



Northern Thailand

POP 186.5 MILLION (IN THAILAND) / 66

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Krua Apsorn (p421)
- ➔ Kao Soi Fueng Fah (p473)
- ➔ nahm (p424)
- ➔ Larp Khom Huay Poo (p482)
- ➔ Khao Soi Pa Orn (p494)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ AriyasomVilla (p420)
- ➔ Tamarind Village (p471)
- ➔ Chiang Dao Nest (p478)
- ➔ Koh Chang Sea Hut (p445)
- ➔ Bann Makok (p444)

Why Go?

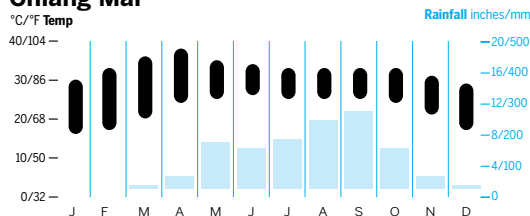
Thailand is arguably the 'safest' introduction to Southeast Asia, but this doesn't mean it represents any sort of compromise. In fact, we suspect that the secret of Thailand's popularity, in particular that of its northern half, is that it packs a bit of everything.

Bangkok is one of the most vibrant cities in Southeast Asia, yet if contemporary Thai living is not your thing, you can delve into the country's past at historical parks such as those at Sukhothai or Phanom Rung. Similarly, fresh-air fiends will be satiated by upcountry expeditions ranging from a rafting expedition in Nan to the cliff-top views from Ubon Ratchathani's Pha Taem National Park. And culture junkies can get their fix at a homestay in the country's northeast or via a trek in northern Thailand.

And lest we forget: Thailand also functions as a convenient gateway to Cambodia and Laos. What's not to love?

When to Go

Chiang Mai



Nov–Feb

Thailand's 'winter' is the best time to visit.

Mar–Jun

The least desirable time to visit is during Thailand's hot season.

Late Jun–Oct

Expect monsoon rains; storms are usually confined to an hour's downpour.

Northern Thailand Highlights

1 Chiang Mai Markets (p474)
Picking up some bargains at the Night Bazaar, Saturday Walking Street and Sunday Walking Street.

2 Pha Taem National Park (p464)
Feeling awestruck by the scenery.

3 Sukhothai (p482)
Cycling around the awesome ruins of Thailand's 'golden age'.

4 Surin Project (p452)
Working or living with traditional elephant handlers at this centre in northeastern Thailand.

5 Pai (p479)
Getting into the groove of rural northern Thailand in this laid-back place.

6 Ko Chang (p442)
Beachcombing and jungle trekking.

7 Bangkok (p404)
Recovering from the hardships of the upcountry in Thailand's modern and decadent capital.

