

About Chiang Rai

General Information



Chiang Rai, the northernmost province of Thailand is about 785 kilometers north of Bangkok. Situated on the Kok River basin, Chiang Rai covers an area of approximately 11,678 square meters with an average elevation of 580 meters above sea level. The province, which is located within the renowned Golden Triangle area where Myanmar, Laos and Thailand converge, is also known as the gateway to Myanmar, Laos and Southern China.

Chiang Rai, which was founded in 1262 by King Meng Rai, was the first capital of the Lanna Thai Kingdom (Kingdom of a million rice fields), which was later conquered by Burma. It was not until 1786 that Chiang Rai became a Thai territory and was proclaimed a province during the reign of King Rama VI in 1910.

Today, Chiang Rai is a traveler paradise endowed with abundant natural tourist attractions and antiquities; the province itself is evidence of past civilization. Attractions range from magnificent mountain scenery, ruins of ancient settlements, historic sites, Buddhist shrines and ethnic villages as the province is also home to several hill tribes who maintain fascinating lifestyles. For those interested in the natural side of Chiang Rai, jungle trekking is recommended along various trails.



Chiang Rai which tends to be a little more 'laid back' now competes with Chiang Mai as a tourist attraction and is fast becoming a popular escape for tourists wanting to get away from the troubles they left behind.

Geography

The average elevation of the province is 580 m. The north of the province belongs to the so-called Golden Triangle, at which the borders of Thailand, Laos and Myanmar converge - an area which was very unsafe because of the drug smuggling across the borders. The Mekong River forms the boundary with Laos, the Mae Sai and Ruak River to Myanmar. Through the town of Chiang Rai itself flows the Kok River.

While the eastern part of the province is relatively flat river plains, the western part consists of mountainous terrain. While not the highest elevation of the province, the 1322 m high Doi Tung (Flag hill) is the most important hill. The Wat Phra That Doi Tung temple on top of the hill according to the chronicles dates back to the year 911. Nearby is the Doi Tung royal villa, former residence of the Late Princess mother (mother of the present king) Somdej Phra Srinagarindra. Thanks to her activities the hills were reforested, and the hill tribes changed from growing poppy to other crops.

History



Populations have dwelled in Chiang Rai since the 7th century and it became the center of the Lanna Thai Kingdom during the 13th century. The region, rich in natural resources and textiles, was occupied by the Burmese until 1786.

Chiang Rai became a province in 1910, after being part of the kingdom of Lannathai for centuries. After Lannathai was incorporated into Thailand, it stayed an autonomous region and thus the Chiang Rai area was administered from Chiang Mai.

Chiang Rai province's Golden Triangle bordering Laos and Burma was once the hub of opium production which had much influence on cultural practices and lifestyles. Until this day, entire clans live together in bamboo houses and each village has its own individual character.

Demographics

The majority of the population is generally ethnic Thai, but 12.5% of the population belongs to the hill tribes, a minority in the North of Thailand. A minority are of Chinese descent, mainly descendants of the Kuomintang soldiers who settled in the region, notably Santikhiri.



Symbols

The seal of the province shows a white elephant, the royal symbol. It remembers that Chiang Rai was founded by King Mengrai, according to the legend because his elephant liked the place.



The provincial tree is the Tree Jasmine (*Radermachera ignea*), and the provincial flower is the Orange Trumpet (*Pyrostegia venusta*).

The provincial slogan says: "เหนือสุดในสยาม อร่ามดอยตุง ผดุงวัฒนธรรม รสล้ำ ข้าวสาร หอมหวานลิ้นจี่ สตรีโสภา ชาเลิศรส สับปะรดนางแล"

"Northernmost in Siam, beautiful Doi Tung, repository of culture, most delicious rice, sweet and fragrant litchi, beautiful women, the finest flavored tea, pineapple from Nang-Lae (, and source of the Giant Catfish)"

Or "เหนือสุดในสยาม ชายแดนสามแผ่นดิน ถิ่นวัฒนธรรมล้านนา ล้ำค่าพระธาตุดอยตุง"

"Farthest north in Siam, intersection of three reigns, home to the culture of Lanna"

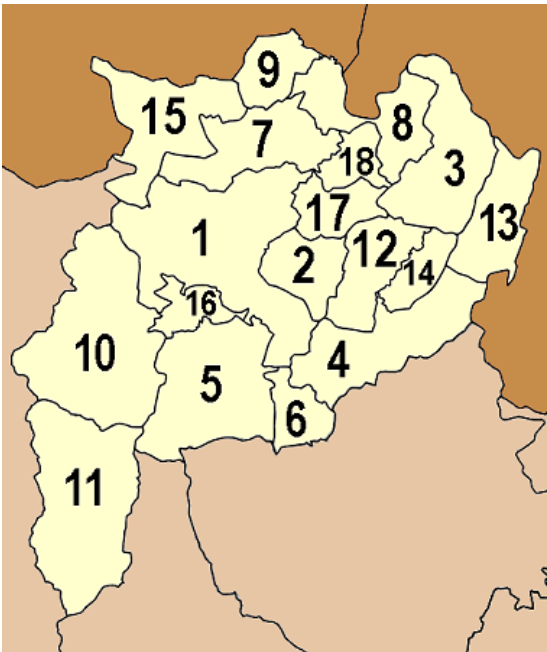


Orange Trumpet

Administrative divisions

The province is subdivided in 18 districts (Amphoe). These are further subdivided into 124 sub districts (tambon) and 1510 villages (muban).

1. Mueang Chiang Rai
2. Wiang Chai
3. Chiang Khong
4. Thoeng
5. Phan
6. Pa Daet
7. Mae Chan
8. Chiang Saen
9. Mae Sai
10. Mae Suai
11. Wiang Pa Pao
12. Phaya Mengrai
13. Wiang Kaen
14. Khun Tan
15. Mae Fa Luang
16. Mae Lao
17. Wiang Chiang Rung
18. Doi Luang



Weather

Average	January	February	Mar	April	May	June
Avg. Temp	66°F 19°C	70°F 21°C	75°F 24°C	80°F 27°C	81°F 27°C	80°F 27°C
Rain	0.5 in. 1 cm.	0.3 in. 1 cm.	0.8 in. 2 cm.	3.5 in. 9 cm.	8 in. 20 cm.	8.3 in. 21 cm.
Average	July	August	September	October	November	December
Avg. Temp	80°F 26°C	79°F 26°C	78°F 26°C	76°F 25°C	72°F 22°C	66°F 19°C
Rain	- in. - cm.	- in. - cm.	- in. - cm.	5.6 in. 14 cm.	2.4 in. 6 cm.	1 in. 2 cm.