

the ultimate
CHIANG RAI
travel guide



Why You Need to Visit Chiang Rai

Most people say there aren't many things to do in Chiang Rai. They're wrong, and I'm going to show you why.

All other Chiang Rai travel guides cover attractions near the town such as; White Temple, Black House, the Clock Tower. Sure, these are interesting, and you should visit them, but there is so much more to be discovered.

The reality is that most travellers don't go beyond the town, and really miss out loads of amazing things to do in Chiang Rai.

Chiang Rai has a very diverse culture. There are the people of Northern Thailand which speak their own dialect of Thai called *Lanna*. Then there are the countless ethnic villagers such as Lahu, Karen, and Hmong which have lived in the mountains around the borders of Cambodia, Laos, China and Thailand for centuries. They maintain age old traditions not seen elsewhere in Thailand.

The nature in Chiang Rai is stunning. While living there I discovered beautiful waterfalls, amazing mountain hikes, relaxing hot springs, and even a beach! I explored by longtail boat down and upriver, motorbiked off-beat trails in the national park, and cruised about town in a Tuk-Tuk after one too many beers.

Chiang Rai is no doubt an incredible place. Now I want to share my experience with you.

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Where is Chiang Rai?

Chiang Rai is in the far north of Thailand. It is the most northern province in Thailand, about 2 hours north of Chiang Mai by road (car, bus, motorbike).

That's right, there is more than one *Chiang* in the north of Thailand, and you're about to learn of more soon!

Chiang Rai borders the provinces of Chiang Mai, Lampang, and Phayao from southwest to southeast. You might never have heard of these and I suggest visiting them too if you have time.

Chiang Rai shares international borders with Laos and Myanmar. All three countries meet at the point known as *The Golden Triangle*.

Travel just another 130km north of Chiang Rai and you will reach Yunnan in China. Now you can imagine how diverse the culture in Chiang Rai is!

You should also know that “Chiang Rai” refers to the province in Thailand. “Mueang Chiang Rai” refers to the town itself within the province.

Mueang Chiang Rai is the largest town in the province, however there are quite a few other interesting towns like Mae Sai, Chiang Kong and Chiang Sean which we'll see later in the guide.

Mueang Chiang Rai is then broken down in though you will probably never use this information unless you are a geologist or something.



How to Get to Chiang Rai

Bus – Chiang Mai to Chiang Rai

The best way to get from Chiang Mai to Chiang Rai is the Green Bus. It is the quickest, most comfortable, and most frequent public transport option. Tickets start from 129 THB (USD 3) per person. A one-way journey takes about 3hrs.

There are multiple buses departing each day. This is the latest timetable from the GreenBus. [Pre-book tickets on 12GO Asia](#) to ensure you don't miss a seat.

Note that Chiang Rai has two bus terminals; Terminal 1 in the centre for local buses, and Terminal 2 6km away for intercity buses. A local bus connects the two terminals for 15 THB.

Slow Boat – Chiang Rai to Luang Prabang

The slow boat from Luang Prabang to Chiang Rai is a popular route for travellers heading from Thailand to Laos or vice versa. The slow boat departs from Huay Xai, a small border town 65km away. You will need to get a minivan from Chiang Rai's Bus Terminal 2 which takes about 1hr 30min.

Trains – None

Despite what others may tell you, there is no train to Chiang Rai. You can, however, take a train from Bangkok to Chiang Mai ([tickets and timetables](#)). After the 14-hour train, you then take the Green Bus from Chiang Mai to Chiang Rai.

Route 166 Chiangmai - Chiangrai

Chiangmai - Chiangrai			Chiangrai - Chiangmai		
Depart	Arrive	Class	Depart	Arrive	Class
6:45	9:45	V-Class	06:15	09:45	A-Class
7:15	10:35	X-Class	07:30	10:30	V-Class
8:15	11:15	V-Class	08:15	11:35	X-Class
08:45	12:05	X-Class	09:15	12:15	V-Class
09:15	12:45	A-Class	09:45	13:05	X-Class
09:45	13:05	X-Class	10:15	13:35	X-Class
10:00	13:20	X-Class	11:15	14:15	V-Class
10:30	13:30	V-Class	12:00	15:20	X-Class
11:00	14:20	X-Class	12:45	15:45	V-Class
11:30	14:50	X-Class	13:15	16:45	A-Class
12:15	15:15	V-Class	13:45	17:05	X-Class
12:30	16:00	A-Class	14:15	17:35	X-Class
13:00	16:00	V-Class	15:00	18:20	X-Class
14:15	17:35	X-Class	15:30	18:30	V-Class
15:00	18:20	X-Class	16:00	19:20	X-Class
15:45	18:45	V-Class	16:30	19:50	X-Class
17:00	20:20	X-Class	17:00	20:00	V-Class
17:30	21:00	A-Class	17:15	20:45	A-Class
18:00	21:00	V-Class	17:30	20:50	X-Class
(Fri,Sun)6:30pm	9:50pm	X-Class	18:00	21:00	V-Class
(Fri,Sun)7:00pm	10:20pm	X-Class	(Fri,Sun)6:00pm	9:00pm	V-Class
			(Fri,sun)6:45pm	10:05pm	X-Class
			(Fri,Sun)7:30pm	10:50pm	X-Class

Ticket Fee:

- V-Class 258 Baht
- X-Class 166 Baht
- A-Class 129 Baht

Flights – Domestic Routes

Chiang Rai has a domestic terminal with daily flights from major airports including Bangkok, Phuket and Chiang Mai. Popular budget airlines include:

- AirAsia Thailand (\$)
- Nok Air (\$\$)
- Thai Smile (\$\$\$)
- Bangkok Airways (\$\$\$)

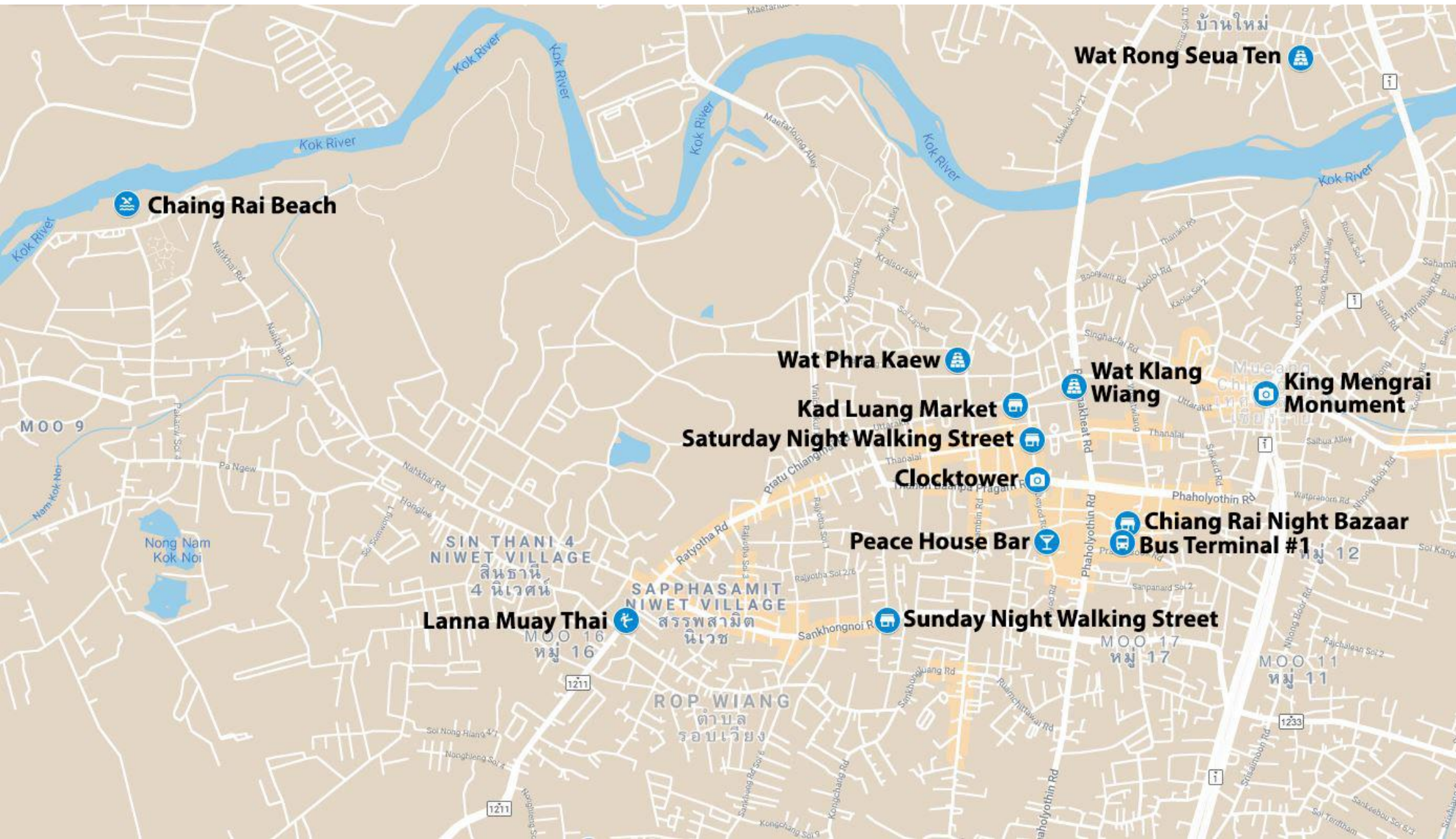
Bangkok to Chiang Rai – there are 6 daily flights with AirAsia, and another 5 daily flights with Not Air. The flight duration is 1hr 30 min direct. Flights typically cost less than USD 100 per person, one way, but are generally more expensive on public holidays and long weekends.

Hat Yai to Chiang Rai – there is 1 daily flight with AirAsia, and another 5 daily flights with Nok Air. The flight is just over 2hrs direct and typically costs about USD 140. It saves many hours of travel compared to the bus and train options.

Maps of Chiang Rai

On the next few pages I have included maps of Chiang Rai town and the province with loads of destinations pinned for your trip planning.

If you have an internet connection while traveling I highly suggest checking out my [interactive map of Chiang Rai](#).



Attractions in Town

Temples, markets, monuments, and coffee shops are all within walking distance of town centre (i.e. the Clocktower). The following destinations are perfect for anyone making a quick stop in Chiang Rai, or for just wandering around town on a lazy day.

Wat Klang Wiang

Wat Klang Waing dates way back to the 15th century. Apart from the White Temple, this is one of the most ornate temples in Chiang Rai. It also marks the exact centre of town where you will find the city pillar.

Opening hours: 6am to 5pm

Get there: a 7 minute walk from the Clocktower along Rattanakhet Road

Wat Phra Kaew

Wat Phra Kaew (temple of the Emerald Buddha) is one of the oldest temples in all of Chiang Rai, dating way back to the 14th Century. This is the location where the Emerald Buddha statue was discovered which is now housed in Bangkok's Wat Phra Kaew (The Grand Palace).

Opening hours: 7am to 6pm

Get there: a 10 minute walk from the Clocktower along Kraisorasit Road



Chiang Rai Clocktower

The Chiang Rai clock tower is a popular monument and artwork to visit right in the centre of town. It is probably the most intricately designed round-a-bout in the world. The Chiang Rai clocktower was designed by the same artist who built the famous White Temple.

If you want to see the clock tower in all its glory, be sure to visit for the light show which kicks off every night at 7, 8, and 9 o'clock - bang on the hour. Don't be late, you will miss it.

Get there: centre of town, easy walking distance from almost everywhere.

Saturday Night Walking Street

The Saturday Night Walking Street is like the Chiang Mai Walking Street. A huge open-air market sprawls all over the road with loads of food, clothes, and other goods for sale. It is a fun place to hang out at night and an easy place to meet other travellers.

Opening hours: 5pm to just after midnight

Get there: a 5-minute walk from the Clocktower along Thanalai Road.

Sunday Night Walking Street

The Sunday Night Walking Street (Happy Street) is located just behind Chiang Rai hospital. It is quite similar to the Saturday Night Walking Street with lots of street stalls, food arts, and crafts. If you can't decide which of walking street to visit, just do both!

Opening hours: 5pm to about 11pm

Get there: less than a 10-minute walk from the Clocktower.

Chiang Rai Night Bazaar

The Chiang Rai Night Bazaar is a popular place to hang out at night for good food, cold beer, and live shows. Some nights there is live music, other nights there may be live theatre or Thai comedy shows. The stalls around the Chiang Rai Night Bazaar offer a wide range of handmade goods from the surrounding ethnic villages. You can also find other typical market type goods such as clothing, food, and painting by local artists.

Opening hours: 6pm to midnight daily (Monday to Sunday)

Get there: a 5-minute walk from the Clocktower.

Kad Luang Market

The Kad Luang Market is not so much as tourist hotspot as it is a massive local market. You will find all sorts of goods here such as clothing, electronic appliances, fresh fruit and vegetables, street food vendors, and oh so much more.

The best way to explore the market is simply to walk in and aimlessly wander around the small, almost claustrophobic alleyways. The market seamlessly merges into the morning market to make one huge hive of activity.

Watch out for the vendors selling fried chicken and roti. You have to visit late at night after a few beers on Jet Yod Road, you won't regret it.

Opening hours: different parts of it are open all day (24hrs)

Get there: a 5-minute walk from the Clocktower

King Mengrai Monument

The King Mengrai Monument is dedicated to King Mengrai who established the Lanna Kingdom of northern Thailand back in 1296. The ancient Lanna Kingdom included the region around Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai.

Opening hours: all day

Get there: a 15-minute walk from the Clocktower.



Chiang Rai Beach

Going to the beach in Chiang Rai sounds odd but it is simple, and a great local destination. This beach is not by the ocean obviously. Chiang Rai beach is located 4km outside of town along the banks of the Kok River.

It is safe to swim or tube down the river in the dry season from October to March. Be careful in the wet season as the current gets very strong.

After a swim you can get lunch and some drinks (water, shakes or beers) in one of the nice bamboo huts. Food and drinks are cheap and fresh.

Opening hours: open all day, don't swim at night

Get there: 10 minutes by motorbike or *songtaew*, or a 45-minute walk.

Train Muay Thai

Where better to start your Muay Thai future than in the north of Thailand? Lanna Fighting Muay Thai Gym teaches a traditional Lanna (northern) style of fighting. They focus more on posture and technique than on hardcore cardio. The trainers here have toured internationally fighting and performing traditional Muay Thai shows, so they really know their stuff.

A session typically runs for 1.5 hours which will leave you completely exhausted.



Temples

Discover the iconic White Temple and other lesser known Buddhist temples across town.



White Temple (Wat Rong Khun)

One of the most iconic destinations in Chiang Rai is the White Temple. The art on both the interior and exterior by local artist Chalermchai Kositpipat is incredible. In 2014 a huge earthquake shook Chiang Rai and damaged some of the work inside. The White Temple was closed for a while but restoration work is now ongoing and it is now reopened.

Opening hours: 6.30am to 6pm daily (Monday to Sunday)

How to get there: The White Temple is located 13km south of Chiang Rai. A taxi costs about 300THB one way. The cheaper option is to take the local blue bus from Chiang Rai Bus Terminal 1. The bus costs 20THB one way and takes about 20 minutes. The bus timetable is:

- Mornings: 06:15, 07:10, 08:10, 09:10.
- 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM bus every 30 minutes.
- Afternoons: 14:35, 15:10, 15:45, 16:20, 17:00

Blue Temple (Wat Rong Suea Ten)

Wat Rong Suea Teng is a more recent development in Chiang Rai. The temple was abandoned over 80 years ago, and restorations were complete in 2005. The temple is located about 2 kilometres north of town across the Kok River (much closer than the White Temple or Black House).

Opening hours: 8am to 5pm daily (Monday to Sunday).

Get there: For the adventurous the Blue Temple is walking or cycling distance from town. Otherwise it is a quick ride in a songtaew or a tuk tuk. Probably the better option.

Wat Phra That Doi

Little known to most tourists, Wat Phra That Doi is a temple built up on top of Khao Kwai (Buffalo Hill). The road to the top is steep, but the viewpoint is amazing with a beautiful view looking out over the rice fields of outer Chiang Rai. Visit around sunset for the best view.

Opening hours: open all day

Get there: a 10-minute motorbike or songtaew trip from town, or a 30-minute walk from town.

Black House (Baan Dam)

Many people refer to the Black House as the Black Temple thereby drawing a similarity to the White Temple. The Black House (Baan Dam) is actually not a temple but the house of the creative artist Thawan Duchanee. There are a few buildings to explore in the grounds of the Black House each hosting an odd collection of artefacts.

Opening hours: 9am to 5pm daily (Monday to Sunday). Closed for lunch midday to 1pm.

Get there: (1) charter a songtaew roundtrip from town for 300 THB (USD 10). (2) Take the Green Bus towards Mae Sai from Chiang Rai Bus Terminal 1 for 20 THB (USD 0.80), the one way and takes 20 minutes. Coming back, you will need to walk out to the main road and wave down any passing buss to hop on board, there is no bus stop here.

Waterfalls

There is no better way to appreciate Thailand's nature than to visit a waterfall. Hike through the jungle for an hour to find a 70-meter stream pouring over a cliff, or simply laze back in the gardens and take a cool dip in the water.



Khun Korn Waterfall

At over 70 metres, Khun Korn Waterfall is the tallest waterfall in northern Thailand. It is located in the Namtok Khun Korn Forest Park about 30km east of Chiang Rai. The waterfall is reached by a 1.5km trek through the forest. Be sure to have a shower right under the waterfall.

Get there: there is no public transport to the waterfall, you will need to hire a motorbike or charter a songtaew in town. The best place to do this is around the Clocktower or Jet Yod Road.

Opening hours: 8am to 4.30pm daily (Monday to Sunday). The waterfall can occasionally be closed after heavy rains in the wet season for safety (people have died here before).

Huay Mae Sai Waterfall

Huay Mae Sai Waterfall is a great small waterfall near Chiang Rai. Hardly anyone knows about it. This small two-tiered waterfall is located 19km from the town in the middle of the forest, nearby a nice Lahu Ethnic Hill Tribe.

There is a short 15 to 20-minute walk from the lower parking area to the Huay Mae Sai Waterfall, quite slippery when wet. At the end, you will find two levels Huay Mae Sai waterfall. The lower level has a deeper pool of water and is great for swimming. The upper level has a taller waterfall and a good place to sunbake on the rocks.

Get there: Huay Mae Sai waterfall is not known to many western tourists and is not offered on tour packages. The best way of getting to Huay Mae Sai waterfall is by motorbike or to arrange private transport. There is no public transport servicing this waterfall.

Opening hours: all day daily, there is no National Park administration

Huay Kaew Waterfall

The Huay Kaew Waterfall (location) is a beautiful two-tiered waterfall, located far out into the forest. Hardly any tourists make it out this far, and most that do are on long hiking tours to the Pha Soet Village, an Akha Hill Tribe. Do not confuse this with the Huay Kaew Waterfall in Chiang Mai.

The road to Huay Kaew Waterfall in Chiang Rai is a steep and badly potholed dirt/concrete trail. The route follows the Kok River before heading deep into the forest.

Near the end, you will pass tea plantations and the Pha Soet Village before arriving at a sign for the waterfall. There is a short and fairly easy walk from the village to the waterfall.

Get there: there is no public transport to Huay Kaew Waterfall. Hire a motorbike or charter a *songtaew* in town. The journey takes about 45 minutes one way. Only take a motorbike if you are a confident rider.

Opening hours: all day daily, there is no National Park administration

Pong Phrabat Waterfall

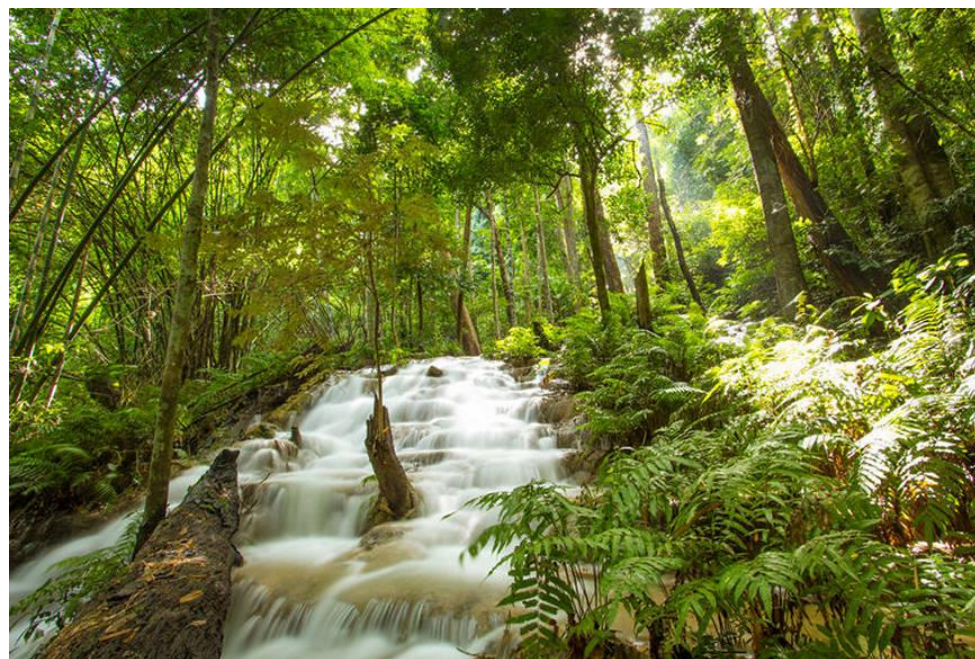
The Pong Phrabat waterfall is located 14km north of Chiang Rai in the Lam Nam Kok National Park. The entrance to the waterfall is at the end of a long road veering off to the mountains behind the Rajabhat University. You will find the National Park HQ at the end of the road. From there it is an easy walk to the Phong Phrabat Waterfall itself.

The waterfall is a small cascading stream, nothing like the huge Khun Korn Waterfall. There is a pool deep enough for swimming in, and some grass to lay back and relax in the forest.

The area nearby the National Park HQ makes for a great picnic location. You may see many locals hanging out here, especially students from the nearby Rajabhat University.

Get there: there is no public transport to Pong Phrabat Waterfall. Hire a motorbike or charter a *songtaew* in town. The journey will take about 25 minutes one way

Opening hours: 8am to 4.30pm daily (National Park opening hours)



Pu Kaeng Waterfall

Pu Kaeng Waterfall has 9 beautiful levels flowing through the jungle. The hike from bottom to top takes about 45 minutes one way. The trail is an adventure, slippery and overgrown, as not many people visit.

Pu Kaeng waterfall is located about 70km south of Chiang Rai near to Pan district, in the Doi Luang National Park. This is at least a half day trip.

Get there: Hire a motorbike or charter a *songtaew* in Chiang Rai. The journey takes about 1.5hrs one way following Phahonyothin Road south towards Chiang Mai. The waterfall sign is on the opposite side of the road.

Opening hours: 8am to 4.30pm daily (National Park opening hours)

Entry fees: National Park entry fees are 200 THB per person plus a vehicle entry fee.

Art Galleries

Chiang Rai is the art capital of Thailand with a huge range of talented artists living here turning out some amazing artworks from landscape painting to modern sculptures.

Art Bridge Chiang Rai

The Art Bridge Gallery is located at the turnoff to Chiang Rai International Airport (Mae Fah Luang Airport) and hosts the works of many local Chiang Rai artists. The collection changes every few months. Expect to find huge panorama paintings of the northern Thailand landscape, modern art and a collection of sculptures.

The Art Bridge gallery is best visited together with a trip to the Black House (Baan Daam).

How to get there: charter a songtaew from town for a round trip for about 300 THB. The cheaper option is to take the Green Bus going to Mae Sai from Chiang Rai Bus Terminal 1. The bus costs 20THB one way and takes about 15 minutes. Coming back, you will need to walk out to the main road and wave down any passing buss to hop on board, there is no bus stop here.

Opening hours: 10am to 7pm daily (Monday to Sunday)

Chalermchai Kostipipat Hall of Masterwork

This amazing art gallery is located right next door to the White Temple. I'm always surprised by how little people make the effort to walk an extra 20 meters, but I highly recommend it. The art in here is possibly more impressive than the temple itself.

There is a mixture of artworks in this gallery by both Chalermchai and by his students. You will find a lot of intricate paintings in his Buddhist inspired White Temple style art.

How to get there: right across the road from the White Temple, see directions.

Opening hours: 8am to 5pm daily (Monday to Sunday)

Mountains

Chiang Rai is surrounded by mountains on the east along Laos, and the west along Myanmar. Enjoy the amazing panoramic views while visiting the ethnic villages.



Phu Chi Fa

Stand way above the clouds at the summit of Phu Chi Fa, and admire the view of rural Laos in the valley below. This is Thailand's most amazing sunrise viewpoint.

To catch sunrise you will need to The 1-kilometer hike to the peak of Phu Chi Fa is best done early in the morning around 5am so that you can catch sunrise at the summit. The walk is steep and slippery in some sections, but

overall relatively easy. You won't have to walk along the edge of the mountain unless you really want to, no danger here.

I suggest spending about 1 hour at the summit enjoying sunrise. You can explore the small walking trails on the mountain ridge which let you wander along the Thai-Laos border a little farther. There are no maps, just wander a little bit and you'll find the way back.

If you want to see sunrise in a one-day trip from town you will have to leave Chiang Rai by 3am. I recommend you spend a night at the village instead.

Most people don't know about the small ethnic villages near to Phu Chi Fa. I suggest taking a 20-minute drive south east of Phu Chi Fa to Ban Rak Phaen. Here you can explore the small streets by foot and have a chat with the locals. The villagers don't generally speak English or Thai but their own ethnic language.

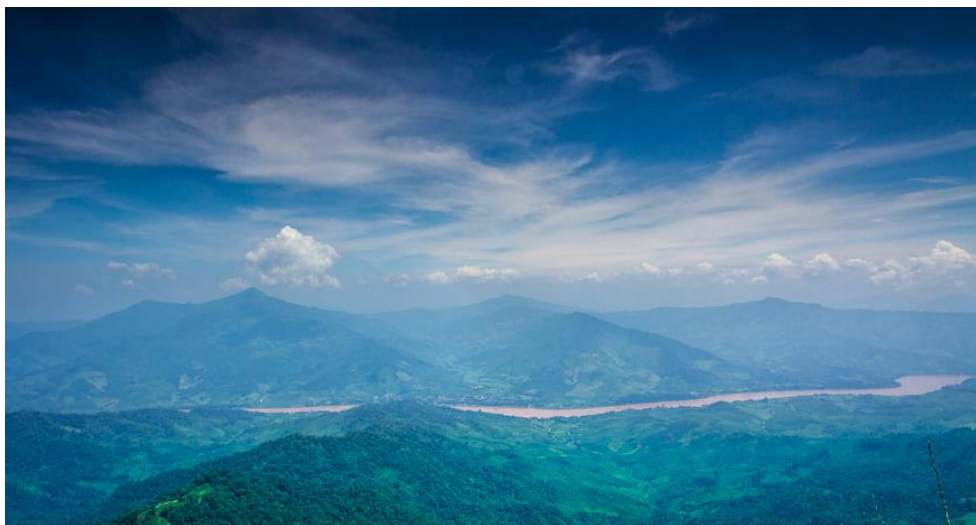
How to get there: Phu Chi Fa is a 2.5-hour drive from Chiang Rai. There is no public transport so you either have to hire car/motorbike in town or charter car with a driver (see our options at the end of this guide book).

Doi Mae Salong

Doi Mae Salong is located in north-western Chiang Rai and just 6km from Myanmar. The peak at an elevation of 1,367m is accessed via a very steep road. The area around Doi Mae Salong is home to many ethnic villages, tea, fruit and coffee plantations.

The most popular time to visit Doi Mae Salong is between December and January when flowers bloom all over the mountain. Doi Mae Salong is best reached by spending a night in the village of Tha Ton from where you can take songtaew in the early morning.

How to get there: There is no public transport so you either have to hire car/motorbike in town or charter car with a driver.



Doi Pha Tang

Doi Pha Tang is located 30km north of Phu Chi Fa, nearby a small Chinese village called Ban Pha Tang. The road from Ban Pha Tang to the peak of Doi Pha Tang is a steep 1km ascent via a badly potholed road. It is another 1km hike from the car park to the top of Doi Pha Tang where the peak sits at an altitude of 1,909m. The peak of Doi Pha Tang offers a stunning 360-degree view of Laos and Thailand divided by the Mekong River.

The small trails along the mountain ridge offer a scenic view, so spend a few hours up here. If you take your own tent you can camp on the summit.

Stop at Ban Pha Tang to try out the local foods such the stewed pork and steamed buns. You will find this store at the bottom of the steep road which heads up to Doi Patang.

How to get there: Doi Patang 3 hour drive from Chiang Rai. There is no public transport so you either have to hire car/motorbike in town or charter car with a driver – best to combine with a trip to Phu Chi Fa.

Doi Tung

Doi Tung is another mountain in Chiang Rai located to the north of the province, by the Myanmar border. There are ethnic villages and tea plantations around the area to explore. Doi Tung is best visited on a day trip up to the Mae Sai Tachilek border gate.

There are 6 main attractions to visit at Doi Tung including;

- Colour of Doi Tung Festival – shop and local foods
- Mae Fah Lunag Gardens – a garden with lots of beautiful flowers
- Doi Tung Royal Villa – a villa for the Princess Mother
- Hall of Inspiration – a museum of the Thai Royal Family
- Mah Fah Luang Arboretum – see amazing views of Myanmar
- Doi Tung Treetop Walk – a raised walkway through the trees

How to get there: Doi Tung is approximately 60km north of Chiang Rai town. There is a public bus number 619 from Chiang Rai to Mae Sai which departs every few hours from 12.50pm. From the bus stop at Baan Huay Krai you will need to take another songtaew to Doi Tung. Alternatively charter a songtaew or rent a car directly from Chiang Rai.

Hot Springs

While the rest of Thailand is steamy hot, Chaing Rai's winter drops to freezing. It is the perfect time to soak away in a hot spring while admiring the nature around you.

Huay Mak Liam Hot Spring

The Huay Mak Liam Hot Spring is located along the Kok River in the Lam Nam Kok National Park, about 24km north-west of Chiang Rai. This is one of the nicest hot springs in Chiang Rai. The hot spring is set in a relaxing forest surrounding with a water temperature of 65 degrees Celsius.

How to get there: For an adventure hire a motorbike or 4WD in Chiang Rai. Alternatively, take a longtail boat upriver from the Chiang Rai pier located by the Mae Fah Luang Bridge.

Opening hours: 8am to 4.30pm daily (follows National Park hours).

Pong Phrabat Hot Spring

The Pong Phrabat Hot Spring is the closest to Chiang Rai, located just 11km north of town. The water is naturally heated however the hot spring is concreted and tiled. Don't expect a scenic setting like the other hot springs in the National Park.

How to get there: there is no public transport to Pong Phrabat Hot Spring. A motorbike or *songtaew* rip takes about 25min – best to combine with Pong Phrabat Waterfall.

Opening hours: 8am to 8pm daily (subject to change)

Entry fee: 20 THB per person.



Nam Roo Hot Spring

Set high up in the mountains, Nam Roo Hot Spring is the closest you'll get to a natural infinity pool. The view over the mountains is incredible.

Nam Roo Hot Spring is not marked on maps, nor is it known by western tourists. There are signs along the way from Fang, though it can be tough following the way. If going there I suggest you use these co-ordinates on a map (19°55'19.9"N 99°06'27.6"E).

How to get there: there is no public transport to Fang Hot Spring. Hire a motorbike in Chiang Rai or charter a driver in Fang – best to combine with a trip to Fang Hot Spring.

Opening hours: 8am to 4.30pm daily (National Park opening hours).

Entry fee: 200 THB per person.



Fang Hot Spring

Fang Hot Spring is located in the Doi Pha Hom Pok National Park about 2 hours from town. It's in Chiang Mai Province, but easier to reach from Chiang Rai. There is a natural geyser by the park entrance which erupts every 10 minutes or so up to a height of 50 meters.

There are private hot spring houses within walking distance of the geyser. They are some of the best hot springs in northern Thailand. You will have to pay an additional hourly fee to use the private rooms.

How to get there: there is no public transport to Fang Hot Spring. Hire a motorbike in Chiang Rai or charter a driver in Fang.

Opening hours: 8am to 4.30pm daily (National Park opening hours).

Entry fees: National park entry fees are 300 THB per person plus a vehicle entry fee. The journey will take about 1.5hrs one way.

Pong Phra Soet Hot Spring

The Pong Phra Soet Hot Spring is also located in the Lam Nam Kok National Park. It is only 1km away from the Huay Mak Lium Hot Spring and is in a similar natural forest surrounding by the Kok River. There is a large outdoor pool for the general public and 8 private spa rooms which can be reserved.

How to get there: For an adventure hire a motorbike or 4WD in Chiang Rai. Alternatively, take a longtail boat upriver from the Chiang Rai pier located by the Mae Fah Luang Bridge.

Opening hours: 8am to 4.30pm daily (follows the National Park opening hours) however you may be able to get in after hours as there is no administration office here.

Towns

Chiang Rai is just one of many towns in the province. To see what the rest of Chiang Rai looks like you should visit one or more of the following towns. Each town has its own unique attractions. With one week to spend in Chiang Rai, you may as well them all.



Chiang Khong

Chiang Khong is a sleepy little town situated along the Mekong River across the water from Laos. There are a whole lines of hotels where you can enjoy the river view with a Laotian mountain backdrop.

The city itself isn't so much of a travellers destination, rather a stopover for those crossing to Laos, or traveling around the northern Thai border from the mountains to Mai Sai.

If staying in Chiang Kong you should not miss the early morning procession of monks. The monks walk the streets at around 6am to fill the alms with food offerings. It is a cultural experience not to be missed.

I highly suggest staying a night at the Fortune River View. It is incredibly cheap for a luxury hotel and offers a great view of the Mekong River.

Stay Here: [Fortune River View.](#)



Mae Sai

Mae Sai is located 60km north of Chiang Rai on the Thai-Myanmar border. In the past, Mae Sai was a popular crossing point for "border runs" a quick and cheap way to extend tourist visas for an additional 14 days.

These days the Myanmar border market is the main attraction. Here you can find a wide range of knock-off goods, terrible cigarettes, and questionable Burmese whiskey. Most people only head across the border to Tachilek for an hour or so, but it is also possible to stay for a couple of nights in a hotel near the market.

You can also apply for a special permit before crossing the border to venture deeper into Myanmar to the Kentung district.



Chiang Saen

Chiang Saen is located 50km north of Chiang Kong. It is home to a city of ancient temples dating back to the year 1325, well before Ayutthaya.

The most popular attraction here is the Golden Triangle, where Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar borders meet. They are divided by the Mekong and Ruak rivers. The Golden Triangle is really just a quick photo stop though.

Spend your time in Chiang Saen exploring the ancient temples such as; Wat Pa Sak, Wat Phra That Chedi Luang, Wat Roi Ko, and Wat Phra Buat. They are all located within Chiang Saen's Old City precinct and are within walking distance of each other.

Hotels in Chiang Rai

Chiang Rai may be a small town, but there is no shortage of quality hotels and resorts. Whether you want a budget guesthouse or a luxury hotel, there is a good option out there.

Budget

Mercy Hostel



Mercy Hostel is located right by the Chiang Rai Night Bazaar, just 500 meters from the centre of town. It is one of the closest hotels in to the town centre. There are 8-bed dorms and private rooms. Rooms have Wi-Fi and air conditioning. You will love the swimming pool and the pool table, a great place to meet other backpackers.

Stay here: [Mercy Hostel](#)

Fun-D Hostel



Fun-D Hostel is located just 700 meters from of the town centre nearby the King Mengrai Monument. There are private rooms, 6-bed dorms, and 8-bed dorms to choose from. Rooms have Wi-Fi and air conditioning. Watch out for the amazing beer specials and live music nights.

Stay here: [Fun-D Hostel](#)

Banlomnow



The Banlomnow Guesthouse is a nice colonial building located about 2km south of the town. There are private rooms with air conditioners, free Wi-Fi, and private bathrooms. The guesthouse is close enough to town to be walking distance (about 30 minutes) though it is a fair bit further out than Mercy Hostel.

Stay here: [Banlomnow Guesthouse](#)

Mid-Range and Luxury

The Riviere formerly



The Riviere Island Resort is located 2km from the centre of town alongside the Kok River (walking distance). The Riviere Island Resort overlooks the mountain ranges to the north, perhaps one of the nicest views in Chiang Rai.

Stay here: [The Riviere](#)

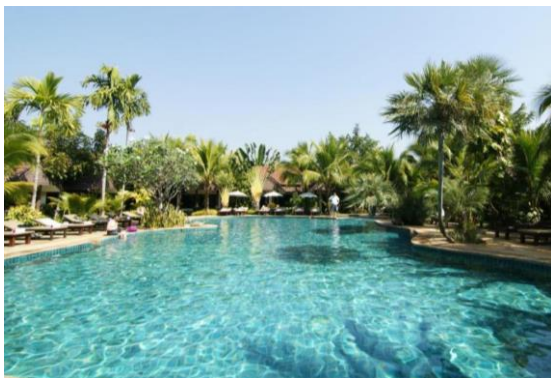
The Legend Chiang Rai



The Legend Chiang Rai is a super luxury style resort located right along the banks of the Kok River. If you want to splurge a bit on your trip, then look no further. Everything here is amazing; food, pool, views, rooms, and beds. You may only stay one or two nights here, but you won't forget them.

Stay here: [The Legend Chiang Rai](#)

Laluna Resort, Chiang Rai



Laluna Resort is a great mid-range hotel nearby the center of Chiang Rai. It is located within walking distance of the weekend walking street markets, 2km south of the city center. Laluna Resort has a great swimming pool and comfortable rooms. A great spot for your time spent in the city.

Stay here: [Laluna Resort](#)

A few finishing notes...

Thank you for purchasing my Chiang Rai Travel Guide! I hope you have found this guide useful in planning your trip to Chiang Rai. It is an amazing part of Thailand which I know you are going to love.

Many people travel to Chiang Rai for only one day. You might be able to squeeze in a few local attractions, but it just won't do this beautiful province the justice it deserves. I suggest spending at least three days in Chiang Rai. You won't regret it.

If you have any further questions please feel free to email me on:

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Otherwise happy travels,

Josh Shephard

Travel Writer, Photographer, Videographer – The Lost Passport