

Thailand



↑ Fabulous views as far as the eye can see, at The Pavilions in Phuket. ↑ A resident at the Elephant Nature Park, near Chiang Mai. → The soaring lobby of the luxurious Sukhothai – a serene haven in the heart of Bangkok.

Live the Thai life

Bustling Bangkok will delight, Chiang Mai will charm, and Phuket is all about the pale blue sea

BANGKOK

A traveller's delight, the City of Angels, as Bangkok is also known, is a bustling city of some 8 million with plenty of enticements, from boutique hotels and ritzy restaurants to high-end shops offering the best in Thai goods.

SANCTUARY

The perfect way to end a day is to retire for the night at a serene oasis of a hotel, and Bangkok certainly has a good selection of luxurious accommodations.

Despite its location – right in the heart of the lively Sukhumvit district – the 40-room Maduzi Hotel (maduzihotel.com) offers tranquility the minute you step inside – gleaming wood floors, clean-line furnishings and artworks. It does not take walk-ins, which makes staying here almost like being in a private home. The Siam Heritage (thesiamheritage.com) on Surawong Road, which features traditional Thai Lanna décor, is conveniently within walking distance to Silom district with its many upscale shops, restaurants and bars. Gourmet meals and a beautiful rooftop pool are major draws at the Cabochon Hotel (cabochonhotel.com) on Sukhumvit Road, along with its architecture, a re-creation of 1920s Shanghai chic. Luxuriate in fine Belgian bed linens and vintage accoutrements at this unique boutique hotel of just four suites and four studios. Generous-sized rooms and suites are available at The Sukhothai (sukhothai.com) on South

Sathorn Road, replete with private balconies overlooking lotus ponds and gardens.

SUSTENANCE

Secreted away on a small street near Rama IV Road is a 100-year-old house surrounded by lush gardens. It is home to Issaya Siamese Club (issaya.com), which serves superb Thai cuisine. Try the *yum hua plee* (banana blossom salad) or the *poo nim tod kai kem* (soft-shell crab). Little Beast (44/9-10 Thonglor Soi 13), a French-American bistro, dishes out gastropub fare for discerning diners. Order the foie gras terrine with beetroot and fig, along with the special plate of the day, which, if you're lucky, could be the succulent "15-hour lamb shoulder." At Gossip (gossip-bangkok.com), a Mediterranean café also in Thonglor, go for one of the creative cocktails, say, the pineapple-vanilla Manhattan or an orange Vesper martini, and then tuck into a squid-and-chorizo rocket salad or perhaps the slow-cooked chicken tagine.

SHOPPING

For higher-end goods, head to the Siam Paragon Mall (Rama 1 Rd.). At Jim Thompson House (6 Soi Kasemsan 2), check out the exquisite silk scarves. If you want to take home a custom-tailored suit, go to Tailor on Ten (tailoronten.com), near Nana BTS Station. Visit the 27-acre Chatuchak Weekend Market (chatuchak.org) to browse a multitude of goods, from jewellery and clothing to children's toys. The Pra-

tunam Market (at the Ratchaprop/Petchburi intersection) is a maze of wholesale vendors, but most are willing to sell clothing and shoes at retail prices to individuals.

WHAT TO SEE AND DO

If you're up with the sun, go to Lumpini Park and join the Thais practicing Tai Chi or yoga. Take a Chao Phraya River cruise to check out the Buddhist monuments and the city's canal system. Make sure to visit the Temple of Dawn and the Temple of the Reclining Buddha. Stop by Wat Pho Traditional Medical School (watphomassage.com) for an outdoor massage, and in the evening take in a Muay Thai match at Lumpinee Boxing Stadium (Rama 4 Rd.). And if you love Thai food, book a class at the Blue Elephant Cooking School (blueelephant.com).

PHUKET

Thailand's most popular southern beach destination and largest island, Phuket is all about powdery white sand and the aquamarine waters of the Andaman Sea.

LUXE ESCAPES

At Sala Phuket Resort and Spa, plunge into your private pool or head to pristine Mai Khao Beach for blissful private sunbathing. Twinpalms Phuket in Surin has several large pools, a well-equipped gym, spa and a restaurant with an extensive wine list. Renowned Thai architect Mom Tri originally designed Mom Tri's Villa Royale as his personal cliffside Shangri-La. Now



a boutique hotel, it offers fantastic views of Kata Noi Beach, and its restaurant, Mom Tri's Kitchen, has won the Wine Spectator's Award of excellence for seven consecutive years. If you're a golfer, make sure to drop by The Pavilions Phuket on Bangtao Beach with its three golf courses.

FOOD AND DRINK

Join the locals indulging in fresh seafood at the rustic Mor Mudong Restaurant in Soi Palai, near the Phuket Zoo. Try the whole fish steamed in salt crust or any one of the dishes featuring *kruang nam prik*, a fiery hot sauce. For a swanky meal and gazillion-dollar views, head to 360 Degrees at The Pavilions Phuket (Bangtao), or Diavolo Restaurant in the five-star Paresa Resort on Millionaires' Mile (Nakalay Rd.), on Kamala Beach.

CHIANG MAI

If you love elephants and spicy northern Thai cuisine, go to Chiang Mai. A compelling stop on any tour of Thailand, this historically significant, laid-back city offers intriguing contrasts – 300-plus ancient temples as well as trendy bars, hotels and restaurants.

HUSH, HUSH HIDEAWAYS

Tamarind Village (tamarindvillage.com) is in the heart of Chiang Mai, surrounded by majestic 200-year-old tamarind trees and temples. The richly patterned fabrics and carved wood furniture in its guest rooms and suites reflect the eth-

nic diversity of the region. Rachamankha (rachamankha.com), a Relais & Chateaux property, has a library, a gallery and a gift shop showcasing works of local designers. Puripunn Baby Grand Boutique Hotel (puripunn.com), which features traditional Lanna design combined with colonial style, is just a few minutes' walk from the Night Bazaar.

FOOD AND DRINK

Go for high tea at Nakara Jardin (11 Soi 9 Charoenprathet Rd.), a French bistro overlooking the Ping River, and sample the delicious pastries it's known for. Try Ristr8to Coffee (15/3 Nimmanhaemin Rd.), a chic small café that takes its coffee very seriously. Pre-dinner, stop by Jagajee (1/1, Soi 15, Nimmanhaemin Rd.) for a glass of prosecco with, say, shrimp Newburg. For traditional northern cuisine, head to Dash! Restaurant and Bar (38/2 Moon Maung Rd.) for a stir-fry. And make sure you try Grandma's stir-fried eggplants in homemade chili sauce.

ELEPHANT EXPERIENCES

At Patara Elephant Farm (pataraelephantfarm.com), visitors are allowed not just to ride the gentle giants, but also to learn how to be a mahout, or elephant keeper, by bathing and brushing the elephants in the river and communicating with special commands. Elephant Nature Park (elephantnaturepark.org) is a rescue centre where you can come for the day or stay overnight and get to know the herd.

Our Premium Economy Class.

A welcome enhancement to the Economy Class experience.

You'll enter a private cabin for just 26 to 34 passengers. Sit in wider seats with more legroom. Relax with award-winning Studio^{CX} inflight entertainment on demand. And enjoy a little extra attention from our flight attendants. Enhance your next journey in the comfort of our Premium Economy Class.

cathaypacific.com/premiumclass

Aircraft deployment varies and availability is subject to operational requirements.