

Northern Thailand

Northern Thailand is a refreshing, peaceful escape from the frenetic pace of Bangkok. As well as offering an insight into Thailand's colourful culture, this region also boasts beautiful picturesque scenery: cool mountains, misty valleys, tropical jungle and lush green fields.

Chiang Mai is a good introduction to the area and is easily reached from Bangkok by air (1 hour flight). A relaxed city, Chiang Mai has plenty to do. The city is home to a host of ornate Buddhist temples. The most visited of these is Wat Doi Suthep, situated in the hills just outside the city and reached by 290 steps or funicular lift. The stunning views over Chiang Mai are well worth the trip to the top.

If you have time it's well worth travelling further north to Chiang Rai and Mae Hong Son, into the heart of the Golden Triangle, where the borders of Thailand, Myanmar and Laos meet. Situated on the banks of the Mae Kok River, Chiang Rai is the ideal base for visiting the surrounding tribal villages and taking a long tail boat trip down the river. Close to the Burmese border, Mae Hong Son is a sleepy market town home to many hill tribes including the long neck (Padong) Karen tribe where women wear brass rings to elongate their necks.

ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES

CHIANG RAI & GOLDEN TRIANGLE A chance to visit the famous Golden Triangle, where the borders of Thailand, Myanmar and Laos meet. You will drive through beautiful scenery, stop at the hot springs of Mekajan, have lunch at a local restaurant as well as visiting Akha and Yao hill tribe villages. Daily 07:00 - 19:00. Price £53 per person.

CHIANG MAI THREE TOUR PACKAGE A great value for money option, incorporating the 3 most popular Chiang Mai tours: A half day tour of Chiang Mai City Temple & Wat Prathat Doi Suthep, half day Elephants at work and Meo Hill Tribe at Mae Saa and an evening of Kantoke; a northern Thai style dinner and traditional Thai entertainment. Daily from £34.

CHIANG MAI CITY & TEMPLES Visit four of the most important temples; Wat Chiang Man, the oldest temple within the city walls; Wat Chedi Luang, where the emerald Buddha was once enshrined; Wat Phra Singh, housing a sacred 1,500 yr old Buddha; and Wat Suan Dok, where the ashes of Chiang Mai's Royal Family are interred, plus an unforgettable drive through many parts of the city. Daily from 08:30 - 11:00 & 13:00 - 15:00. Price £11 per person.

ELEPHANTS AT WORK & ORCHID FARM A pleasant morning in the company of the magnificent gentle giants, who in earlier times were a vital part of the King's army. You will witness the training process and take an optional extra elephant ride, followed by a visit to Mae Sa waterfall and then onto an orchid farm displaying a full variety of exquisite blooms. Daily 08:00 - 13:00. Price £17 per person.

WHITE MEO HILL TRIBE & WAT PHRA DOI SUTHEP Visit the White Meo Hill tribe village, one of the largest hill tribes and distinguished by their black costume. This tribe are settled further away from the city and are less commercial than other hill tribes. You will get a magnificent view of northern Thailand on your journey. Afterwards visit the 600 year old temple of Wat Phra Doi Suthep. Daily 08:00 - 12:00 & 13:00 - 17:00. Price £21 per person.

ELEPHANT AT WORK & RIVER RAFTING Visit the elephant camp and watch the gentle giants at work before heading off for a trek through the jungle on the back of an elephant, followed by a gentle glide along the river on bamboo rafts. Daily 08:00 - 15:30. Price £51 per person.

PRICES

LOW SEASON - Jan to mid Mar, Apr-June, Sep-mid Dec
MID SEASON - Mid to end Mar (Easter), Jul-Aug
HIGH SEASON - Mid to end Dec.