

Outside Bangkok

AYUTTHAYA



The ancient city of Ayutthaya, or Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, was the capital of Siam for 417 years, and remains one of Thailand's major tourist attractions. Founded by 'King U-Thong or Ramathibodi I' in 1350, the city possesses many ancient ruins and art which were left behind when the Thais were forced southwards after being sacked by the Burmese in 1767.

CHA-AM



This beautiful beach, twinned with Hua Hin of Phrachuap Khiri Khan, is located 40 kms. south of the town or 20 kms. north of Hua Hin. Cha-Am was originally a small fishing village. After a Royal Palace was built near Hua Hin in the reign of King Rama VI, the land was occupied by the Royal Family and the elite. Today, it is very popular among Thais who love superb seafood and comfortable hotel or bungalow accommodation.

CHIANG MAI



Chiang Mai is blessed with stunning natural beauty and a unique indigenous cultural identity. Founded in 1296 by King Mengrai the Great, it was the capital of the Lanna Thai Kingdom by merging the various city-states in the region. Chiang Mai is today the economic, communications, cultural and tourism centre of Northern Thailand. This pre-eminent regional status has been obtained without losing the essence of its natural environment and culture. The terrain consists mainly of mountainous jungles, parts of which

are within fertile and verdant national parks full of all kinds of flora and fauna. Additionally, many sites and locations still exist where tourists can still witness the lifestyle and traditions of the ancient hill tribe people.

Chiang Mai is also Thailand's main centre for quality handicrafts. Artisans hone their art in the outlying villages where authentic cottage industries thrive. In particular, along the Bo Sang-San Kamphaeng Road, such handicraft-producing factories give visitors a glimpse of the traditional methods still in use today.

CHIANG RAI



Chiang Rai is situated in the Kok River basin 416 m above sea level in the northernmost province of Thailand about 785 kilometres from Bangkok. With an area of some 11,678 sq km, the mostly mountainous expanse touches the Mekong River to the north, and borders both Myanmar and Laos. The province is rich in tourism resources, in terms of natural attractions and antiquities, which serve as reminders of an ancient civilisation. It is also home to several hilltribes who lead simple, albeit fascinating, ways of life.

HAT YAI

Situated 1289 km. southwest of Bangkok, Hat Yai is Thailand's most popular destination for travellers because of its strategic location as the southern gateway to Thailand. The city finds fame as a focal point for vigorous cross-border trading, enjoying the support from Thai folk from all over the country who clamour for Malaysian produce, such as tropical fruit: pears, apples, Muscat grapes, and products including assorted Western biscuits and chocolates, cosmetics and many other items. Nevertheless, Hat Yai owes much of its charm and attraction to its vibrant, vivacious nightlife which revolves around the nightclubs, bars, pubs, discotheques, karaoke lounges, shopping malls and cinemas.

HUA-HIN

This beach city located 200 km. south of Bangkok, became popular as a rainy season retreat in the 1920s with the construction of the railway line from Bangkok. Also during this time, King Rama VII selected a special piece of beachfront property to build the Klai Kangwon Palace, or literally 'Haven Far From Worries'. The fact that this palace remains in frequent use by the Royal Family today lends this town an atmosphere quite different from other beach areas in Thailand.

KANCHANABURI



The mountainous province of Kanchanaburi, Thailand's third largest, covers some 19,473 sq km, and borders Myanmar (Burma) to the west of Bangkok. The compact provincial capital, some 130 km or a comfortable two-hour drive from Bangkok, is both the site of the world-famous 'Bridge Over The River Kwai', immortalised in books and movies, as well as the gateway to a region of rugged natural beauty. The countryside beyond the provincial capital is characterised by mountains and fertile river valleys where a labyrinth of dammed reservoirs provide further scenic elements to the province's natural beauty.

KHAO YAI



Khao Yai National Park is Thailand's second largest, covering 2,168 sq km, encompassing 11 districts and 4 provinces; Sara Buri, Nakhon Ratchasima, Prachin Buri, and Nakhon Nayok. It was Thailand's first National Park, and was established on September 18, 1962. The park encompasses a wide variety of habitats, including evergreen forests and grasslands. There are also several mountains as tall as a 1,000 m including Khao Khieo. It is host to almost 2,500 plant species, 67 different kinds of mammals and over 300 species of birds. The abundant wildlife includes many endangered mammals such as elephants, gibbons, tigers, leopards and Malaysian Sun bears. The entire area is criss-crossed by hiking trails, ranging in length from one and a half to eight km in addition, there are many waterfalls, the tallest and most spectacular of which is Haew Narok at 80 m. Another waterfall, Haew Suwat, is located along the upper reaches of the Lam Takhong River.

KHON KAEN

Khon Kaen boasts a lengthy history and claims to be the birthplace of so many thriving civilisations and cultures. This is an area where the first dinosaur fossils were found in

Thailand. Once the quiet capital of one of the poorest provinces in the Northeast, it has undergone dramatic changes and is now a prosperous, bustling town. Situated right in the heart of the region, Khon Kaen is the focal point of many regional development projects, including the site of the region's largest public university.

KOH CHANG



This island paradise is located in Trat province near the border of Cambodia, and lies approximately 315 km. from Bangkok. This wonderful island is thankfully not as exploited as some of Thailand's other islands and remains unpolluted, with white sandy beaches. King Rama V, King Rama VI and King Rama VII used to holiday on the island and even the present ruler, King Bhumibhol Adulyadej, plans occasional visits. Besides a relaxed beach vacation Koh Chang has various leisure offers for active holidaymakers e.g. snorkelling, diving or mountain-biking. Many resorts rent out kayaks and arrange jungle treks as well as all day boat tours to the surrounding islands. Islands such as Koh Ngam, Koh Sai Kao, Koh Laoya, Koh Vai, Koh Kam, Koh Mak and Koh Kradard also offer tranquility and natural-beauty. Coral reefs offer diving and snorkeling on Koh Vai, Koh Kra and the Rang group of islands.

KOH SAMUI



Thailand's 3rd largest island is a palm-fringed paradise with coastal roads encircling the whole island. Aside from the lovely beaches and coral beds, it is plentiful in coconut plantations and forested hills. The more popular beaches are on the northern and eastern coasts, namely Chaweng Beach, known for its party scene and a combination of luxury accommodations and Lamai Beach. Many international diving schools have been established on nearby Koh Tao (Turtle Island) because of its pristine beaches and abundant coral reefs which contribute to its reputation as the best scuba diving spot in the Gulf of Thailand.

KRABI



One of the most attractive destinations in Thailand covers an area of 4,709 sq km and is located 814 km south of Bangkok. Krabi's major attractions are located largely along its extensive coastline with several well-known beaches and bays, and numerous offshore tropical islands.

Krabi's mountainous physical landscape is broken only by appearances of highlands and plains on the mainland. Natural forest cover is chiefly Mangrove and Cassia trees. The Krabi River flows 5 km through the town and falls into the Andaman Sea at Tambon Pak Nam.

LOEI

Loei is a land of water and mountains in the Upper Northeast. The Mekong River divides it and Laos. Some national parks here are major tourist destinations. The climate is cool like that of northern Thailand. Loei is 520 km from Bangkok. It has an area of about 11,426 sq km and is divided into the following districts: Muang, Wang Saphung, Phu Kradung, Chiang Khan, Pak Chom, Tha Li, Phu Rua, Dan Sai, Na Haeo, Na Duang, Phu Luang, Pha Khao, Erawan and Nong Hin.

LOPBURI



Lopburi, formerly known as 'Lawo', was one of the most important towns of the vast Khmer Empire from the 10th-13th century, and so many examples of Khmer art and architecture are easily found in and around the area.

MAE HONG SON



Nestled in a deep valley hemmed in by high mountain ranges, Mae Hong Son has long been isolated from the outside world. Virtually covered with mist throughout the year, the name refers to the fact that the terrain is highly suitable for the training of elephants. Mae Hong Son is one of the dream destinations for visitors who are attracted by its cultural and natural wonders.

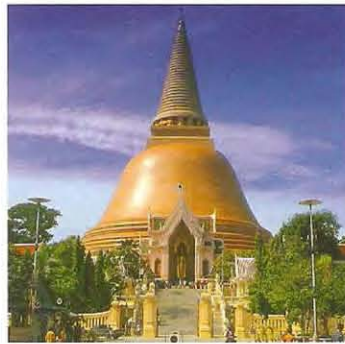
NAKHON RATCHASIMA

Nakhon Ratchasima, or Khorat, is a large province on the northeastern plateau that serves as a gateway to other provinces in the Northeast. It is 259 km from Bangkok and has an area of around 20,494 sq km. The historical province is rich with Khmer cultural



influence, while also possessing a beautiful natural environment of forests, mountains, waterfalls, and reservoirs. Khorat also has a reputation for producing a variety of quality handicrafts, particularly the popular clay pottery of Dan Kwian.

NAKHON PATHOM



Nakhon Pathom is a small province which surrounds the 'Phra Pathom Chedi', an ancient religious landmark signifying the first influx of Buddhism into the Kingdom of Thailand. Despite its size, the province contains many places of interest for visitors.

PATTAYA



Pattaya is 147 km southeast of Bangkok and faces the Thai Gulf. It is Asia's premier beach resort and caters with broad appeal to families, couples and single visitors. Accommodation ranges from luxuriously appointed hotels with convention facilities to simple guest-houses. Sporting opportunities abound both on land and water including some of the finest golfing, game fishing and scuba-diving anywhere in Asia. Theme and amusement parks, offbeat museums and lush botanical gardens offer numerous forms of leisure activities and cultural entertainment for all. After dark, Pattaya offers all the allure and magic of a truly vibrant nightlife with a spectacular variety of restaurants, night clubs, bars, discotheques, cocktail lounges and cabarets.

PHANG NGA



A seaside province by the Andaman Sea with scenic views of forests and islands. The province offers superb natural beauty both onshore and underwater. The province of Phang Nga is located some 788 km from Bangkok

and it covers an area of 4,170 sq km. The outer islands of Phang Nga are considered to be one of the world's best scuba diving grounds. Popular trips are live-aboard diving excursions to Similan Islands, home of the most beautiful and colourful soft corals in the world plus a whole range of coral fish, manta rays and other exotic marine animals.

PHUKET



Phuket is Thailand's largest island, approximately the size of Singapore. Lying 862 km south of Bangkok, Phuket is nestled in the balmy waters of the Andaman Sea, Thailand's portion of the Indian Ocean. Phuket is blessed with magnificent coves and bays, palm-fringed powdery white beaches and sparkling island-dotted seas. This lush tropical landscape provides plenty of opportunity to enjoy superb accommodations and seafood, delightful turn-of-the-century Sino-Portuguese architecture, as well as numerous sporting and leisure pleasures – all of which combine to create a delightful ambience for truly memorable holidays.

RATCHABURI



Ratchaburi, a glorious town of the Dvaravati period, is located on the bank of the Maekhong River. The provincial area abounds in natural attractions and historical sites. It is located 80 kms. west of Bangkok and borders on Myanmar to the west having the Tanaosi Range as a borderline. Ratchaburi occupies an area of 5,196 sq km and is administratively divided into nine districts.

RAYONG

Situated 221 km from Bangkok, Rayong is one of the most developed provinces on the country's eastern seaboard, and is reached following an hour's drive east



to Pattaya. The province is a popular destination among Thai families, many of whom own condominiums by the sea. In addition to the numerous high-rise condos, Rayong's seaside houses a wide spectrum of accommodation options, from first-rate hotels to bungalows on the beach. Rayong's beaches are fairly crowded on weekends, making this province more of a destination for the social sun-seeker. Most of the hotels are located along a 20 kilometer strip, along the beach road between the fishing village of Ban Phe and Laem Mae Pim Beach.

SI SA KET



Si Sa Ket was originally called Muang Khu Khan. Archaeologists believe the city dates back to the time of the Khmer Empire because of the presence of many Khmer ruins. The area around Si Sa Ket also has an abundance of natural beauty to which the numerous forests, parks, and waterfalls can hold testament.

SUKHOTHAI



Founded in the 13th century, Sukhothai (Dawn of Happiness) was the first truly independent Thai Kingdom. The superb temples and monuments of this great city have been lovingly and meticulously restored in the Sukhothai Historical Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a must-see for all travellers to the Kingdom. Sukhothai is located on the lower edge of the northern region, 427 km north of Bangkok or some 350 km south of Chiang Mai.

SURIN



Surin, located 457 km from Bangkok covering an area of 8,124 sq km, is famous for the Elephant Roundup and for its many Khmer sanctuaries, being separated from neighboring Cambodia by the Banthat Mountains. However, the city also possesses a wide variety of handicrafts, silk and other cultural arts.

UBON RATCHATHANI

Ubon Ratchathani is a major tourist attraction of the lower I-San Bangkok. The province borders the Mekong River to the east and features superb scenic views of Ubon Ratchathani. The province covers 15,517 sq km and is divided into the following districts: Muang, Warin Chamrap, Det Udom, Buntharik, Na Chaluai, Nam Yun, Phibun Mangsahan, Khong Chiam, Si Muang Mai, Trakan Phutphon, Khemmarat, Muang Samsip, Khuang Nai, Kut Khao Pun, Tan Sum, Pho Sai, Samrong, Sirindhorn, Don Mot Daeng, Thung Si Udom, Na Yia, Na Tan, Lao Sua Kok, Sawang Wirawong and Nam Khun.