



THINGS TO DO IN CHIANG MAI (last updated -January 2022)

There are a multitude of activities and attractions within Chiang Mai and the surrounding area. A good place to start for ideas is a website like Trip Advisor or similar “Top 10 things to do in Chiang Mai”. Here is some information and tips based upon feedback from our guests and managers personal experience.

Many of the attractions in Chiang Mai have closed down or operated with additional restrictions since the outbreak of COVID in 2020. At the time of writing (Jan 2022), some of these regulations have been relaxed but we would still **advise guests to contact the operators of attractions in advance to confirm opening hours and remaining restrictions.**

Please note that some national parks and other attractions still require guests to provide copies of their passports and vaccination records (photographs on your phone are usually acceptable).



SHOPPING

Night Bazaars

Chiang Mai is famous for these. Monday-Friday it is set up close to the river near Le Meridien hotel about a 10-minute taxi ride from JT. On the weekend the location changes. On Saturday it is on the south side just outside the moat area (the Old City) and on Sunday starting at Tapae Gate on the east side of the moat area. On Saturday there is an extensive street food market and on Sunday it is usually very busy!

The Covered Market “Wararot”

This opens Monday- Saturday from about 8am-6pm. Mostly undercover and sells everything from clothes to household goods, food, fruits & vegetables and flowers. Great people watching place. It can get crowded. If you need a break check out Thamel Coffee shop or Wawee Coffee both close by.

Shopping Malls

There are a number of world-class malls in Chiang Mai all situated outside the city centre area. Central Airport Plaza is the closest (about 15 mins by taxi), medium price range with a good food court. Central Festival is bigger and a bit more up-market (about 20 mins away). Both have cinemas. Promenade is very close (about 10 mins away) not so busy, less choice but a has a good supermarket & cinema. Maya Mall is on the other side of the city from JT, high end brands, cinema & food court.

Supermarkets

The closest is Rimping near the river, about 5 mins from JT, or by bicycle about 15 mins. Good choice, a bit pricy. There is also a Rimping at Promenada Mall. Big C Extra about 20 mins from JT, more local but a good choice and reasonable prices. 7-11- there are many of these for smaller items the closest being near Rimping by the river. The other big supermarket brand around the city is Tesco Lotus.

Pharmacy/ Post Office

There is a small pharmacy next to Rimping supermarket by the river. For a bigger choice go to Pharma-Choice close to the railway station. There is a post office very close to JT.

Arts & Crafts

Sankampaeng Road (about 15 mins from JT) has many factories and outlets selling pottery, umbrellas, silk, jewelry and other Thai Crafts. It is best to ask a driver to take you, stop off and wait etc. A good half day activity.

Baan Tawai craft village is about a 30-minute drive away and has a great selection of Thai arts & crafts all within a village setting. The Night Bazaars all sell art & crafts.



CULTURE

For an insight into northern Thai culture there are 3 museums located at the city center by the Three Kings Monument. The Historical Centre, The Arts & Culture Centre and The Folklore Museum. You can buy a ticket that gives you discounted entry to all 3. They are not too big and easy to get around.

There are also a number of northern Thai cultural dinner locations including a show of Thai dancing and local food etc. Check out Trip Advisor or similar for choices.

FOOD & DRINKS

Chiang Mai is a 'foodies' haven, offering a great choice of restaurants and cafes, many of which cater for dietary requirements. You can get almost any kind of cuisine from Thai/ Asian to European, North American & Mexican etc. The prices range from cheap street food to expensive fine dining. Check out Trip Advisor or similar for choices. There is a folder containing menus and recommendations in the Lounge and feel free to ask in the office for any further advice and recommendations. You can of course also find more reviews and recommendations on line.

Here are a few recent recommendations;

Thai Food

Dash: Very good Thai food. A little pricey but worth it. Beautiful setting in an old Thai style house with garden seating. About 15 mins by taxi.

The River Market: Very good Thai food. A little pricey but worth it. Beautiful setting in an old Thai style building right on the river with outdoor seating. About 10 mins by taxi.

At Khualek and The Riverside Inn: Good Thai food reasonable prices right on the river including outdoor seating. About 10 mins by taxi.

Street Food markets: The Monday-Friday night bazaar area has good street food choices. The Saturday night bazaar area has an excellent street food market at one end (near the moat).

Mexican Food

If you are starved of good Mexican food Chiang Mai offers Miguel's and Salsa Kitchen. Both are good with reasonable prices. Salsa kitchen has gluten free options and very large portions. Salsa Kitchen is about 20 min and Miguel's about 15 mins by taxi.

Japanese Food

Both of the large shopping malls Central Festival and Central Airport Plaza have a large selection of Japanese food outlets. Try Gohanya if you are looking for a non-mall experience. Good food with reasonable prices. About 15 mins away by taxi.

Middle Eastern Food

Gulf Restaurant and Little Istanbul are both within the night bazaar area, casual, reasonable prices and good food.

Western Food

Dukes is the most popular place if you are looking for a burger and the like. A bit pricey but good portions and about 10 mins away by taxi. Shopping malls also have a good selection of western fast food “brands”.

Da Antonio is a very nice Italian restaurant if you are looking for a special night out, Great food and atmosphere. A bit pricey but worth it.

Jacky Show is a French restaurant offering reasonable priced lunches and more expensive dinner options - easy walk from the JT. Good for that special occasion

Coffee Shops

There are a multitude of coffee shops in Chiang Mai some with really interesting themes. Check out Trip Advisor or similar for choices. The Fern Café, Bake n’ Bite, and Caramello are recommended as is Klern coffee (within walking distance of JT opposite Wat Muang Kai). If you are really into coffee check out the following link with a list of “the best” cafes in Chiang Mai

<https://www.urbanpixxels.com/best-cafes-chiang-mai/>

Other recommendations from guests include

- **Beast burger** (it is what the name states)
- **Janie Scoop** (good ice cream in Nmman precinct)
- **Ori9in Farm** / Waiting for May Restaurant - Organic farm with cute restaurant with great view - 45 mins north on way to Sticky Falls
- **Fernpresso at the Lake** - beautiful lakeside setting at foot of Doi Suthep (20 min drive from JT)
- **Ozark** – Querky garden café near Wat Doi Kham (30 mins drive)
- **Chamcha** – Tree top restaurant in lovely garden setting near Wat Doi Kham (30 mins drive)



THE GREAT OUTDOORS!

The nice thing about Chiang Mai is that you do not have to go too far to be out of the city and in beautiful northern hill country. There are also a number of national parks or protected areas. Here are a few tips for easy day trips;

Doi Suthep

The “mountain” (not really) behind Chiang Mai. The top is National Park and there are hiking trails, a tribal village and great views. An easy half day trip.

Doi Intanon

The highest point in Thailand. The top is National Park and there are hiking trails and great views. An easy full day trip.

Route 1096 (it goes around the base of Doi Suthep)

This road has a lot of attractions including Mae Sa waterfalls, orchid & butterfly farms, some elephant camps and botanical gardens. Lots of restaurant choices (try The Mae Sa Valley Resort for lunch). Also off the route a bit is Mon Jam Royal Project and high altitude farming- great views and worth a visit.

Doi Khun Tan National Park

Situated about an hour and a half drive south of Chiang Mai. There is a walking trail up to the summit of Doi Khun Tan with great views. The walk takes about 2 hours with stops on the way. You can also reach Doi Khun Tan by train from Chiang Mai and then walk the trail from the train station adding about another hour to the hike.

Elephant Camps

There are many choices within easy reach. Best to check out Trip Advisor or similar for choices.

Sticky Waterfalls

A popular spot about an hour and a half drive away. The nature of the sticky rock surface allows you to climb up. Walking trails also nearby. ‘Great fun for the whole family – and its free’

River Boat Trips

Take a cruise up the Ping River to see the countryside. Trips often include a stop at a local farm.

Tea Plantation

Araksa tea garden is about an hour and a half away. Beautiful location and is an active tea plantation where you can learn all about tea and do some picking!

Chiang Mai Zoo or Night Safari

Both about 20 mins away by taxi within beautiful outdoor setting. Both provide good family trip. If you have a Thai work permit or drivers license you may be able to negotiate the much cheaper local entrance fee).

Chiang Dao

About an hour and a half drive from JT. Chiang Dao is a small town set in a pretty valley and is known primarily for its caves. The caves are worth a visit and reasonably priced. There are also walking trails and a nice restaurant “the Nest 1 & 2” that has 2 locations. One for Thai food and one for western. Food. The food quality is very good but a bit pricey.

Pai

‘The town is quaint and lovely and worth the crazy drive’ (2.5 hours / 130km north of CM) . Attractions include family friendly hot springs, Om Café (cheap and delicious food with good vegan options) and Khaotha Coffee (across from the nice public park).