

An aerial, top-down view of a market stall. A large green umbrella is open on the left, and a blue umbrella is open on the right. The stall is covered with a blue cloth and displays various items, primarily jewelry, in several plastic trays. People are gathered around the stall, some looking at the items. In the background, there are racks of clothing. The overall scene is busy and colorful.

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A guide to:

CHIANG MAI



Foreword.

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As travelers, we all seek authentic experiences that not only create lasting memories but also deepen our connection with the places we visit. Chiang Mai, a city rich in history, culture, and natural beauty, offers just that—an inviting destination that speaks to the soul. From its ancient temples and lush mountains to its vibrant street markets and delectable cuisine, Chiang Mai stands as a testament to the harmony of tradition and innovation.

At Airbnb, we believe in the power of travel to transform both travellers and the communities they interact with. Responsible tourism lies at the heart of this mission. With every booking made through our platform, we strive to create a positive economic and cultural impact by promoting travel that respects local customs, supports local businesses, and encourages sustainable practices. Our goal is to help travelers explore the world in a way that is mindful of its people, places and traditions.

In Chiang Mai, this philosophy comes to life in the form of **our extraordinary hosts—local culture ambassadors who open their doors, share their stories,** and provide visitors with unparalleled insights into the city's rich heritage.

These hosts are the true heartbeat of the city, offering travelers an authentic and immersive experience that goes beyond the ordinary. Whether it's learning to cook traditional Thai dishes with a local chef or discovering hidden gems in the surrounding countryside, Airbnb hosts in Chiang Mai play a pivotal role in making every journey meaningful.

This e-guide celebrates the spirit of Chiang Mai, showcasing not only its most iconic attractions but also highlighting the lesser-known corners of the city that often go unnoticed. By spreading the benefits of tourism beyond the traditional hotspots, **we are helping to disperse travel across the region, ensuring that the positive impact of tourism reaches a wider community.**

I invite you to explore this beautiful city through the eyes of its locals and uncover the hidden wonders that await you. By choosing to stay with an Airbnb host, you are not only enriching your own travel experience but also contributing to a more sustainable and responsible tourism ecosystem.

Enjoy your journey to Chiang Mai, and let the magic of this incredible destination unfold before you.

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Chiang Mai's Lanna culture and festivals.

Step into Chiang Mai, a city where the past and present dance together in perfect harmony, and the spirit of the ancient Lanna kingdom still whispers through its streets. Here, tradition isn't just remembered—it's lived.

Chiang Mai's Lanna culture and festivals.

One of the most captivating parts of Lanna culture is its music, often accompanied by the graceful *fon lep* dance. Performers, adorned with glittering silver fingernails, move with a mesmerizing elegance, evoking mythical creatures and transporting you to a bygone era.

Chiang Mai's temples are more than architectural wonders—they're living, breathing parts of the city's spiritual heartbeat. Whether nestled in the city or hidden on a misty mountain, the temples are the spiritual heartbeat of the city, offering serene spaces that beautifully intertwine faith and artistry.



(Wat Doi Suthep, Chiang Mai)

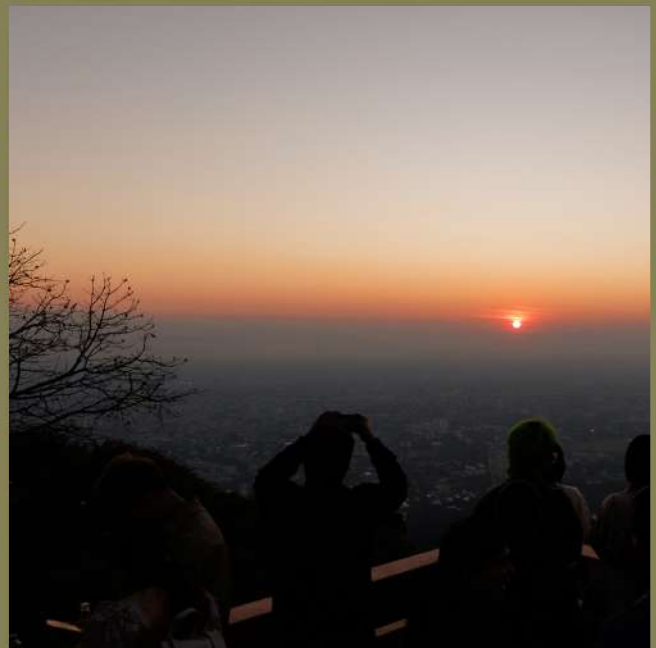
The city's festivals further immerse you in its magic. **In April, Songkran marks the Thai New Year** with exuberant water fights, temple rituals, and communal celebrations, blending joy and reverence in equal measure. As the year winds down, **the twin festivals of Yee Peng and Loy Krathong in November illuminate the city**. During Yee Peng, glowing lanterns float into the sky, each carrying a wish, turning the night into a sea of stars. Meanwhile, Loy Krathong transforms rivers into shimmering pathways of light, as candle-lit krathongs are set adrift to honor the water goddess. Together, they create an atmosphere of peace and reflection.

Chiang Mai is a place where music, spirituality, and celebrations of light converge, making the Lanna culture not just something to observe, but something to feel. It's a city that invites you to let go, make a wish, and lose yourself in the beauty of its timeless traditions.

Chiang Mai's Lanna culture and festivals.



(Airbnb Experience: Sunrise at Wat Doi Suthep)



Sipohn, Airbnb host (top right)
'Sunrise-Wat Doi Suthep with an ex-monk guide'

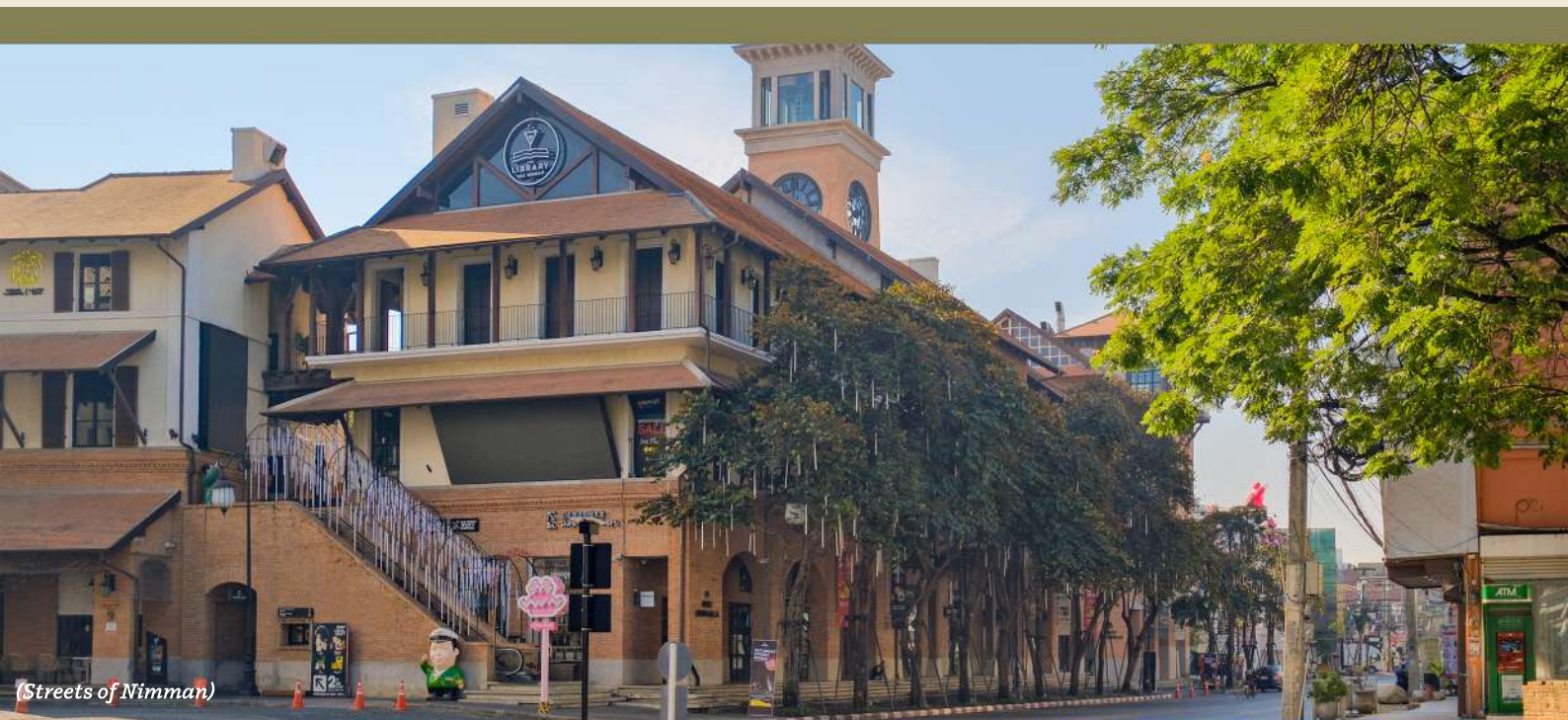
"Many visitors hear about Chiang Mai's abundance of temples or its popular trekking routes, but few truly understand the spiritual depth that the city offers. **As a host, I take pride in personally guiding guests through meaningful experiences**—whether it's practicing meditation, making merit by offering alms, or listening to monks' chants. These moments allow guests to gain insight into Buddhist teachings and the stories behind Chiang Mai's iconic temples."

Neighbourhoods to explore.

Chiang Mai is a city of contrasts, known for its vibrant neighborhoods that blend rich history, creative energy, and local charm. Whether you're exploring centuries-old temples, sipping coffee in hip cafes, or browsing artisanal markets, Chiang Mai has something for every traveler. Among its neighborhoods, **Nimman**, **Chang Moi** and **Santitham** stand out for their unique appeal.

If Chiang Mai had a fashionable younger hipster, it would be **Nimman**. This neighborhood, known for its most stylish and vibrant energy, is where the past meets the present in an explosion of creativity, and where hip cafes, chic boutiques, and contemporary art galleries thrive.

Modern architecture sits alongside traditional Lanna influences while galleries and art spaces dot the streets reflecting Chiang Mai's evolution from its historic roots to a buzzing cultural hotspot. The culinary scene is equally dynamic, offering everything from traditional northern Thai dishes to fusion cuisine in chic settings.



(Streets of Nimman)



(Chic boutiques in Nimman)

Neighbourhoods to explore.



(The streets of Chiang Moi, Chiang Mai)

Just a stone's throw from the walled Old City - famed for its old streets, culture, history and iconic landmarks such as Thae Phae Gate and Wat Chedi Luang - is **Chang Moi**, a neighborhood that exudes authenticity. Historically a trade hub, it remains the go-to place for artisans specializing in wood carving, ceramics, and textiles.

What makes Chang Moi special is its harmonious blend of old-world charm and a new generation revitalizing local businesses. This unique mix creates an inviting atmosphere, where quiet streets lead to cozy cafes and street vendors offering local favorites. For those seeking a taste of Chiang Mai's heritage with a more laid-back vibe, Chang Moi is a delightful escape from the busier areas.



(Busy roadside of Santitham, Chiang Mai)

A short ride from Nimman is **Santitham**, a neighborhood which combines a genuine local vibe with a touch of modern comfort. Known for its chill ambience, **Santitham is perfect for those seeking an experience away from the tourist crowds.**

Home to a mix of traditional markets alongside cozy cafes and eateries, Santitham also offers an abundance of great food. Its quiet streets and welcoming community make it an appealing choice for anyone drawn to a slower, more grounded pace of life and for off-the-beaten-path enthusiasts, Santitham is a hidden treasure worth exploring.



Chiang Mai's delicious dishes.

Chiang Mai's culinary scene is a paradise for food lovers, where rich traditions meet innovation. From aromatic street food stalls to fine dining Michelin guide restaurants, the city offers an extraordinary range of flavors.



Chiang Mai's delicious dishes.

The street food in Chiang Mai is unbeatable. For a casual authentic experience, visit the vibrant Chiang Mai Gate Night Market where you can indulge in local delights like *sai ua* (Northern Thai sausage), *khai pam* (grilled banana-leaf-wrapped eggs), and *khanom jeen nam ngiaw* (a flavorful noodle soup).

Chiang Mai Gate Market is also a great place to start your day with many lesser-known northern Thai dishes available. Alternatively, visit Yunnan Market in Chang Moi, where Chinese, Muslim, and Tai Yai influences come together in a unique blend of snacks, fresh produce, and hearty meals.

For those craving an elevated dining experience, Chiang Mai's emerging fine dining scene takes Thai cuisine to new heights. Picture locally sourced herbs and fresh vegetables transformed into stunning, artful creations, each restaurant telling a story of the region's rich agricultural heritage.

Chiang Mai's vibrant food scene blends tradition with modern flair, offering everything from street food to fine dining. With its rich variety of flavors, it's a must-visit for any food lover seeking an unforgettable culinary adventure.



(A food stall in Chiang Mai Gate Market)



(Kiti Panit)

Chiang Mai's delicious dishes.



Ratchakorn, Airbnb host (bottom right)
'Half Day Authentic Thai Cooking Class in Organic Farm'

“My passion for cooking started when I was a little girl, learning from my grandma in the kitchen, and through this Airbnb Experience I love to share my family recipes. Airbnb has been incredible, the platform has helped us to connect with travelers who truly appreciate authentic culinary experiences and in response to guests' interest in Northern Thai food, we have recently launched a new Lanna cuisine experience on Airbnb.”



Chiang Mai's brews and blends.

Chiang Mai's coffee and tea cultures both embody the region's commitment to quality and sustainability, but each offers something distinct and deeply tied to the area's natural environment.



Chiang Mai's brews and blends.

The coffee here is renowned for its beans, sourced from the high-altitude farms. These beans, grown in the rich soils of the northern highlands, develop complex flavors thanks to the ideal growing conditions. **Local cafés, found in almost every corner of the city—earning Chiang Mai its reputation as the “City of Cafés”—**take pride in roasting these beans in-house and using careful brewing techniques, such as pour-overs and slow brews, to bring out their full potential. This focus on farm-to-cup sustainability, combined with the skill of local baristas, gives Chiang Mai's coffee its distinct, artisanal character.



While Chiang Mai is celebrated as a coffee hotspot, its tea culture quietly shines with exceptional quality and heritage. **The region is home to rare, wild-harvested teas, many sourced from ancient tea trees in the surrounding forests, particularly in high-altitude areas such as Chiang Dao.** Tea houses in Chiang Mai also focus on traditional brewing methods, emphasizing the preservation of these delicate flavors while promoting eco-conscious practices. For those seeking a tranquil alternative, the city's tea scene provides a refined, yet underrated, taste of Northern Thailand's rich heritage.

Chiang Mai's coffee and tea cultures offer a perfect blend of bold flavors and tranquil experiences, inviting you to savor the region's rich heritage and sustainable practices with every cup, whether it's vibrant coffee or serene tea.



Chiang Mai's brews and blends.

Nutth, Airbnb host (bottom left)
'Coffee Connoisseur, Local-Cafe Hopping'

“Chiang Mai’s coffee culture thrives because of its close relationship between farmers and café owners. Our proximity to high-altitude farms allows us to work directly with growers, ensuring top-quality beans. Over the years, many baristas have transitioned into café owners, bringing their knowledge and passion to create unique experiences. Visitors to Chiang Mai often arrive unaware of our coffee scene, but they leave with an appreciation for the craftsmanship, community, and authenticity that define Chiang Mai’s cafés. The collaborative spirit here makes it a special destination for coffee enthusiasts worldwide.”



(Airbnb Experience: Coffee Connoisseur, Local-Cafe Hopping)



Indulge in Chiang Mai's wellness scene.

Chiang Mai has long been known for its rich traditions of wellness, deeply rooted in the region's history, spirituality, and connection to nature.

At the heart of wellness is the art of healing, rooted in local herbal remedies and traditional Thai massage, which target pressure points and energy lines to release tension and restore vitality. Equally essential is mindfulness, guided by meditation and sacred temple rituals that lead the mind toward inner peace. Infused with the spiritual essence of Buddhism, these practices nurture both body and soul, creating a holistic path to well-being.

Set against Northern Thailand's breathtaking landscapes—rolling mountains, serene rice paddies, and lush forests—**Lanna wellness draws from nature's gifts, offering healing herbs and mineral-rich waters that invite you to reconnect, rejuvenate, and find balance.** Whether it's a sunrise yoga session overlooking the hills or a meditative retreat in a temple's quiet embrace, each experience fosters harmony between inner and outer worlds.

Chiang Mai's wellness traditions seamlessly blend ancient wisdom, mindfulness, and nature, offering a timeless path to renewal. Here, every moment is an invitation to breathe deeply, center yourself, and embrace the healing essence of the North of Thailand.

From local foot and Thai massage places to indulgent body treatments and immersive spas, wellness options are varied and a must try while visiting Chiang Mai.

Amornrat, Airbnb host (right) *'Yoga, Meditation & Immersion in Thai Culture'*

"Moving back to Chiang Mai to care for my mother led me to open a yoga studio, but it was meditation that truly transformed my life. Yoga nurtures the body, but meditation nurtures the mind—teaching us to face suffering rather than escape it.

Many guests come to Chiang Mai seeking a calm environment, away from the chaos of Bangkok, and they find a unique experience here. I never expected my journey to resonate with so many people, but sharing Thai culture, Buddhist teachings, and mindfulness practices has created a meaningful connection that continues to attract like-minded travelers."





Chiang Mai's art, crafts and creative scene.

Chiang Mai is a vibrant hub of arts and crafts, where traditional Thai craftsmanship merges with modern innovation. Travelers seeking an authentic creative experience will find a unique blend of past and present in the city's flourishing art scene.

Chiang Mai's arts, crafts and creative scene.

As the capital of the ancient Lanna Kingdom, Chiang Mai became a center for traditional craftsmanship and there's a legacy of artisan skills still thriving in its markets and workshops today. The city's rich history is reflected in its vibrant artisan communities, **where crafts like wood carving, silk weaving, and silverwork have been passed down through generations.** This dedication to preserving culture is visible across the city where you can find handmade crafts that reflect the region's tradition seamlessly blended with modern design.



In recent years, Chiang Mai has experienced a resurgence in its arts scene, with modern designers and young artisans breathing new life into traditional crafts. **This creative revival blends old techniques with fresh perspectives, resulting in unique fashion, décor, and accessories** that bridge local heritage with global appeal across multiple artistic disciplines.

For an immersive experience, you can explore workshops around the city, where skilled craftsmen produce everything from ceramics to papermaking, offering hands-on learning and unique experiences.

Chiang Mai's arts and crafts scene is a captivating journey into the heart of creativity. With its vibrant markets, unique galleries, and beautifully crafted local treasures, the city invites you to explore a world where tradition and innovation meet. Every corner of Chiang Mai brims with artistic inspiration, making it an unforgettable destination for those seeking beauty, culture, and creativity at every turn.

Chiang Mai's arts, crafts and creative scene.

North, Airbnb host (top right)
'Chiang Mai Street Art Tour & Workshop'

"Chiang Mai's art scene thrives because it's a city where tradition meets creativity. My Street Art Experience began with a vision to connect visitors with the local community. Here, guests can paint murals on walls, knowing that their contributions help sustain a space for underprivileged children to learn and play at my studio and also in a community. Chiang Mai's slower pace and proximity to nature allow people to reflect and express themselves uniquely. **This city isn't just a destination, it's a place where art builds connections, preserves culture, and inspires mindfulness, making every creative endeavor deeply meaningful.**"



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