



Central Thailand

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E-Thong	187
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Sangkhlaburi	187

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Blue Rice (p181)
- ➔ Bann Kun Pra (p165)
- ➔ Suanmagmai Resort (p190)
- ➔ Naan Stop Curry (p171)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Tamarind Guesthouse (p164)
- ➔ FloatHouse River Kwai (p184)
- ➔ Oriental Kwai Resort (p180)
- ➔ Ayothaya Riverside House (p163)
- ➔ P Guesthouse (p189)
- ➔ Good Times Resort (p179)

Why Go?

The past is never far behind in central Thailand. Cycle around the temple ruins in Ayuthaya and you can imagine how grand this former capital must have once been. Visit the memorials and Death Railway in Kanchanaburi and you'll find new empathy for the WWII prisoners of war who suffered there.

Central Thailand doesn't just do history, though. Nature is a major player here, with the jagged mountain ranges that dominate Kanchanaburi's horizons hosting spectacular waterfalls, deep caves and some of Thailand's few remaining wild tigers. In the region's multi-ethnic northwest, lethargic Sangkhlaburi encourages lakeside lazing near the gateway to Myanmar, or you can sleep among the trees in lush Thong Pha Phum National Park.

Lopburi combines both nature and history in its own unique way, as hundreds of monkeys scamper among the Khmer-era temples in what was once Thailand's second capital.

When to Go

- ➔ Central Thailand experiences the country's three seasons in equal measure: hot from February to June, rainy from June to October and cool (relatively speaking) from October to January. The one constant is the humidity.
- ➔ Because of altitude, it is cooler (sometimes genuinely cold) and wetter in Sangkhlaburi and surrounding national parks than in other areas. Ayuthaya and Lopburi sit in a wide-open plain that receives similar amounts of rain and heat as Bangkok.

Central Thailand Highlights

- 1 Getting up early and walking over the **Saphan Mon** (p188) wooden bridge in laid-back Sangkhlaburi.
- 2 Watching the monkey mayhem in **Lopburi** (p170).
- 3 Cycling around the temple ruins in **Ayuthaya** (p158).
- 4 Spending a night up high in a tree house at **Thong Pha Phum National Park** (p186).
- 5 Visiting the Death Railway and WWII museums in **Kanchanaburi** (p173).
- 6 Clambering up the seven levels at **Erawan waterfall** (p183), one of Thailand's most impressive falls.

