

# Chiang Rai

Phayao • Phrae • Nan





*Phu Chi Fa Forest Park*



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# Union of Myanmar



Mae Hong Son

108

108

105



Thailand  
Unforgettable.

Chiang Rai  
Phayao  
Nan  
Phrae

- Main Highway
- Provincial Highway
- Road
- Railway
- Country Boundary Line
- Changwat (Province)
- Amphoe (District)
- Tourist Attraction



*Doi Tung Palace*



*Wat Phrathat Doi Tung*

# Chiang Rai

*Chiang Rai is a small, charming city that provides the perfect base for exploring the scenic and cultural attractions of Thailand's far north.*

Located 785 kilometres north of Bangkok, Chiang Rai is the capital of Thailand's northernmost province. At an average elevation of nearly 600 metres above sea level and covering an area of approximately 11,700 square kilometres, the province borders Myanmar to the north, and Lao PDR to the north and northeast. The area is largely mountainous, with peaks rising to 1,500 metres above sea level, and flowing between the hill ranges are several rivers, the most important being the Kok, near which the city of Chiang Rai is situated. In the far north of the province is the area known as the Golden Triangle, where the Mekong and Ruak Rivers meet to form the borders of Thailand, Myanmar and Lao PDR. Inhabiting the highlands are hilltribes like the Akha, Lahu, Karen, and Hmong.

The region boasts a long history with small kingdoms dating back to the pre-Thai period, while the city of Chiang Rai was founded in 1262 by King Mengrai. It was temporarily the capital of Mengrai's Lanna Kingdom until being superseded by Chiang Mai. Today, Chiang Rai is a small, charming city that provides the perfect base for exploring the scenic and cultural attractions of Thailand's far north.

## City Attractions

### King Mengrai Monument

Commemorating the founder of Chiang Rai, the monument should be the first place to visit, since locals believe that respect should be paid to King Mengrai before travelling further. The monument is located on the city outskirts beside the road to Mae Chan.

### Wat Phra Sing



### The King Mengrai Stupa

In front of Wat Ngam Mueang atop Doi Ngam Mueang in Mueang district the stupa was built by King Chaisongkhram to contain the remains of his father (King Mengrai).

### Wat Phra Sing

This temple, on Singhakhlai Road, is a fine example of Lanna religious architecture. The Phra Phuttha Sihing image, now at Chiang Mai's Wat Phra Sing, was originally enshrined here. A copy now sits in its place.

### Wat Phra Kaeo

Located behind Wat Phra Sing, Wat Phra Kaeo is noted for its late Lanna image hall and several fine bronze Buddha images. The temple is more famous, however, as the place where the statue of the Emerald Buddha, now housed in Bangkok, was originally discovered.

### Wat Phrathat Doi Chom Thong

This ancient hilltop temple predates the founding of Chiang Rai and commands fine views of the Kok River. It is believed that from this vantage point King Mengrai first surveyed the site of the city. Situated on a small hill west of Wat Phra Kaeo, the temple has an ancient brick chedi that is the reliquary for the remains of King Mengrai.

### Oub Kham Museum

It's located near the Den Ha market, 1 kilometre from the centre of town. The collection showcases objects from the areas once belonging to, or affiliated with, the Lanna kingdoms: present north Thailand and some parts of northeast Myanmar, south-west China and Vietnam. Apart from ritual objects the collection mainly consists of objects used in royal courts like lacquerware, silver jewellery, and clothing. A golden bowl once reserved for royals is a masterpiece. It is open daily from 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Tel: 0 5371 3349

### Ho Watthanatham Nithat

The site is a museum exhibiting ancient artefacts and written records on history, literature and local know-how as well as exhibits on royal activities by the late Princess Mother at Doi Tung. It is open to the public Wednesday - Sunday from 8.30 a.m. until 3.30 p.m.

### Kok River

This scenic river is a major transportation artery from neighbouring Chiang Mai province, especially the town of Tha Ton. The river runs some 130 kilometres through the heart of Chiang Rai passing on its way several hilltribe settlements and elephant



Wat Phra Kaeo

camp from where jungle treks start. Long-tailed boats are available daily for 3-4 hour tours.

### Namtok Khun Kon Forest Park

Khun Kon, also known as Tat Mok Waterfall, is located about 30 kilometres south of Chiang Rai. The 70-metre waterfall is the highest and most beautiful in Chiang Rai.

## Out-Of-City Attractions

### Amphoe Mae Chan

#### Hot Spa

Located 8 kilometres from Mae Chan, along the Mae Chan - Mae Ai Road, this complex has hot mineral water and bath-house facilities. Accommodation is also available.

### Hilltribe Development and Welfare Centre

The centre, located some 15 kilometres along Doi Mae Salong Road, aids and administers local hilltribe settlements. Hilltribe handicrafts, including woven cloth and silverware, are available for purchase.



*Doi Mae Salong*

### *Amphoe Mae Fa Luang*

#### *Doi Mae Salong*

Located some 40 kilometres beyond Mae Chan, the rugged mountain of Doi Mae Salong is topped by a settlement known as Santi Khiri, home to descendants of Chinese Nationalist soldiers who settled in the area in the 1940s. The mountainside plantations of coffee and fruit orchards provide scenic variety, especially picturesque in December and January when Thai cherry trees are in blossom. Hotels, restaurants, horse-riding and trekking are among the major attractions.

#### *Doi Tung*

This northernmost mountain offers several attractions, including Doi Tung Royal Villa, built for the late Princess Mother and designed in an architectural combination of Lanna and Swiss chalet styles; the Mae Fa Luang Botanical Garden, with colourful plants and trees of many different species within rock, aqua, palm and flower gardens, and various hilltribe villages. The mountain is topped by the revered temple of Wat Phrathat Doi Tung, which contains Buddha relics and also commands a spectacular panoramic view of the surrounding countryside.

#### *Pha Mi Akha Village*

This picturesque hilltribe village is one of the most accessible Akha settlements in Chiang Rai province, located on the way to the summit of Doi Tung.

#### *Doi Hua Mae Kham*

The site is the domicile of the hilltribe near the Thai-Burmese border, about three hours by road along the Mae Chan-Ban Thuet Thai-Ban Huai In route which winds along a steep precipi-

ce. The inhabitants are predominantly of the Lisu tribe, with a smattering of Akha, Hmong and Muser. Doi Hua Mae Kham is most scenic in November when the yellow Wild Sunflowers are in full bloom.

### *Amphoe Mae Sai*

#### *Mae Sai*

This border town is the northernmost point of Thailand, facing Myanmar across the Mae Sai River, and is located 61 kilometres north of Chiang Rai on Highway 110. The town presents great shopping opportunities for buying popular Thai, Burmese and Chinese goods.

#### *Khun Nam Nang Non*

The name translates as “lagoon of the sleeping lady” and is derived from a natural rock formation that resembles a reclining woman. It is located 12 kilometres before reaching the town of Mae Sai along a 2-kilometre spur road.

#### *Tham Pum-Tham Pla (Reed & Fish Caverns)*

Located 1 kilometre north of Khun Nam Nang Non, these caves are known for their spectacular interiors.

#### *Tham Pha Chom*

This cave, 2.5 kilometres west of Mae Sai, is noted for its beautiful stalactites and as a place for meditation.

### *Amphoe Chiang Saen*

#### *Chiang Saen*

The town of Chiang Saen, delightfully situated on the banks of the Mekong River, is the site of an ancient settlement that predates Chiang Rai and survives in the ruins of city walls, moats, gateways and temples.

#### *The Golden Triangle*

##### *Doi Hua Mae Kham*







*The Golden Triangle*

Eight kilometres north of Chiang Saen, this famous riverside spot marks where the borders of Thailand, Lao PDR and Myanmar meet at the junction of the Mekong River and the small Ruak tributary. Boats on the Mekong can be hired for travel upstream from Chiang Saen to the Golden Triangle, or downstream to Chiang Khong.

#### **Chiang Saen National Museum**

This small museum is dedicated to the historical settlement of Chiang Saen and its ancient culture, and provides information on archaeological sites and ethnic minorities in the Mekong River basin, as well as displaying exhibits of Buddha images and Lanna artefacts. The museum is open from Wednesday to Sunday from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. except official holidays.

#### **Wat Phrathat Chedi Luang**

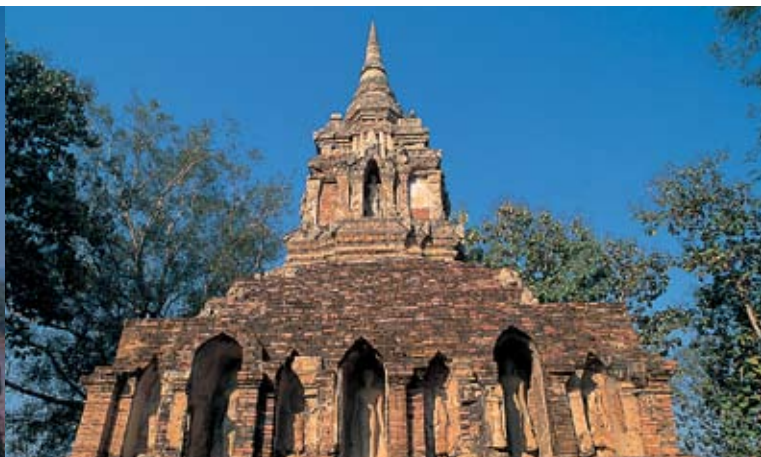
Wat Phrathat Chedi Luang, built in 1291, is the biggest ancient pagoda in Chiang Rai province, comprising a 58-metre high, brick bell-shaped chedi with an octagonal base. The main hall and other surrounding chedis are in ruins.

#### **Wat Pa Sak**

Wat Pa Sak occupies a 16-acre site just outside the city walls, 200 metres from the Tourist Service Centre. The chedi, built in 1295, is decorated with ornamental stucco motifs and is regarded as one of the most beautiful examples of Lanna architecture in northern Thailand.

#### **Wat Phrathat Chom Kitt**

This hilltop temple, reached by a flight of 339 steps, has a chedi



*Wat Pa Sak*

enshrining the Lord Buddha relic.

#### **Wat Phrathat Pha Ngao**

This small bell-shaped pagoda built on top of a hill, 4 kilometres along the Chiang Saen-Chiang Khong road, commands a spectacular view over the Mekong River and Lao PDR beyond. The temple houses a magnificent Chiang Saen-style Buddha image.

#### **Wat Phrathat Doi Pu Khao**

This riverside temple, near the Sop Ruak Market, offers an amazing panorama over the Golden Triangle and the surrounding mountains.

#### **Wat Phra Chao Lan Thong**

The temple is located within the city wall, built by Prince *Wat Phrathat Pha Ngao*





Phu Chi Fa Forest Park

Thong Ngua, a son of King Tilokkarat, the 12<sup>th</sup> ruler of Lanna, in 1489. A 1,200-kilogramme Buddha statue was cast. Named Phra Chao Lan Thong, it has a lap width of 2 metres and is over 3 metres high. Another statue called Phra Chao Thong Thip was also cast in brass and in the Sukhothai style.

#### Chiang Saen Lake

South of Chiang Saen, along Highway 1016 (two kilometres from the Km. 27 marker) this scenic 640-acre lake hosts migratory flocks of waterfowl during the winter months. Accommodation and water-sport facilities are available.

#### Amphoe Chiang Khong

##### Chiang Khong

Located 55 kilometres east of Chiang Saen and 114 kilometres northeast of Chiang Rai town, this pleasant traditional settlement faces Lao PDR across the Mekong River.

#### Ban Hat Klai

This is the area where *pla buek*, or giant freshwater catfish, weighing up to 300 kg, are caught in the Mekong from April to June.

#### Ban Hat Bai

This Thai Lue community, located 25 kilometres along the Chiang Saen-Chiang Khong road, is noted for its hand-woven cotton.

#### Amphoe Thoeng

##### Phu Chi Fa Forest Park



Doi Pha Tang

This mountain, some 25 kilometres south of Doi Pha Tang, is characterised by high, steep cliffs providing a panoramic view over Lao PDR. Its highest peak points out sharply towards the sky. Mist commonly shrouds the mountaintop in the early morning, especially in the cool season. During February, white wild flowers, known as *dok siao*, dot the area.

#### Amphoe Wiang Kaen

##### Doi Pha Tang

Some 32 kilometres from Amphoe Wiang Kaen (127 kilometres from Chiang Rai town), this scenic 1,638-metre mountain is home to Hmong and Yao ethnic minorities, and affords fine views of the Thai-Lao border. During December and January, the area is rendered even more picturesque with cherry blossoms and, in the morning, mountain mists.

#### Amphoe Phan

##### Doi Luang National Park

This park, some 65 kilometres south of Chiang Rai town, covers an area of 1,170 square kilometres and extends into parts of Chiang Mai, Lampang and Phayao provinces. The park's major attraction is the Pu Kaeng Waterfall.

#### Namtok Pu Kaeng

This waterfall is in Doi Luang National Park located in Phan district. To get there, drive down the Chiang Rai-Phayao route for 58 kilometres to arrive at Bang Pu Kaeng. At Km.77 take a right turn and drive on for another 9 kilometres to a large waterfall amid virgin jungle with water cascading down limestone brooks. There are camping areas and jungle trekking services.

## Amphoe Wiang Pa Pao

### Wiang Kalong

This community located about 16 kilometres from the district office of Wiang Pa Pao. Here they found remains of ancient furnaces used to make terracotta utensils. The furnaces are shaped like turtle shells of various sizes with a width of 2 to 5 metres.

### Mae Khachan Hot Springs

The hot springs located at Tambon Mae Chedi Mai on the Chiang Rai - Chiang Mai road at Kms. 64 - 65, next to a stream. Villagers sell eggs to tourists to boil in the hot springs.

### Khun Chae National Park

At Tambon Mae Chedi Mai of Wiang Pa Pao district, the park can be reached by taking the Chiang Mai-Chiang Rai route (Highway No. 118). The park headquarters is right next to the highway at Kms. 55-56. Visitors wishing to undertake a jungle trek and camp within the park need to have the services of a guide and prepare their own camping equipment. The trek through the Khun Chae jungle is for adventure travel enthusiasts as the route passes over steep terrain and several hilltops and cliffs over 1,400 metres high. There are good viewpoints and trekkers can enjoy waterfalls, flowing streams and virgin jungle areas lush with plant life.

## Special Events

### Wai-sa Phaya Mengrai

End of January or early February held to commemorate King Mengrai as the founder of Chiang Rai and the Lanna Kingdom, the festival features parades, cultural performances and various competitions.

### Songkran and Chiang Saen Boat Races

13-15 April, Songkran, the traditional Thai New Year, is well celebrated at Chiang Saen, where boat races between teams from Thailand, Lao PDR, China and Myanmar are held on the Mekong River. Cultural shows and beauty contests to crown the Queen of the Golden Triangle are other attractions.

### Lychee Fair

Held the third weekend in May, the fair celebrates Chiang Rai's tastiest fruit, and also features various agricultural displays and exhibitions, local handicrafts, folk dancing and beauty contests.

## Shopping

Chiang Rai is rich in handicrafts such as handwoven cotton, hilltribe silver ornaments and woodcarvings. Agricultural prod-



*Toking Kingkala, a Local Dance*

ucts include lychee (in season April-May), pineapples and tea, as well as temperate climes produce from various royal projects.

## How To Get There

### By Air

*Thai Airways International* operates daily flights from Bangkok to Chiang Rai.

Tel. 0 2628 2000, 0 2280 0060 or Hotline 1566

[www.thaiairways.com](http://www.thaiairways.com)

### By Bus

The 10-hour journey from Bangkok can be made by either airconditioned or non-airconditioned bus, leaving from the Bangkok Bus Terminal on Kamphaeng Phet II Road.

Tel. 0 2936 2852-66

[www.transport.co.th](http://www.transport.co.th)

### By Car

From Bangkok, take Highway 1 then Highway 32 to Nakhon Sawan and then Highway 1 again to Chiang Rai via Phayao, Lampang and Tak, a total distance of 785 km.

A small, peaceful province of mostly hills and valleys, Phayao covers an area of 6,335 square kilometres and lies about 690 kilometres north of Bangkok. It is also conveniently accessible by road from Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai. Phayao was formerly



*Phra Chao Ton Luang, Wat Si Khom Kham*

# Phayao

*The modern provincial capital of Phayao is set beside an attractive mountain-fringed lake on the banks of which are located several interesting sights. Accommodation and other facilities are modest, but offer simple comforts.*

ruled by its own kings, one of whom, King Ngam Mueang, is believed to have assisted his close friend, King Mengrai, in establishing Chiang Mai as the new capital of Lanna in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. As with other northern principalities, the most visible reminders of regal connections are the Buddhist temples either built or patronised by former rulers. The modern provincial capital of Phayao is set beside an attractive mountain-fringed lake on the banks of which are located several interesting sights. Accommodation and other facilities are modest, but offer simple comforts.

## City Attractions

### *Kwan Phayao*

This is the largest freshwater lake in the upper North, and its stocks of fish provide a livelihood for many of the local people. The surrounding scenery, particularly at sunset, is stunning. Along the shores of the lake are food shops and recreation areas.

### *Wat Si Khom Kham*

The temple, located on the shore of Kwan Phayao, enshrines the largest Lanna style Buddha image, the seated statue measuring 16 metres high and 14 metres across the lap. It is said that it took 33 years to complete. Celebrations are held here every year in May.

### *Ho Watthanatham Nithat*

Situated next to Wat Si Khom Kham, this folk museum houses exhibits relating to the history, native culture and traditions of Phayao.

### *Kwan Phayao*





*Phra Nang Din*

### Wat Phrathat Chom Thong

Opposite Wat Si Khom Kham and reached by a 1.5-kilometre uphill road, this attractively sited temple offers panoramic views of the lake and Phayao town.

### Fresh-water Fishery Station

Located in town on Highway 1, this is the first facility in the world to successfully breed the giant *pla buek* catfish. There is an aquarium displaying many species of fish and water plants.

### Pho Khun Ngam Mueang Memorial

Situated in a park beside Kwan Phayao, the memorial commemorates the 13<sup>th</sup> century ruler of Phu Kam Yao, during whose reign the state prospered and expanded its territory. Phu Kam Yao is also famous for the alliance of harmony, loyalty and non-aggression that Pho Khun Ngam Mueang forged with King Mengrai of Chiang Mai and King Ramkhamhaeng of Sukhothai.

## Out-Of-City Attractions

### Wat Analayo

The hilltop temple of Wat Analayo, set in an extensive tree-shaded area about 7 kilometres north of town and a further 9 kilometres along a turn to the left, is noted for its collection of religious-based sculptures by contemporary artists.

### Chiang Kham

The district, about 74 kilometres northeast of Phayao town on Highway 1021, is home to many Thai Lue people whose ancestors migrated from Yunnan, in southern China, some 200 years

ago. Also interesting is Wat Nantaram, a Burmese-style temple constructed from teak.

### Wat Nantaram

An interesting temple in Chiang Kham is Wat Nantaram, a Burmese-style site built entirely with teak. The woodwork on the windows, gables, corridors and other parts are beautifully chiseled in elaborate designs.

### Namtok Phu Sang

Namtok Phu Sang is a scenic waterfall about 20 kilometres to the north of the district town of Chiang Kham on Highway No. 1093. The surroundings are still in perfect natural condition. Phu Sang is different than other waterfalls. It is fed by a hot spring on the mountain which flows into the brook before cascading over the rocks.

### Namtok Champa Thong

A high waterfall in a beautiful natural setting, Champa Thong is reached by turnoff at Km. 7 along the Phayao-Chiang Rai road.

### Doi Phu Nang National Park

#### *Namtok Phu Sang*





*Songkran Festival, Chiang Kham*

This national park is 48 kilometres south of Amphoe Dok Khamtai along Highway No. 1251 and 4 kilometres along an access road. A variety of birds flock here, especially peacocks which come to the park area for breeding from January to March. The park also has a scenic waterfall called Namtok Than Sawan. Camping in the park is possible.

#### **Ban Tham Indigenous Cultural Centre**

Located about 15 kilometres from the district town of Dok Khamtai on the way to Chiang Muan district, the centre has a large collection of agricultural implements, as well as ancient artefacts.

## **Shopping**

Products made from woven water hyacinth fibres are a speciality of Ban San Pa Muang, about 15 kilometres from Phayao town on the way to Wat Anlayo. In Chiang Kham, hand-woven cotton is a traditional handicraft of the Thai Lue.

## **How To Get There**

### **By Air**

Travellers can take a flight from Bangkok to Chiang Rai, then take a bus which leaves Chiang Rai Bus Terminal for a 1.15-hour journey to Phayao.

*Thai Airways International* operates daily flights from Bangkok

to Chiang Rai.

Tel. 0 2628 2000, 0 2280 0060 or Hotline 1566

[www.thaiairways.com](http://www.thaiairways.com)

### **By Bus**

Both airconditioned and non-airconditioned buses depart from Bangkok Bus Terminal on Kamphaeng Phet II Road to Phayao daily. Travel time is about 9 hours.

Tel. 0 2936 2852-66

[www.transport.co.th](http://www.transport.co.th)

### **By Car**

From Bangkok, take Highway 1 then Highway 32 to Nakhon Sawan and then Highway 1 again to Phayao via Lampang and Tak, a total distance of 690 km.

Covering an area of 6,538 square kilometres and with its provincial capital located 551 kilometres north of Bangkok, Phrae is surrounded on all sides by mountains, with level plains in the middle. It is noted for having one of the largest reserves of teak forests in the country. The province has a remote feel about it, although it is easily reached by Highway 101. Phrae town, situated on the Yom River, is an old community, founded slightly





Wat Phrathat Cho Hae

## Phrae

*Phrae town, situated on the Yom River, is an old community, founded slightly after Chiang Mai, and retains much of its traditional character, with quiet streets and a number of old teak houses.*

after Chiang Mai, and retains much of its traditional character, with quiet streets and a number of old teak houses. Cultural influences blend Lanna, Burmese and Lao styles. Principal interests are both cultural and scenic.

## City Attractions

### Wat Luang

Most likely dating from the founding of Phrae, Wat Luang is a venerable temple of considerable interest, especially in its large Chiang Saen-style chedi, its image hall and a museum housing several antique Buddha images.

### Wat Phra Non

Located west of Wat Luang, near the site of the old city walls, Wat Phra Non dates back some 300 years and enshrines a 9-metre-long image of the reclining Buddha. The temple buildings are excellent examples of Lanna architecture, with impressive roofs and fretted eaves.

### Wat Phra Bat Ming Mueang

Located on Charoen Nakhon Road, near the townhall, Wat Phra Bat Ming Mueang was built in 1955 by combining two ancient temples. There is an old chedi containing a replica of the Buddha's footprint.

### The City Pillar Shrine

Situated on Khun Doem Road in the town centre, the city pillar shrine features an inscription from the Sukhothai period describing the building of a temple in the town.

### Wat Chom Sawan





Wat Sa Bo Kaeo

### Wat Chom Sawan

One kilometre from the town hall, on Yantrakit Koson Road, Wat Chom Sawan is an even more impressive Burmese-style temple, characterised by multi-tiered roofs, fine fretwork and elaborately decorated interiors. Antique Buddha images enshrined here include a marble statue and another made from woven bamboo covered in lacquer.

### Wat Sa Bo Kaeo

Located on Nam Khu Road, next to the city moat, this temple is distinguished by its Burmese-style architectural features.

## Out-Of-City Attractions

### Wat Phrathat Cho Hae

This major religious site is located about 8 kilometres east of town along Highway 1022. The Sukhothai-period temple is famous for its 33-metre-high Chiang Saen-style chedi, built of bricks and covered with bright brass sheets. The name refers to a fine silk cloth woven in Xishuangbanna (in China's Yunnan province), which was used to wrap around the chedi when the temple was first constructed. Enshrined in the temple is the revered Buddha image of Phra Chao Than Chai.

### Wat Phrathat Chom Chaeng

Standing 3 kilometres from Wat Phrathat Cho Hae, this temple, built in 788, has a 29-metre-tall golden chedi, which enshrines a holy relic. There is also a museum of rare ancient relics.



Wat Phrathat Chom Chaeng

### Ban Thung Hong

About 4 kilometres from town along Highway 101 is Ban Thung Hong, a village noted for the making of products, especially farmers' shirts, from *mo hom*, a local cotton fabric dyed a distinctive blue colour.

### Phae Mueang Phi Forest Park

Located 12 kilometres out of town along Highway 101 and a further 6 kilometres after a right turn, Phae Mueang Phi literally means "Ghost Land", the name derived from the weird geological phenomenon found here. The area is treeless, and subsidence and erosion have created a landscape of strange rock and soil formations in the shape of pillars and what look like exotic mushrooms.

### Ban Fai Folklore Museum

Situated in the same compound as Ban Fai garden restaurant, 3 kilometres from town on the Phrae-Sung Men Road, the museum comprises several wooden buildings with exhibits exemplifying local lifestyles, shophouses and a traditional market.

### Hua Dong Market

About 9 kilometres south of town on Highway 101, Hua Dong Market is a centre for furniture and home decorative items made from wood and rattan.

### Wat Phra Luang

About 700 metres off Highway 101 at Ban Hua Dong is Wat Phra Luang, featuring a Sukhothai-period chedi, known locally as "That Noeng" or "leaning chedi".





Phae Mueang Phi Forest Park

### Fabric Weaving Village

Long district, some 45 kilometres from the provincial town on Highway No. 1023, is the site of a centuries-old community. The local people are skilled in the craft of weaving, both silk and cotton. The art of making the *tin chok* fabric, in particular, has been handed down from generation to generation. Its design has been developed to appeal to modern tastes, although the original method has been retained. A fair celebrating the fabric is held annually in the Long district around November.

### Wiang Kosai National Park

The Wiang Kosai National Park is about 70 kilometres from the provincial town in Wang Chin district. It can be reached by taking Highway No. 11 (Phrae-Lampang). Then take a left turn toward Wang Chin district and continue for a further 13 kilometres to reach the turn to the park headquarters. A further 1.5 kilometres on are two waterfalls, the Mae Koeng Luang, one kilometre from the headquarters, while the Mae Koeng Noi is 2 kilometres further. Streams from the falls flow into the Yom River.

### Mae Yom National Park

Located in Song district, 48 kilometres from town, Mae Yom National Park covers mountainous terrain, where teak forests are probably the densest in the country. Along the Yom River, in front of the camping site, is a 2-kilometre stretch of rapids, best visited during November–February when the weather is cool and the scenery at its loveliest.

## Special Events

### Phrathat Cho Hae Fair

This temple fair features a Lanna-style procession in which the people, dressed in traditional costume, carry robes with which to cover the temple's chedi.

### Kin Salak Fair

Held in September, this is an old Buddhist merit-making celebration in which villagers prepare offerings and carry them in a procession to present to monks.

## Shopping

Phrae is well known for two fabrics of high quality: *mo hom*, made mainly in Ban Thung Hong and using traditional methods of weaving, dyeing and tailoring, and *tin chok*, a fine material with a distinctive design used for handbags, shoes and household decorative items, as well as clothing. The main production centres are Long, Wang Chin and Den Chai districts.

## How To Get There

### By Rail

Trains leave from Bangkok Railway Station to Den Chai district daily, then travellers can take a mini-bus to Phrae. Tel. 0 2220 4334 or Hotline 1690  
[www.railway.co.th](http://www.railway.co.th)

### By Bus

Both airconditioned and non-airconditioned buses depart from Bangkok Bus Terminal on Kamphaeng Phet II Road to Phrae daily. Tel. 0 2936 2852-66  
[www.transport.co.th](http://www.transport.co.th)

### By Car

From Bangkok, take Highway 1 then Highway 32 to Nakhon Sawan, then Highway 117 to Phitsanulok and then turn right to Highway 11 to Phrae, a total distance of 550 k.m.

Extending over an area of 11,472 square kilometres, and with its provincial capital located 668 kilometres north of Bangkok, Nan is a remote province, yet one that is richly rewarding in both its cultural and scenic attractions. The town of Nan nestles in the verdant valley of the river of the same name, surrounded by densely forested hills, and was formerly an independent city state back in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. During its long history, Nan was initially influenced culturally and politically by Sukhothai, before coming under the influence of first the Lanna Kingdom, centred in Chiang Mai, and later the Burmese. With the expul-



Wat Phumin

# Nan

*Nan is a remote province, yet one that is richly rewarding in both its cultural and scenic attractions. The town of Nan nestles in the verdant valley of the river of the same name, surrounded by densely forested hills, and was formerly an independent city state back in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.*

sion of the Burmese in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Nan continued to enjoy a semblance of independence until coming under the full control of Bangkok in the early 1900s.

Evidence of such a rich past is still present in a number of historic temples, while the scenic attractions of the surrounding countryside, home to numerous Thai Lue and other hilltribe peoples, add another dimension to touring the region.

## City Attractions

### Nan National Museum

Housed in what was formerly the residence of the ruler of Nan, the museum is an excellent starting point for a tour of the town, its displays highlighting the region's history and the evolution of the arts.

### Wat Phrathat Chae Haeng

Perhaps the most impressive of Nan's venerable temples, Wat Phrathat Chae Haeng lies about 2 kilometres from town on Highway 1168, east of the Nan River. This was the original site of the settlement until some 600 years ago when the king moved the town to the west bank in response to the promptings of a dream. Occupying an elevated spot, reached by a naga-flanked stairway, Wat Phrathat Chae Haeng is a walled temple dating from the 14<sup>th</sup> century and is dominated by a 55-metre-high chedi. Of equally awe-inspiring proportions is the image hall, a marvellous structure of Laotian influence characterised by a three-tiered, five-level roof.

### Wat Chang Kham Woraimage hall

*Wat Phrathat Chae Haeng*





*Wat Chang Kham Worawihan*

Located opposite the museum, Wat Chang Kham Worawihan was originally built in 1406, subsequently restored several times, and is named after its chedi, which has elephant (*chang*) buttresses around its base. Enshrined at the temple is a superb 145-cm.-high statue of a walking Buddha made of pure gold.

#### **Wat Phumin**

Situated nearby, Wat Phumin is a magnificent temple of exceptional beauty. The hall dates from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century and has an atypical cruciform pattern. The interior is as charming as the external architecture and is dominated by a splendid centrepiece of four Buddha statues facing the four cardinal points, while the walls are covered with fine mural paintings that depict the story of one of the Buddha's previous incarnations, as well as intriguing scenes of provincial life.

#### **Wat Suan Tan**

The temple, dating back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, is dominated by a beautiful chedi, and is renowned for its important 500-year-old Buddha image known as Phra Chao Thong Thip, a 4.1-metre high bronze statue sculpted in the Sukhothai style.

#### **Wat Phayawat**

Located just before reaching town on Highway 101, Wat Phayawat is remarkable for its chedi constructed in the form of a steep pyramid with a stepped base of five tiers each with niches containing Buddha images.

## **Out-Of-City Attractions**



*Wat Phayawat*

#### **Ban Nong Bua**

This Thai Lue village is located about 40 kilometres north of Nan town along Highway 1080, and an additional 3 kilometres off to the left. The villagers are noted for producing a traditional tribal fabric, while the village's Wat Nong Bua is a good example of Thai Lue temple architecture and decoration.

#### **Ban Pak Nai**

Ban Pak Nai, about 22 kilometres along the road winding over the shoulder of the mountain some 96 kilometres from the provincial town, is a fishing village on the bank of the fresh-water lake above the Sirikit Dam in Uttaradit province. Local rafts are turned into restaurants and accommodation for visitors who prefer vacationing amid peaceful natural surroundings. The most famous food is the many kinds of fresh-water fish caught in the lake.

#### **Doi Phu Kha National Park**

To the north of Nan along Highway No. 1080 in Nong Bua district some 25 kilometres en route to Bo Kluea district lies the Doi Phu Kha National Park. The terrain is mainly forested lands on limestone mountain ranges, the source of several streams which merge into the Nan River. The elevation is about 1,900 metres above sea level and it is home to near-extinct flora, particularly the *Chomphu Phu Kha* (bretschneidera ninesis hemsl.), whose pink flowers are in full bloom during February. In the morning, a sea of mist can be seen drifting across the valley. There are also several scenic waterfalls. Permits to camp can be obtained. Alternatively, tourists may choose to utilise the accommodation services in the park.



Doi Phu Kha National Park

### Si Nan National Park

The Si Nan National Park covers extensive forested and mountainous areas. Pha Chu is the major attraction in the park. The cliff can be reached by taking the Nan-Wiang Sa - Na Noi route for 135 kilometres, then turning into Highway No. 1083 and on for another 22 kilometres. The cliff top offers an excellent viewing point to enjoy a panoramic vista of the mountains. A national flag pole has a lanyard running all the way down to the foot of the hill, the longest in the country. There are camping areas for visitors in the park.

### Hom Chom

This is a natural geological phenomenon of earthen pillars formed by soil erosion, similar to Phae Mueang Phi in Phrae. It is located about 10 kilometres from Na Noi district on Highway 1083.

### Tham Pha Tup Forest Park

Lying some 10 kilometres north of Nan town, this a complex of 17 caves in what is part of a new wildlife reserve.

### Wa River Rafting

This exciting activity waits for tourists who like to shoot many rapids. Rafting can be accompanied by elephant riding. The suitable time for rafting is from September to February. Visitors can contact travel agencies in the town.

## Special Event

### Traditional Long Boat Races

Held in October or November, these are among the largest and arguably the most exciting of all the traditional longboat regattas held by many riverine communities around Thailand to celebrate the end of Buddhist Lent.

## Shopping

### Textiles

Nan is noted for its quality hand-woven textiles in various patterns, the most famous being *lai nam lai*, “flowing water design”, which depicts stepped patterns representing streams and waterfalls.

### Handicrafts

Silverware, woodcarving and hilltribe handicrafts are popular souvenirs.

### Musical Instruments

Nan is also known for its musical instruments, in particular the *salo*, a violin-like instrument, and the *sueng*, similar to a guitar.

## How To Get There

### By Air

*PB Air* operates flights from Bangkok to Nan on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.  
Tel. 0 2261 0220, 0 5422 6238  
[www.pbair.com](http://www.pbair.com)

### By Bus

The 9-hour journey from Bangkok to Nan can be made by either airconditioned or non-airconditioned bus, leaving from the Bangkok Bus Terminal on Kamphaeng Phet II Road.  
Tel. 0 2936 2852-66  
[www.transport.co.th](http://www.transport.co.th)

### By Car

From Phrae, Nan is readily accessible by Highway 101, a short distance of 118 km.



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