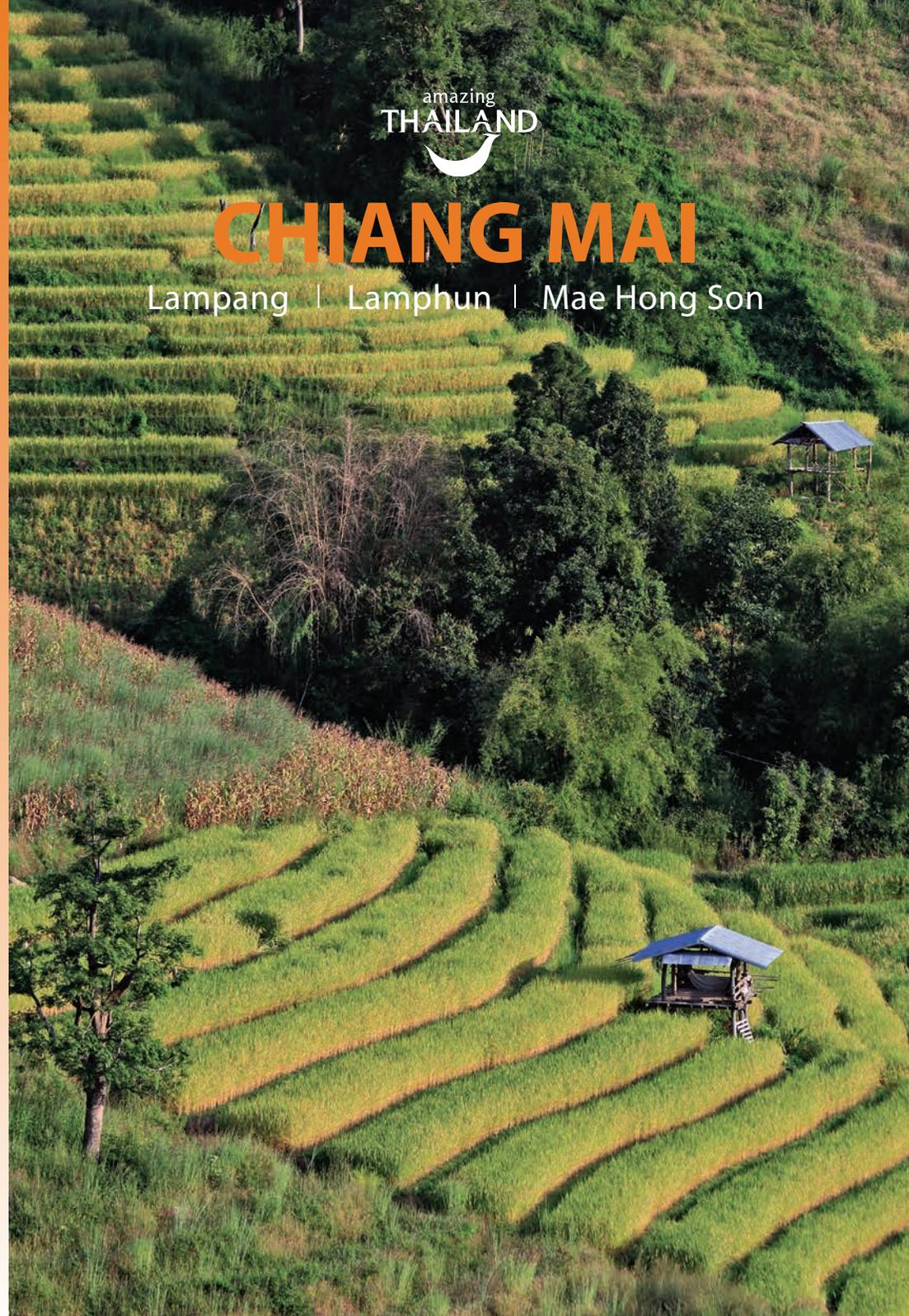


Umbrella Painting, Chiang Mai

amazing
THAILAND

CHIANG MAI

Lampang | Lamphun | Mae Hong Son



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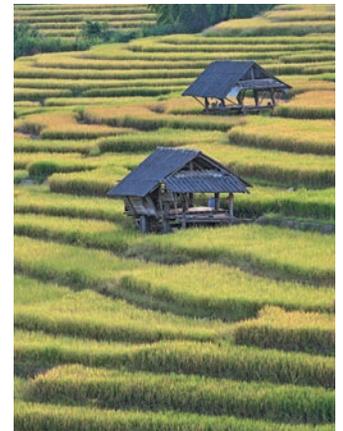
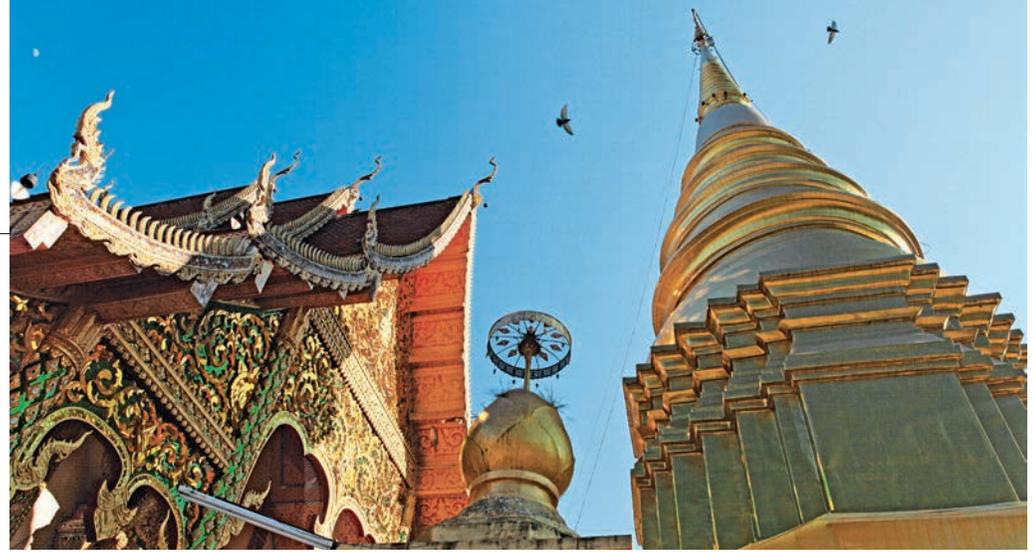
Doi Inthanon

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CHIANG MAI CHIANG MAI

Lampang | Lamphun | Mae Hong Son

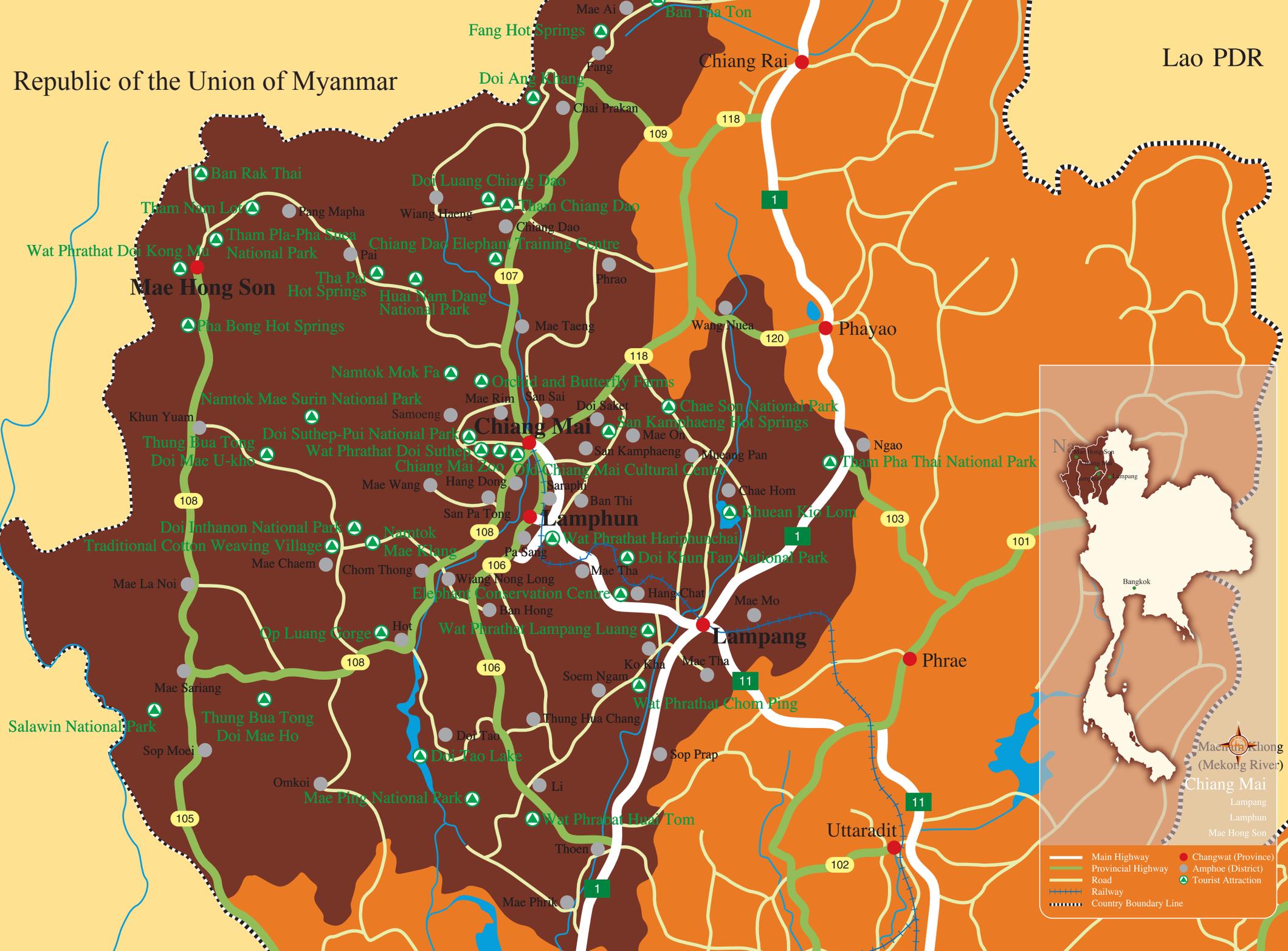


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Wat Phrathat Doi Suthep

CHIANG MAI

Popularly known as “The Rose of the North” and with an enchanting location on the banks of the Ping river, the city and its surroundings are blessed with stunning natural beauty and a uniquely indigenous cultural identity.

Located some 700 kms. from Bangkok, Chiang Mai is the principal city of northern Thailand and capital of the province of the same name. Founded in 1296 by King Mengrai as the capital of the Lanna Kingdom, Chiang Mai has had a long and mostly independent history, which has to a large extent preserved a most distinctive culture. This is witnessed both in the daily lives of the people, who maintain their own dialect, customs and cuisine, and in a host of ancient temples, fascinating for their northern Thai architectural styles and rich decorative details.

Chiang Mai is also renowned for its outstanding handicrafts that illustrate their exquisite cultures, producing items in silk, wood, silver, ceramics and more, which make the city the country's top shopping destination for arts and crafts.

Beyond the city, Chiang Mai province spreads over an area of 20,000 sq. kms. offering some of the most picturesque scenery in the whole Kingdom. The fertile Ping River Valley, a patchwork of paddy fields, is surrounded by rolling hills and the province as a whole is one of forested mountains (including Thailand's highest peak, Doi Inthanon), jungles and rivers.

Here is the ideal terrain for adventure travel by trekking on elephant back, river rafting or four-wheel drive safaris in a natural wonderland. Adding a special feature to the landscape are the traditional villages of the region's hilltribe people, distinguished by their colourful tribal costumes and lifestyles mostly untouched by the modern world. At the same

time, visitors will find deluxe hotels, mountain resorts and other facilities that ensure today's comforts and convenience.

Around Chiang Mai, the neighbouring provinces of Lampang, Lamphun and Mae Hong Son have great appeal, offering further opportunities to experience the North's natural beauty and distinctive culture.

CITY ATTRACTIONS

Wat Phra Sing

Located on Sam Lan Road, this lovely temple dates from 1345 and enshrines the revered Phra Phutthasihing Buddha image, a focal point for the Songkran Thai New Year festivities on April 13-15. The temple compound includes the Lai Kham chapel featuring exquisite woodcarvings and northern-style murals; a magnificent scriptural repository with striking bas-reliefs, and a bell-shaped stupa.

Wat Suan Dok

This 14th century temple, on Suthep Road, was in the royal flower garden and is most notable for its several white Chedi, which contain the ashes of members of Chiang Mai's former Royal Family. Enshrined in a secondary chapel is a 500-year-old bronze Buddha, one of Thailand's largest metal images.

Wat Chiang Man

Located within the old walled city on Ratchaphakhinai Road, this is Chiang Mai's oldest temple, believed to be built in 1296, when King Mengrai allegedly lived here while the new city of Chiang Mai was under construction. The temple is noteworthy for its fine Chedi supported by rows of elephant buttresses and a beautiful chapel. Enshrined



Wat Phra Sing

within the temple are the ancient Buddha images of Phra Kaeo Khao, a tiny crystal statue thought to have the power to create rain, and Phra Sila Khao.

Wat Chedi Luang

Here, on Phrapokklao Road, is the largest Chedi in Chiang Mai measuring 98 m. tall and 54 m. wide. It was originally completed in 1481 but partially collapsed due to an earthquake in 1545. Among other features is a magnificent Naga staircase adorning the chapel's front porch. Wat Chedi Luang is also notable as one of the temporary abodes of the Emerald Buddha, now enshrined at Wat Phra Kaeo in Bangkok.

Wat Phan Tao

Located next to Wat Chedi Luang on Phrapokklao Road, this ancient temple is renowned for the intricate Lanna-style carvings on the door, which is regarded as one of the most beautiful and most complete ancient work of art in Chiang Mai.



Wat Chiang Man

Wat Ku Tao

Located near the Chiang Mai Stadium, Wat Ku Tao is remarkable for its unusual bulbous Chedi, shaped like a watermelon and thus prompting its Thai name. The structure is decorated with coloured porcelain chips and is believed to represent five monks' alms bowls.

Wat Chet Yot

Away from the town centre on the Super Highway, north of the Huai Kaeo Nimmanhem in



Wat Chedi Luang



Wat Saen Fang

intersection, the temple owes its name to the square Chedi with seven spires. The design was inspired by the temple at Bodhgaya, in India, the site of the Lord Buddha's Enlightenment.

Wat U-mong

Located on Suthep Road, this delightful meditation temple, founded in the reign of King Mengrai, is very different from Chiang Mai's other major temples and enjoys an almost bucolic setting. Its principal architectural feature is a large ancient Chedi.

Nimmanhemim Road

Situated in the heart of Chiang Mai city, this is the most famous and trendy shopping street where you can find designer's product, handmade souvenirs, hip restaurants, chic hotels, and art gallery. At the beginning of December of every year, Nimmanhemim Road

organises NAP or Nimmanhemim Art & Design Promenade where the local artists get to exhibit their work to the public and the locals and tourists get to enjoy shopping these designed products.

Wat Saen Fang

Located at Tha Phae Road, this old temple illustrates the beautiful architecture that was influenced by the Burmese.

Wiang Kum Kam

Southeast of Chiang Mai between Km. 3-4 on the Chiang Mai- Lamphun road, the site is an ancient city built by King Mengrai the Great prior to the founding of Chiang Mai. Uncovered by archaeologists are the ruined remains of some 20 ancient temples and other buildings.

Chiang Mai National Museum

Standing next to Wat Chet Yot and in modern

Lanna style, the museum houses an interesting collection of northern arts and crafts. Open Wednesday to Sunday from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m except on Songkran and New Year. Contact Tel. (6653) 22 1308 or visit www.finearts.go.th/chiangmaimuseum for more information.

Insect and Natural Wonders Museum

On display here is a fascinating collection of domestic and foreign insects, as well as animal fossils. The museum is located at 72 Nimmanhemim Road, Soi 12.

Walking Street

Every weekend from 5.00 p.m. onwards, the street in the middle of Chiang Mai is closed to traffic and turned into a walking street selling unique and authentic handicrafts, local arts, hill-tribe crafts, souvenirs, and handmade products. Not only shoppers enjoy Walking Street but also those looking for a wide range of entertainment performed by local artists playing traditional and modern music, often accompanied by Thai dancers. On Saturday, the walking street is at Wua Lai Road, whereas Sunday walking street is at Tha Phae Road.

OUT-OF-CITY ATTRACTIONS

West (Highway 1004)

Huai Kaeo Arboretum

Beside Chiang Mai University, this attractively landscaped garden boasts many kinds of tropical trees and flowers.

Chiang Mai Zoo

Next to Huai Kaeo Arboretum, this is a large and extremely well-managed zoo occupying the lower forested slopes of Doi Suthep and showcasing more than 200 species of Asian



Walking Street

and African mammals and birds, a gigantic aquarium, and a snow dome, as well as the famous pandas – Lin Hui and Xuang Xuang, which are the goodwill ambassador of Thailand and the People's Republic of China, and their offspring named "Lin Ping". Open daily from 8.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. Restaurants and a camping site are available. For more information, contact Tel. (6653) 22 1179, (6653) 35 8116 or visit www.chiangmaizoo.com.



Giant Panda in Chiang Mai Zoo

Chiang Mai Night Safari

Located within Doi Suthep-Pui National Park, Chiang Mai Night Safari takes visitor on an exciting journey through a nature theme park that features several kinds of animal; such as, elephants, giraffes, zebras, lions, tigers, and crocodiles. A walking trail of around 1.2 km. enables visitors to get an up-close experience with wild animals amidst the beautiful surroundings of

garden and lake. For more information, contact Tel. (6653) 99 9000, (6653) 99 9089 or visit www.chiangmainightsafari.com.

Namtok Huai Kaeo

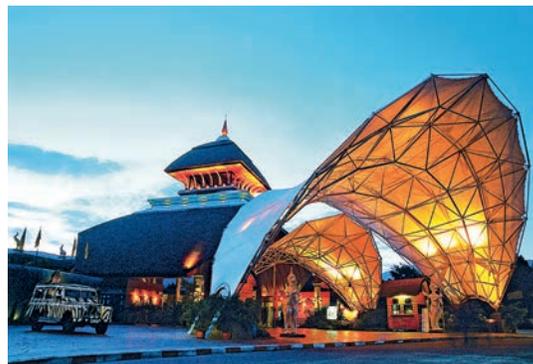
Located close by the zoo, this 10-metre cascade provides a green and scenic picnic spot.

Wat Phrathat Doi Suthep

Situated 15 kms. from town, this is Chiang Mai's most famous and most visible landmark, and at 3,520 feet above sea level, it commands an exhilarating view of the city and surrounding countryside. Dating from 1383, the temple is approached by a flight of 290 Naga-flanked steps (although the less energetic may ascend by a funicular railway), and is dominated by a golden Chedi which contains holy Buddha relics. Local people say those who have never been to Phra That Doi Suthep have never really been to Chiang Mai.

Khun Chang Khian

Located in the Chiang Mai city, along the same route as Phrathat Doi Suthep, Phu Phing Palace, and Doi Pui Tribal Village, this Highland Research and Training Centre serves as a station to conduct the experiment on growing



Chiang Mai Night Safari

coffee, temperate and sub-tropical fruits; such as, plum, avocado, macadamia, and lychee. The best time to visit is around January as the Thai cherry blossoms are in full bloom, creating a pink and lively atmosphere.

Phu Phing Palace

Further up the road from the foot of Wat Phrathat Doi Suthep stands the Phu Phing Palace which is the Royal winter residence. Built in 1961, the lavishly landscaped gardens and grounds are open to the general public daily from 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. except when the Royal Family is in residence.

Doi Pui Tribal Village

This Hmong village lies some 3 kms. from Phu Phing Palace. It is the most accessible of hilltribe villages and has accordingly lost some of its authenticity, although it still provides a glimpse of tribal life.

Khruba Siwichai Monument

Situated at the foot of Doi Suthep Mountain, the monument honours the devoted Buddhist monk whose followers built the first 10- km. paved road to Wat Phrathat Doi Suthep in 1935.

Southwest (Highway 108)

Old Chiang Mai Cultural Centre

Located at the beginning of Chiang Mai-Hang Dong road (Highway 108), the Centre has an excellent collection of Lanna Thai art. It is also the venue for folk dance performances and typical northern-style *khan tok* dinners. Open from 7.00 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. Tel. (6653) 20 2993-5 Website: www.oldchiangmai.com



Khruba Siwichai Monument

Wat Phrathat Si Chom Thong

Located 58 kms. from town, this intriguing temple dates from the mid-1400s and houses a collection of bronze Buddha images while a holy Buddha relic is enshrined in the secondary chapel.

Wat Phrathat Doi Noi

The temple, between Km. 43 and 44, was built by Queen Chamma Thewi in 658 AD. The hilltop location, reached by a flight of 241 steps, affords



Namtok Mae Klang

fine views of the Ping River and surrounding countryside.

Namtok Mae Klang

Chiang Mai's most photographed waterfall lies some 58 kms. from town at the foot of Doi Inthanon. The waterfall is a 100 metre-tall one-level cascade and the picturesque setting is a popular picnic spot.



Doi Inthanon National Park

Tham Borichinda

A 10-minute drive and a 2-hour walk from Namtok Mae Klang, this large cave has stalactite and stalagmite formations and features Buddha images and a rocky stream.

Doi Inthanon National Park

The 1,005-sq. km. park encompasses Thailand's highest peak which rises to 2,565 metres above sea level. Rich in flora and fauna, especially bird life, and with waterfalls, nature trails and Hmong and Karen hilltribe villages, the park as a whole is one of Chiang Mai's top attractions and well worth visiting.

Doi Inthanon Royal Project Research Station

Located in Khun Klang village, close to the park headquarters, this Royal Initiated Project was established in 1979 to help hilltribe farmers to cultivate temperate-clime cash crops instead of opium and to train them in modern agricultural practices. The flower plantation and the plant and breeding research lab are open to visitors.

Ban Mae Klang Luang

Located amidst the terraced rice paddy field on Doi Inthanon in Tambon Ban Luang, Amphoe Chom Thong, Ban Mae Klang Luang is the village of the Pwakin-nyaw or Karen ethnic group. The village is especially beautiful during the rainy season (September – October) with the lush green rice fields, and during winter season (October – November) which is when the rice grains turn golden. Visitors can also enjoy trekking along the natural walking trail to Namtok Pha Dok Siao, the magnificent waterfall. Homestay accommodation to learn about the hilltribe's way of life is also available.

Phra Mahathat Napha Methanidon and Phra Mahathat Naphaphon Phumisiri

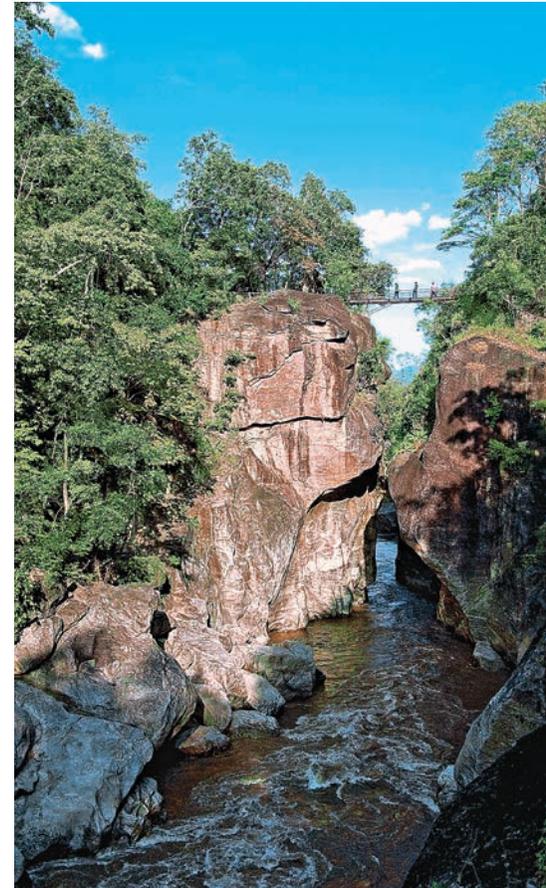
These twin pagodas, located at Km. 41.5, were built to commemorate the fifth cycle birthdays of Their Majesties King Bhumibol Adulyadej and Queen Sirikit.

Mae Chaem

Mae Chaem is a small district locating just behind Doi Inthanon, around 150 kms. northeast of the Chiang Mai city. Nestled in the valley, Mae Chaem is where visitors can enjoy the magnificent natural beauty and distinctive cultural heritage which is simple way of life and unique traditions. Attractions within Mae Chaem include ancient temples and fascinating terraced rice paddy field. Visitors can also stay at the Homestay to learn about their way of life, especially the craft of weaving their indigenous *Tin Chok* silk.

Traditional Cotton Weaving Village

Located 3 kms. from Mae Chaem District Office in Tambon Tha Pha, the village is famous for producing northern-style cotton sarongs.



Op Luang Gorge

Op Luang Gorge

This picturesque gorge with a river zigzagging between high, steep cliffs is located 105 kms. from Chiang Mai. The area is pleasantly framed by teak forests and hills.

Ban Rai Phai Ngam

Also renowned for its high quality traditional cotton, this village can be reached after a left turn between Km. 69 and 70 along the Chiang Mai-Hot road.

Doi Tao Lake

The large reservoir here lies behind Bhumibol Dam in Tak province and offers recreational opportunities, including boat cruises. It is located in Doi Tao district, which is around 133 kms. from Chiang Mai.

Huai Phak Phai Royal Project

At Ban Mae Ha in Hang Dong district, this royally initiated project is a research and cultivation centre for roses. The main attraction is the 8.4-acre Royal Rose Garden, best seen between October and February.

North (Highways 107 & 1096)

Tribal Museum

Situated in King Rama IX Lanna Garden on Chotana Road, this ethnology museum has exhibits highlighting the separate identities and cultures of the North's nine major hilltribe groups, namely Karen, Hmong, Yao, Lisu, Akha, Lahu, Lau, Thin, and Khamu. Open daily to the public from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. except Saturdays, Sundays and national holidays. Tel. (6653) 21 0872, (6653) 22 1933 Website: www.hilltribe.org/museum

Orchid and Butterfly Farms

There are several orchid nurseries in the Mae Sa Valley area where visitors can view these exotic year-round blooms. Some orchid farms also have special butterfly enclosures where tropical species can be seen in a natural environment.

Mae Sa Snake Farm

Here, the largest snake farm in Thailand, some 3 kms. along the Mae Rim-Samoeng road, various kinds of snakes indigenous to Thailand can be seen. There are also daily 30-minute snake shows. Open from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. For more information, contact Tel. (6653) 86 0719.

Namtok Mae Sa

This 8-tiered waterfall in Mae Rim district is 26 kms. from town and occupies a lovely setting among towering trees.

Mon Chaem

Mon Chaem, a part of the Nong Hoi Royal Project Development Centre in Tambon Mae Raem, Amphoe Mae Rim, has become one of the most popular tourist destinations in Thailand. The Royal Project helps developed the abandoned hill ridge to be a tourist attraction that is equipped with a restaurant, camping grounds, as well as vegetable and fruit plantations. The garden at Mon Chaem is especially photogenic as it is creatively adorned with charming decorative items; such as, flower-pots and vegetable pots made from obsolete truck or basin.

Embraced by the cool mountain breeze all year round, Mon Chaem is situated on the hill ridge where visitors can indulge in the panoramic view of the spectacular surrounding mountains and valleys. The top of the hill also serves as the viewpoint that offers magnificent sunrise and sunset vistas. When the night falls, a myriad of flickering lights from the valleys below and thousands of twinkling stars above provide visitors with the most magical atmosphere.

Queen Sirikit Botanical Garden

This international botanical garden, located around 12 kms. along the Mae Rim-Samoeng road and extending over a mountainous area of 560 acres, was established to honour H.M. Queen Sirikit in 1992. The garden has an extensive collection of Thai and foreign plants laid out according to species and climate, and there are three walking trails. Also here is a Tourist Information Centre, the Thai Orchid



Queen Sirikit Botanical Garden

Breeding Centre, the herbs Museum and the Research Centre. Open daily from 8.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Tel. 0 5384 1000 Fax. 0 5329 9754, Website: www.qsbg.org

Chiang Dao Elephant Training Centre

Located off Highway 107 at Km. 57 between Mae Taeng and Chiang Dao, this is one of the various elephant camps in the area which put on shows of work elephants displaying their forestry skills. Open from 8.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. daily. There is a show starting at 10.00 a.m. Tel. (6653) 29 8553, (6653) 86 2037 Website: www.chiangdaoelphancamp.com, www.elephanttrainingcenter.com

Tham Chiang Dao

Sacred Buddha images can be seen in the cave complex of Wat Chiang Dao at Km. 72 on Highway 107. The cave complex comprises five

caves, two of which are illuminated by electric lights, while the other three caves can be visited with the assistance of the local guides with lantern.

Doi Luang Chiang Dao

This cone-shaped limestone mountain in the Chiang Dao Wildlife Reserve rises to 2,195 metres above sea level, which makes it Thailand's third highest peak after Doi Inthanon and Doi Pha Hom Pok. The area is rich in highland flowers, birds, and butterflies. Permission to visit the mountain must be obtained from the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation. Contact Tel. (662) 562 0760 or visit www.dnp.go.th for more detail.

Huai Nam Dang National Park

The park, accessed via the Mae Malai-Pai road, covers an area of 180 sq. kms. in the Mae Taeng,



Doi Ang Khang

Chiang Dao, and Wiang Haeng districts of Chiang Mai province and Pai district of Mae Hong Son province. Forested highland ranges and panoramic views are among the attractions. Contact Tel. (662) 562 0760 or visit www.dnp.go.th for more detail.

Doi Ang Khang

Often referred to as “Thailand’s Little Switzerland”, Doi Ang Khang is some 163 kms. north of Chiang Mai and offers breathtaking scenery and cool climate all year round. Trekking, mountain biking, enjoying the sight of the blooming Thai Cherry Blossoms, are some of the activities that can be done here. Restaurants, coffee shops, and several kinds of accommodation are also available. This is also the location of a Royal agricultural station, which is a demonstration site for the research and cultivation of flowering plants, temperate fruit trees, vegetables and other crops under the patronage of H.M. King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

Doi Pha Hom Pok

Awarded Thailand Tourism Award for Outstanding Natural Attraction, Doi Fa Hom Pok is the second tallest mountain in Thailand. Abundant with natural resources, this mountain is a great place to be mesmerized by the spectacular sight of sea of fog in the morning, as well as to enjoy bird watching activity. Many types of accommodation are available; please contact Doi Pha Hom Pok National Park at Tel. (6653) 45 3517-8 ext.104, (662) 562 0760 or visit www.dnp.go.th for more detail.

Fang Hot Springs

Located at Ban Pin, 8 kms. northwest of Fangtown, 50 hot springs occupy a 10-acre forest setting. Three of them boil continuously with

water temperatures of 90 to 100 degrees Celsius.

Ban Tha Ton

Situated on the bank of the Kok River, close to the border with Myanmar, this small town is the location of the magnificent mountain top temple called Wat Tha Ton. However, it is best known as the starting point for long tail boats trips downriver to Chiang Rai, a thrilling 3 1/2 hour journey that passes hilltribe villages and jungle scenery. Bamboo rafts can also be hired for the 3 days journey for the same trip down the river.

East (Highways 118 & 1006)

San Kamphaeng

This district, 13 kms. to the east of Chiang Mai city, is famous for its silk and cotton weaving. The village showcases finished products as well as the silk-weaving process. The road from Chiang Mai to San Kamphaeng is lined with factories and souvenir shops selling woodcarving, silverware, earthenware, lacquerware, and cotton fabrics.

San Kamphaeng Hot Springs

Situated 36 kms. from Chiang Mai city, San Kamphaeng Hot Springs is an ideal destination for visitors who like to take a short trip from town to enjoy a pleasant natural setting of trees and verdant hills. These hot springs are famous for its water with high sulphur content which possesses curative and restorative properties. Accommodation, a swimming pool, dining facilities and segregated mineral water bathing rooms are available. Nearby is Rung Arun Hot Spring Resort which offers bungalows, mineral baths and an excellent park setting.

Activities

Elephant Shows

Elephant shows are generally held in the morning at 9.40 a.m., and begin with elephants bathing before continuing with displays of forestry work and other skills. Elephant rides are usually available after the show. Some elephant camps offer mahout training course to those who would like to learn more and get a deeper understanding about the Thai elephants. Included in the course are learning the correct way to approach, command and ride the elephants. Open from 7.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. Tickets range between 80 to 1,000 baht (depending on activities).

Tha Phae Mae Taman and Pang Chang Mae Sa

Tel. (6653) 20 6247-48

www.maesaelephantcamp.com

Chiang Dao Elephant Training Centre

Tel. (6653) 29 8553, (6653) 86 2037

Pattara Elephant Farm

Tel. (668) 1992 2551, (668) 1671 0958

Heritage Walk

The centre of Chiang Mai town or what the locals called "Sadue Mueang Chiang Mai" is full of ancient temples which illustrates the prosperity of this capital city of the Lanna Kingdom in the past, as well as reflects the unique identity of this charming city. The best time for to stroll along the town is in the morning and late afternoon to avoid the heat from the sun.

Mountain Biking

Mountain biking is widely available on several routes in Chiang Mai and the hills beyond. For more information, please visit www.tourismthailand.org/chiangmai.

Homestay at Ban Mae Kampong

The village of Ban Mae Kampong, some 50 kms. east of Chiang Mai in Mae On district, is situated in a mountainous area with lush jungle surroundings. Here visitors can experience real Thai village life, as well as enjoy several activities. Nearby attractions include waterfalls, a cotton weaving village and the Huai Hong Khrai Royal Agricultural Station. To make a reservation, please contact Tel. (6653) 31 5111, (6653) 31 5113, (668) 5675 4598 or www.mae-kampong.com.

Trekking

One of the best ways to experience both the natural environment and the unique culture of the northern region's hilltribes in Chiang Mai is by trekking. Of particular interest are the six major hilltribes which inhabit the highlands, the largest group being the Karen, followed by the Hmong, Lahu, Yao, Akha and Lisu. Each tribe has its own distinctive spiritual beliefs, ceremonial attire, languages, customs, rituals, dances and agricultural practices. Popular "jungle treks" last from 2 to 7 days and take trekkers through forested mountains and high valleys and meadows, as well as visits to more remote high-altitude hilltribe settlements for overnight stays. The best guides are hilltribe youths who customarily speak English, Thai and at least three tribal dialects. Treks commonly feature travel by foot, sometimes by boat, elephant-back, horse-back or jeep, or frequently a combination of two or three modes of transportation. Visitors are advised to contact the Tourist Police (at 75 Chiang Mai-Lamphun Road, Tel. 0 5324 7318) or the TAT for information on the most reliable trekking companies. And remember, for trekker's protection, all treks must be registered with the Tourist Police.



Umbrella Painting

Visitors should remember to:

- Respect hilltribe beliefs and religious symbols and structures.
- Dress modestly. Hilltribe people are generally modest and inappropriate attire may offend them.
- Ask permission before photographing someone. Some villages do not permit photography.
- Refrain from trading Western medicines and articles of clothing. Gifts; such as, pens, paper, needles, thread and cloth are acceptable.

Extreme Sports

The other side of the culturally rich city of Chiang Mai is numerous extreme sports opportunities amidst the fascinating natural surroundings; such as, bungee jumping, white-water rafting, ATV racing, and playing paintball.

For more information regarding these extreme sports, contact Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Chiang Mai Office at Tel. (6653) 24 8604, (6653) 27 6140-1

SPECIAL EVENTS

Bo Sang Umbrella Festival

January

Held at the Bo Sang Handicraft Centre in January, the festival features paper products, particularly painted paper parasols, cultural shows, beauty contests and a parade showing traditional ways of life.

Chiang Mai Flower Festival

February

Nong Buak Hat Park, Amphoe Mueang

If you are obsessed with beautiful flowers and decorative plants, this is the festival for you. Experience these beautiful flower-decorated



Chiang Mai Songkran Festival

floats and a magnificent tapestry of floral splendor that blankets the land. There are also agricultural exhibitions, floral contents, and product sales by local groups of housewives.

Website: www.tourismthailand.org

Chiang Mai Songkran Festival

April

Partake in this ancient spectacle in Chiang Mai with merit-making activities, a procession of Buddha images and bathing rituals, the sprinkling of water to seek the blessing of elders, sand-stupa building, folk games, Lanna cultural shows and water throwing.

Website: www.songkran.net, www.tourismthailand.org

Doi Suthep Pilgrimage

May

The important Buddhist festival of Visakha Puja

is celebrated with a candlelit procession to the temple on Doi Suthep.

Chiang Mai Yi Peng Festival

November

Participate in the launching of lanterns to worship Phrathat Chulamani, and take in the competition of a Yi Peng procession, as well as Lanna cultural performances and various forms of entertainment.

Website: www.loikrathong.net, www.tourismthailand.org

ACCOMMODATION

Chiang Mai offers a comprehensive selection of hotels and resorts in all price categories. A full list of accommodation choices can be obtained from the TAT office Tel. (6653) 24 8604, (6653) 27 6140-1 or visit www.tourismthailand.org.

LOCAL PRODUCTS

Without a doubt, Chiang Mai is Thailand's centre for exquisite and quality handicrafts, both traditional and modern, hilltribe handiwork and antiques. Top buys include:

Cottons & Silks

Chiang Mai offers first-class cottons and silks, which are of incomparable quality and suitable for various fashion and furnishing applications. The largest possible selection is available in San Kamphaeng.

Umbrellas/Parasols

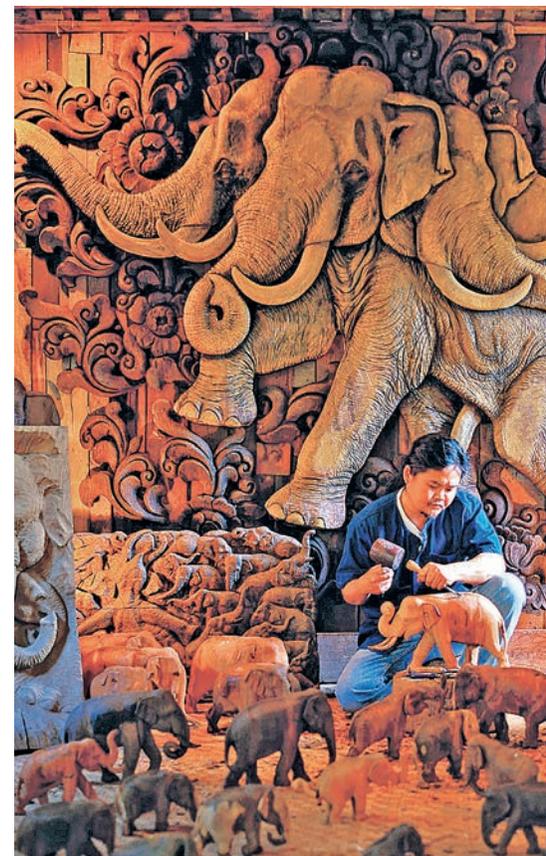
These are inextricably associated with Bo Sang where villagers have been engaged in their manufacture for at least 200 years. All materials, silks, cottons, Sa paper (manufactured from the bark of the mulberry tree) and bamboo are produced or found locally. Visitors to Bo Sang will see literally hundreds of designs and sizes ranging from the miniature to the gigantic.

Silverware

The finest Thai silverware is made in Chiang Mai, where certain families have practiced these delicate works of art for several generations. Traditional skills and a guaranteed content of at least 92.5% pure silver invest bowls, receptacles and decorative items with authentic value. Silver shops are concentrated on Wua Lai Road, where the artisans and their families live.

Lacquerware

Typified by striking black and gold designs, lacquer enhances items made of wood, bamboo, metal, paper and baked clay in the form of receptacles, ornaments and different souvenirs.



Wood Carving

Furniture/Woodcarving

Woodcarving is a traditional northern Thai art featured in numerous temples, while in modern times it has been increasingly used to embellish furniture-screens, chairs, tables, beds, indeed anything bearing a wooden surface large enough to be carved. Chiang Mai's Ban Thawai village in Hang Dong district is a major centre of furniture making. Principal woods used in the carving include teak, rosewood and rattan.



Pottery

Hilltribe Products

These include silver ornaments, from bracelets, necklaces, and pendants to pipes of intricate design, and richly embroidered items including tunics, jackets, bags, purses, caps, and dress lengths.

Pottery

Chiang Mai is a major centre of Thailand's pottery industry. Prized items include high-fired celadon which is produced in many forms, including dinner sets, lamp bases and decorative items.

HOW TO GET THERE

By Air

Thai Airways International operates daily flights from Bangkok to Chiang Mai, tel. (662) 356 1111 or website: www.thaiairways.com.

Bangkok Airways operates daily flights from Bangkok to Chiang Mai, Tel. (662) 270 6699 or Hotline 1771. Website: www.bangkokair.com

Air Asia operates daily flights from Bangkok to Chiang Mai.

Tel. (662) 515 9999 Website: www.airasia.com

Nok Air operates daily flights from Bangkok to Chiang Mai, Tel. 1318. Website: www.nokair.com

Thai Lion Air also operates daily flights.

Tel. (662) 529 9999 Website: www.lionairthai.com

By Rail

The State Railways of Thailand operates daily services from Bangkok Railway Station (Hua Lamphong). Trains leave for Chiang Mai 5 times a day between 8.30 a.m. and 10.00 p.m. Tel. 1690 Website: www.railway.co.th

By Bus

The 10-hour journey from Bangkok can be made by air-conditioned bus departing the Bangkok Bus Terminal on Kamphaeng Phet II Road. Tel. (662) 936 2852-66 Website: www.transport.co.th

By Car

From Bangkok, take Highway 32 to Nakhon Sawan, then Highway 1 through Kamphaeng Phet and Tak to Lampang, from where Highway 11 leads to Chiang Mai, a total distance of 696 kms.



Silverware Carving



Horse-drawn carriages

LAMPANG

Rich in archaeological and architectural evidence reflecting the ancient civilisations of Hariphunchai, Lanna and Myanmar, Lampang shows a great diversity in culture and possesses considerable historical interest. Lampang covers an area of 12,534 sq. kms., with its provincial capital, famous for its horse-drawn carriages, located 100 kms. southeast of Chiang Mai and 600 km. north of Bangkok.

Set in the Wang River basin, the province has less spectacular highland landscapes than Chiang Mai, and its main attraction is cultural rather than scenic. It has been a cultural hub since the 7th century, when it was part of the Mon Kingdom of Hariphunchai and in the early 20th century was the centre of the teak trade, an important product during which time Burmese influences were prevalent.

Attractions in Lampang include several well-preserved temples that display a blend of Thai and Burmese architectural styles, while a short distance outside town is Wat Phrathat Lampang Luang, arguably the single most fascinating temple in the North. Moreover, Lampang is in its relaxed atmosphere and lifestyles more typically and traditionally Thai than Chiang Mai, and shows little change in spite of the growth of tourism. Blending cultural interest with nature conservation is Lampang's remarkable Elephant Conservation Centre. Elephants played a major role as beasts of burden during the heydays of the teak industry, and although that era has passed, a number of the elephants have been given a new home at the centre, where visitors can see demonstrations of their forestry skills, as well as the more recent accomplishments of elephants as painters and musicians.



Wat Phra Kaeo Don Tao

CITY ATTRACTIONS

Horse-Drawn Carriages

Lampang is the only province in Thailand still retaining horse-drawn carriages as a means of transport within the city. Visitors can hire such vehicles to tour places like markets, traditional houses along the river bank and the numerous temples in town.

Wat Phra Kaeo Don Tao

This historic temple, on Phra Kaeo Road, was where the Emerald Buddha (now in Bangkok) was once enshrined. Structures of note in the extensive temple compound include a large Chedi believed to be containing the hair of the Lord Buddha, a Burmese-style Mondop, an old Wihan housing a reclining Buddha image, and a museum exhibiting ancient artefacts of the Lanna era.

Wat Si Rong Mueang

To the west of town is this Burmese-style temple built in 1905, at the height of Lampang's teak trade, when many Burmese traders



Wat Si Rong Mueang



Wat Pha Fang



Wat Si Chum



Wat Chedi Sao

and forestry experts came to the town. The roof of the main chapel has several overlapping gables, reflecting typical of Burmese religious architecture, while the whole temple is ornate with elaborate woodcarving and plaster designs adorned with coloured glass mosaics.

Wat Pha Fang

Located on Sanam Bin Road, this 19th-century temple has a large golden Chedi containing the relics of the Lord Buddha that was brought from Myanmar in 1906. The extensive Preaching Hall is made of wood with Burmese-style multi-tiered roofs.

Wat Si Chum

Wat Si Chum, on Si Chum Road, has a small ordination hall typical of the Burmese style in its multi-tiered roofs, intricately carved eaves and coloured glass mosaic. By contrast, the preaching hall, rebuilt after a fire in 1992, is rather plain except for its mural which depicts the story of the fire and the rebuilding

of the temple, as well as showing rural domestic scenes of considerable charm. A community of Burmese monks still resides at Wat Si Chum.

Wat Chedi Sao

About 5 kms. from town on the Lampang-Chae Hom road, Wat Chedi Sao is distinguished by 20 (sao means "twenty" in northern Thai) whitewashed Chedi each fashioned in Lanna-Burmese style. A Lanna-style Buddha statue is also enshrined here.

Wat Pongsanuk Tai

Awarded UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation, Wat Pongsanuk Tai, which is located in Wiang Nuea district, in contrast to the Burmese-style temples that are present in the surrounding area, displays pure Lanna style of architecture. The most remarkable features are the Chedi and superb wooden Mondop that preserves the essence of Lanna architectural genius.

Old Houses

Thanon Talat Kao or "Old Market Road", which runs parallel to the Wang River, was once the town's business centre. Along this road lined Lanna-style homes with distinctive roofs and Chinese shop houses which are characterised by typical paneled wooden folding doors with filigree fanlights over the top.

Kat Kongta

A prosperous market in the past, located on Thanon Talat Kao, Kat Kongta today is one of the several important cultural attractions in Lampang. During weekdays, visitors get to enjoy absorbing the charm of the ancient architecture, arts and culture that have been well-preserved. Over the weekends, this road is turned into a walking street where visitors get to experience a more vibrant local lifestyle.

OUT-OF-CITY ATTRACTIONS

Wat Phrathat Lampang Luang

Situated some 20 kms. southwest of town in

Ko Kha district, Wat Phrathat Lampang Luang is one of the finest examples of Lanna religious architecture in the Northern region. Raised on a grassy mound and surrounded by thick walls, it looks very much the stronghold it once was. The spacious compound is dominated by a huge Chedi of the 15th century, measuring 45-metre high and 24-metre wide at its base, which enshrines the relic of the Lord Buddha. The open-sided main Wihan is an equally fine structure with many notable features, including some exquisite murals on wooden panels below the roof eaves. Enshrined in a compound adjacent to Wat Phrathat Lampang Luang is the revered green jasper image of Phra Kaeo Don Tao, widely held to have magical powers.

Wat Lai Hin Luang

Located in Ko Kha district, Wat Lai Hin Luang is one of Lampang's significant historic temples aging several hundred years. The magnificent architecture of this temple reflects the local artisan's ability to create delicate artwork and



Wat Phrathat Lampang Luang

apply their belief to the decoration of the Wihan, Chedi, Ubosot, arches and cloisters.

Wat Phrathat Chom Ping

Located around 14 km. from Ko Kha district office, Wat Phrathat Chom Ping is another venerable age-old temple of Lampang. The unique feature of this temple is the hole in the window that acts as a camera obscurer and projects natural-colour reflection of the Phrathat on the floor inside the ubosot, during both day and night.

Elephant Conservation Centre

Awarded Thailand Tourism Award for Outstanding Natural Attractions, this important conservation centre is in the Thung Kwian forest park in Hang Chat district, about 32 kms. from Lampang town on the way to Chiang Mai. Demonstrations of elephant training and forestry skills are staged two or three times a day. In recent years, the elephants have also been given scope to paint and to play musical instruments, performances of which are quite remarkable.



Wat Lai Hin Luang

Paintings by elephants are for sale. The centre also provides health care for the elephants. Tel. 05424 7871-6 Website: www.thailandelevator.org

Doi Khun Tan National Park

The Khun Tan mountain range forms a natural boundary between Lamphun and Lampang provinces. The most prominent feature of this national park is the Thailand's longest railroad tunnel that runs for a distance of 1,352 metres. It is possible to walk from the Khun Tan Station up the mountain, a distance of about 7 kms. with four rest areas on the way. Visitors may also camp overnight but must bring their own food. The best time to make the trip is between November and February when the weather is fine and cool. For more information, please contact the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation at Tel. (662) 562 0760 or visit www.dnp.go.th.

Chao Pho Pratu Pha Shrine

Located about 50 kms. from town on the Lampang-Ngao road near the Km. 650 marker,



Wat Phrathat Chom Ping

this sacred shrine is covered with offerings to honour the legend of Chao Pho Pratu Pha, a great warrior of the Lampang ruler. He reputedly died fighting Burmese invaders with his two swords still clutched in his hands, his body propped against the hillside, and the attackers were so frightened by the sight that they withdrew.

Khuean Kio Lom

Located 38 kms. from town, take the Lampang-Ngao road and turn left at Km. 623-624 marker, then continue for a further kilometre. Constructed for irrigation purposes, this scenic reservoir is suitable for boating or rafting. At least a half-day tour is suggested and visitors are

welcomed to stay overnight on a floating raft-house. Places to see include cliffs, isles and a fishing village.

Tham Pha Thai National Park

Some 60 kms. from town between Mueang and Ngao districts, the park features a number of caves with picturesque stalactites and stalagmites.

Ban Chang Luang

This facility, at 33 Mu 9, Ban Khoi in Tamboon Ban Rong near the Phayao-Lampang road, was established by woodcarver Khru Kam-ai Dejduangta to showcase his work and serve as an artisan's training centre.



Elephant Conservation Centre



Chae Son National Park

Chae Son National Park

The park, around 66 kms. from Lampang in Amphoe Mueang Pan, is a picturesque area of forested mountains and includes several waterfalls, caves, famous hot springs with bathing facilities, as well as nature study trail. To go there, take Highway No. 1035 and make a left turn at Km. 59, then proceed for another 17 kms. For more information, please contact the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation at Tel. (662) 562 0760 or visit www.dnp.go.th.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Khantok Chang Fair February

Organised on the first Friday and Saturday of February at the Elephant Conservation Centre, the fair features an elephant show, while the elephants are treated to a feast of fruits and

vegetables presented on a Tok, a traditional Lanna food tray.

Luang Wiang Lakhon Fair

Late October – early November

Held immediately prior to the Loi Krathong Festival in late October to early November around Wat Phra Kaeo Don Tao and Wat Phrathat Lampang Luang, the fair celebrates Lampang's history, customs and traditions.

LOCAL PRODUCTS

Lampang's top buys include ceramics, widely regarded as being of the best quality in Thailand, hand-woven cotton and woodcarving, a major cottage industry at Tambon Na Khrua in Mae Tha district, and traditional Sa paper made from a type of soft wood, a specialty of Ban Nam Thong.

HOW TO GET THERE

By Air

Bangkok Airways and Nok Air operate Bangkok – Lampang flights on a daily basis, for Bangkok Airways, contact 1771 or visit www.bangkokair.com. For Nok Air, contact 1318 or www.nokair.com for more information.

By Rail

Trains depart from Bangkok's Railway Station to Lampang daily.

Tel. 1690 Website: www.railway.co.th

By Bus

Both air-conditioned and non air-conditioned buses to Lampang leave Bangkok Bus Terminal on Kamphaeng Phet II Road daily.

Tel. (662) 936 2852-66 Website: www.transport.co.th



Elephant Conservation Centre

By Car

From Bangkok, take Highway 32 to Nakhon Sawan and then Highway 1 to Lampang via Kamphaeng Phet and Tak, a total distance of 599 kms.



Wat Phrathat Hariphunchai

LAMPHUN

Renowned for its productive longan orchards, its quality hand-woven silk and cotton, and its enchanting old-world charm, Lamphun has a long history and authentic Lanna culture that are the greatest attraction for travellers.

With its provincial capital just 26 kms. south of Chiang Mai, Lamphun is a small province of 4,506 sq. kms. The town of Lamphun was originally the centre of the Mon Kingdom, known as Hariphunchai and believed to have been founded in the late 7th or early 8th century AD. The first and most famous ruler of Hariphunchai was Queen Chamma Thewi, whose legendary amorous and diplomatic exploits are the subject of numerous Lanna folk tales. Independence was finally lost in the late 13th century, when Lamphun was taken by King Mengrai and incorporated into his Lanna Kingdom.

CITY ATTRACTIONS

Wat Phrathat Hariphunchai

Situated in the centre of town, Wat Phrathat Hariphunchai dates from the early 12th century, when it was founded during the reign of King Athitayarat, a descendant of Queen Chamma Thewi. Its dominant feature is the 46-metre-tall golden Chedi, which was rebuilt in 1443. Also of note are the ancient-style brick arches adorned with fine designs, a pair of sculptured lions at the door, a square-shaped Chedi and a Khmer-style Buddha statue.

Hariphunchai National Museum

Located almost opposite Wat Phrathat Hariphunchai on Inthayongyot Road, the museum exhibits prehistoric human skeletons and art objects from the Dvaravati, Hariphunchai, Lanna and Rattanakosin periods.



Wat Chamma Thewi

Open Wednesday-Sunday from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

Tel. (6653) 51 1186

Phra Nang Chamma Thewi Statue

Situated in the Nong Dok Public Park, the statue honours Phra Nang Chamma Thewi who is the first ruler of Hariphunchai.

Suthewa Rusi Statue

In front of the Town Hall, the statue relates to a legend that a rusi, or ascetic, was the actual founder of Hariphunchai. According to the tale, the rusi, as an ascetic refraining from worldly affairs, invited Phra Nang Chamma Thewi, a daughter of the King of Lop Buri, to ascend the throne and helped her to establish Buddhism in the land.

Wat Chamma Thewi

Commonly referred to as Wat Ku Kut, the temple on the Lamphun-San Pa Tong Road is believed to be built around the 8th or 9th century and was rebuilt in 1218. The Chedi is a square-structure, similar to that found at Bodhgaya



Wat Mahawan

in India, and reputedly enshrines the ashes of Queen Chamma Thewi. Surrounding the Chedi are niches holding a total of 60 Buddha statues.

Wat Mahawan

On the road parallel to the old city wall to the west of town, Wat Mahawan houses the image of Phra Rot Lamphun, a Nak Prok statue (statue with Naga serpent overhead), which serves as the model for a famous votive tablet.

Wat Phra Yuen

This temple is famous for its Ku Chang Ku-Ma Chedi, the chedi which was built to commemorate Queen Chamma Thewi's war elephant and her son's steed. Surrounded the Chedi on all four sides are standing statues.

Ban Nong Chang Khun

Located around 8 kms. before Lamphun and with a further 7 kms. after a right turn, this is the

most famous longan-growing area in the country. The fruits are in season from July to August.

OUT-OF-CITY ATTRACTIONS

Pa Sang

The district of Pa Sang is a handicraft centre and famous for its handmade cotton, produced primarily in the village of Ban Nong Ngueak. Also at this village is an ancient temple noted for its fine architecture with the Burmese-style influences.

Ban Hong

This is the site of a 1,400-year-old community dating back to the Hariphunchai Kingdom. Located some 40 kms. south of Lamphun town, it offers a scenic and delightful vista of green fields and mountains. Ban Hong is also the location of several old temples built in indigenous styles, such as Wat Phra Chao Ton Luang, with its 600-year-old Buddha statue, and



Wat Phra Yuen

Wat Pa Puai and Wat Dong Rusi, both with 100-year-old wooden scripture halls. Among the natural attractions in the area is Tham Luang Pha Wiang, a cave some 15 kms. south of the district town with oddly-shaped stalactites.

Wat Phrabat Huai Tom

This is the largest temple in Li district, about 5 kms. off Highway 106 at Km. 47, which boasts a large Lanna-style Chedi and an extensive place of worship built in laterite by Karens living in the vicinity who were admirers of the highly revered Phra Khru Ba Chaiwongsa.

Mae Ping National Park

Covering an area of over 1,000 sq. kms., the park's main feature is the Ping River, which flows through the forests and sheer cliffs within the park. Certain parts of the waterway spread out to form reservoir-like bodies of water with numerous small islands and rapids. Other attractions are the 7-level Ko Luang

waterfall and the fascinating stalactites and stalagmites which are found inside the limestone caves. For more information, please contact the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation at Tel. (662) 562 0760 or visit www.dnp.go.th.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Song Nam Phrathat Hariphunchai

May

Held in May to celebrate the province's principal religious site, this is Lamphun's best-known annual event.

Longan Fair

August

The fair is held annually in August, showcasing the province's most famous fruit with a beautifully decorated longan parade and contests.



Namtok Ko Luang, Mae Ping National Park



Hand-woven cotton products of Lamphun

LOCAL PRODUCTS

Best buys include Pha Mai Yok Dok Silk, an elaborately hand-woven fabric originally used in the northern Royal court, available at Tambon Wiangyong of Mueang district. Those interested in ancient hand-woven cotton products can enjoy shopping at Ban Don Luang, the most famous centre of hand-woven cotton products of Lamphun. Also popular are hand-made cotton fabrics, with the market at Pa Sang offering a large selection, and carved wooden items; such as, animal figurines, dolls, utensils and decorative items, for which the main production centre is in Mae Tha district.

HOW TO GET THERE

By Air

Visitors can fly from Bangkok to Chiang Mai and then take a bus which leaves Chang Phueak Bus Terminal every 15 minutes.

Travel time from Chiang Mai to Lamphun is 45 minutes. For airline information, please refer to the Chiang Mai section.

By Rail

Trains leave Bangkok's Hua Lamphong Railway Station to Lamphun on a daily basis. The travelling time is around 10-12 hours.

Tel. 1690 Website: www.railway.co.th

By Bus

Both air-conditioned and non air-conditioned buses depart from Bangkok Bus Terminal on Kamphaeng Phet II Road to Lamphun daily. Travel time is about 9 hours.

Tel. (662) 936 2852-66 Website: www.transport.co.th

By Car

From Bangkok, take Highway 1 to Nakhon Sawan and Lampang and then turn onto Highway 11 and proceed to Lamphun, a total distance of 670 kms.



Wat Chong Kham and Chong Klang

MAE HONG SON

With stunning landscapes, waterfalls, caves and hill-tribe villages, Mae Hong Son is an ideal location for trekking, soft adventure travel and for those who love to seek the thrill of sweeping valley vistas.

Lying to the west of Chiang Mai and bordering Myanmar on its eastern flank, Mae Hong Son province covers an area of 12,681 sq. kms. of breathtaking mountains traversed by hidden valleys, each one a contender for Shangri-la.

The terrain of Mae Hong Son makes it one of Thailand's most remote provinces and thus retains its own separate identity. At the same time, the provincial capital is readily accessible by air and road. Nestled in its own lovely valley and surrounded by hills that are often shrouded in early morning mist, this small town is one of the most enchanting places in the entire North. Burmese-style temples, a picturesque lake, a hilltop vantage point and a bustling morning market afford scope for leisurely sights-seeing, while a choice of hotels makes it an excellent base for excursions into the surrounding countryside.

CITY ATTRACTIONS

Wat Phrathat Doi Kong Mu

Atop the hill to the west of town, the temple is distinguished by its two Burmese-style Chedi, the larger one built in 1860 and the smaller in 1874. The site also offers magnificent panoramic views of Mae Hong Son and the surrounding hills.

Wat Phra Non

This temple at the foot of Doi Kong Mu houses a 12-metre long reclining Buddha casted in the Thai Yai (Shan) style in 1875. Also notable are the two large sculpted lions standing side by side,



Wat Phrathat Doi Kong Mu

providing the passage for people who go up to pay homage to the relic of the Lord Buddha which is enshrining on Doi Kong Mu.

Wat Kam Ko

Located opposite Wat Phra Non, this temple dates from 1890 and is architecturally distinguished by its roofed passageway from the entrance to the Burmese-style Wihan. It also stores texts in Thai Yai script chronicling their history.



Wat Phra Non

Wat Hua Wiang

Also known as Wat Klang Mueang, the temple is located right in the centre of town on Sihanat Bamrung Road next to the Morning Market. It was built in 1863 and enshrines the beautifully adorned Phra Chao Phalarakhaeng Buddha image, a replica of a statue in Mandalay, Myanmar.

Wat Chong Kham

Situated close to the banks of the town's small Chong Kham Lake, the temple was built in 1827 by Thai Yai artisans and houses a large Buddha statue with a lap width of 4.85 metres cast by Burmese craftsmen.

Wat Chong Klang

Located next to Wat Chong Kham, Wat Chong Klang is interesting for its replica of the Phra Phuttha Sihing Buddha image, the wooden figurines of humans and animals depicted in the Phra Vejsandon Jakata, which were made by Burmese craftsmen and brought to Mae Hong Son in 1857, and 100-year-old paintings on the glass about the Jakata and way of life of the local people.



Wat Kam Ko

Ban Huai Hi Community

Located in Tambon Huai Pu Ling, Amphoe Mueang, Ban Huai Hi Community has won the Thailand Tourism Award for outstanding Community-based Tourist Attraction. This Catholic influenced Pwakin-nyaw village is one of not many communities that use solar energy. Attractions include trekking amidst the natural trail, learning the Pwakin-nyaw's unique way of life, observing the cotton weaving and the blacksmith technique. Homestay accommodation is available.

OUT-OF-CITY ATTRACTIONS

Salawin National Park

Covering an area of 721 sq.kms., the park is on the banks of the Salween River on the Thai-Myanmar border, about 164 kms. south of Mae Hong Son town. This park is set in a well-reserved forest with the Salawin River passing through it. Transport can be hired for travel to Mae Sam Laep village (46 kms.) and then by boat to reach the park headquarters.



Wat Hua Wiang

A variety of accommodations is available. For more information, please contact the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation at Tel. (662) 562 0760 or visit www.dnp.go.th.

Tham Kaeo Komon Forest Park

Located at Khao Doi Thao, once known as Mae La Noi Calcite Cave, Tham Kaeo Komon Forest Park was discovered by the Mae Hong Son Mining Engineer. It is known for its fascinating

cave wall which is laminated with crystal of calcite which is especially beautiful when the glittering calcite makes a sparking effect to the light. There are only 3 such caves in the world, one in Mae Hong Son, Thailand, and the other two are in China and Australia.

Thung Bua Tong (Wild Sunflower Field)

These wild sunflowers bloom during November and carpet the entire landscape of Doi Mae U-kho in Khun Yuam district with brilliant yellow.

Khun Yuam Indigenous Cultural Center

Located at Km.200 on Highway 108, the centre has a considerable collection of Thai Yai and other hill-tribe handicrafts. It also displays military accessories and equipment of the Japanese army which entered Khun Yuam district during World War II.

Pha Bong Hot Spring

Located on Highway 108, about 11 kms. from town, Pha Bong Hot Spring provides more than just a relaxing leisure activity to the visitors as the mineral water at this spring has therapeutic value as well.

Phu Klom

Phu Klom or Phu Klom Country Club is known for its hot mineral water and natural black mud from the hot springs. The Tourism Authority of Thailand included Phu Klom in the Unseen in Thailand programme, as well as Spa in Paradise campaign. This is the source of the boiling black mud, which is between 60-140 degree Celsius, without sulfur smell and full of therapeutic values that are highly beneficial for the skin and blood circulation. Visitors can enjoy getting a facial mud mask and body mud mask, as well as buying the mineral mud



Thung Bua Tong (Wild Sunflower Field)



Tham Pla - Pha Suea National Park

products back home.

Tham Pla - Pha Suea National Park

About 17 kms. from town on Highway 1095 (Mae Hong Son-Pai Road) the park is a pleasant area of streams and woodland. A special feature of this national park is the Tham Pla, which is a river cave filled with carp-like Phla Mung or Pla Klamg fish, which is believed to belong to the gods. For more information, please contact the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation at Tel. (662) 562 0760 or visit www.dnp.go.th.

Namtok Pha Suea

These large falls are located in Tambon Mok Champae, about 17 kms. from town on Highway 1095, then a left turn at Ban Rak Thai and

a further 20 kms. beyond the village. Another 5 km. away are the hill-tribe villages of Na Pa Paek and Mae O on the Thai-Myanmar border.

Ban Rak Thai

Situated 44 kms. from town in Tambon Mok Cham Pae, Ban Rak Thai is a Chinese Yunnan village founded by the Kuomintang (KMT) Chinese soldiers. At 1,776 metres above sea level, this location is ideal for tea and temperate plant cultivation. This village is famous for the breathtaking scenery of the tea plantation, tasty Yunnan's cuisine; such as pork legs braised in brown sauce and steamed bun. Activities include trekking along the trail and horse-riding across the border to Myanmar. Nature lovers would enjoy living in the earth house which is situated by the river.

Ban Huai Suea Thao, Ban Nai Soi, and Ban Nam Phiang Din

Visitors that are interested in learning more about the culture of the hill-tribe villagers can visit the 3 famous long-neck Karen villages in Mae Hong Son. Ban Huai Suea Thao is the one closest to town, Ban Nai Soi is the biggest long-neck Karen village, and Ban Nam Phiang Din is located by the Pai River and required a boat trip to get to the village.

Ban Mae Lana

Awarded the most Outstanding Community-based Tourist Attraction, Ban Mae Lana is around 200 years old village that has been preserving their authentic local tradition. There is a natural trail for trekking to see

the Mae Lana Cave, the longest cave in Thailand, and Pakarang Cave. Homestay accommodation is available.

Tham Nam Lot

In a forest area in Pang Mapha district, 77 kms. from town, the main attraction is a 1-km-long cave with a stream running through it and beautiful stalactite and stalagmite formations. Also discovered here were 2,000-year-old remains of utensils and coffins.

Pai

Amphoe Pai, located 111 kms. from Mae Hong Son, is a quiet, relaxed little town amidst the superb scenery, which recently becomes popular amongst the tourists. Enclosed by the spectacular mountain ranges,



Tham Nam Lot



Pai

Pai offers several activities to the visitors; such as, trekking, whitewater rafting, visiting hill-tribe villages, relaxing in the hot springs, viewing the sea of fog that carpeted across the valley, and shopping at the walking street. Accommodations range from backpacker's guesthouse to five-star resorts. The cool temperature coupled with the magnificent surroundings make Pai a base for exploring several natural attractions of the area. Pai can be visited throughout the year, but the high-season being from November to February, when the relatively cool climate combines with the magnificent surrounding and liveliness of the tourists, make Pai a colourful destination.

River Rafting on the Pai River

The Pai River is the longest river of Mae Hong Son, originating from mountain ranges in Laos and flows through Pai district and eventually

joins the Salween River in Myanmar, a total distance of 180 kms. Several sectors are suitable for rafting and trips are organised by tour operators in Mae Hong Son town or in Pai. The best time for rafting is from October to March.

Tha Pai Hot Springs

Located 2 km. off Highway 1095 at Km. 87, the spring has an average temperature of 80 degrees Celsius. Steam from the spring permeates the area in the morning creating a fascinating sight.

Huai Nam Dang National Park

At Km. 65 on the Pai-Mae Malai road (Highway 1095) is a turn leading to the headquarters of the park. Visitors can spend the night in tents to wait for the spectacular views of sunrise and mist-shrouded mountain views in the morning. Attractions include the Huai Nam-



Poi Sang Long Procession

Dang Waterfall and spectacular sea of fog at Doi Chang Viewpoint. Cherry blossoms during January add charm to the attraction. For more information, please contact the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation at Tel. (662) 562 0760 or visit www.dnp.go.th.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Poi Sang Long Procession

March-May

This is a traditional Thai Yai mass ordination ceremony for novice monks in which the candidates, with their heads shaven and wrapped with Burmese-style head-cloth, don prince-like garments and jewels, and are taken on horseback or carried on shoulders to the city shrine.

Chong Phara Procession

October

Chong Phara are model castles made of wood and coloured paper and decorated with fruits, flags and lamps. On the full-moon day of the 11th lunar month, these castles are placed in the courtyard of houses and temples as a gesture to welcome the Lord Buddha on his return from giving sermons to his mother in heaven, according to traditional belief. Other activities to celebrate the occasion include dances with performers dressed in animal costumes.

Loi Krathong

October/November

In addition to traditional Loi Krathong celebrations around Chong Kham Lake, candle-lit krathong suspended from balloons are released at Wat Phrathat Doi Kong Mu.

Bua Tong Blossom Festival

November

Each year in November, the hill-tribes of Khun Yuam and Mae Sariang districts are filled with a host of golden Bua Tong blossoms. They are as yellow as daisies and almost as large as sunflowers. At Doi Mae U-kho, the blossoms are profuse, but only last for a month.

LOCAL PRODUCTS

The Mae Hong Son Royal Folk Arts and Crafts Training Centre offers a variety of hand-made products from woven fabrics to basketry. Website: www.maehongsonarts.com

HOW TO GET THERE

By Air

There is no direct flight from Bangkok to Mae Hong Son, although travellers may fly from Bangkok-Chiang Mai and then connect with a Chiang Mai-Mae Hong Son flight.

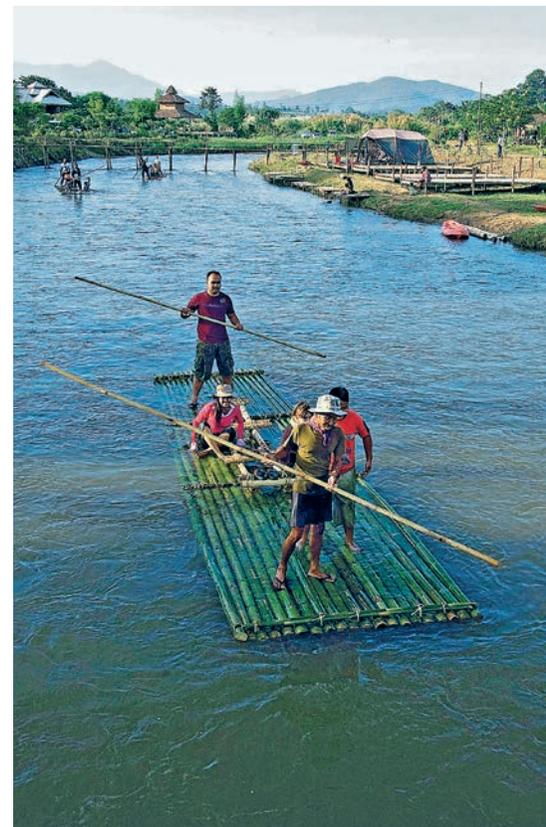
Kan Airlines operates flights from Chiang Mai to Mae Hong Son and from Chiang Mai to Amphoe Pai. For more information, contact Tel. (662) 551 6111 or visit www.kanairlines.com.

By Rail

There is no direct train to Mae Hong Son. Visitors are required to take the bus or car from Chiang Rai to Mae Hong Son. Trains leave Bangkok Railway Station to Chiang Mai on a daily basis. Contact 1690 or visit www.railway.co.th for more information.

By Bus

Both air-conditioned and non air-conditioned buses depart daily from Bangkok Bus Terminal on Kamphaeng Phet II Road to Mae



Rafting along the Pai River

Hong Son. Travel time is about 17 hours. Tel. (662) 936 2852-66

By Car

Mae Hong Son is 924 kms. from Bangkok, the route following Highways 1 and 11 to Chiang Mai and then either by Highway 108 or Highway 1095 via Pai.