



# Northern Thailand

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## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Larp Khom Huay Poo (p388)
- ➔ Khaomao-Khaofang (p374)
- ➔ Lung Eed (p311)
- ➔ Ban Mai (p352)

## Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Fern Resort (p398)
- ➔ Boklua View (p347)
- ➔ Phu Chaisai Resort & Spa (p317)
- ➔ Riverside Guest House (p300)

## Why Go?

What can't you do in northern Thailand?

The region's premier draw is its nature, and northern Thailand's rugged geography is a playground for outdoor pursuits ranging from rafting in Um Phang to hiking among wild orchids in Mae Hong Son.

For those drawn to the human side of things, there's also northern Thailand's buffet of cultural attractions and experiences. The region is regarded as the birthplace of much of what is often associated with Thai culture, and is a great place to take part in activities ranging from exploring a Buddhist temple in Phrae to taking part in a homestay in rural Sukhothai or sampling a local dish at Lampang's evening market.

In the north, even niche players are catered for: intrepid explorers can head off on a hill-tribe trek in Mae Sariang or on a road trip to Phayao, history buffs can travel back in time at Sukhothai Historical Park, and we suspect that even the most devout beach bum could be converted by the inland party scene in Pai.

## When to Go

- ➔ Winter (from November to January) is the time to head to northern Thailand, when daytime temperatures at the higher elevations are a relatively comfortable 20°C to 23°C. Nighttime temperatures can, in some places, dip perilously close to freezing.
- ➔ From March to May, the hottest time of year, daytime temperatures climb close to 40°C and smoke from slash-and-burn agriculture can fill the skies.
- ➔ The rainy season, June to October, should generally be avoided if you plan to do any trekking.

## Northern Thailand Highlights

- 1 Exploring nature reserves such as Phitsanulok's **Phu Hin Rong Kla National Park** (p353) or Mae Hong Son's **Salawin National Park** (p406)
- 2 Hiking and rafting in remote Um Phang, where the end of the road leads to **Nam Tok Thilawso** (p377). Thailand's most beautiful waterfall
- 3 Learning to be a mahout (elephant caretaker) at Lamphun's **Thai Elephant Conservation Center** (p304)
- 4 Investigating little-visited cities such as **Phayao** (p332) or **Phrae** (p335)
- 5 Cycling around the ruins of Thailand's golden age at

