

- HIGHLIGHTS
- ITINERARIES
- LOCAL EXPERTS
- ✚ PULL-OUT MAP

# Discover Thailand

Experience the best of Thailand



# Discover Thailand

Contents



Throughout this book, we use these icons to highlight special recommendations:



## The Best...

Lists for everything from bars to wildlife – to make sure you don't miss out



## Don't Miss

A must-see – don't go home until you've been there

## Local Knowledge

Local experts reveal their top picks and secret highlights



## Detour

Special places a little off the beaten track



## If you like...

Lesser-known alternatives to world-famous attractions

These icons help you quickly identify reviews in the text and on the map:



Sights



Eating



Drinking



Sleeping

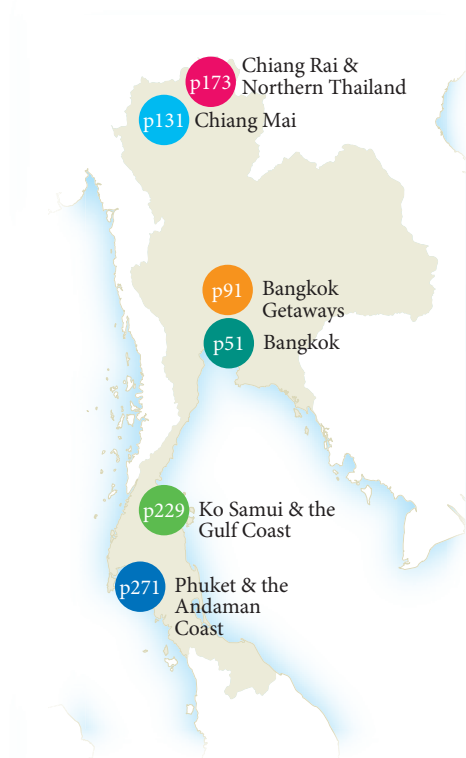


Information

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# This Is Thailand

Thailand is blessed: it has the looks, the temperament and the personality to entice the world to its shores. It is exotic and mysterious yet approachable and inviting.

**The tranquil southern coast massages away modern worries.** The waters are clear, the diving is spectacular and the pace is reminiscent of an afternoon nap. Like the country as a whole, Thailand's famous islands and beaches specialise in having fun, from late-night beach parties to casual beachside dining. Clustered along the Andaman Coast are dramatic limestone mountains looking like prehistoric monuments.

**Beyond the beach scene, Thailand's culture trail educates and enlightens visitors with intense displays of religious devotion and tangible fragments of historic eras.** The hyperactive city of Bangkok, the centre of the Thai universe and the seat of religion and monarchy, boasts flamboyant and revered temples. Further north, the ancient capitals of Ayuthaya and Sukhothai are peppered with gravity-ravaged monuments and Buddha figures meditating serenely.

**Northern Thailand crowns the country with lush mountains, historic cities and border intrigue.** The gateway to the region, Chiang Mai has a well-preserved old city and university atmosphere. In higher altitudes, minority hill tribes preserve a cultural identity that defies modern borders. The interplay of border cultures and the daily alms route of orange-robed monks compel visitors to trundle through Chiang Rai and Mae Hong Son Provinces and absorb the landscape along switchback mountain roads.

**In every corner of the kingdom, Thais concoct a flavourful feast from simple ingredients.** Travelling from region to region becomes an edible buffet, sampling fresh coconut curries in southern Thailand, steamy bowls of noodles in Bangkok and hearty stews in Chiang Mai.

“  
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