

Where next?

Many of our visitors combine time in the remote, subtropical, tribal, mountainous north with Thailand's tropical southern coastal resorts or another exotic location in South East Asia. Most destinations can be reached from Chiang Mai airport. To acclimatise to the heat, the north is a gentler starting point, though often physically more demanding for outdoor types.

Chiang Mai's runway is too short for fully laden inter-continental flight departures, but its an excellent hub to reach Thailand's coastal resorts, Bangkok and the other countries of South East Asia, including China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Malaya, Singapore and Burma. It is well served by the regional airlines, national carrier Thai Air and low-cost AirAsia, the Ryanair of the region.

Bangkok is the main destination for intercontinental flights and there are then hourly shuttles up to Chiang Mai, the northern and cultural capital.

Chiang Mai is a low rise, relaxed and spacious city, characterized by its cultural history, artisan skills and friendly atmosphere, well worth a night or two. Its thronged with winter visitors. The hotels and guest houses are all good value within their categories. We specially like Tamarind Village, whose byword is Culture, in a quiet leafy compound in the heart of the Old City. For sheer romance book a candlelit table at Riverside Restaurant, as close as you can to the water.

Phuket is mainstream international tourism, just 90 minutes from Chiang Mai. We prefer to head for Krabi and the more relaxed island of Ko Lanta. The further south you venture, the nicer it is gets.