



THAINESS

Live & Learn the Thai Way of Life





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30 Resort Destinations with the Souls of Thais





The Kingdom Of Thailand
 Thailand is situated just north of the equator in the heart of South-East Asia. The country is the third largest in the region and its shape resembles an axe, the handle being the long peninsula to the south. It is a place that can be visited at any time of the year with a variety of ethnic cultures and traditions and a wealth of natural attractions.



“เข้าเมืองตาหลิว ต้องหลิวตาตาม”
When in Thailand do as the Thais do



PREFACE

A small, wooden boat stacked high with pomeloes, mangoes, bananas, and jackfruit fresh from the orchards floats slowly down a canal. Monkeys play in the palm trees while farmers pick their homegrown vegetables to sell at the market. Others are preparing to harvest the golden rice almost ready in the paddies. The smell of cooking rice means it is close to meal time.

These timeless images are dreams of a way of life that has existed for a long time and continues today, of traditional knowledge and a peaceful philosophy that have stood the test of time, of wisdom passed from generation to generation.

But these dreams are reality in Thailand, a country of rich cultural heritage, stunning natural attractions, and friendly, smiling people.

'Thainess – Live and Learn the Thai Way of Life' visits 30 resort destinations to show this heritage, beauty, and happiness that makes the magic of the traditional way of life. Feel Thai for just a moment – these destinations will warm your hearts, inspire your thoughts, and fill your hopes.

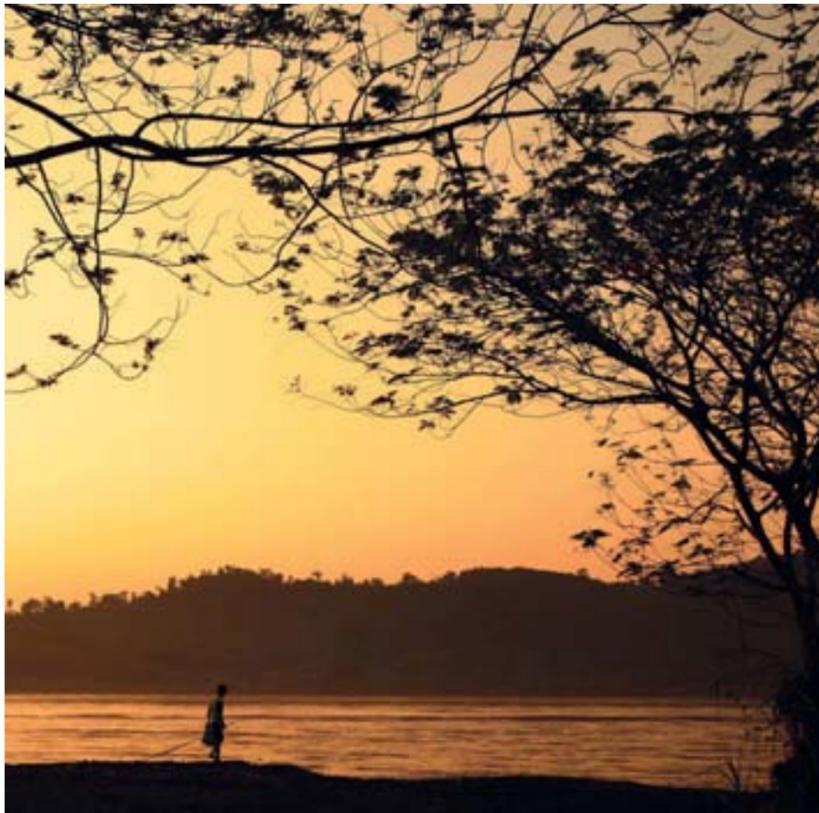


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THAILAND OVERVIEW

The Kingdom of Thailand



๒. Thai Language

Thai is the official national language, a tongue that is rhythmical and pleasant to the ear. Its tonal characteristics – high, middle, low, rising, and falling – make it difficult for Westerners to learn, often causing a smile when using the wrong tone. Most Thai phrases and sentences are politely ended by the use of “khrap” by men and “kha” by women.



๑. Thai People

Smiling faces, shining eyes, warm hospitality, and gentle talk – you can find them all as you take your first steps into Thailand. Most people live in the central region containing Bangkok but there are various other groups with their own characteristics, traditions and languages residing in other parts of the country.



๓. Eating Customs

The charm of Thai food is the variety of ingredients that combine harmoniously to please not only the palate but also the nose and eyes. Thai food is regionally diverse but rice is the staple food at all meals, it being a food deeply embedded in Thai culture. After the main course, Thai desserts and tropical fruits are served to complement the meal.



๔. Religion

Buddhism is the principal religion in Thailand, an essential driving force in the morals of Thai individuals, families, and communities. It gives Thais an inner serenity and a moderate manner in this present-day frantic world. The religion also inspires a number of artistic pursuits and traditions handed down from generation to generation.



๕. Climate and Attire

Thailand is situated in the tropics with a temperature range throughout the year of 18 to 34 degrees Celsius. The monsoonal climate produces 3 distinct seasons – hot and dry, wet, and cool. The most suitable choice of fabrics for clothing are those made from natural fibers such as cotton and silk – cool and lightweight.



๖. Thai Traditional Houses

Thai houses usually accommodate different generations living together. The traditional house is made of wood, single storey, and elevated, such as in the central and north-eastern regions, to catch cool breezes and avoid floodwaters. Northern houses have bargeboards called ‘kah-lae,’ a wing-like structure to ward off evil spirits. The Pan Ya houses in the south display uniquely mixed styles of gabled roofs.

SPEAK THAI

Feel Thai by Speaking Some Words of Thai



๑. General Phrases

Hello	sa-wat-dee
How are you?	sa-bai-dee-mai?
I'm fine	sa-bai-dee
Please to meet you	yin-dee-tee-dai-roo-jak
Please	ka-ru-naa
Thank you	khop khun
You're welcome	mai-apen-rai
Sorry / Excuse me	kor-thot
Goodbye	laa-gon
Pardon?	arai-na
I don't understand	mai-kao-jai
I don't want	mai-ao



๒. Shopping

How much is...	ra-ka-thao-rai?
Expensive	phaeng
Cheap	thuuk
Do you have...?	mee...mai?
Can I see that?	khor-doo-dai-mai
Can you give me a cheaper price?	lot-noi-dai-mai?



๓. Eating

Delicious	a-roi
Not Delicious	mai-a-roi
Hold the chillies!	mai-sai-prik!
Not too spicy	ao-mai-phet
I'm hungry	hiew
I'm thirsty	hiew nam



๔. Getting Around

Where is ...?	yuu-tee-nai?
I'd like to go to...	yaak-ja-pai...
Which way?	pai-tang-nai?
Left	sai
Right	khwaa
Straight on	trong-pai
Is it far?	glai-mai?
Bus	rot-may
Three-wheeled taxi	tuk-tuk
Local share taxi	song-thaew
Car	rot-yon
Train	rot-fai
Long tail boat	rua-hang-yao

๕. Places

Tourist office	sam-nak-nga-an-thong-thiaw
Airport	sa-naam-bin
Railway station	sa-thaa-nii-rot-fai
Bus station	sa-thaa-nii-khon-song
Hospital	rong-pha-yaa-baan
Post office	prai-sa-nee
Hotel	rong-ram
Market	ta-laot
Toilet	hong-nam



๖. Numbers

Zero	soon
One	nueng
Two	song
Three	sam
Four	see
Five	har
Six	hok
Seven	jed
Eight	pad
Nine	gao
Ten	sib





NORTH

Stand on Doi Inthanon, the highest peak in Thailand, and listen to the trees in the wind, feel the gentle breeze on your skin, and savor the warm hospitality of the Lanna people who live in harmony with their environment. This area is full of forests, rivers, waterfalls, and spectacular mountain ranges. Northern Thai cultural traditions are varied and the region's heritage is strongly linked to the history of the Lanna kingdom. These cultural traditions are preserved for all to see, retaining their charm and distinctiveness for the appreciation of visitors and locals alike.

NORTH

The Legendary Home of a Million of Rice Fields



๑. Silverware

People in northern Thailand have been using silverware for a long time and the Wua Lai area – a traditional center for the manufacture of silver goods – is a popular destination for Thais and foreigners. Delicately designed bowls, betel boxes, and bracelets are available.



๒. Lacquer Ware

Northern Thai lacquer ware is best known for its tradition of gold-leaf work with black backgrounds and gold-on-black patterns. Beautiful water bowls, pots, boxes, and trays are some of the items on display. Most are the result of many weeks of pain-staking hand-painting and lacquering.



๓. Tea Farming

The weather and the elevation make the northern part of Thailand ideal for tea plantations. Crisp, cool air all year round allows the tea to develop more aroma and sweetness. Many tea enthusiasts take the opportunity to taste the numerous sorts of tea grown in the region.



๔. Bo Sang Umbrellas

Bo Sang near Chiang Mai is renowned for its hand-painted umbrellas made from mulberry paper and silk. These are decorated with beautiful floral motifs painted in dazzling colors. Many of the designs are very distinctive and some have a history dating back more than 200 years.

๕. Mor Hom Clothes

The indigo-colored 'Mor Hom' is traditional attire that can be traced back to the Lanna kingdom. Made from locally-grown cotton, it is easy to wear, maintain, and appropriate for many occasions ranging from work to more formal festivals. It's perfect for the tropical climate.



๖. Northern Cuisine

Northern food has a delicious and distinctive taste well-liked by Thai people and foreigners. The food is not too spicy and there is a wide choice of dishes. Try "Khantoke" in which various kinds of authentic northern food are served on a rotating wooden tray with sticky rice, all eaten with the fingers.



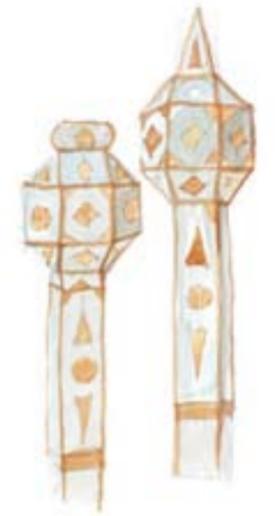
Above: Lanna Flag-making Session is conducted in a fun and friendly atmosphere

Right: The bedroom's design shows a great combination of Thai and Lanna style

Opposite Page: Baan Singhkham's architecture and ambiance reflect a true Lanna culture



Baan Singhkham Boutique Resort North



BAAN SINGHKHAM BOUTIQUE RESORT Chiang Mai

Baan Singhkham offers a touch of Lanna life frozen in time, providing an insight into a cultural heritage seldom seen today.

"Do you see those small orange and yellow flowers? They're the flowers of the ancient Lanna kingdom. Lanna people always use those flowers in paying homage to the Lord Buddha," said the gently spoken Mrs Sirirat Sankaew, owner of Baan Singhkham.

Walking around the old Lanna-style teak houses and smelling the sweet fragrances of Peacock's Crest, Chinese Rose, Cork Tree, and Cape jasmine, Mrs Sirirat introduces the resort and some of the flowers in her garden with a genuine affection.

"My husband and I are very proud to make this place an oasis of things Lanna. Many items,

such as tung (Lanna flags) that decorate the resort, represent the Lanna culture and most are handmade. Guests who stay with us are welcome to have a **HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE MAKING TUNG**. We teach them how to do it and they can take them home," says Sirirat.

Living in Baan Singhkham allows you to pursue a true Lanna experience amid the calm, natural surroundings. On a beautiful morning, start your day by making merit by **OFFERING FOOD AND ALMS TO BUDDHIST MONKS** in front of the resort, and release the birds and fish at the temple for good luck. In the afternoon, take a bike ride to explore the

Clockwise from Top Left: Learn to make "tung" and paper balloon in the natural surrounding of Baan Singh Kham
Bottom Left: Begin your beautiful day by offering food and alms to the monk in front of the resort
Opposite Page: Enjoy many of the activities Baan Singkhkam offers under the shades of greenery



nearby communities or observe the harmonious lifestyle along the banks of the River Ping.

Ancient Lanna culture has been the foundation of lifestyle in North Thailand for more than 700 years, and many of the traditional skills have been handed down through many generations. Tung, for example, is an arrangement of vertical flags used to mark the boundaries of sacred sites, such as temples, and ornaments used in religious ceremonies. The belief behind the making of tung is that it allows the maker to be reborn with prosperity and high status. At the resort, the manufacture of tung is taught by the grandmother of the house, Arrom Sittichai. "Tung can be made from wood, galvanized iron, paper, palm leaves, or cloth. We teach guests by using a long piece of paper as it is believed that the longer the paper the more merit the maker receives."

"However, tung can also be made from silk strands delicately bound together. White yarn is tied or knitted into different shapes using bamboo as a framework and then decorated with flowers or frills.

It often has ascending steps that are believed to lead up to heaven," Arrom adds.

Apart from learning how to make tung, there are other activities related to the local culture available at Baan Singkhkam. Guests can learn to carve watermelons, turnips, pineapples, and many other fruits and vegetables into simple or elegant shapes. In Thailand, the **ART OF CARVING FOODS** is considered part of the presentation of the meal. Some of the more elaborate carvings can take hours but practice allows you to proceed faster and even make your own designs.

Grandmother advises, "You have to be

At the resort, the manufacture of tung is taught by the grandmother of the house.

patient and happy most of the time when you're carving. The most enjoyable part is when you create your own patterns. Once you start carving, you don't want to stop – it takes you into a deep state of meditation."

Others prefer **LEARNING TO COOK THAI FOOD**. There are many fine dishes taught by the expert chef, Mrs Bussara Na Chiangmai. Lessons are conducted in an outdoor kitchen and include food preparation, cutting vegetables and meats, and using Thai herbs, spices and condiments. If you are new to the cooking of Thai food, don't worry! The chef will allow you to proceed at your own speed so you can enjoy every minute of preparing your first Thai dish. Mrs Bussara comments, "Cooking Thai food is truly fun. Just like carving the fruits, it requires much creativity especially when there are many ingredients to mix together in a dish."

Living in Baan Singkhkam allows you to pursue a true Lanna experience amid the calm, natural surroundings.

Left: Learn the basic Thai cooking skill and you can take the taste of Thai home as a souvenir

Right: Enjoy the traditional experience of Lanna Khantoke Dinner at Khum Jaw Nang Noy

Another special event at Baan Singkhkam is the traditional Lanna wedding festival during November, December, and January. The celebration includes a selection of traditional Thai ethnic dances performed by a local Thai dance troupe and the release of kom loi (fire balloons) to take away bad luck.

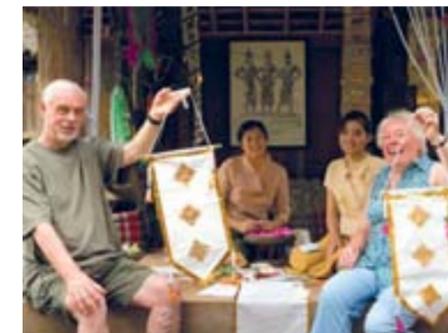
If you like the Lanna life, then you should also eat like a Lanna. About ten minutes drive from Baan Singkhkam, you are invited to experience a traditional Lanna Khantoke dinner with classical Lanna dance and music at Khum Jaw Nang Noy. At this Khantoke dinner, you will find such delights as mixed vegetable curry, Burmese-style pork curry, northern Thai-style pork sausage, pork rinds, and minced pork with chili dip served in banana leaf containers.

There is also Kat Mua, a local Lanna market with demonstrations of local Thai handicrafts such as cloth-weaving, Sa paper-making, wood-carving, silk hand-weaving, clay-molding, bamboo basket-making, and many other souvenirs.

There is no better way to experience Lanna culture than to see it with your own eyes. Baan Singkhkam presents it all to you in its fullest beauty.



Trip Summary



Tung – Lanna Flag-making Classes

Activities involving the making of tung, the local Lanna flag, are conducted everyday at the resort. Workshops with a group of friends or family are welcome. Classes are available daily but prior booking is required.



Fruit and Vegetable Carving

Learn to carve fruit and vegetables with friendly instructors. As you become more adept, you'll find that you can use any special occasion to show off your new-found skills. Classes are available daily but prior booking is required.



Thai Cooking Classes

Thai cooking classes, conducted by a professional chef at the resort, enable you to make your own authentic Thai cuisine with very little effort. To join a class, advanced reservation is required.



Offering Foods and Alms to Buddhist Monks

It is a Buddhist belief that the giving of food during an alms round benefits the donor. It is an opportunity for people to make an offering and have that offering dedicated to a good cause. Advanced notice to the resort is required in order to prepare foods and alms.



Baan Singkhkam Boutique Resort

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Ban Maepundin Potumsuan North

Opposite Page: Khun Mae Chaleo shows that a good clay sculpture is to be done with love and care

Left: The room inside the small museum shows the local wisdom that nourishes their culture until today

Bottom Right: The cozy area under the 'Khalae' house

BAN MAEPUNDIN POTUMSUAN Chiang Mai

Maepundin Potumsuan is a home away from home where everything comes alive – love, peace, happiness, art, and memories.

At Maepundin Potumsuan, your memories of the rich, community atmosphere of your childhood are re-kindled – your mother singing her favorite songs in a soothing, tender voice while cooking food in the kitchen as Dad picks some fresh vegetables and herbs from his garden for mother to add to her beautiful dishes. Meanwhile, the whole family helps prepare the dinner table for all the children of mother's friends that she has invited over. Plenty of food is cooked and everyone eats to their fill. Maepundin Potumsuan is just such an experience.

As well as being a place of family and neighborly love, warmth, care, and hospitality, it is also a comfortable residence where you

can celebrate art, the elegance of nature, and a traditional Thai way of life in this unique and special home sweet home.

'Maepundin Potumsuan,' or 'Mom's Pottery and Dad's Garden,' is located in a charming district of Mae Rim, Chiang Mai province. Originally, it was the private home of the Nilmoung family and, because of its beautiful setting, friendly environment, and the residents' knowledge of art and culture, the house attracted many interested persons and relatives. As the result, the Nilmoungs decided to turn their house into a home-stay and welcome visitors from all over the world. These guests find traditional Lanna-style houses, a terracotta gallery, and a small museum all set in a peaceful



Clockwise from Top Left: The smiles and happiness in the cooking class and clay sculpture lesson mirror the Art of Living beautifully



Clockwise: Khun Mae Chaleo explains that each plant in the garden is grown with Khun Po and Khun Mae's warm hearts. The little coffee corner in the garden
Bottom: Khun Po's garden is decorated with love and the terracotta made by Khun Mae



garden complete with coffee and reading corners and supplies of fresh fruit drinks, vegetarian, and healthy homemade food.

"You're welcome to relax at our home anytime. Live with us and be part of our family. I can teach you how to make terracotta items, cook Thai food, or you can plant flowers and trees with my husband in the garden," invites Mrs Chaleo Nilmoung, or you can simply call her 'Khun Mae' or Mom, whichever you prefer.

Khun Mae Chaleo is a renowned sculptor in Thailand. She is adept in working with clay and other artistic pursuits, her speciality being in the Lanna style. Each piece of work is based on a theme of love and the family and is strongly influenced by natural world. There are many examples of her work around the house and garden – clay pots, figurines, and dolls scattered everywhere. Khun Mae Chaleo conducts **LESSONS IN CLAY SCULPTURE** for enthusiastic

There are no rules in the creation of art. In clay sculpture, just use your imagination and let your hands follow as you turn thoughts into reality giving you a tremendous sense of creative self-fulfillment.

artists and those not so serious so you can produce your own terracotta piece of art.

"There are no rules in the creation of art. In clay sculpture, just use your imagination and let your hands follow as you turn thoughts into reality giving you a tremendous sense of creative self-fulfillment," explains Khun Mae.

On a beautiful sunlit start to the day, smoke swirls out of the open kitchen window and mixes with the morning air – the delicious aromas tell you that breakfast is ready. At the home-stay,

you can **LEARN THE CULINARY ARTS** of cooking, baking, and grilling side by side with Khun Mae Chaleo. Here, the class might be different from other cooking schools as you are expected to do it from your heart with a passion and love in every chop, slice, and peel.

"Even cooking is an art. It involves your imagination, senses, and the nature and nuances of food," says Khun Mae Chaleo. You can learn how to cook various kinds of Thai and vegetarian foods such as spicy noodle salad, grilled chicken, fried rice, fried noodle with coconut milk and herbs, and spicy fruit salad.

Most of the ingredients such as the vegetables and herbs are freshly hand-picked straight from her husband's garden. Mr Anong Nilmoung or Khun Po Anong fell in love with gardening, his garden being an intricate web of flowers and vegetables, fruit trees, and evergreen shrubs, all decorated with





Trip Summary



Clay Sculpture Lessons

Join a clay sculpture lesson and create your own terracotta. You are taught by the kind, loving mother of the house. The lesson can be in a group or individually. Prior booking is required.



Thai Cooking Classes

Learn the best-kept secret recipes of various menus of Thai and vegetarian food. Home-grown vegetables and herbs are the main ingredients. Thai herbal drinks are also available at the classes. Prior booking is required.



Gardening

You're welcome to exchange ideas, thoughts, and knowledge about gardening with the father of the house. You can also help to grow plants, flowers, or trees. Enjoying a cup of freshly-brewed coffee in a peaceful corner is highly recommended.



Visit the Local Village

Take a short bike ride to the local village nearby. There you can observe the culture and way of life of the community. Don't forget to try some of the food and beverages at the market.

Ban Maepundin Potumsuan

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I developed my garden with a sense of wonder, love, respect, and, of course, with the inspiration of my wife's artwork.

Khun Mae's pottery works.

There is a little **COFFEE CORNER IN THE GARDEN**. Guests can sit here and rest, settling comfortably with a drink and a book accompanied by the fragrance of the plants and flowers. If you have special interest in gardening, Khun Po is more than happy to exchange ideas, knowledge, and experiences with you.

"I developed my garden with a sense of wonder, love, respect, and, of course, with the inspiration of my wife's artwork," says Khun Po. "I have more than a hundred pieces of her work decorating my garden," he adds.

The garden at Maepundin Potumsuan is a place of beauty in which visitors can see magnificent examples of plants and flowers but it is also to relax and savor the atmosphere.

From Maepundin Potumsuan home-stay, you can cycle to the **LOCAL VILLAGE** where you are able to experience the lifestyle and culture of the people. Enjoy a ride to the early morning market to try the coffee and get some locally-grown food and flower garlands to offer to the Buddhist monks. On your return, visit the temple in the village to pay homage to the Lord Buddha.

The happiness, love, peacefulness, and works of art at Maepundin Potumsuan make you feel at home irrespective of where you come from.

Left - Right: Visit the local village to see their way of life and stop by at the market to buy the ingredients back for the cooking class with Khun Mae





Opposite Page: One of tribal people's ways of life is to enjoy singing traditional songs while collecting tea leaves on the top of the hill early in the morning

Right: The stunning scenery of the vineyards and the tea plantations

Bottom Left: The spacious bedroom is decorated with minimalism and added a touch of Northern Thai culture



DOI HOM FHA RESORT & MAECHAN VALLEY Chiang Rai

Nestled in a small valley, Doi Hom Fha Resort & Maechan Valley is a charming hideaway producing rice, tea, and wine.

At the end of the wet season in the Maechan Valley in Chiang Rai, the stunning greens of the rice paddies always fascinate visitors. With time passing the fascination grows stronger as the rice bends under the weight of its grain and the landscape slowly turns a golden color.

The breathtaking scenery of the valley convinced one fortunate property owner to share his luck with other people by creating a guesthouse for friends who visited on vacations – this became Doi Hom Fha Resort & Maechan Valley.

Situated on the side of a hill, the small resort of 23 rooms allows its guest to enjoy stunning views of a green valley decorated by rice paddies, tea plantations, and a vineyard.

It has developed into an ideal haven for those who dream of hiding away in a beautiful, natural setting. Local handicrafts in a Lanna-style decorating the rooms, handsome furniture, and a hospitable atmosphere in the resort attract people throughout the year.

Different seasons present different ambiances therefore the resort provides a range of activities for guests to experience at various times of the year.

"During the rainy season when there are not many guests in the resort, I love to wander around admiring the green blanket of rice that covers the hills, green waves of rice dancing in the wind," explains Nantarath Tangvitoontham, the assistant to the Managing Director. There





Top Left: Tea maker demonstrates the technique of making great tea to the visitors

Middle Left: Sipping tea slowly is the best way to get the taste and aroma of the tea

Bottom Left: Fishing by the river that encircled the resort is another activity available for the guests at Doi Hom Fha Resort

Right: Doi Hom Fha's terrace shows the beautiful living portrait of the vineyard and tea plantation

Opposite Page: Many sparkling selections of gems tempted the visitor to take at least one home



is nothing exciting about growing rice but it has a subtle charm that attracts everyone's attention.

"It is mountain rice, a bit sticky but not as much as sticky rice. You can try it at the resort," she said. "Growing rice is easy. When it's planting time, we use a long stick and punch a hole in the ground – drop a few seeds into the hole, cover it with soil, and wait for the rain. The most beautiful time is September before harvest. Rice paddies covering the whole valley turn gold," says Nantarat.

Late September to early October, farmers slowly harvest the golden grain leaving the paddies dry for a few months. But that does not mean that the landscape is lifeless straight after the rice harvest. On the other side of the valley, the tea plantation is green all year round. Every 45 days, workers, some of them members of hill-tribes from nearby areas, come to



collect leaves to make an excellent fragrant tea. A high standard of product is maintained and some is used for export.

"Three leaves on one bud and one should only pick the leaves that are 75% developed," recommends tea-maker Lao Ur Sae Jung for the ideal harvest.

Twice weekly, tourists are allowed to work at **THE TEA PLANTATION**. This starts in the early morning, just after the sun has removed the dew from the leaves. The leaves are placed in a pan and stirred gradually by hand for a period of about 3 hours until dry. They are then packed into an air-tight container.

The tea plantation is green all year round. Every 45 days, workers, some of them members of hill-tribes from nearby areas, come to collect leaves to make an excellent fragrant tea.

Surprisingly close by this natural haven in the valley, there is a **GEM-CUTTING FACTORY**. Guests are invited to watch gems-cutters turn rough rocks into precious jewelry in hours. A short course is offered to those who are

interested in learning more about the precious stones. The course involves the design and cutting of gems, allowing visitors to develop some basic skills and create their own products.

Besides the different attractions of rice, tea, and gems, there is also the vineyard. You can pick your own grapes fresh from the vine or linger over the choice of a favorite wine by tasting samples in the cellar.

The busiest time of the year at Doi Hom Fha is January when both the table and wine grapes are ready for harvesting. During this period, guests are welcome to participate in the wine-making process, cutting and sorting the

Bottom Left: Visitor can discover the end-to-end process of the wine making at the winery
Bottom Right: Enjoy tasting different type of wine at the winery

Surprisingly close by this natural haven in the valley, there is a gem-cutting factory. Guests are invited to watch gems-cutters turn rough rocks into precious jewelry in hours.



grapes, and pressing the juice.

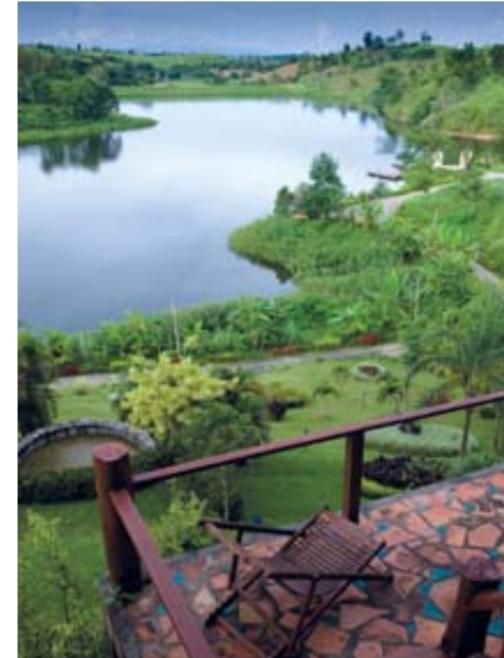
"EXCURSIONS TO OUR VINEYARD include visiting the winery and learning how to check the sweetness of the grapes and how to take care of the grapes to maintain the best quality," explains winemaker Wantana Buthsalee.

Grape time is fun time as guests can taste the grapes while they are cutting them. Kids and adults, families and individuals alike, all love to crunch the juice by stepping on the grapes. But the fun also has another side – wine production is a serious business. The winery has the capacity to produce 100,000 bottles a year and has won many local awards.

"Our best grapes are kept to make the best wine, Chateau de Maechan. Each year, only 3,000 bottles of this are made," Nantarat says.

The resort pays back some of the favors bestowed on it by nature and the community by providing employment for locals as well as setting aside space for the sale of local products. In this way, there are benefits for all.

The seasons change and the colors of Maechan Valley change too. But the fun of visiting and living here in this small valley does not change.



Trip Summary



Tea-making Courses

The 150 minute course teaches tourists the first steps of making good tea, from selecting the right buds, baking them traditionally, and packing them correctly. The course is available every Monday and Wednesday in the early morning. Booking one week ahead is recommended.



Gem-cutting Factory Visit

The factory tour shows the process of producing valuable specimens from rough stones. The short gem-cutting course is available for guests staying more than 5 days at the resort, after which they can take home their own creation.



Vineyard Tour

The excursion is available all year round and wine-tasting is a must! However, grape-harvesting and wine-making are only available in January. Booking in advance is recommended.



Doi Hom Fha Resort & Maechan Valley

โดยห่มฟ้ารีสอร์ท และ ไร่แม่จันทน์แวลลีย์

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Kaomai Lanna Resort North

Opposite Page: Visitors learn how to make the incredible Sa paper

Left: The greenery of the resort is a result of the beautiful climbing plant

Bottom Right: The masseuse enjoys teaching the local wisdom of Thai traditional massage to the visitors

KAOMAI LANNA RESORT

Chiang Mai

Hidden away in San Patong in Chiang Mai, Kaomai Lanna Resort allows its guests to explore the lifestyle of the former Lanna kingdom.

Hidden in lush vegetation, Kaomai Lanna in the San Patong district of Chiang Mai is a hide-away for those in search of the slower-paced life of rural Lanna. The resort has romantic guestrooms made from tobacco-curing barns covered by a blanket of climbing plants, a refuge for guests from the busy world outside.

"You work too hard at the computer, right?" says Aunty Thorn, the masseuse who teaches at Kaomai Lanna. The student feels relief from the eye strain that has lingered for months. As Aunty Thorn releases the pressure on the shoulders, the stress simply flies away. "Put your hands here, you can feel the lines deep inside. Press firmly and you will know how much stress there is in your shoulders," Aunty Thorn

smiles, speaking softly to her student. "Now you can cure your own pain or also help your mother relax after a long day." Aunty Thorn hopes that the **LOCAL WISDOM OF THAI TRADITIONAL** massage will make visitors happy. "Thai traditional massage is an ancient wisdom which never goes out of date. It can help people in these stressful times, particularly those who do not exercise enough," she says.

Visitor can relax in this lush retreat, learn about Lanna life, or explore the back roads of San Patong riding bicycles through vast rice paddies and fruit orchards and discovering some of the various handicraft centers.

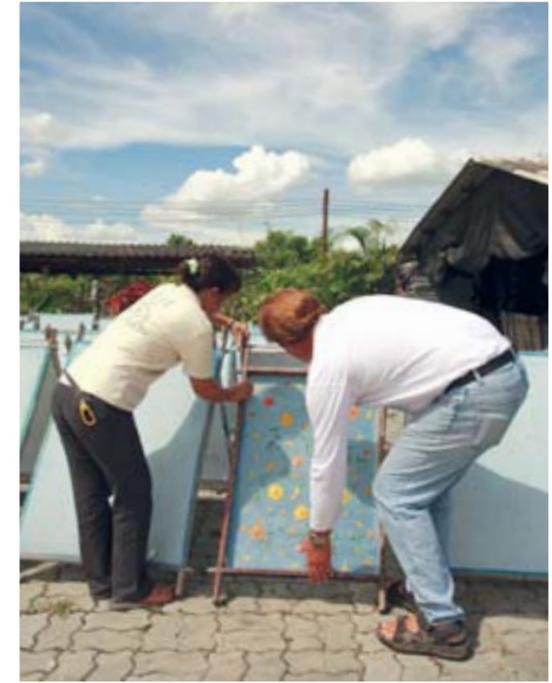
"**SA PAPER** is a legacy of this community, passed down from generation to generation for



Clockwise from Top Left: Experience the local's way of life on the way of your biking tour, Welcome the bright day with the charming contrast of red window and green surroundings, Take a break from the biking tour under the cool shade of the temple, Kaomai Lanna's room is decorated with sweetness and warmth



Clockwise: Visitor attempts the most enjoyable yet difficult part of Sa paper making process , Drying the Sa paper in the sun by resting two screen against each other
Bottom: The visitor gets a hands-on experience with the blacksmith



centuries. In many Buddhist temples, the paper replaced fan palm leaves as it copes better with pest infestation," says Buacham Khamwang, a Sa paper-maker from Dong Pasang village. Sa or paper mulberry is an amazing plant. Its peel is made into a pulp which in turn is used in the manufacture of a durable paper with a beautiful texture. Its natural beauty has transformed Sa paper from a domestic product into a major industry in two decades. On sunny days you can see villagers in Dong Pasang making paper in the traditional way. From providing a small extra income, it has become a thriving industry that exports throughout the world.

"It's smelly but chemical-free," explains Buacham, referring to the fermentation process. The peel of the Sa plant is soaked overnight in water and then boiled for 8 hours. After this, the soft peel is beaten until it becomes a soft pulp. The most enjoyable but probably the most

Thai traditional massage is an ancient wisdom which never goes out of date.

difficult part of the manufacturing process is the filtration of the pulp and making the beautiful designs in the paper. Buacham stirs the pulp thoroughly with a large paddle before spreading out a thin layer on a large mesh screen in the water. She smoothes out this layer gently and slowly lifts the screen horizontally, draining away the excess water, leaving the thin layer of paper to dry in the sun. Each piece of paper is made distinctive by adding leaves and flowers during the manufacturing process. With creative ideas,

beautiful paper can be made to produce unique postcards, notebooks, and photo frames.

"Don't hesitate to make your own special piece of Sa paper with your own hands," encourages Buacham.

Handmade products are not uncommon around San Patong, most things being made by hand and from the heart. **RONG TEE MEED** is another place you can experience the thrill of making something yourself. The village is filled with the noise and heat of its famous blacksmith industry, working in the traditional way to produce quality knives and agricultural tools. The blacksmith heats pieces of iron on clay stoves until they glow red. Then the leading blacksmith holds an individual piece firmly on the anvil while the assistants, standing in a circle, swing their large hammers, beating the hot iron quickly and continually into the desired shape.

"Wanna try?" invites Tawin Jinoduang, the





Trip Summary



Traditional Thai Massage Courses

These short courses aim to teach the art of self-massage, especially useful for those who work long hours at a computer. Courses are available daily from 9 am - 6 pm. Bookings one day in advance are required.



Sa Paper Making

Dong Pasang Village is only 1 kilometer from the resort along a back road. Pick a sunny day. The office hours are usually 8 am - 5 pm. Don't forget the bright-colored flowers for your own designs. Bookings one day in advance are required.



Blacksmith Visits

Blacksmiths at Rong Tee Meed Village work daily, normally in the mornings and evenings. Saturday is quiet as most of them go to the markets to sell their products. Tourists are welcome to try hammering the heated iron. Bookings one day in advance are required.



Lanna Cuisine Cooking Classes

Cooking classes offer a wide selection of Lanna cuisine recipes. The classes start in the early morning with a visit to the local market. Students learn about local vegetables, seasonings, and Lanna-style specialties. After classes, students can enjoy the real Lanna cuisine. Classes are available daily but reservations need to be made one day prior.

Visitor can relax in this lush retreat, learn about Lanna life, or explore the back roads of San Patong riding bicycles through vast rice paddies and fruit orchards and discovering some of the various handicraft centers.

village headman, to a visitor. Swinging the hammer and hitting a small piece of iron is a challenge made all the more difficult by the need to maintain correct timing with the other hammers. Incorrect timing ruins the efficiency of the team, adding to the heat and the physical strain, but it is possible by your own sweat and effort to make your own knife.

After a long day, it is good to sit back and relax among the greenery of the resort and enjoy the local Lanna cuisine. The fragrance of local herbs always attracts visitors to the kitchen.

"Kao Soi," the chef, Sriwan Promwang, points out the Lanna-style noodles. "Want to make some?" **COOKING CLASSES** at Kaomai Lanna are part of the exploration of Lanna culture. The chef starts the class with a morning visit to the local markets, introducing guests to healthy, local ingredients and buying supplies for the cooking classes. Back at the resort, Sriwan throws chili paste into a pan of hot oil. The smell of fried herbs and chili fills the kitchen. Coconut milk, curry powder, and other seasonings are mixed in by the students under the guidance of the chef, and finally the noodles are added to the pan. Topped with crispy fried noodles, Kao Soi or egg noodle in curry is now ready to be served.

After all these experiences, it must be time to take a nap in your green refuge and enjoy your dreams of real rural Lanna life.

Left: Correct timing in harmonization with other hammers is the most important thing

Right: The aroma of the coconut milk in the cooking class at Kaomai Lanna Resort is simply irresistible

Kaomai Lanna Resort

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Opposite Page: The elephant welcomes the little visitor with sweetness in her eyes

Right: Patara Elephant Farm's guesthouse is full of life and natural beauty

Bottom Left: Your adventurous trip of an elephant ride is about to begin



PATARA ELEPHANT FARM

Chiang Mai

Love is almost impossible to prove but there's a deep connection between human and animal at Patara Elephant Farm.



Love at first sight does not happen very often but at Patara Elephant Farm, you fall in love with the sincerity, loyalty, and gentleness of these magnificent creatures as they interact with people and each other in a world of mutual trust and respect. With their soft eyes and handsome faces, these largest of all land animals are sensitive and expressive, showing a full range of joy, anger, grief, and compassion.

Elephants are an important part of Thai culture and way of life. They are a traditional symbol of royal power, an essential feature of Buddhist art and architecture, and a spiritual mentor for people of all backgrounds. Today, the number of Thai elephants has declined alarmingly, only about 3,000 remaining of the

100,000 a hundred years ago.

Patara Elephant Farm focuses on a breeding program to increase the number of healthy baby elephants born in Thailand at the same time as creating a pleasant working and living environment for domesticated elephants and a popular tourist attraction.

"The idea of the elephant farm was to produce healthy babies. I believe one healthy, happy baby elephant gives a better chance of survival for the next generations," says Theerapat Trungrakan, the owner of the farm.

Patara Elephant Farm is situated to the south-west of Chiang Mai, only 30 minute's drive from the airport. At the farm, you get a chance to be an **ELEPHANT OWNER FOR**



Top Left: The elephant's paddock is just a breath away from your bedroom

Middle Left: The trainer takes great care of the elephants as if they are his family

Bottom Left: Enjoy your Picnic Lunch when you are surrounded by the wonder of waterfall and forest

Right: Become friends with the elephant while bathing them in the river

Opposite Page: Experience the remarkable nature of elephants while taking the bare-back riding trip in the wild forest



A DAY during which time you are trained to approach your elephant correctly, know the elephant's temperament, feed and check its health, chain and unchain it, learn about and take care of your animal's skin, bathe and brush it in the river, learn how to ride on its neck, and communicate through different spoken commands.

"Our trainers here are special. They are very kind as they talk to, play with, and care for their elephants just like one of their family members. They are constantly with the elephants, meeting their needs and keeping them safe from harm," says Theerapat.

There are many exciting activities offered at the farm. **RIDING AN ELEPHANT TO A WATERFALL** is an adventure you must experience. The long, up-hill trail passes through villages, temples, and rainforests, giving you and your elephant the chance to greet people and pick up some rubbish. At the waterfall, swim and have a water fight with the elephants and



enjoy a picnic lunch on banana-leaf mats while the elephants play, pairing up with their friends, splashing in the water, and rolling in the mud. It's time for you and the elephants to have fun.

One of the most remarkable moments in life is finding an elephant's trunk gently resting in your hand or an enormous animal gently lifting you up on its back. From here, you can sit and observe nature from the elephant's perspective as it quietly makes its way through the undergrowth. Can you feel the powerful magic of the elephant's respect and responsibility it has for you? **MOUNTAIN TREKKING** allows you to experience this astonishing bond between

The idea of the elephant farm was to produce healthy babies. I believe one healthy, happy baby elephant gives a better chance of survival for the next generations.

elephant and rider. Elephants are capable of climbing steep hills through thick mud and scaling down rocky hillsides, all the time maintaining perfect balance. They are seldom afraid of rugged terrain but what do scare them are cars,

trucks, or inquisitive helicopters overhead.

"Riding an elephant in the wild, you have to trust your animal. Talk to her and say you're OK with her. She will feel your confidence and she will do her best to protect you," explains Theerapat.

The elephant trek allows you to **VISIT A HMONG HILL-TRIBE VILLAGE**. At the village, you can explore their customs, traditions, and lifestyle, and visit a local school to meet the kids. They are shy but friendly and are excited when you teach them a few words of English. Most of the people of the village are farmers associated with the Royal Project initiated by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej. The project was

Bottom Left: Explore the culture and exchange the language knowledge with the kids at the Hmong Village
Bottom Right: The memory of the happiness of riding on an elephant will forever be in our hearts

Love between humans and animals is almost impossible to prove but there's a magical friendship between them invisible to the eyes but felt deeply in the heart.

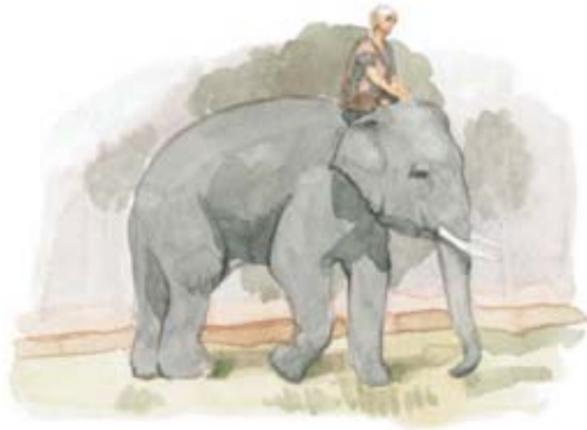
introduced to encourage hill-tribe villagers to replace the cultivation of opium poppies with alternative crops.

Time passes quickly and it's time to choose whether to stay overnight at Maggy's Place, a small resort within walking distance of the farm, or to sleep close to your elephant at the farm's newly-built guesthouse. Wherever you stay, you're welcome to come by to feed the elephants and put your elephant to bed.

"The elephant mirrors the life patterns of humans more closely than any other living thing. I encourage people to try, at least once in their lives, to experience this very special and sacred animal that should be treasured. Everyone's invited, particularly children. The farm is specifically designed for disabled access," says Theerapat.

Patara Elephant Farm can be visited anytime of the year. There are special activities during June to August when you can ride an elephant to help plant rice in the paddies and from November to December during harvesting time.

Love between humans and animals is almost impossible to prove but there's a magical friendship between them invisible to the eyes but felt deeply in the heart. Patara Elephant Farm is a place full of these special connections and feelings.



Trip Summary



Elephant Owner for a Day

This personalized program gives you the opportunity to be the owner of an elephant for a day. You are trained in everything an owner is expected to know and do, such as safety responsibilities, health care, and feeding the elephant.



Elephant Trip to Waterfall

Ride an elephant on an adventure trail to a waterfall. You can swim, water fight, and relax with the elephants. Picnic lunch is included. Electronic devices and non-waterproof items are suggested as not appropriate for this trip.



Mountain Trek by Elephant

Share some of the best moments with your elephant on a mountain trek. You ride through bamboo jungles, rainforests, and over rocky terrain. You'll get a chance to witness the elephant's surprising abilities in such a difficult environment.



Hmong Hill-tribe Village

Visit a hill-tribe village during your elephant trek trip up the mountain. You can experience the local way of life, traditions, and customs of the Hmong hill-tribe of Thailand.



Patara Elephant Farm

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Above: The visitor can enjoy the view of the farmer working on the rice paddies

Right: The guesthouse on the hill provides the lush greenery ambiance to the guests

Opposite Page: The wooden house of Rai Saeng Arun shows simplicity but is truly comfortable



Rai Saeng Arun **North**

RAI SAENG ARUN Chiang Rai

The slow paced agricultural lifestyle of Rai Saeng Arun attracts a special type of visitor to the banks of the Mekong.

In late October, the vast rice paddies turn a special gold as the crop ripens. The beginning of the harvest season in early winter in Thailand is a busy time for farmers.

At the same time a wide variety of vegetables fills the farms with magnificent greenery. Cool winter breezes refresh the countryside. Fields of organic vegetables, paddies of chemical-free rice, and the results of hard but rewarding labor at Rai Saeng Arun make it a perfect place to experience a true agricultural lifestyle.

Rai Saeng Arun nestles close by the mighty Mekong River whose brown waters drift slowly

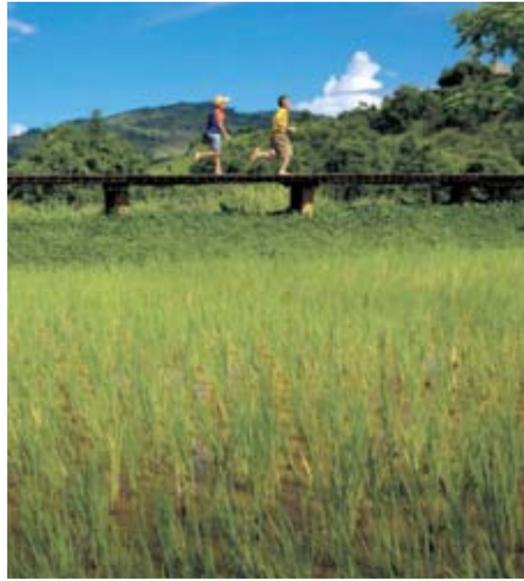
by and provide nourishment for the surrounding areas. Here, between busy Chiang Saen district and sleepy Chiang Khong district in Chiang Rai, Rai Saeng Arun sits on the bank of the river that acts as the border between Thailand and Lao and welcomes guests to savor an easy-paced, natural existence.

Situated on more than 30 acres, this resort with an **ORGANIC FARM** fascinates visitors with its year-round greenery and the opportunity to grow a range of vegetables including annual saw thistle, Chinese cabbage, long beans, and salad vegetables.

"It is a little harder to grow chemical-free



Clockwise from Top Left: The view from the guesthouse on the hill shows the local's way of life on the rice paddies
Bottom Left: The splendid scenery of the guesthouse by Mekong River before the evening falls is unforgettable
Opposite Page (Clockwise from Left): The chemical-free farm requires extra care but the fresh products worth the effort



vegetables. We develop our own fermented fertilizer and make our own herbal pesticide to drive away the bugs. We spray twice weekly compared with once monthly when using chemical pesticide. But the extra work is worth it," explains Patipat Wichitsophon, the farm manager.

Guests explore the chemical-free farm, hand-picking fresh vegetables straight from the fields and taking them directly to the kitchen for use in a delicious dish.

"Of course, all guests are welcome to pick the vegetables themselves," Patipat laughed. "Just tell us what you want and our chef will cook it specifically for you."

The busiest time is before each meal. The resort has a unique philosophy to serve food as fresh as possible so no vegetables are collected before they are actually required.

"Do not be surprised if you see our kitchen staff run out to the fields with basket in hand after getting an order from a guest. We guarantee you will find the food

fresher, sweeter, and more delicious than all the vegetables bought from the market," claims the farm manager.

Mixed vegetables stir-fried in oyster oil, ivy gourd soup, spicy salad in Thai style, and somtam, are among the favorites on the menu here. Sometime, delicious vegetable dishes can tempt even those who say they dislike vegetables, particularly the kids.

"Some guests at their first dish order chili paste to flavor their boiled vegetables but find the vegetables impressive. With the second dish, they order boiled vegetables only – no chili paste needed," says Patipat.

We develop our own fermented fertilizer and make our own herbal pesticide to drive away the bugs.

Rai Saeng Arun not only produces its own vegetables but also **GROWS ITS OWN RICE**. The resort grows jasmine rice, sticky rice, and red sticky rice, and mills just a small amount as it is required. This maintains the rice's freshness and

taste. Probably, this explains why, after tasting the rice here, some guests are willing to roam around muddy paddies and try to grow it for themselves. At the beginning of the rainy season in late July and early August, guests get a chance to plant rice with their own hands. Rice seeds are first grown in the nursery and when they are big enough, the roots and tops are trimmed and then transplanted by hand, one by one into the flooded paddies. Organic rice requires greater care than other types but again, the resort believes it is worth it to the local communities, guests, and the animals living on the farm to keep rice paddies free of chemicals.

Guests explore the chemical-free farm, hand-picking fresh vegetables straight from the fields and taking them directly to the kitchen for use in a delicious dish.

It also means that people at the resort can enjoy the clean air in addition to the lush greenery. Guests remark about the enjoyment of wandering around the farm, reading a book under the warm sun while the kids play safely in the natural surroundings.

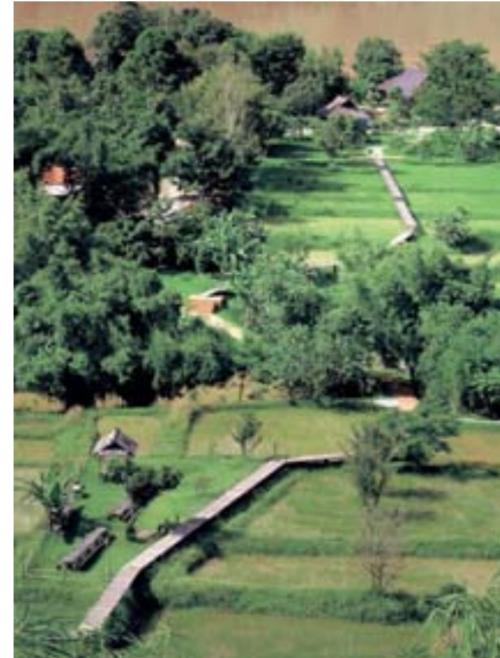
Opportunities exist beyond the boundaries of the farm to explore nature. **CRUISING ON THE MEKONG RIVER** is one of the alternatives. From dawn till dusk, locals' lifestyles revolve around the water, washing clothes, catching fish, playing, and even picnicking. On the other side of the river, in Laos, you may find an old boat like a museum piece that takes you back in time. Small villages sit snugly amongst the dense tropical rainforest.

"Lifestyle by the Mekong is easy here. You can see how people enjoy life, relaxing by the river," says Patipat.

It's an easy journey north to the ancient town of Chiang Saen and on to the Golden Triangle. You can visit the Hall of Opium. Lovers of flowers and handicrafts should travel further to **DOI TUNG** and try the pure Arabica coffee grown by hill-tribes. While here, check the beautiful temperate gardens of the area.

There is much more to do particularly in downtown Chiang Rai. But nature-lovers always linger around Rai Saeng Arun to enjoy the relaxing simplicity of the place. Many love to come here in early winter as the vast rice paddies turn a special gold as the crop ripens.

Left: The local catches fish with the net on Mekong River illustrates the traditional fisherman's lifestyle
Right: Clothes weaving shows the charm of the local's way of life



Trip Summary



Organic Farm

Tourists can enjoy growing and/or picking chemical-free fresh vegetables in addition to attending cooking classes at the resort. Prior booking is recommended.



Rice growing

In July and August, guests get the chance to sow rice with their own hands in chemical-free paddies. Harvesting takes place in October and November.



Cruising on the Mekong River

Cruising on the Mekong River can be arranged all year round. In the dry season, from December to April, sandy islands appear in the middle of the river allowing visitors to enjoy the midstream beaches.



Rai Saeng Arun

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RimPai Cottage North

Opposite Page: The gentle approach of traditional Lanna massage reflects the kindness and compassion of Lanna people

Left: Enjoy the purity of the nature in the relaxed atmosphere of Pai River

Bottom Right: Lanna-style house of RimPai Cottage is sheltered by the shades of beautiful trees

RIMPAI COTTAGE Mae Hong Son

RimPai Cottage opens its door for you to discover the rural charms of life in Northern Thailand in the beautiful setting of Pai.

In the rainy season, there are beautiful views of green rice fields stretching to the foot of the mountains. In winter when the mists come, these same fields are used to grow garlic. Later in the morning, when the mist clears, there is a serene peacefulness beneath the blue skies. In this charming town, the urban and the pastoral mix together harmoniously – welcome to Pai, a feast for the eyes and comfort for the soul where relaxing retreats and tourist attractions are rolled into one.

Surrounded by mountains, the sound of flowing water continuously echoes through this romantic town. The place is well-known as a charming destination nestled in a valley in the most northwestern province of Mae Hong Son.

It is an impressive town. You can see much enchanting Lanna-style architecture and many well-maintained buildings. Pai people are proud of their Lanna history but more so, they are proud of their town and the preservation of their lifestyle.

On a small road just outside of town, there is a dream place hidden along the side of the Pai River. This location holds many secrets of Lanna culture and natural wonders. You can find traditional Lanna-style cottages decorated with a northern touch set amid beautiful tall trees, perfumed by satin-wood and jasmine. This dream place is known as 'RimPai Cottage' and is always ready to welcome guests with the warmest of smiles.



Clockwise from Top Left: The cozy and relaxed ambiance of the lobby, The romantically sweet bedroom by Pai River, Massage trainer guides the guest on the various Lanna massage techniques



Right: Cycling tour on the World War II Memorial Bridge takes your breath away with the stunning view
Bottom: Stop by the Wat Nam Hu on your cycling tour to pay homage to Lord Buddha



The North is known for its friendly and polite people and RimPai Cottage fits right into this reputation. You can experience this magic feeling through a touch of traditional Lanna massage. The massage is performed by a gentle touch that expresses kindness and compassion between one person and another. At RimPai Cottage, you can learn this special massage through the **TRADITIONAL LANNA MASSAGE TRAINING CLASS**. Massage trainer, Prakaikaew Singhanukulkij, teaches you how to integrate basic Thai massage into Lanna massage and experience the smoothness of the traditional Lanna massage.

The instruction focuses on mind and body, dynamic flowing and rhythmic movements, full body manipulation, and acupressure techniques. You are given opportunities to practice the massage skills – how to press, roll, squeeze, pull, draw, twist, bend, pound, and tread – and

Many guests wanted to learn Lanna massage because they are impressed by its gentleness and its special rhythmic movements. It's hard to explain the feeling of it. I invite you to come and try, and feel it on your own.

to learn about energy lines, pressure points, and anatomy. Also, guests are required to understand the art of massage as meditation.

"Many guests wanted to learn Lanna massage because they are impressed by its gentleness and its special rhythmic movements. It's hard to explain the feeling of it. I invite you to come and try, and feel it on your own," says Mrs Prakaikaew, the kind and friendly trainer of the massage class.

Outside the cottages is the chance to

explore the sensational scenery on a **CYCLING TOUR**. This not only takes in the town of Pai itself but some of the surrounding temples and historical sites.

A visit to Wat Nam Hu at Tambon Wiang Tai is a must. At the temple, you can pay homage to Phra Un Mueang, a sacred Buddha image in Lanna-style from 500 years ago. The head of the image can be opened and always appears to have water inside. Another well-known place is Mae Yen Temple, located halfway up a mountain. Once you get there you are stunned by the breathtaking views over the valley of Pai district. It is a perfect place to watch a sunset and the vibrant changing colors of the sky. There is an interesting old chedi at the temple and some murals that were painted by a local artist about the previous lives of the Buddha.

From the temple, you can easily cycle to the World War Two Memorial Bridge. The road





Trip Summary



Learning Traditional Lanna Massage

A 3 day course of traditional Lanna massage is available at the resort. You are trained to understand the energy basis of it as well as the hands-on techniques. Advanced reservation is required.



Cycling and Sightseeing around Pai

Touring around Pai by bicycle lets you explore beautiful valleys, small villages, temples, and tourist attractions dotted around the area.



Make Your Own Herbal Drink

Take these short and easy lessons to create your own herbal drink in a traditional way from Thai herbs such as lemongrass, ginger and pandan.



You can see much enchanting Lanna-style architecture and many well-maintained buildings. Pai people are proud of their Lanna history but more so, they are proud of their town and the preservation of their lifestyle.

is flat and surrounded by the greenery of rice paddies. The bridge was built over the river to transport weapons and provisions to Myanmar. It has become one of many fascinating historical tourist attractions of Pai.

Before cycling back to the town, stop by the elephant camp. Visitors can ride these majestic creatures along the river and explore the natural beauty of the rainforest.

After a long day's journey, refresh yourself with a herbal beverage. It is very refreshing and quenches thirst on hot days. The resort provides **AN EASY LESSON ON THE MAKING OF THAI HERBAL DRINKS** with basic recipes such as lemongrass, ginger, and pandan.

"A little secret of enjoying these drinks is that you should realize the health benefits that these herbal drinks provide – it makes them much more pleasurable," advises Khun Preawthicha Sinlakun, the resort Director in a soothing and sweet voice.

But while you are here, don't miss visiting Pai itself. Take a walk around the beautiful streets of the town, stop in at the coffee corners, eat at the restaurants, buy some local souvenirs, and try the products of the bakeries.

RimPai Cottage is waiting for you now to reveal some of the stories about Pai, a feast for the eyes and comfort for the soul.

Left: Exploring the beauty of Pai's rainforest on the elephant trekking activity

Right: The guest learns to make the simple but full of health benefit Thai herbal drink





Opposite Page: Surrounded by thousands of lotus flowers, you're invited to pick the flowers by your own hands

Right: The deluxe room is styled with ancient Sukhothai architecture and eclectic interior design

Bottom Left: Romantic ambiance of the majestic Sukhothai Heritage Resort



SUKHOTHAI HERITAGE RESORT

Sukhothai

From Sukhothai Heritage Resort, you can explore the remains of a once magnificent city that is an integral part of the country's history.

Sukhothai, the historic heart of Thailand, is often referred to as Thailand's Camelot representing a golden age of goodness, prosperity, justice, art, and religion, being the birthplace of Buddhism as the country's faith. It is located in the lower northern region of the country and was the first independent capital of the Thai kingdom. It is now recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.

'Sukhothai' means the Dawn of Happiness. This happiness is reflected in the fertility of the flat plains of the Yom River on which the city is situated and the surrounding rice fields. Throughout the city's tumultuous history, the one constant factor has been the presence of rice. The gleaming rice fields and their product

have been and are an integral part of the life, knowledge, beliefs, and customs of Sukhothai. It is a place where the inhabitants have constantly claimed that there is always fish in the water and rice in the fields. As the morning sun rises, the happiness of Sukhothai awakens. A gentle wind blows through the fields and the warm sunlight emphasizes the autumnal colors of the rice crop.

In the middle of this fertile plain is Sukhothai Heritage Resort, its architectural and decorative motifs designed to pay homage to the ancient Thai Buddhist kingdom. The interior design of the resort has a strong Thai flavor. During a stay, guests can enjoy the seasonal rhythms of traditional organic farming that has





Counter Clockwise: Observe and have hands-on experience in growing rice in a traditional way at the Organic Agriculture Project

Opposite Page: Sukhothai Historical Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a must-visit for all travelers



been developed as a major activity at the resort. **VISITING THE ORGANIC AGRICULTURE PROJECT** allows you to observe and have hands-on experience in this form of agriculture, such as growing rice in a traditional way, and planting vegetables and fruits without using chemicals. These are all conducted in an atmosphere of concern for the natural environment and society.

The Organic Agriculture Project is the result of the inspiration of Mrs Vanli Prasarttong-Osoth, the Factory Manager of Prasarttong-Osoth Company Limited., who has made a determined effort to initiate and utilize agricultural methods that respect nature, the livelihoods of local communities, and the preservation of traditional farming techniques.

The main achievement of the project is the development of new rice strains. Khao Hom Sukho is one of these strains that includes three major types, namely Khao Hom Mali 105



(Mali Fragrant Rice), Khao Hom Dang Sukhothai 1 (Red Fragrant Rice), and Khao Hom Dam Sukhothai 2 (Black Fragrant Rice). As a result of dedicated efforts in research and development, Khao Hom Sukho is widely distributed to retailers around the country.

Sukhothai is most famous for its ruins of royal palaces, Buddhist temples, city gates, walls, moats, dams, ditches, ponds, and canals dating back to its days of glory. These remains are now preserved and protected as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. A visit to the **SUKHOTHAI HISTORICAL PARK** illustrates how carefully and intelligently this city was planned with a superb

Throughout the city's tumultuous history, the one constant factor has been the presence of rice. The gleaming rice fields and their product have been and are an integral part of the life, knowledge, beliefs, and customs of Sukhothai.

irrigation system created to draw water from the mountains for public and agricultural use. At the heart of the city – the most sacred area – is Maha That temple surrounded by a number of other temples. The old royal palace lies in the

center of the town and here you find magnificent art and typical Sukhothai architecture, including the beautiful Buddha image, the mondapa, and different pagodas, some with lotus-bud tops, some surrounded by elephants, and others bell-shaped.

SI SATCHANALAI HISTORICAL PARK, another historical site, also has UNESCO World Heritage Site status. The park has a city plan that has a Khmer flavor and beautiful religious monuments influenced by Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism. Si Satchanalai is well known for its production of Sangkhalok or celadon pottery, still produced today. You are welcome to observe

Bottom Left: The picking of lotus flowers to use in paying homage to the Lord Buddha
Bottom Right: The orchid greenhouse at the Sukhothai Airport allows you to see over 100,000 plants of numerous varieties including indigenous and exotic species

Visiting the Organic Agriculture Project allows you to observe and have hands-on experience in this form of agriculture, such as growing rice in a traditional way, and planting vegetables and fruits without using chemicals.



the manufacturing process and buy products at reasonable prices.

Start your new day with a sacred activity organized by the resort. This involves the **PICKING OF LOTUS FLOWERS** to use in paying homage to the Lord Buddha. In the early morning, hotel staff invites you to join them on a wooden boat and paddle through a large lotus pond to pick the flowers by your own hands – you are surrounded by thousands of lotus flowers! Lotus flowers play a very important part in Thai life. They are highly symbolic in Thai culture and are regarded as symbolizing purity, fertility, wisdom, and serenity. As a result, it is very common to see lotus flowers on the tops of pillars in temples and in the hands of monks during ordination ceremonies.

In the afternoon, take a cycling tour to visit the Sukhothai Airport. Surprisingly, there are lots of things to see and do here. Lush gardens and an orchid greenhouse, exhibitions of ancient ceramics, and live demonstrations of local pottery-making await your inspection. While you are there, don't miss calling in at the Kueytiew Lanbin Restaurant and taste the delicious Sukhothai noodles!

Sukhothai Heritage Resort reveals not only a great history of the ancient kingdom but also shows how this majestic part of the country played a significant role in the development of the country's cultural heritage.



Trip Summary



Visit the Organic Agriculture Project

You can observe demonstrations of traditional Thai farming techniques that have stood the test of time and are still being used to produce high quality goods that are in great demand.



Visit Sukhothai Historical Park

This was the first capital city of Thailand. Its past glory is shown by the magnificent ruins of old palace and temples. The art and architecture are preserved as historically valuable monuments and essential elements of Thailand's cultural heritage. The park is open daily from 7 am to 6 pm.



Visit Si Satchanalai Historical Park

This park is situated about 52 kilometers from Sukhothai. It contains the ruins of 134 monuments within its boundaries. It is open daily from 8 am to 5 pm.



Lotus Flower Picking

Paddle out into the lotus pond in your wooden boat and personally select the flowers that you wish to use in paying homage to the Lord Buddha at the temple. Advanced reservation is required.

Sukhothai Heritage Resort

สุโขทัย เฮอร์ริเทจ รีสอร์ท

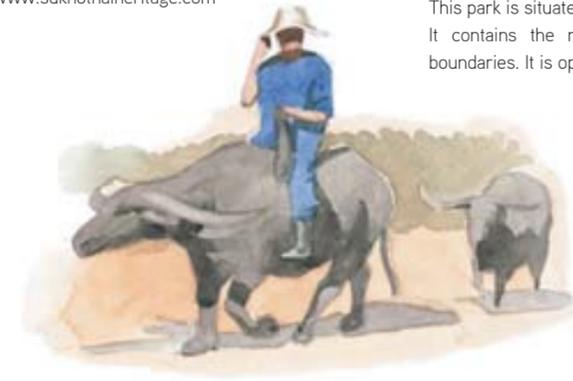
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NORTHEAST

A journey through Isan is an inspiration. People are hospitable and kind-hearted with a fun-loving but sometimes shy streak. The region is situated on the Northeast Plateau of Thailand and is a great source of historical and traditional fascination such as the skeletons and antiques of Ban Chiang, dinosaur relics of Kalasin, and cave paintings of Ubon Ratchathani. Isan is a melting pot of diverse groups of people whose work time is dominated by agriculture, especially rice-growing, but many are also involved in artistic pursuits such as manufacturing silk, hand-woven clothes, and pottery. The simple way of life attracts many tourists.

NORTH EAST

The Land of Happiness and Kind-hearted People



๒. Mor Lam

Mor Lam is a popular form of folk performance in northeastern Thailand consisting of story-telling accompanied by melodic music from bamboo wind instruments (khaen). Themes regularly involve unrequited love and the struggle of life, but often with a wry humor. Mor Lam always attracts the crowds to local celebrations.



๓. Silk Weaving

Isan silk is complex in design and high in quality, and can be used for everyday wear and special occasions. The diversity of ethnic groups has given rise to a variety of types of silk such as supplementary weft (Khit) weaving, Mudmee silk, and tie-dye yarn with distinctive, multi-colored patterns.



๓. Agriculture

Agriculture is a dominant force in the Isan economy despite the relatively infertile soil. Rice is the main crop but also cassava, sugar cane, rubber, and other crops are increasingly diversifying the industry. There are still many water buffalo to be seen working in the fields.



๕. Thai Kick-Boxing

The image of Thai people is as gentle and peace-loving folk but Thai kick-boxing or Muai Thai is an integral part of the nation's history. It is a combination of aggressive combat and art – the Wai Kru dance being performed by each contestant to pay homage to his / her teachers.



๖. Traditional Isan Food

Food is a significant factor in Isan community life from preparation to consumption and cleaning up. The local cuisine has a variety of tastes but many feature fiery chillies. Some of the favorites are somtam (papaya spicy salad), larb (meat spicy salad) and grilled chicken eaten with the hands, all accompanied by sticky rice.





Agalin Holiday Villas North East

Opposite Page: Northeastern style of cooking by the Mekong River

Left: "Ban Chan Choem" (Villa Laura) is one of Agalin's finest accommodations

Bottom Right: The beautiful combination of the fountain and garden, designed by the owner



AGALIN HOLIDAY VILLAS Loei

On the banks of the Mekong, in a remote corner of the northeast, hides an idyllic gem that has much to offer the discerning traveler.

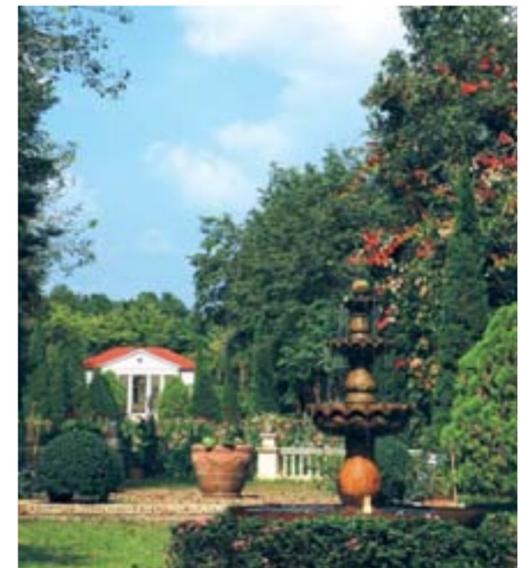


Along the road from Pak Chom to Si Chiang Mai in the province of Loei, the Mekong River shows the contrasting nature of the seasons in Thailand. The river rages in the wet season but is reduced to a world of clear lagoons and white beaches in the dry months. People in this region still lead their lives in a very traditional way depending on the land and the river for their livelihoods, residing in villages close to the water made up of raised wooden dwellings.

On the river bank some ten kilometers from Pak Chom sits Agalin, its large gardens shielded from the main road by mango orchards. The boutique resort started life as a private retreat for the owner, Amnad Khitapanna, a famous

architect and designer, and his numerous friends. It is an intriguing blend of eclectic tastes reflecting the personality of its much-traveled creator. However the main emphasis is on peacefulness and privacy. The 6 houses in the resort were built separately and hence vary greatly in size and style from a traditional cottage to a Palladian villa. The furnishings of each match its style.

From their first step into Agalin visitors are amazed at the scale, the concept, and the richness of the plantings of the gardens. This place is simply unique! There are so many gardens to enjoy at the resort; each with its own character – a cool garden, a white garden, a sunken garden, and even a maze! Nooks and



Clockwise from Top Left: Learn how to make Baisi for the blessing ceremony, The green color of the room brings out the characteristic of the furniture, Baisi made from banana leaves, The astonishing shady ambiance of Agalin



Clockwise: Demonstration of making rice basket with bamboo , Homemade Khao Lam
Bottom: Cooking Khao Lam in bamboo tubes by the Mekong River



corners abound and it is a delight discovering them. A tour of the gardens with Khun Amnad can be exhausting. At the water's edge, Khun Amnad shows guests large patches of aubergine and sweet-corn plots with banana groves in the background. Bananas are the main cash crop of the area and Agalin grows plenty. **BANANAS GROWN HERE ARE OF A SPECIAL STRAIN** producing little fruit but a lot of strong leaves that are sold in the markets as wrappers.

Khun Amnad next leads guests to the cool living area of Tamarind Cottage. Here a special baisi blessing ceremony is prepared to welcome guests. This ceremony is usually performed to mark an important occasion such as an ordination, the birth of a child, or the homecoming of a family member. The ceremony is conducted by a village elder and takes place around the baisi, a structure made largely of banana leaves intricately folded and decorated with flowers,

People in this region still lead their lives in a very traditional way depending on the land and the river for their livelihoods, residing in villages close to the water made up of raised wooden dwellings.

that represents the center of the universe with heavenly abodes for gods. The elder invites the gods to the ceremony to provide protection for everyone involved. At the end of the chanting he ties white cotton cords around guests' wrists as security against evil spirits and bad lucks.

"You do not need expensive ingredients for a good baisi," says the instructor on hand to explain its making. "Use whatever flowers you have available. More important is the neatness and good concentration."

Later she demonstrates how to use banana leaves as wrapping material and cooking foil. Guests are also invited to try their hands at making and weaving bamboo strips. The basics were not very difficult – a little like mat-weaving with many ways of creating different patterns.

In the kitchen of the house, Khun Rae is ready to give guests another lesson – this time in cooking.

"Today we shall make some 'KHAO LAM.' This is usually done at harvest time when sticky rice is freshly brought in," she announces. On the kitchen table are small piles of ingredients neatly arranged in krathongs or small bowls made of banana leaves. Taro, pandanus leaves, coconut milk, sugar, salt, and sticky rice from Agalin's own paddy fields are used. The ingredients are mixed and carefully poured into bamboo tubes. Banana leaves are used as stoppers. The filled bamboo tubes are then





Trip Summary



Go Bananas!

Demonstrations are made of the uses of bananas in many aspects of Thai daily life, including cooking, making receptacles and household objects, and in traditional rites such as the bai si ceremony to protect guests against evil spirits.



Cooking in Bamboo Tubes

Northeastern people often cook sticky rice with coconut milk in bamboo tubes. This delicious concoction is called 'Khao Lam.' There are sweet and savory recipes with numerous local variations. Guests can try their hand at making this nutritious food, with their own variations of course!



Thai Classical Dances

The dances of Loei are influenced by local traditions and folklore making them different from those seen in other parts of the country. Guests receive explanations and demonstrations of the meanings of the movements and are able to watch performances of the dances. Prior booking is required.



Guests are also invited to try their hands at making and weaving bamboo strips.

The basics were not very difficult – a little like mat-weaving with many ways of creating different patterns.



carefully stacked and smoked using dried sweet corn husks as fuel. The entire process is ecologically sound as nothing is wasted and the results of the exercise are simply delicious.

While the sticky rice is gently bubbling away, Khun Rae seasons a huge fish, caught in the river the previous night, with salt and fresh herbs. The fish is then wrapped up tightly in many layers of banana leaves and the neat parcel is placed on the same fire as the khao lam to cook.

In the afternoon on the stage of Agalin Hall, a group of youngsters are waiting to entertain guests. They are dancers from the local schools trained by their teacher, Khun Laddawan. Before the performance, Khun Laddawan gives some demonstrations of some of the dances' gestures and explains the meanings of each of the movements, greatly enhancing the guests' understanding and enjoyment of the dances. **THE THAI CLASSICAL DANCES** they perform are called 'Champa' and 'Salawan.' The 2 dances are of contrasting styles, the first being very elegant and the second being an amusing performance demanding great skill.

The final evening is spent in the white garden soaking up the sight of a magnificent sunset over the Mekong. As a gentle river mist descends, it is time to bid a fond farewell to Agalin with a secret hope to be back very soon.

Left: Season the fish with salt, wrap with banana leaves and bring to smoke on the fire

Right: The little dancers getting ready to show Isan classical dance



Above: Making Phi Ta Khon masks is a cultural heritage that passes through many generations of the locals of Dansai, Loei

Right: Situated in the midst of natural surrounding, Phunacome invites you to relax and enjoy the unsurpassed beauty

Opposite Page: The terracotta is skillfully used as the decoration, making a perfect blend with the nature



PHUNACOME RESORT Loei

Phunacome Resort is a newly-opened boutique resort in the Isan region that affords you the chance to explore the local culture.

Phunacome Resort, located at Dansai Hills in Loei province, is a charmingly furnished resort built in a contemporary style consistent with a luxurious northeastern Thai home, fitted with all modern conveniences. It is surrounded by mountain ranges whose summits are often shrouded in fog. Phunacome Resort is a place for those in search of tranquility but at the same time interested in learning about Isan culture and the promises of the Dansai Hills.

About one kilometer from the resort; there is the simple home of Auntie Nu, Ms Ueyari Minarach. Auntie Nu is a wealth of information and stories about the history of the area,

including the beginnings of the town. She is also regarded as one of most informed persons about Isan cuisine. She helps guests learn to prepare an array of savory and traditional meals and also introduces them to **TRADITIONAL THAI COOKING OF THE DISH 'PAM KHAI'** (a Thai-style omelet) that is rarely available in the region.

"Pam khai is a traditional dish that many of today's kids are not aware of as they prefer to whip up something quick and convenient," says Auntie Nu. The meaning of the word 'pam' derives its traditional roots from the Thai word meaning 'scattered' as the contents of the



Clockwise from Top Left: Phunacome Resort offers you the experience of living close to the nature
Bottom Left: The bedroom is designed for the guests to be comfortable and relax with the touch of nature
Opposite Page (Left – Right): The pretty contrast of the natural colors is seen in front of NaViang. The healthy and delicious local food of Dansai is a must for the guests to try. The extraordinary local wisdom of making Phi Ta Khon masks



omelet are distributed around the pan. However, correct cooking of this dish requires the eggs to be heated over banana leaves and boiling water to bring out the sweet smell of the dish and give the cooked eggs a savory taste.

"This dish is good for your health as it does not use any cooking oil to fry the eggs and is prepared with lots of vegetables. The pam dish is full of flavor and delicious," says Auntie Nu.

At present, Thai cuisine is gaining in popularity throughout the world as it is known for its good taste and high nutritional value. It is also famous for its enthusiastic use of fresh vegetables, herbs, and spices, all growing prolifically in the tropical climate. Thailand is fortunate in being able to grow various fruits and vegetables all year round and others are grown seasonally. This makes the country an attractive option for those tourists who are interested in Thai culinary skills for reasons of health and taste.

Dansai Hills is not only a wealth of culinary excellence but also an exciting place to discover a

diverse cultural heritage. Once a year in July, the locals or 'Thai Dan' people celebrate the 'Phi Ta Khon' (the Mask Festival). This festival is famous for its ghost masks, many of which can be seen hanging in houses around the village.

Mr Suradej Seikratok, known as 'P' Tong,' is the owner of the shop that sells the Phi Ta Khon masks made of coconut shreds stitched to a triangular rice-steamer or 'huad.'

"We have to find the right coconut shreds to make the masks. The most usable shreds are those that are not too thick or heavy. They must be light and strong so the mask is not too heavy to wear. Making the big masks is a demanding

Correct cooking of this dish requires the eggs to be heated over banana leaves and boiling water to bring out the sweet smell of the dish and give the cooked eggs a savory taste.



challenge," explains P' Tong.

The first step in **MAKING A PHI TA KHON MASK** is the selection of the pieces of coconut and the sticky-rice steamers. These are then cut into the desired shapes. They are sewed together

using a needle and thread from rice sacks. Then the masks are painted with white paint as a primer and re-painted in beautiful, vibrant colors. Acrylic paint is used nowadays as it adheres to the masks longer.

"You have to use your imagination painting the Phi Ta Khon masks," says P' Tong, one of the few people left in Dansai district who still creates the masks. "You need to develop attractive designs with screaming colors and thick bold lines to make them interesting and eye-catching," he adds.

From Dansai Hills it is not far to Phu Ruea district. Phu Ruea is reputed to be one of the

Bottom (Left-Right): Enjoy the taste the mushroom, the famous product of Phu Ruea District, at the mushroom farm

Once a year in July, the locals or ‘Thai Dan’ people celebrate the ‘Phi Ta Khon’ (the Mask Festival). This festival is famous for its ghost masks, many of which can be seen hanging in houses around the village.



coldest districts in Thailand. The weather here is perfect to **FARM MUSHROOMS**. Every year thousands of students come to learn the skills of mushroom farming from Khun Awut Kosachan, the owner of the farm. Khun Awut also acts as the guide for visitors.

The climate in Phu Ruea district is generally around 22 degrees Celsius throughout the year. This is the perfect temperature for mushrooms.

“Mushrooms are very particular. They won’t bud if it is too hot and won’t grow if it is too cold. This is the reason why it is hard to farm mushrooms in other provinces,” says Khun Awut. He is one of the pioneers of the industry, starting to grow mushrooms in 1984. Now the farm is the most well-known in the area. Crops here take 6 months to cultivate and be ready to be sold, unlike other kinds of mushrooms that take a shorter time.

Leaving the mushroom factory, it is time to make our way to Ban Nong Bong, Phu Ruea District to see the flower markets. The beauty of the vast array of flowers such as roses, lilies, and salvia is fascinating and makes a worthy end to the trip around this part of the north-east.



Trip Summary



Learn to Cook Traditional Cuisine

Try your hand at cooking traditional Thai dishes and desserts. This is an enjoyable experience and not as difficult as you think. Produce the local delicacy ‘pam khai,’ an omelet fried on banana leaves without the use of any cooking oil.



Make Phi Ta Khon Masks

The challenge of sewing and creating your own mask may seem hard at first but with practice becomes simple and enjoyable. You get a sense of the spirit that lies within the colorful designs of the masks.



Mushroom Culture

Visit the farm to learn how to cultivate mushrooms and see how they can be used in the cooking of various meals. The dish also serves as a takeaway or a gift for the family or friends who didn’t make the trip.



Phunacome Resort

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Opposite Page: The guest enjoys weaving bamboo sticky rice basket by the mighty Mekong River

Right: The great combination of cultural heritage and contemporary design at the Pool Villa of Sedhapura

Bottom Left: The natural beauty of Mekong River is revealed before your eyes at Sedhapura



SEDHAPURA Ubon Ratchathani

Sedhapura reveals treasures of history, heritage, and natural resourcefulness that exist in the simple communities on the Mekong.

Hidden near the Mekong River on the most eastern edge of Thailand is 'Sedhapura.' Named after the ancient Khmer kingdom, Sedhapura is a contemporary structure in a part of the country that is full of tradition and cultural history. The natural beauty and the stunning Lao mountains in the distance give the place a magical, mysterious quality.

This part of Thailand, known as Isan, is renowned for its hospitality and a way of life far removed from the bustle of modern times. Sedhapura attracts its guests by taking them on an extraordinary journey through the region that illustrates the depth and richness of local wisdom.

The journey begins with one of the most important aspects of Isan culture – cooking

sticky rice. Sticky rice constitutes the main part of the diet of Isan people. Everywhere you go you see the bamboo baskets that are used for cooking and carrying the sticky rice – on the way to school, to work in the fields, or simply around the restaurant. Nowadays, most sticky rice is cooked in an electric rice cooker because it is faster than the traditional way. However, this method of cooking does not produce the aroma of the bamboo and sticky rice in contact with each other, so many Isan inhabitants shun the electric method and persevere with the more traditional ways. Why hurry? Why neglect the knowledge derived from years of local wisdom? These are the questions that traditional Isan poses.





Counter Clockwise: The local wisdom of transforming bamboo tube into basket for cooking sticky rice and the simple yet delicious Isan food cooking class are provided for you to learn at Sedhapura

Opposite Page: Isan language lesson invites you to have fun and fall in love with the language and its people



At Sedhapura, you learn the art of **WEAVING BAMBOO BASKETS FOR COOKING STICKY RICE**. This weaving involves many steps, starting with the correct selection of bamboo tubes for size and condition. These tubes are chopped into thin strips of bamboo that are then woven into the required structures and designs of the baskets. Initially, the weaving is slow and takes great patience and concentration but after a little practice, it becomes relaxing and enjoyable. Once you are happy with the basket, it is then time to move on to the preparation of the sticky rice to go in it and the accompanying dishes.

ISAN FOOD COOKING LESSON at Sedhapura give you more than just a full stomach. You also acquire Isan culinary arts from the head chef, Petch Chotirat, who has over 10 years' experience in this field. Isan food, especially som tam (papaya salad) and gai yang (grilled chicken), is well-known to the world.



Preparation is not difficult. The ingredients and the way of cooking are in harmony with the lifestyle of people – simple and natural.

"The heart of Isan cuisine is the Thai anchovy, our way of preserving food that has been with us for many generations," says Petch.

"The trick of making excellent som tam is to put not only the Thai anchovy but also your heart into the dish. Then you can tell people that you have made and tasted real Isan cuisine," adds Petch with a big smile on her face.

A good Isan meal is not complete if you don't say "saep lai" while enjoying the scrumptious local cuisine. Sedhapura offers mini

Everywhere you go you see the bamboo baskets that are used for cooking and carrying the sticky rice – on the way to school, to work in the fields, or simply around the restaurant.

ISAN LANGUAGE LESSONS that allow you to say how delicious the food is ("saep lai").

"The background of Isan culture is pure and simple, and its distinctive customs and traditions are reflected through our language," says the

language instructor, Yuthantri Sukan.

"All Isan people are very proud of their language as it represents who we are. It shows our individuality through the genuineness in the tones and words that we use," says Yuthantri. This pride that Isan people feel nourishes their identity wherever they are, but they are always prepared to share it with the world.

The way of life is basically simple and peaceful and relies on the efficient everyday use of limited and valued natural resources. This philosophy is illustrated by the manufacture of children's toys by the weaving of coconut leaves into different shapes to make ta kraw,



Bottom Left: Learn Isan's local wisdom of making toys with natural resources

Bottom Right: Catching prawn and fish on Mekong River with a bamboo fishing hook on a rowboat is truly a traditional lifestyle of the locals

All Isan people are very proud of their language as it represents who we are. It shows our individuality through the genuineness in the tones and words that we use.

grasshoppers, and flowers. Sedhapura preserves this art by conducting **TOY WEAVING LESSONS**. Not only do you learn to make toys but the weaving lessons demonstrate the ability of the locals to use and adapt the natural resources of into items that are used as home decorations.

The journey through the Isan way of life is not complete without a chance to see the lifestyle of a river-based community on a fishing trip on the Mekong River. Here again you see the reliance on natural resources. Whole communities survive by catching prawns and fish for their own consumption and/or for sale at the markets. Everything in this way of life, ranging from the rowboats to the bamboo fishing hooks, is made from natural resources, showing the strength and the practicality of the cultural heritage of Isan.

In this part of the world by the Mekong River, Sedhapura reveals for you the peace, beauty, and cultural richness of a region that many have not yet experienced.



Sedhapura

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Trip Summary



Bamboo Basket-weaving

Discover Isan culture by learning the process of weaving the bamboo baskets for cooking and carrying sticky rice. You chop the bamboo tubes into thin strips, weave them into basket shapes, and finally cook the sticky rice in the basket.



Isan Food Cooking Lessons

The cooking lessons give you the opportunity to prepare and produce famous Isan dishes such as papaya salad. The experienced chef introduces you to the art of cooking and gives you the tricks and tips to turn ordinary ingredients into stunning Isan food.



Isan Language Lessons

Interactive Isan language lessons are available to help you understand not only some of the language but also to start to comprehend the culture and the way of life of the people.



Toy weaving Lessons

Weave your own toys from coconut leaves to learn Isan handicrafts that truly utilize local wisdom and natural resources. The coconut leaves are woven into various shapes and patterns producing toys and home decorations.





Opposite Page: Be creative with the Isan pottery lesson that also boosts your concentration level

Right: Baan Veru, the remarkably designed glasshouse of Supanniga Home

Bottom Left: The walkway is beautifully sheltered with Papyrus



SUPANNIGA HOME Khon Kaen

Supanniga Home is a hideaway that offers the opportunity to experience the charms of Thailand's celebrated Isan culture.

The afternoon air is full of the distinctive aroma of **PUER, SUPANNIGA HOME'S SIGNATURE TEA**, freshly brewed by the property's charismatic owner, Mrs Phajongkit. Serving the tea in elaborate tea cups, she tells stories of her life-long passion for gardening. She reminisces about the day when she first entered the abandoned piece of land her family had inherited.

"The garden used to be overgrown with wild grass taller than people. Every tree you see in this garden, I planted with my own hands." That includes the majestic Banyan tree that provides a massive canopy of foliage sheltering Supanniga Home's grand and picturesque terrace where tea is served.

As everyone loses counts of how many times their tea cups are refilled, Mrs Phajongkit speaks of her mission to preserve and promote the beautiful traditions of Isan – a place she calls home. Isan, the local name for Thailand's northeastern region, is one of the most celebrated and vibrant regions of the country. Famously friendly and fun-loving, the people of Isan have developed a collection of unique customs that illustrate these qualities.

At Supanniga Home, Mrs Phajongkit offers lessons in **ISAN DANCING**, known locally as "**SERNG KRATIB KHAO**." In this, the dancers use kratib khao, a traditional container for sticky rice, as the main prop in the dance routine. This type of container has very close ties to the





Top Left: The host welcomes guests with the inimitable Puer Tea
Middle Left: The simple but classy decoration within Baan Veru
Bottom Left: The meditation path for health lover stimulates the nerves system on your foot
Clockwise: Mud-Mee silk making process is skillfully demonstrated by Khon Kaen's locals
Opposite Page: "Serng Kratib Khao", is an Isan dancing that imitates the action of washing the hands before eating sticky rice



people as the food is the central dish in every meal. Made from bamboo, it is generally small and lightweight and suitable for carrying to the farm or rice fields on a workday. Similar to most Isan dances, Serng Kratib Khao is accompanied by fast, rhythmic music expressing the happiness and joy of the planting seasons. Rice has long been a central pillar of Thai culture, especially in the Northeast. Mrs Phajongkit explains the connections between the dance routines in Serng Kratib Khao and farming.

"Isan farmers are hard workers in the field. At lunch, they traditionally lift their spirits by dancing together. The dance routines in Serng Kratib Khao were designed to mimic the typical action of eating sticky rice – something that everyone in our culture can relate to."

Mrs Phajongkit hopes that Supanniga Home provides its guests with glimpses of Isan life and stimulates their interest in the culture of the region. But activities are not confined to



dancing. There is a form of Isan art that stems from practicality – the famous "MUD-MEE SILK" made in Isan by a unique and arduous dying process that results in a finished product with intricate patterns.

"The Mud-Mee patterns are a manifestation of Isan lifestyle, industrious yet rich and genial," says Mrs Phajongkit.

Supanniga Home provides tours to Chonabot village, forty kilometers south of Khon Kaen. Many claim this village to be the center of this "practical art." In the past, women weaved their own sarongs for everyday use as well as for special occasions such as weddings or

Supanniga Home is a reflection of its owner's diligence and attentiveness that only come from true dedication and love.

social gatherings. The sarongs used in the special events were beautifully made with the utmost care and attention to detail. Chonabot has won numerous awards in international silk competitions and has kept the art of the

manufacture of Mud-Mee silk at its heart. Nearly every household weaves the days away using their own hand-built wooden and bamboo machines. The small village streets have many silk boutiques and the villagers are not shy to show guests how they make their beautiful creations – from raising silk worms to weaving a silk piece thread by thread.

In the comfort of Supanniga Home's garden, a **TERRACOTTA POTTERY CLASS** is being offered and is highly recommended by Mrs Phajongkit.

"Khon Kaen is blessed with many natural resources that enhance our culture. The Nam



Isan farmers are hard workers in the field. At lunch, they traditionally lift their spirits by dancing together.

Bottom (Left - Right): Maj. Wichatorn and his student delicately and skillfully gives his work on the pottery the final touch

Pong River, running through the city, not only supports our farming but also is a crucial factor in the supply of fine clay that in the past was made into vessels and utensils the people used in their everyday lives," explains Mrs Phajongkit. With the pottery teacher, guests have the opportunity to create their own work to take home as a souvenir of Khon Kaen and also have the chance to learn about the history of pottery in Isan.

"Supanniga Home to me represents happiness," Mrs Phajongkit declares as she empties the final helpings of Puer tea into the guests' empty cups. With its magnificent environment and peaceful, inviting atmosphere, Supanniga Home is a reflection of its owner's diligence and attentiveness that only come from true dedication and love.

"I hope that everyone who comes to Supanniga Home leaves with the sense of joy and peace that I experience everyday in this garden. If they get to learn something about the culture of Isan too, then that is a great gift," adds Mrs Phajongkit with a kind smile on her face.



Trip Summary



Puer Tea Serving Ceremonies

Gather on Supanniga Home's tea terrace and enjoy our special Puer tea, a caffeine-free Chinese tea with numerous health benefits. Engage in a friendly conversation with the host who will share stories about Khon Kaen, Isan, and Supanniga Home, and answer any questions guests may have about Thai culture.



Serng Kratib Khao – Isan Dancing Lessons

Try a fun class of Isan dancing in which the dance routines imitate the actions of eating sticky rice. The dance is accompanied by Isan's up-tempo music. Each participant receives a "Kratib Khao" to use as a prop during the dance lesson and to take home as a souvenir of Supanniga Home.



Mud-Mee Silk Route

Take a tour of Chonabot village, located forty kilometers south of Khon Kaen. You can learn the processes involved in making Mud-Mee silk, starting from raising silk worms, fabricating fine silk threads from caterpillars' cocoons, right through to designing patterns, dyeing, and eventually weaving a beautiful silk sheet. Also, visit the local boutiques to view their collections.



Terracotta Pottery Lessons

Get your hands dirty while learning the history of Isan pottery. With clay brought from Khon Kaen's Nam Pong river, you can create your own piece of art under the guidance of our pottery teacher.

Supanniga Home

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CENTRAL & EAST

The Central region of Thailand is defined by the fertile plain of the Chao Phraya River that supports a thriving rice-growing industry and a lifestyle based on water activities. There are a number of natural attractions such as lush forests, mysterious caves, and stunning waterfalls. The Eastern region is a popular destination for domestic and international travelers charmed by its magnificent beaches, sheltered bays, and many off-shore islands to explore. It is well-known for its variety of fruits and the wide choice of fresh seafood cuisine.

CENTRAL & EAST

The Regions of Fertile Flatlands and Serene Coastlines



๑. Rice Farming

Rice is the principal crop of the country and it forms the staple diet of most Thai people. Much of this rice is grown in the Central region in flooded paddy fields filled directly by rainfall or indirectly by irrigation systems. Machines are used but water buffalo and oxen can still be seen working in the fields.



๒. Salt Farms

Sea salt farms can be found in Samut Sakhon and Samut Songkhram provinces. Farmers use the many sea-filled lakes along the coast to manufacture the salt by evaporation. The process involves hard work in the preparation of the land and then a patient wait for a combination of sun and gentle sea breezes to produce the salt.



๓. Vegetable Farms

The Eastern region has been traditionally known for its tropical fruit orchards but these have more recently been joined by the production of abundant supplies of chemical-free vegetables. These include cucumber, yardlong beans, Chinese kale, and pak choi.



๔. Tropical Fruit Orchards

One of the pleasures of Thailand is the variety of tropical and temperate fruits. Fruit-lovers travel to Rayong and Chanthaburi provinces to taste and buy fresh fruits at the orchards. Seasonal fruits include durian, longans, mangosteens, and rambutans, and year-round supplies of bananas, oranges, and pineapples are always available.



๕. Dairy Farming

Saraburi has the country's largest dairy farm. At the farm you can relax and enjoy the sights of magnificent green pastures dotted with grazing black and white cows. Then you are able to observe milking time and even have a go at milking yourself. There are many dairy products to sample.



๖. Central Thai Food

Steamed rice is an essential part of every Thai meal especially in the Central region. Gang som (chili vegetable soup), gang phed (Thai red curry), tom yam (spicy herbal soup), and nam prik (local herring with chili sauce) are examples of common Thai dishes, usually followed by a distinctive, mild-tasting dessert.



AKA Guti Resort Hua Hin Central

Opposite Page: Enjoy cooking the simple mouth-watering dish with Didier, the executive chef
Left and Bottom Right: The tranquility and beauty that leave you breathless at Aka Guti Resort Hua Hin

AKA GUTI RESORT HUA HIN

Prachuap Khiri Khan

Hua Hin is known as a beach resort but AKA Guti Resort Hua Hin opens another door to show a different aspect of nature's beauty.

AKA Guti Resort Hua Hin is the new place in town. There are 19 pool villas with the touch of Chinese, Tibetan, and Japanese that blends perfectly together, each villa decorated simply to produce a relaxed atmosphere. The view from the resort is one of pine trees, golf course, and the hills of Kaeng Krachan National Park, an unusual feature for Hua Hin where most accommodation outlooks are dominated by sand and sea.

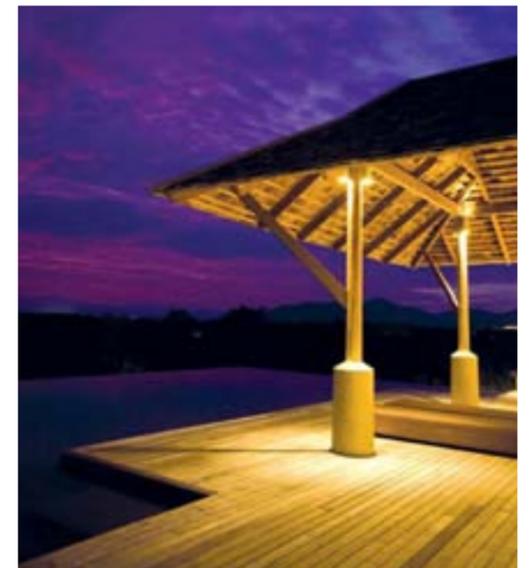
It is a perfect hideaway where you can relax by the magnificent infinity-edge swimming pool, stroll peacefully through the hills, and sip wine as the sun sets. But AKA Guti Resort Hua Hin invites you to do more than this by participating in a range of activities that make

your trip to Hua Hin one to remember.

Start your day early in the morning by visiting **THE SEAFOOD MARKET AT CHA-AM**. This gives you a true perspective of the busy fishing communities of Cha-am and Hua Hin. Fish, prawns, crabs, and all the many other sorts of fresh seafood you can think of can be found at this market and brought back for the cooking class provided by the resort.

At the resort you learn to cook simple seafood dishes with Didier Jacob, the Executive Chef from Mauritius who has a long background in international cuisine and has specific expertise in French cooking.

THE COOKING CLASSES AT AKA GUTI RESORT HUA HIN introduce you to the



Clockwise from Top Left: Learn to choose the ingredient from the seafood market and the resort's organic farm before starting your cooking class



Clockwise: Understand more of Thai culinary art by having a hands-on experience of cooking Thai food, The scrumptious 'pu pat phong ka-ri' is ready to be served
Bottom: Absorb the bond of Thai culture and appreciation in Buddhism at 'Wat Huai Mong Khon'



preparation of simple yet authentic Thai cuisine that uses fresh herbs and natural ingredients. Didier takes you to the resort's organic farm that supplies most of the ingredients for the dishes at the resort. There are Thai eggplants, lemongrass, mint, ginger, galangal, gourd, and morning glory, each of them giving a different flavor providing that uniqueness of Thai food.

"Thai food is full of flavors different from Western food. Thais like to eat their food spicy but we can tone down the chilies for those who prefer less heat," says Manoon Yuthanawa, the Front Office Manager. He adds that the resort's cooking classes are in demand as most of the guests want to go home with some cooking skills to show their friends that they can produce such dishes as tom yam kung after their time in Thailand.

One of the recipes that AKA Gutti Resort Hua Hin presents to guests is 'pu pat phong ka-ri' or

Fish, prawns, crabs, and all the many other sorts of fresh seafood you can think of can be found at this market and brought back for the cooking class provided by the resort.

stir-fried crab with curry powder, an authentic but reasonably simple Thai dish to prepare. This dish consists of fresh crabs' legs stir-fried in curry powder for the yellow color and the mouth-watering aroma, finished by a topping of celery to add more flavor, showing how simple Thai cooking can be.

After enjoying yourself in the cooking class and then tasting your own creations, the resort offers you the chance of adventure at Namtok Pa La-u, about 60 kilometers from the resort.

This waterfall is one of the most famous tourist attractions in Hua Hin.

On the way to the waterfall, you can stop at 'WAT HUAI MONG KHON' (Blessing Creek Temple), the site of the statue of a famous and highly-respected monk, Luang Pu Thuat. This temple used to be called 'Wat Huai Khot' (Bending Creek Temple) because it is situated on the curve of a creek. However, the King visited it in 1952 as part of the establishment of a royal project and changed the name from 'Huai Khot' to 'Huai Mong Khon' meaning blessing. It has developed into an important center for the teaching of Buddhism ethics and principles to students and members of the general community.

Namtok Pa La-u is in Kaeng Krachan National Park. The spectacular waterfall is surrounded by the shade of the forest making an attractive setting on a hot day. The car only takes





Don't miss the opportunity to have a dip in many of the small, refreshing pools to complete this splendid trip to the waterfall.

you so far – to get the best view, you have to walk to the top of the 11- tiered waterfall.

The first few tiers consist of small waterfalls but they get bigger after the fifth tier. From here, any further exploration requires National Park authority and assistance in the interests of safety. But don't miss the opportunity to have a dip in many of the small, refreshing pools to complete this splendid trip to the waterfall. The environment around **NAMTOK PA LA-U IS ONE OF THE BEST FOREST AREAS IN THAILAND** containing many different species of birds and butterflies.

There is also the chance to get some first-hand experience of elephants at Pang Chang Thep. Elephants have been an important feature of Thai culture since ancient times. However, their numbers have been greatly reduced because of the lack of work and habitat, so this is an opportunity that may not exist much longer to see these magnificent creatures. Take a ride on an elephant, watch their performances of work skills, and feed them some bananas before your return to the resort.

There is nothing better to end a perfect day than watching the sun descend with a glass in your hand and thinking about the memories of a fantastic holiday and place.

Above: Explore the beauty of the splendid 'Namtok Pa La-u', one of the best forest areas in Thailand



AKA Guti Resort Hua Hin

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Trip Summary



Visit Seafood Market at Cha-am

You can see all the fresh seafood you ever imagined at the market at Cha-am. This market starts to get lively early in the morning when the catches arrive and locals come to select the best specimens.



Thai Cooking Classes

One of the ways to absorb and understand Thai culture is to learn how to cook Thai food. The resort offers cooking classes for interested guests who can then take their new-found skills home. Special menus such as barbecued seafood might be available on the weekends.



Wat Huai Mong Khon

This temple houses the large statue of Luang Pu Thuat, a highly respected monk. Wat Huai Mong Khon has become recognized as a leading center of Buddhist studies and a place at which to pay respect.



Visit Namtok Pa La-u

The spectacular waterfall at Namtok Pa La-u stimulates and relaxes you with its size and the constant sound of the flow of water. There are many spots where you can have a dip in the refreshing water. The whole setting is enhanced by the magnificent forest surroundings.



Baan Amphawa Resort & Spa Central

Opposite Page: Sitting on a 'mud board' and digging for blood cockles

Left: The sweet and warm ambiance of Baan Amphawa Resort & Spa

Bottom Right: The Thai culture is reflected through the stunning architecture of the resort

BAAN AMPHAWA RESORT & SPA Samut Songkhram

Baan Amphawa Resort & Spa charms visitors with its river bank setting and a wealth of environmentally-friendly aquatic activities.

On the banks of the peaceful Mae Klong River, the traditional Thai house of Baan Amphawa Resort & Spa sits amidst a tropical garden setting. The Rattanakosin-style house gives the idea of times past with each room simply furnished yet fully equipped to suit the modern traveller. The resort displays works of art throughout and is a fine example of the beauty and high standard of service associated with the province of Samut Songkhram.

The town of the same name is known as the place of three waters – fresh, brackish, and sea – and includes a network of canals. As a result, the area hosts an ecological diversity ranging from magnificent mangrove forests to coconut plantations.

Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn frequently comes to visit the well-maintained coastal mangrove forests of Tambon Khlong Khon, sometimes to plant new trees herself. You can take a boat trip into the forests to witness the way of life from the water. On the way, the boat stops to let you feed colorful crab-eating macaques. Further on, you can watch villagers working on a green mussel farm and digging for blood cockles. Lunch is on a floating hut originally used for night-time supervision of the mussel farm. Finally, you get the chance to make your own contribution to this ecological wonder world. Sitting or laying on a 'MUD BOARD,' a long wooden plank with an upturned front edge, allows you to slide



Clockwise from Top Left: Digging for blood cockles or sliding on the mud board show the villagers' way of life by the mangrove forests



out into the mud and plant mangrove seedlings, thus help the preservation of the forest with your own hands.

The mangrove forests are only one of the charms in the town of three waters. At the coconut plantations of Amphoe Amphawa, you are able to smell a sweet fragrance wafting from the palm furnaces in the late morning. The profession of coconut sugar-maker is a traditional one in this area, although now it is in decline. The process of **MAKING COCONUT SUGAR** depends on local knowledge and patience as it takes time. It begins with climbing up the palm and skilfully cutting the flower clusters or inflorescences of the coconuts. Then, the flowers are rubbed to produce a clear liquid which is put in a round container and poured into a deep-bottomed pan in a furnace. The mix simmers until it is viscous giving off a pleasant aroma. Finally, everybody helps pour out the

Sitting or laying on a 'mud board,' a long wooden plank with an upturned front edge, allows you to slide out into the mud and plant mangrove seedlings, thus help the preservation of the forest with your own hands.

sugar drop by drop into rounded lumps.

Samut Songkhram is a friendly place. The families of the sugar-makers on the coconut plantations make you welcome to their hard but satisfying lifestyle. Their happiness reflects their Buddhist background. Samut Songkhram is a traditional Buddhist part of the country with more than 100 ancient temples in the province located on the river banks. You can see these temples by **TAKING A BOAT AND EXPERIENCING LIFE ALONG THE BANKS**. Admire traditional Thai

way of life by inspecting these temples packed with evidence of a rich history. For example, Wat Bangkhae Noi is known for its ordination hall that has a floor made of just 7 wooden planks of Malabar ironwood and its four walls splendidly decorated with wood carvings telling the story of the ten lives of Buddha.

At Wat Bang Kung in Amphoe Bang Khonthi there is an ancient ordination hall mysteriously hidden under the roots of a large tree. It is known as 'Bot Prok Bodhi' and houses a Buddha image of 'Luang Pho Nilmani.' This temple is located near Bang Kung military camp whose soldiers were used by King Thaksin of the Thonburi dynasty to fight the Burmese.

The boat will then take you to Wat Phummarin Kudi Thong with its history dating back to the reign of King Rama I. The ordination hall is also a museum that displays a variety of valuable antiques including Thai Buddha images,

Clockwise: The local demonstrates how to collect the coconut from the coconut tree, The sweet fragrance of making coconut sugar process is very mouth watering
Bottom: Visit the Buddha image of 'Luang Pho Nilmani' at Wat Bang Kung





Trip Summary



Mud Board Mangrove Reforestation in Tambon Khlong Khon

Take a boat and discover the mangrove forests, home to animals such as the crab-eating macaques and fiddler crabs. Try the local way of farming green mussels and digging for blood cockles as well as planting mangrove seedlings from your mud board.



Making Coconut Sugar

Coconut sugar is a sweet-smelling product of Samut Songkhram. Watch the workers climb a coconut tree to cut flower inflorescences. Then participate in the process of making the palm sugar and pouring the finished product into small rounded lumps.



Boat Trips to Ancient Temples

Take a boat to visit old temples on the banks of the river and learn a little about the faith and way of life of Thais. Make sure to visit Wat Bang Kung with its 'unseen Thailand' ordination hall, Bot Prok Bodhi, Wat Bangkhae Noi, and Wat Phummarin Kudi Thong.



Night-boating to Watch the Fireflies

Take a boat at night to see the fireflies and step into another world that illustrates the richness of the mangrove forest of Samut Songkhram.

At night, the amazing lights of fireflies twinkle in the Sonneratia trees, showing a beauty not visible in the light.



chinaware, and ancient wooden and brass items. The abbots over many generations have carefully preserved these objects. As well as the museum, don't forget to visit 'Kudi Thong,' a chamber built in the reign of King Rama I that has a display of ancient glassware and antiques.

Boating in the daytime allows visitors to observe the everyday lives of the people along the banks in bright sunshine. **NIGHT-BOATING** is a different experience. At night, the amazing lights of fireflies twinkle in the Sonneratia trees, showing a beauty not visible in the light. The long-tailed boat moves quietly along the small canals, stopping now and then to hide in the darkness. The tiny glowing lights of the fireflies blink on and off as if performing a welcoming dance for visitors in the soft night breeze. In fact, the blinking lights are the courtship displays of male fireflies trying to attract females – their love songs being sung in the twinkling lights.

Next morning, wake early and make an offering of alms to the monks who paddle their small boats along the canals to receive the offerings of the people. Such a scene sums up the peaceful lives of the villagers along the river banks of the Amphawa and confirms the warm friendship for visitors in this province of streams and rivers.

Left: Watch the magical fireflies on the night boating tour
Right: Experience the Thai culture of offering alms to the monks in the boat

Baan Amphawa Resort & Spa

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Above: The elegant delicacy of flower garland is used as a medium to share the Thai culture to the foreigners
Right: The history of the house is well kept for the guests to experience the traditional way of life
Opposite Page: The ancient dressing table demonstrates the owner's intention to enjoy the lifestyle of the olden days



Baan Pra Nond Central

BAAN PRA NOND Bangkok

Step into the past at Baan Pra Nond, centrally located in the heart Bangkok, and you discover a serene and simple way of life.

The image of Bangkok as a modern mix of skyscrapers, glittering shopping plazas, entertainment spots, and hectic lifestyle is one with which most people are familiar. But in the midst of this noise and nightlife is a place that manages to maintain the city's cultural heritage and traditional way of life.

Baan Pra Nond, the former home of a Supreme Court judge of Thailand, is a retreat from the hustle and bustle of the city. Over 70 years ago, the judge built the house for 8,000 THB. (approx 235 US\$ or 170 Euros) in the Thai - colonial architectural style. The 3 - bedroom house was originally the family residence

surrounded by fruit orchards and several canals. Other nearby buildings housed the extended family that made up most of the local community. As the family grew, it later moved into a larger home on Sathorn Road and rented out Baan Pra Nond for residential and business purposes.

Accommodation at Baan Pra Nond was the idea of Tasma Cotsmire who renovated her grandfather's house and made into a bed and breakfast establishment. The name 'Baan Pra Nond' is derived from baan, the Thai word for house, pra, the former title given to high ranking government officials, and Nond, the judge's first

Clockwise from Top Left: Making the flower garland helps you practice your concentration and shows a great dedication to learning this unique craft

Bottom Left: Pak Klong Talat is the busiest and biggest fresh flower market in Bangkok.

Opposite Page: The fragrance of the herbal compress ball relaxes your mind while the technique of this traditional Thai massage helps relieve the muscle pain



name. Today, it welcomes all to enjoy the simple charm and relaxing lifestyle of the old days of Bangkok.

"I would like our guests to feel that they are living in their own house while experiencing a traditional Thai way of life. Hopefully, they can sense a charm and a uniqueness of the olden days of the area," says Mrs Tasma, the owner of the house.

Baan Pra Nond endeavors to provide some experiences of old Thailand that guests can utilize when they return home.

Upon arrival, guests are greeted by a fresh **FLOWER GARLAND**, a symbol of Thai hospitality. The flower garland is something that they can learn to make for themselves. A short course of making a flower garland starts with an evening excursion to Bangkok's famous fresh flower market, Pak Klong Talat, where you can enjoy exploring one of the city's busiest flower outlets. With a guide, you select the flowers and take them back to Baan Pra Nond for lessons in the making of a traditional garland. When completed, it can be offered to the local temple for good fortune and health.

After a long day exploring the City of Angels, there is no better way to relax than by getting a traditional Thai massage. This can be arranged to fit into your schedule and the experience is enhanced by combining the massage with a **HERBAL COMPRESS BALL**. The ball is applied to specific locations on the body depending on their required effect through the deep absorption of its ingredients from traditional Thai medicine into the muscles to help alleviate aches and pains. Guests are invited to learn about the therapeutic properties of the ingredients, their natural fragrances for aromatherapy, the body's pressure points, and finally

The flower garland is something that they can learn to make for themselves. When completed, it can be offered to the local temple for good fortune and health.

the correct techniques for the application of the compress ball. These skills can then be used on the guests' return home

Visitors to Baan Pra Nond are encouraged to **LEARN HOW TO MAKE SIMPLE THAI**

DISHES that they can easily recreate in their own time. This course has been set up so that participants select 2 dishes to prepare from an extensive choice of dishes. Preparation involves the creation of a shopping list of required items in consultation with kitchen staff. Next morning, guests and hotel staff visit the local morning market to buy vegetables, meats, herbs, sauces, and anything else needed to produce the dishes.

"The guests are encouraged to flavor each dish according to their own personal preference because the essence of Thai cooking is in its individual interpretation," says Mrs Tasma.

I would like our guests to feel that they are living in their own house while experiencing a traditional Thai way of life. Hopefully, they can sense a charm and a uniqueness of the olden days of the area.

Not only does this visit to the market allow visitors to find out about shopping, prices, and ingredients, but it also provides them with an insight into market life, an integral part of Thai culture.

Baan Pra Nond provides modern conveniences in conjunction with the traditional, simple charms of Thailand. Guest rooms and common areas are equipped with Internet access and cable television to keep you abreast of all that is happening in the world.

However, if you prefer to escape this, all you need to do is get lost in your surroundings. Many of the rooms at Baan Pra Nond have been decorated to match the colonial style of the house itself while most of the furnishings in the main house are made from Asian hardwoods such as teak and are restored originals with a history all their own.

You are invited to take a step back and discover this different life of yesteryear at Baan Pra Nond. Whether you choose to learn to make a floral garland, apply a herbal compress ball, or indulge in some Thai cooking, you experience a timeless culture that celebrates the small things that make life so enjoyable.

Left - Right: Yarn Som-o is a Thai salad that is becoming famous among the foreigners because of its unique taste



Trip Summary



Floral Garlands

Traditionally, floral garlands are used in merit-making Buddhist ceremonies and it's easy to learn how to make these garlands. A small, simple gesture can bring you good fortune and health.



Thai Herbal Compress Ball

Discover the therapeutic properties of traditional Thai massage with a herbal compress ball. Learn about the ingredients that make this great stress reliever and the correct techniques in its application – a great way to get rid of those aches and pains of daily life.



Thai Cooking Classes

Love the taste of Thai cooking but intimidated about doing it yourself? Learn simple and easy recipes with an emphasis on ingredients that can be found anywhere so that you can take the taste of Thailand home.



Baan Pra Nond

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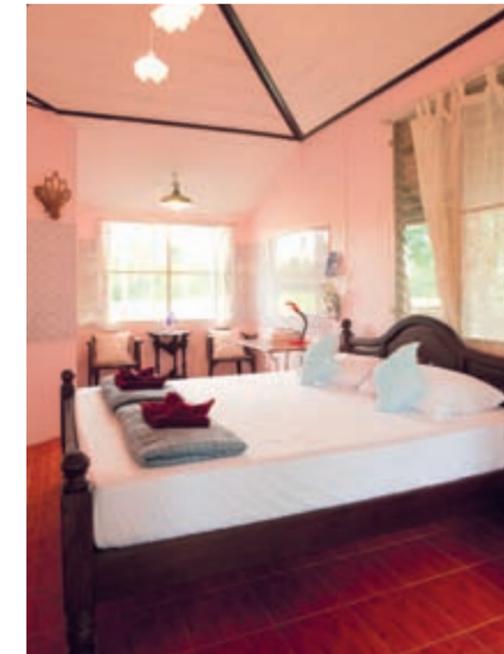
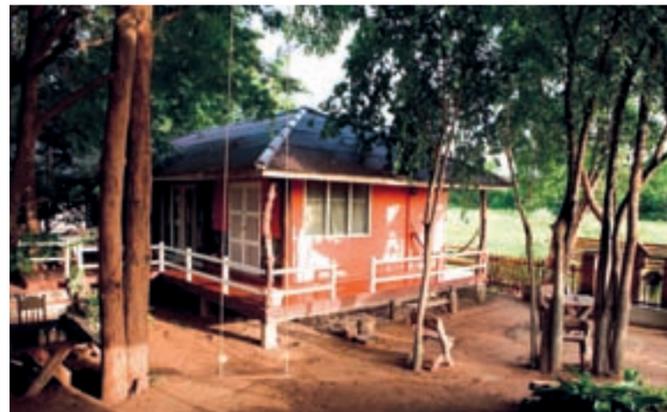
Website www.baanpranond.com



Above: Locals pay respect to the Rice Goddess during the rice ceremony

Right: Small house with big heart of Ban Klangtung's people

Opposite Page: The sweetness of the room is decorated with Aunty Add's heart and soul



Ban Klangtung Organic Home **Central**

BAN KLANGTUNG ORGANIC HOME Kanchanaburi

The story of Ban Klangtung is spread continuously by word of mouth – a remarkable couple in a remarkable place.

Ban Klangtung Organic Home is a welcoming home-stay where Aunty Add-Thippawan and Uncle Khon-Sakhon Prasertkul built a little house they hoped to use for their own retirement. One day, Aunty Add welcomed a guest to her home and she realized that sharing her natural way of life could help make the world a better place. So she built another small house with a wide veranda, decorated every last corner by herself with charming bric-a-brac, and created 3 rooms, each with its own character. All bedding has been carefully chosen with none being bleached or dyed. In front of the main house, another guest house

has been built to accommodate other guests.

Everybody comes for the same reason, to escape their chaotic lifestyles, relax in a slower-moving natural world, and experience the many activities that reflect the traditional Thai way of life. This can be done by resting under the shade of the big trees, using the reading corner and the hammocks, and simply admiring the lush green rice paddies out the front.

Aunty Add welcomes everybody with butterfly pea juice, a local herbal delicacy. All guests can learn how to make this juice with Uncle Khon, an expert in Thai cooking.

"The butterfly pea is an easily found local

Clockwise from Top Left: Activities at Ban Klangtung that invites you to discover the Thai way of life
Bottom: Aunty Add shows how to arrange flowers in leaf vases
Opposite Page: Decoration of flowers is the important part of the rice ceremony



flower that can be made into a refreshing juice. It illustrates the simplicity of Thai life and the use of everyday objects," says a smiling Aunty Add, offering a juice to a newly-arrived guest.

Those who want to sample traditional 'Thainess' can make a **FLOWER ARRANGEMENT IN A BANANA LEAF VASE** after sharpening coconut palm sticks and arranging their flowers to their own design. Aunty Add insists on each guest making their own flower arrangement to personally experience the interaction with Thai culture.

Many of the activities at Ban Klangtung Organic Home explore the bond with nature that modern generations may be neglecting. One example is fish-weaving.

"In the past, Thais used woven palm leaf fish to relax tired kids. Because we had no toys we used our knowledge of natural objects to weave the fish and make children's mobiles. This was not only for pleasure but also to enhance the children's development," she explains.

Cooking is another activity that uses the natural resources of the surrounding environment. Uncle Khon is happy to share his skills with visitors. He creates the menu and asks the guests to select and pick the organic vegetable ingredients from around the house. The beautiful smell of hot curries from the kitchen is a testimony to his skills as he prepares another dish in the relaxed cooking area.

Another event celebrating nature is a **CEREMONY TO APPEASE "CHAO MAE PHOSOP," THE RICE GODDESS**. This occurs as the rice is ripening and involves brightly - colored cloths and fruit offerings.

The butterfly pea is an easily found local flower that can be made into a refreshing juice. It illustrates the simplicity of Thai life and the use of everyday objects.

Ban Klangtung Organic Home is only a couple of kilometers from Wat Intharam (Wat Nong Khao), the community's cultural centre. The favoured mode of transport is the motorised cart passing through the green rice paddies to

the center of **BAN NONG KHAO, A FAMOUS CULTURAL VILLAGE** in Kanchanaburi. The village is well-known for its horse-rearing and-training expertise and its distinctive ceremonies. Important ones are the topknot procession and the postulant ordination ceremony. At these, horses walk formally to the beat of a single drum. These exciting ceremonies can only be seen during merit-making times at the village.

Almost every house has a weaving loom. The people of Ban Nong Khao have been recognized for their unique weaving patterns for a long time. In the past, they grew their own

In the past, Thais used woven palm leaf fish to relax tired kids. Because we had no toys we used our knowledge of natural objects to weave the fish and make children's mobiles.

cotton and made the fabric and natural dyes themselves. Now materials have to be obtained from other sources as demand has increased. They use these imported materials but still retain their original patterns of weaving.

A very popular cloth from Ban Nong Khao is 'Pha Khao Ma Ta Chak' that displays an inventive woven basketry pattern. It is also known as 'Pha Khao Ma Roi Si' (one hundred colors wrap-around cloth) due to its many colors and detailed designs.

The villagers still retain the ancient art of making sugar palm sweets called 'Mo Ta Mo Yai.' Fragrant sugar palm sweets straight from a hot stove are a real treat! A great way to explore the rice paddies is by bicycle as this allows you to experience the timelessness and serenity of the agricultural setting.

On your return to Ban Klangtung, the owners are busy arranging the dinner table for you. Aunty Add wants her house to be a home to everybody who loves nature, encouraging all to live as the same family. The word 'home-stay' doesn't differentiate between owner and guest here because the warmth and hospitality bond everyone as one Thai family.

The story of Baan Klang Tung, a friendly couple welcoming visitors to share their house in the middle of the rice paddies, is spread continuously by word of mouth. More and more people come to experience the hospitality of this remarkable couple and this remarkable place.

Left: Take a tour to the rice paddies on the motorised cart
Right: Visit Ban Nong Khao to see the weaving of one-hundred-colors wrap-around cloth



Trip Summary



Flower Arranging in Leaf Vases

This gives everybody the chance to create their own flower arrangement. Start by placing local Thai flowers such as globe amaranths and plumerias onto sharpened coconut palm leaves then arrange them in your own design in a vase made from a banana leaves.



Weaving Fish from Palm Leaves

This activity is fun since you weave the fish with your own hands. It is a good way to practise concentration and learn the Thai way of using natural resources to benefit daily life.



Experiencing the Rice Ceremony

The full ceremony can only be seen as the rice ripens and depends on how many harvests the villagers have in a year. The ceremony teaches us to understand our lives and roles more clearly.



Riding a Motorised Cart to See Village Activities

Travel by cart to Ban Nong Khao to see the weaving of one-hundred-colors wrap-around cloth and visit Wat Intharam or Wat Nong Khao, important temples and spiritual centers for the people of the village. If you visit during the topknot procession or the postulant ordination ceremony, make sure you see the trained horses prancing to the sound of the drum.

Ban Klangtung Organic Home

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Opposite Page: The delicate pattern of Thai art is shown on the carved wood

Right: Bannkunpra is carefully decorated to present the originality of Thai home in the past

Bottom Left: Bannkunpra's cozy resting area by the river



BANNKUNPRA Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya

'Bannkunpra,' an old teak house by the Pa Sak River, gives an insight into the richness of Ayutthaya's history.

'Bannkunpra' is an example of the grandeur that once was Ayutthaya, the former glorious capital of Thailand. This well-preserved, traditional Thai, two-storey, teak house stands in a prominent position in the city showing off its origins from the reign of King Rama VI with its combination of colonial architecture and a touch of the East.

Ayutthaya was the national capital for 417 years and evidence of this can be seen in its glorious temples, palaces, and historical ruins. The city is virtually an island formed at the convergence of three major rivers. It is located on the flat river plain of the Chao Phraya River and is flanked by the Lop Buri and Pa Sak Rivers. Such a strategic location has made Ayutthaya a

communication and commercial hub described by early foreign traders as one of the wealthiest cities in the East with effective natural defense lines. Its situation on the rivers also means that it's a fertile area producing much rice.

Rice is the staple food of Thai people throughout the country but not many know of 'sano' – the sesbania tree – that shares the fields with the rice crops. Ms Sommai Mesrireung of Khlong Suan Phlu, Ayutthaya is a leader of a group of housewives who make **ARTIFICIAL FLOWERS FROM SANO TREES**. The type of sano they specifically prefer for their craft is sano hang kai. This is actually a weed that grows in the rice fields and had no value in times past but is now recognized worldwide as





Top Left – Bottom Left: The ambiance of Bannkunpra brings you back to the old days

Right: Nuno is intrigued by the process of turning Sano tree into flowers

Opposite Page (Clockwise): Enjoy learning how to make artificial flowers from Sano tree, A beautiful piece of wood carving is done with patience and care



a valuable material for making these flowers. This creative use of natural resources is even more productive as classes are conducted for tourists to develop the skills of manufacturing the artificial flowers.

Nuno De Oliveira Dias, a tourist from Portugal, and his French girlfriend, Karine Borne, attended Ms Sommai's classes and were amazed to see the number of products made from sano trees. Both were intrigued by the skills of the housewives as they transformed the cores of the trees into beautiful flowers.

Ms Sommai explains that these sano hang kai trees must be the kind grown in rice fields submerged under water to a depth of between 1 and 1.5 meters. In most areas, rice is only harvested once a year so sano is only available once a year. Those areas that have 2 crops per year do not produce suitable sano trees as the water levels are too low and the



trees do not produce good quality branches.

"So, no rice means no sano trees," says Ms Sommai. Good sano branches must be straight, smooth, and have consistent bark.

"We use all the parts of the branches, the fleshy core and the bark," continues Ms Sommai showing the light, fluffy core and the bark that is cut to make leaves. The artificial flower industry is important to the villagers as it provides extra income to supplement the farmers' other agricultural pursuits.

"It is amazing that these artificial flowers are made of natural materials and not from plastic like I saw in Europe, and the white color

Sano is actually a weed that grows in the rice fields and had no value in times past but is now recognized worldwide as a valuable material for making these flowers.

of the core and the brown of the bark look so natural," comments Nuno who says he will return to stock up on souvenirs before heading back to his country.

Flowers crafted from sano trees are not

the only example of the artistic skills of Thai people. **WOOD-CARVING** is another craft common in Ayutthaya. Mr Somsak Duangnarong of Ban Thai Phai, Ban Mai Sub-District is a person who has devoted his life to wood-carving for over 20 years. His work requires time, patience and great skill as Thai patterns are very detailed and complicated.

"Talented wood-carving artists have the ability to carve patterns with angles that, when covered with gold leaf, produce glittering reflections," explains Mr Somsak.

Getting to know Ayutthaya is not complete without **A BOAT TRIP AROUND THE CITY**

Bottom Left: Visit Wat Cheung Tha to see the amazing ancient mural painting
Bottom Right: The reclining Buddha at Wat Phutthaisawan is truly remarkable

Talented wood-carving artists have the ability to carve patterns with angles that, when covered with gold leaf, produce glittering reflections.



ALONG THE PA SAK, LOP BURI, AND CHAO PHRAYA RIVERS. The boat trip shows the cleverness of the city's original settlers in choosing a site so well-protected from attackers.

The boat makes a stop at an elephant corral where many animals of different ages are playing together. In the early evening the riders bathe their elephants in the Pa Sak River, a touching scene that displays the close bond between these large animals and their carers.

After visiting the elephants, the boat travels along the Lop Buri River where numerous interesting temples can be found. Wat Cheung Tha is one of the oldest temples and its splendid mural is incredible. Even though faded through time it still retains the beauty of the era. On the banks of the Chao Phraya River is Wat Phanang Choeng, the famous temple of Ayutthaya, and Wat Phutthaisawan with its unique ancient cloisters and the Reclining Buddha within its thick brick walls. Wat Chai Watthanaram is another place not to be missed.

The only problem is that a 30-minute boat trip might not be enough to witness all that Ayutthaya has to offer.



Trip Summary



Flowers crafted from 'Sano' Trees

You will be amazed to find that the fluffy core of the 'sano hang kai' tree, a weed in the rice fields, can make such beautiful, decorative, artificial flowers.



Wood-carving

Those who have a passion for Thai arts are impressed with the skills of the workers and the exquisite patterns carved on the wood. Advanced reservations are required for viewing.



A Temple Sight-Seeing Boat Trip

The boat takes you along 3 rivers – the Chao Phraya, Pa Sak, and Lop Buri. You can visit an elephant corral and enjoy the sight of ancient teak houses and temples on the river banks.



Bannkunpra

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Opposite Page: "Wai Khru" shows the great combination of spirits and sports

Right: The rooms in Fairtex are spacious and cozy

Bottom Left: The entrance to Fairtex Sports Club & Hotel



FAIRTEX SPORTS CLUB & HOTEL Chon Buri

'Muai Thai' is a popular Thai martial art that attracts many nationalities to study its hidden wisdom and benefits.

Fairtex Sports Club & Hotel is the largest and best equipped health complex in central Pattaya. The elegant Sukhothai-styled brick exterior leads to a modern, luxurious lobby. This integration of two worlds is the idea of the owner, Banchong Busarakamwong, who has been a Thai boxing fan for many years.

"I like everybody who comes here to feel as though we're from the same family. That's my script," says Mr Banchong, as he relaxes in the lobby.

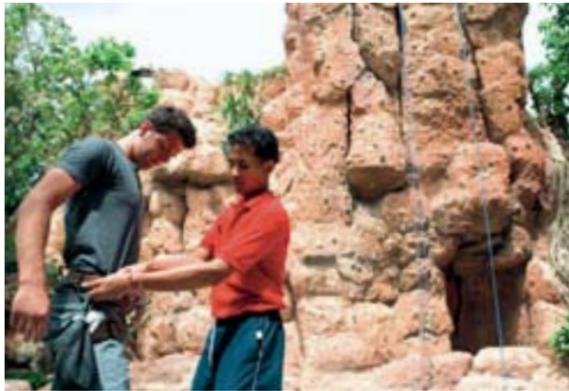
Fairtex is a sports club and a hotel, a heaven for fitness enthusiasts. It is fully equipped with modern facilities such as a fitness room, swimming pool, the first hot yoga studio in Pattaya, tennis courts, and the challenging

ARTIFICIAL CLIMBING WALL, currently the highest in Thailand.

The club provides a variety of sports at all levels but the major attraction for prospective members from around the world is the opportunity to learn and participate in the martial art known as **MUAI THAI (THAI BOXING)**.

"We are considered the largest Thai boxing school in Thailand," claims Mr Banchong. He fell in love with Thai boxing at a young age and recognized the value of its combination of science and art in its tactics and wisdom. "If you really get in touch with it, you will see that Thai boxing does not just focus on aggression but also provides a knowledge of self-defence and a chance to exercise," says the boxing school owner.



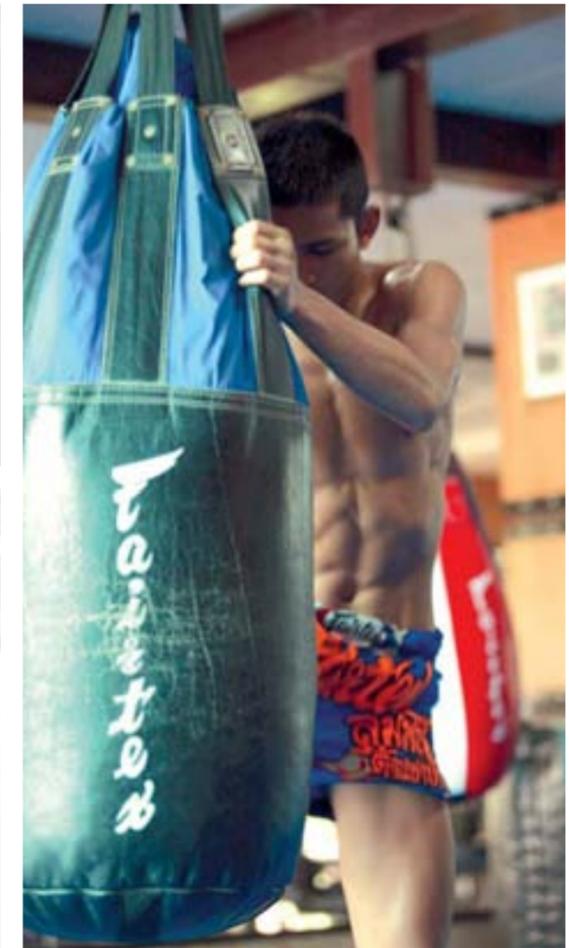
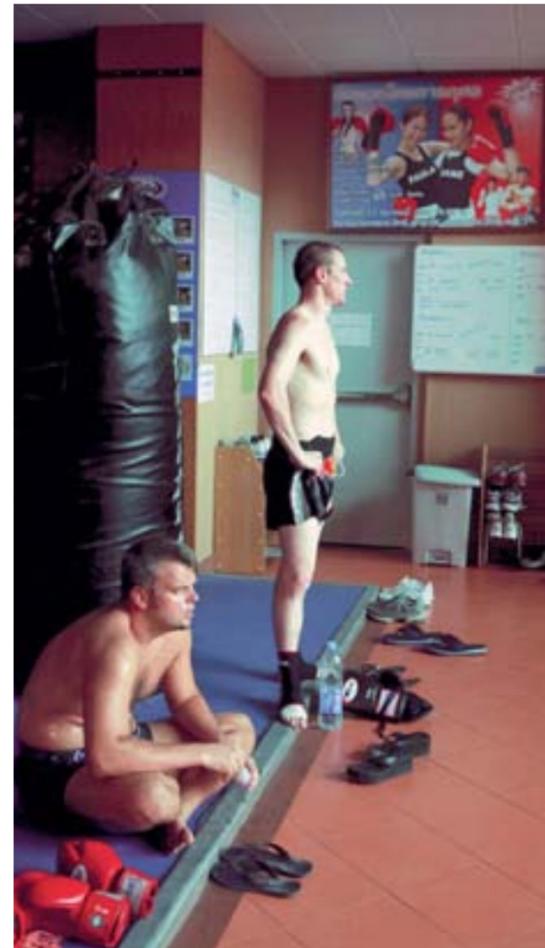


Top Left: The red brick statue shows Fairtex's unique architecture
Middle Left: Outdoor swimming pool for swimming laps or relaxation
Bottom Left: Getting ready for the adventurous activity
Right – Devil's peak, the highest rock climbing wall in Pattaya
Opposite Page (Clockwise from Left): Thai Boxing enthusiasts, both beginners and advanced, gather at Fairtex's Boxing arena



Muai Thai is a nationally-popular martial art with a long history and a universal appeal. It uses all parts of the body including fists, elbows, lower arms, feet, shins, knees, head, and torso. The sport follows several local traditions, the main ones being Muai Tha Sao (north), Muai Korat (northeast), Muai Chaiya (south), Muai Lopburi and Muai Phra Nakhon (central region). There are also several well-known moves including heavy punch Korat, smart Lop Buri, good mien Chaiya, and faster Tha Sao. Over more than 20 years of dedication, Mr Banchong has continually encouraged foreigners to study the art of Thai boxing and, over the last 5-6 years, it has started to become popular internationally.

In the morning, the gym at Fairtex is busy with people of all nationalities. They are there with the same objective, to learn the art of Thai boxing. Lynn Maguire, a young woman from England, is passionate about Thai boxing and has lived and breathed the sport for more than



5 years. She is now assistant manager and warms up energetically with others near a punch bag.

"There are several reasons why people want to learn Thai boxing here. Some want to be healthy, to know self-defence, and to learn the actual martial art itself. But I think Thai boxing is different. It uses every part of the body when you're in the ring. When fighting, you have to fight. When finished, we are friends and share the camaraderie. Thai boxing teaches us many things," shouts Lynn, to make herself heard over the sounds of students' gloved fists striking leather.

Male and female, all professions, nationalities,

If you really get in touch with it, you will see that Thai boxing does not just focus on aggression but also provides a knowledge of self-defence and a chance to exercise.

and ages can learn Thai boxing as long as they have commitment. To cater for this variety, Fairtex provides training at several levels ranging from beginners to advanced, and includes 'Wai Khru,' a ceremonial performance

that pays respect to one's teacher, for those who want to enter the professional ring.

Since the reasons for learning Thai boxing differ for each student, a trainer first provides consultation and discusses the student's objectives. The newcomer is then allocated to an appropriate class.

In the ring on the other side of the gym, Anson Dichaves from Singapore is concentrating on a performance of 'Wai Khru.' This vacation in Thailand is his 'fitness holiday.' Today is his last day before saying good-bye and flying home. He has spent almost 3 weeks here with the sole purpose of learning Thai boxing.

Bottom Left: Thai boxing enables you to practice your concentration while fighting with your opponent
Bottom Right: The powerful strike of the Thai Boxing is seen in the boxing ring

When it is time to fight, everybody concentrates on the opponent but at the end, they shake hands. I think this is the charm of Thai boxing.



Anson is another person who has loved the sport from the beginning. Before turning to Thai boxing he was mad about basketball until an accident damaged his knee and he was told by his doctor to change sports. Thai boxing caught his attention and the more he learns, the more he loves the sport.

"Did you know, in Singapore, Thai boxing is a very popular sport? I think it is a sport that everybody can learn. As you learn, you discover that it is a safe sport. However, a lot of people don't know that Thai boxing has several hidden gems. The 'Wai Khru' ceremony demonstrates a connection between the spirit and the sport. It also has furious and strong fighting. When it is time to fight, everybody concentrates on the opponent but at the end, they shake hands. I think this is the charm of Thai boxing," explains Anson as he drinks water and wipes the sweat away.

"Thai boxing is a sport in which you exercise strenuously, have intellectual stimulation, and receive spiritual uplift," enthuses the Singaporean on his final day.

Training finishes at noon leaving the gym with only the punch bags, gloves, and other training equipment left. It is time for everybody to enjoy the atmosphere of Pattaya before returning tomorrow morning for more lessons – lessons that take you into the special world of Thai boxing that offers much more than is first apparent.



Trip Summary



Thai Boxing

The Thai boxing classes at Fairtex Sports Club & Hotel are tailored to each person's individual needs. Accommodation for serious learners can be provided in an economical sport dormitory. Tourists who want to learn the basics of Thai boxing and who also want all the facilities can try the five-star hotel service.



Artificial Rock Climbing

Challenge yourself on the Devil's Peak artificial rock climbing wall, the highest in Thailand, under the tuition of skilled climbers. Climbing the artificial wall helps you think about and plan for higher achievements.



Fairtex Sports Club & Hotel

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The Heritage Baan Silom Central

Opposite page: Teaching the classical Thai instrument is how the resort brings you to understand the beauty of Thai culture that is hidden behind the art

Left and Bottom Right: The design of the room is 'An Eclectic Hotel', showing the perfect blend of Colonial classic and the 21st Century style

THE HERITAGE BAAN SILOM Bangkok

The Heritage Baan Silom has it all – puppets, Thai dance, basic Thai music! Follow all this with a cruise on the Chao Phraya River.

The Heritage Baan Silom is located in the heart of Bangkok's financial area. It is a small hotel with only 36 guestrooms, designed in a style that combines the best of all things, past with present, Western art with Eastern art, traditions with modern amenities, located right in the middle of a great metropolis.

The Heritage Baan Silom offers special experiences for guests through Thai art and culture, such as **PERFORMANCES OF THAI THEATRICAL PUPPETRY**, learning of skills and gestures of Thai classical dance, developing expertise Thai music, and cruising on the Chao Phraya River to admire the beauty of Thai life on the water.

Thai theatrical puppetry is a traditional

performing art that has been passed on through many years. The puppets are perfectly-scaled miniature versions of Thai classical performers, complete with costumes and Khon masks. They move, make gestures, and dance to music just like real performers. The puppets are controlled by the professional handlers of the Traditional Thai Puppet Theater-Joe Louis. This group has won numerous international awards, including first prize in the Best Traditional Performance category at the World Festival of Puppet Art 2006.

Everything to do with the performances is of the highest quality. The theater itself has magnificent Thai-style decorations, the puppets' costumes are exquisitely designed, the painted



Clockwise from Top Left: The Traditional Thai Puppet Theater- Joe Louis, who has won first prize in the World Festival of Puppet Art, put on the great show of the exceptional performing art



Clockwise: The teacher shares the techniques of playing "khim" to the guest, Learning basic Thai classical dance gives you the enjoyment as well as the understanding of each movement's meaning
Bottom: Observe the stunning art and architecture of the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, the most sacred shrine of Bangkok



backdrops are works of art, and the music is exceptional. But it is the movements of the puppets themselves that are the crowning glory.

Each puppet is manipulated by three puppeteers, all who have received exhaustive training in the art. Their actions are coordinated not only with each other but also the actions of the handlers of other puppets in the performance and the music and musicians. Such is the skill of these artists that it results in a realistic presentation of stories from Thai literature, many with cutting references to modern day happenings. The puppets make contact with the audience, teasing and pleasing with beautiful gestures. The darling of the show is the lively King of Apes, Hanuman.

An inspiring artistic performance of the Traditional Puppet Theater is a stimulus for guests to explore their own performing skills. The Heritage Baan Silom arranges **THAI CLASSICAL**

The puppets are perfectly-scaled miniature versions of Thai classical performers, complete with costumes and Khon masks. They move, make gestures, and dance to music just like real performers.

DANCE instructors for those with an interest in this area of the arts.

There is basic training in standard dances such as Ram Wong. This aims to provide you with confidence to join Thai colleagues in celebrations at festivals like Loy Krathong and Songkran.

Instructions include teaching graceful arrangements of fingers, steps, body movements, all in coordination with the music. Thai classical dance appears easy when performed

by Thais but the lessons illustrate the difficulty of apparently simple gestures, all having a meaning and a role in the dance. These lessons start to give you an understanding not only of the movement skills but also the underlying messages behind the art.

But you are not finished yet – there are also the **BASIC THAI MUSIC CLASSES** to add to your dance skills! One of the instruments used for these classes is the 'khim,' a wooden instrument shaped like a butterfly with brass strings stretched across it. These are contacted by sticks to produce the music. Playing the khim involves correct handling of the sticks, held firmly between by the thumb at the front and the index finger at the back with assistance from the three remaining fingers. Skilled performance requires movement of the sticks controlled by the wrists, a difficult skill that appears effortless when performed by the artist. Students are given basic





Trip Summary



View the Theatrical Puppet Performance

The beauty and vitality of the puppet theatre is amazing. The Traditional Thai Puppet Theater- Joe Louis is a cultural icon that has achieved international recognition.



Learn Thai Dance and Basic Thai Music

The acquisition of some basic skills in Thai dance and music gives visitors confidence to participate in cultural activities. It also allows them to start to understand some of the artistic features of the Thai way of life.



Cruise the Chao Phraya River and Visit the Temple of the Emerald Buddha

A cruise on the river lets you see the city from a different angle. There are traditional houses and temples right on the waterfront. Stop at the Royal Barge Museum and visit the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, the most important shrine of the country.



Get to Know Basics of Thai Massage

By learning some basic skills of Thai massage under expert tuition you can develop the ability to relax yourself in stressful times in your daily life.

There are also the basic Thai music classes to add to your dance skills! One of the instruments used for these classes is the 'khim,' a wooden instrument shaped like a butterfly with brass strings stretched across it.

Left: Cruising on the river to see the main bloodstream of Thai way of life from the past until today
Right: Learn basic tips from the experienced therapist while relaxing with the Thai massage

instructions in the playing of this and other Thai classical instruments.

A visit to Bangkok is not complete without a chance to see the city from the water. **CRUISING ALONG THE CHAO PHRAYA RIVER** gives the opportunity to see Thai life from a different perspective offered from the inside of a taxi or bus. Bangkok has a strong aquatic history and much of present Thai life is closely involved in water trade, transport, and recreation. The Chao Phraya River allows you access to locations such as Phasi Charoen and Bangkok Noi Canals along which there are many traditional Thai houses, shops, and temples. Take some time to visit prominent landmarks such as Wat Arun Ratchawararam, the Temple of the Dawn, with its lofty pagoda, and the Royal Barge Museum where elaborate ceremonial barges used in spectacular royal processions are displayed.

The river cruise ends at the Grand Palace with a visit to the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, the most sacred shrine in the land. The Temple of the Emerald Buddha, Wat Phra Si Rattana Sasadaram, was built by King Rama I when he established Bangkok as the royal capital more than two centuries ago. It is the royal temple within the Grand Palace, housing various significant royal shrines where the king and members of the royal family pay homage regularly. It contains many examples of classical Thai architecture and art.

As you are weary from the trip, The Heritage Baan Silom has prepared a treatment for you to help your recovery, greeting you with a relaxing **THAI MASSAGE**. As well as receiving the massage, you can even learn some of the basic skills to relax the body under the instruction of experienced therapists. This massage is an ideal way to conclude a day filled with experiences of the Thai way of life.

The Heritage Baan Silom

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Opposite Page: Painting on ceramics invites you to get to know Thai's charm and your own creativity
Right: When the evening falls, the scene of roofed boats at Mom Chailai is as beautiful as the painting
Bottom Left: The Thai style bedroom is decorated with warmth and care from Mom Chailai's heart



MOM CHAILAI RIVER RETREAT Nakhon Pathom

Mom Chailai's renovated riverside accommodation provides a great base from which you can explore the Tha Chin River.

Twenty years ago, a number of boats were brought to Thailand from Vietnam at the fall of Saigon by Mom Chailai. The boats were refurbished to produce 17 roofed, single and double-decked barges that were placed on the peaceful waters of Bang Len District in Nakhon Pathom. These were named Mom Chailai River Retreat.

Each boat has a plush, Thai-style bedroom, comfortable furniture, relaxing veranda, numerous plants, and a small indoor garden.

"All plants are personally nurtured by Mom Chailai's own hands. She remembers where each plant is. If anything changes, she immediately notices and asks the reason," says a member of the resort personnel.

Apart from the 17 roofed boats modified as accommodation for visitors, there are a group of Thai houses that Mom Chailai bought decades ago. She had them assembled on the river bank forming one central hall and 7 linked structures lining the river.

Guests not only experience a genuine Thai way of life on the Tha Chin River but are also afforded opportunities to participate in 'CERAMIC' PAINTING. The large, open pavilion area in front of the dining room has been turned into a temporary Thai art class. Peerapoj Chan-On, the teacher, is preoccupied with the arrangement of different poster colors for the upcoming class. Today, materials used are earthenware plates instead of ceramics. This





Top Left: The teacher guides the guests on painting the floral pattern on the ceramics

Middle Left: Guests enjoy taking a ride along Tha Chin River

Bottom Left: The stylish ancient boat is the distinctiveness of Mom Chailai River Retreat

Clockwise: Mom Chailai's special herbal bath gives you a total sense of relaxation, Release your muscles tension with the Thai traditional massage

Opposite Page: Alms offering on the boat is a rarely seen way of life by the river



makes little difference as the creation of artwork depends on an individual's creativity and imagination, not on the materials used.

"I think we should paint a Thai floral design. That suits this plate and it is functional," says Peerapoj. For decorative ceramics, he usually recommends traditional Thai designs such as an artistic Kinnari, half-bird/half-human figures, hibiscus flowers, and geometric and flame-like patterns. Sometimes it is difficult to choose a design as traditional Thai ones may not be suitable to the material being used. The teacher starts drafting Thai floral vines as simple patterns for participating guests before instructing them on the use of brushes to paint and decorate the plates according to their imagination and choice.

"Poster colors are brighter than water colors and can be applied on all types of textures. When painted and lacquered the colors are even brighter," he explains. The class is hushed



as everyone concentrates on their artwork. At the completion, these artworks are kept by the guests as souvenirs.

For those who want to experience Thai therapeutic treatments, Tharavadi Spa offers **HERBAL BATHS ACCORDING TO KHUN MOM'S FORMULA**. This is made up of herbs beneficial to the body selected by Mom Chailai such as turmeric, zingiberaceae, camphor, kaffir lime leaf, and chilli seeds. Each has different properties but when combined the herbal solution in the Jacuzzi exudes a soft aromatic scent that soothes the bather. After immersion in a warm herbal bath for about half

For decorative ceramics, he usually recommends traditional Thai designs such as an artistic Kinnari, half-bird/half-human figures, hibiscus flowers, and geometric and flame-like patterns.

an hour, the therapist gives you a Thai massage lasting 90 minutes. This holistic treatment produces a stimulating release of tension in the muscles. A fitting conclusion to the massage is a relaxing bicycle ride along the river.

Tha Chin River is a major waterway originating from Chai Nat and flowing past Suphan Buri and Nakhon Pathom before entering the sea at Samut Sakhon. Along the stretch of river that passes through Bang Len District there are many riverside activities witnessed everyday such as the morning offering of food to monks in boats. **MONKS FROM WAT BANG PLA PADDLE OUT TO ACCEPT ALMS FROM VILLAGERS** in the area, many also in their boats, presenting a unique and amazing scene of Thai life.

Water and boating are integral parts of the way of life of residents along the Tha Chin River.



Along the stretch of river that passes through Bang Len District there are many riverside activities witnessed everyday such as the morning offering of food to monks in boats.

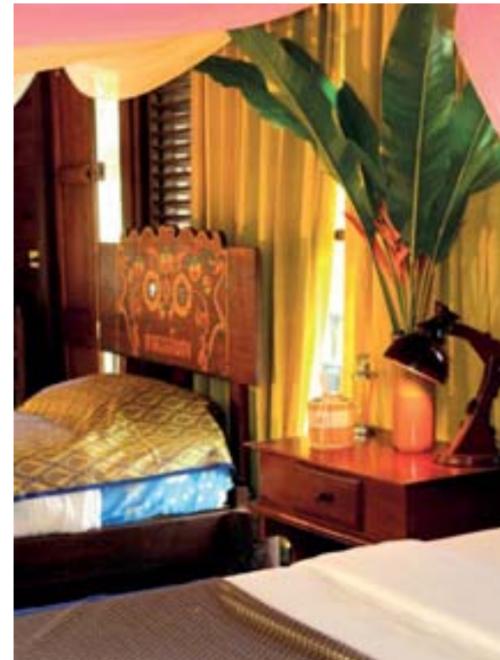
The soft, early light on the water, morning glory flourishing on the river banks, mimosaceae with its tiny golden flowers greeting the morning sun, villagers setting their fishing nets – all are common scenes in this environment but are seldom seen in many other parts of the world.

At Mom Chailai River Retreat, tourists are taken on a cruise **ALONG THE THA CHIN RIVER** to visit Lam Phaya Floating Market held only on Saturdays and Sundays. The market is the gathering point for merchants offering garments, accessories, basketry, and fresh produce including vegetables, fruits, Thai cooked food, and desserts.

Lam Phaya Floating Market was restored in an effort to preserve this traditional institution for present and future generations. In the hectic atmosphere of large and small shops decked with commodities, you can come across villagers paddling boats selling food items to tourists. You may choose to take a cruise in an ancient roofed boat known as a krachaeng.

After a fulfilling visit to the market, you are happy to get back to your comfortable retreat on the water. That night, you are ensured a good sleep and sweet dreams never before experienced in your life.

Left - Right: Enjoy the variety of mouthwatering food at Lam Phaya Floating Market



Mom Chailai River Retreat

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Trip Summary



Painting Thai Patterns on Ceramics

This activity makes you feel like an artist. Thai patterns penciled on ceramics and then painted become works of art of your own creation. Sometimes, the resort uses different materials such as earthenware plant pots and large tiles so the guests have a variety of souvenirs to take home.



Herbal Bath using Khun Mom's Formula and a Thai Massage

Immersion in a warm herbal bath of Mom Chailai's special formula in the Jacuzzi pool followed by a Thai massage at Tharawadi Spa is a perfect relaxation after a day of exploring the surroundings.



Paddling out to offer Food to Monks in the Morning

A once-in-a-lifetime experience as you paddle a boat out into the river to offer food to monks, also in boats. Alms-offering in the middle of the Tha Chin River is a true Thai experience.



Cruising to the Lam Phaya Floating Market

On weekends you can cruise along the Tha Chin River to be part of the hectic atmosphere of the Lam Phaya Floating Market. The market is decked with fresh vegetables, fruits, flowers, and an array of food items, satisfying all your shopping needs.





Pattaya Floating Market Central

Opposite Page: Cooking Thai food is a good way to understand the local wisdom as well as Thai culture
Left and Bottom Right: The nearly forgotten river-based community come alive at Pattaya Floating Market

PATTAYA FLOATING MARKET Chon Buri

Within the modern skyline of Pattaya is a floating market at which attempts are being made to revive traditional Thai culture.



Pattaya is known for its sun, sand, sea, and colorful nightlife, but there is much more to the place than that. At 'Pattaya Floating Market,' there are lessons about the Thai way of life to be learnt that make your vacation into an experience of 'Thainess' and turn a casual trip into a journey of a lifetime. Such experiences are becoming increasingly popular as people seek exotic encounters and an awareness of unfamiliar cultures in a bid to increase their understanding of the world and its inhabitants.

A visit to Pattaya Floating Market is a trip down memory lane to the times when Thais lived their lives close to waterways. Communities were established along rivers and canals, especially in the central region of the

country where several major rivers form major communication networks. Although times have changed considerably as society has become increasingly land-based, these communities still exist and farmers load their boats high with fresh produce and converge at certain agreed points to trade their wares.

The charms of a riverside bazaar have been revived on the 60 rai site at Pattaya. You see all sorts of modified boats and roofed and unroofed vessels that have been renovated and put back on the water. Merchants in boats of different shapes and sizes shout to attract customers with their special offers and bargains.

Apart from shopping at the floating market, you have a chance to **LEARN RECIPES OF**



Clockwise from Top Left: Making "nam phrik" sounds easy but it involves many details such as choosing the finest ingredient to bring out the best flavor



Clockwise: Thai dancing illustrates the delicacy and sweetness of the Thais
Bottom: Watching the demonstration of the world famous "Muai Thai"



THAI FOOD FROM ALL FOUR REGIONS.

These are long-established recipes, some almost forgotten, others changed to suit modern times. A menu of Thai food from each region is presented for your choice. Dishes such as tom yam kung, tom kha kai, and phat Thai are known throughout the world but you won't find them here! It is original and distinctive fare that is offered – spicy dip with mackerel, an original Ayutthaya recipe served with a large selection of vegetables; steamed seasoned snakehead fish flesh wrapped in banana leaves from the central region; spicy minced meat, papaya salad, and seasoned grilled meat from Isan; the red and green dips of the northern region; stir-fried nitta seed with prawns and spicy fish-maw soup from the southern region.

Meticulous preparations are made for each dish with numerous tips provided all the way through, from selection of raw materials to

You see all sorts of modified boats and roofed and unroofed vessels that have been renovated and put back on the water. Merchants in boats of different shapes and sizes shout to attract customers with their special offers and bargains.

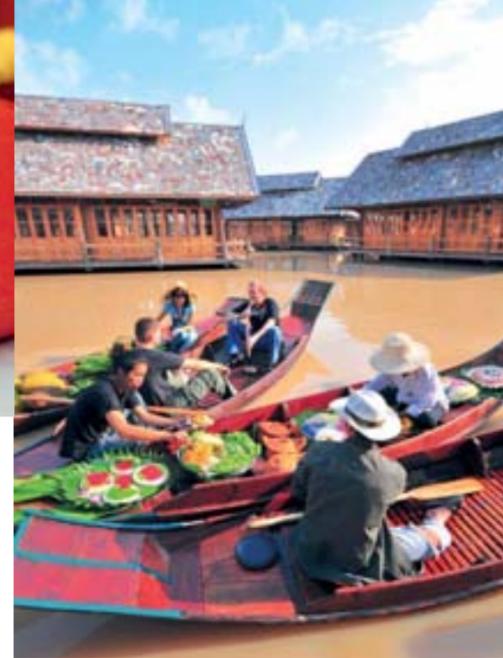
presentation of the dish. Consider nam phrik. This seasoned mixture served as a small side dish has a taste that belies its ordinary appearance. The main ingredient, shrimp-paste, is wrapped in banana leaves and grilled before being mixed in a mortar with chilli and garlic cloves. Warm water is added to the mixture and it is seasoned with lime, palm sugar, a dash of fish sauce, and white sugar. When served, it is garnished with crushed Turkey berries and chilli.

"When finished, tourists can taste what they

cook," says the coordinator of the classes. "Most importantly, we want them to know that cooking involves both science and art and is folk wisdom passed on through generations. In the cooking classes, we instruct tourists how to select raw materials, mix the ingredients, and cook. The teacher tastes the finished product and awards certificates to each of the students," she explains. As well as main courses, you can also learn the steps in **MAKING THAI SWEETMEATS AND DESSERTS.**

Certain Thai sweetmeats and desserts have their origins in Western culture, but Thais have quickly adapted them to their taste. This process started in the Sukhothai period in which Siam maintained trade links with China and India. In addition to trade, culinary skills were exchanged. Later, relations were forged with Western countries through religious and trade missions. Desserts from those countries were adopted,





Certain Thai sweetmeats and desserts have their origins in Western culture, but Thais have quickly adapted them to their taste. This process started in the Sukhothai period in which Siam maintained trade links with China and India.

especially Portuguese sweetmeats, delectable items in Thai meals.

As well as dishes from the different regions of Thailand, you can also learn **THAI DANCES FROM THE 4 REGIONS** at Pattaya Floating Market. These include the joyous long-drum dance of the central region, Lam Phloen of Isan, umbrella or silk-weaving dances of the northern region, and Manohra or Takilipas dance of the south.

If you are interested, you can watch demonstrations of boat skills ranging from design, construction, types of boats and their classifications, paddling, and rowing. All this is in addition to performances of **WORLD-FAMOUS 'MUI THAI.'**

The organizers of the floating market have even thought about accommodation for the many visitors. Ravindra Beach Resort & Spa, a four-star hotel and resort, offers 277 comfortable rooms decorated in contemporary Thai style with beautiful wooden furniture, distinctive patterning on the walls, and works of art by Thai painters on display. The main lobby is graced by a special chandelier carved in a characteristic Thai design.

In this way, the accommodation at Ravindra reflects the 'Thainess' of the floating market's efforts to revive and promote activities associated with traditional Thailand.

After an intense and exhausting day learning the ways of the country, you are ready to retreat to your relaxing suite and enjoy your dreams of Thai food, dances, and boats.

Left - Right: Ravindra Beach Resort & Spa invites you to world of relaxation by Hat Jom Thian

Trip Summary



Learn to Cook Thai Food from the Four Regions

The cooking of original Thai food from the four regions is taught using selected dishes from throughout the country, such as spicy dip with mackerel, spicy steamed snakehead fish flesh wrapped in banana leaves, red dip, and nitta seed stir-fried with prawns.



Make Thai Sweetmeats and Desserts

Certain Thai sweetmeats have been adopted from foreign culinary art but they have been adapted to suit local conditions. Sweetmeats such as Golden Cup, Golden Drop, and Golden Thread show the delicacy of Thai taste.



Thai Dances from the Four Regions

Each region of Thailand has its own dance style in accordance with local culture and conditions. The gestures and formations reflect the different identities of the regions and assist in the understanding of them.



Observe Demonstrations of Muai Thai Techniques

The martial art of Muai Thai is watched by people around the world. The offensive movements such as hak nguang aiyara (elephant's trunk breaking), charakae fat hang (crocodile sweeping with its tail), and montho nang thaen (montho seated on the throne) are intriguing to watch and technically difficult to perform.

Pattaya Floating Market

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Above: Learn the local wisdom of using natural resources in the Tie-dye activity

Right: Experience peace from the nature by the river at Phuiyara Resort

Opposite Page: The magnificent view of Phuiyara is truly a gift of nature



PHUIYARA RESORT Kanchanaburi

Phuiyara Resort, the place of elephants, sits quietly in the tropical mist, providing a base to explore the surrounding countryside.

'lyara' in Thai means elephant so this resort called 'Phuiyara' is the mountain home of elephants – just the place to see herds of wild elephants roaming the forests searching for food in the night. Phuiyara also offers you 2 types of accommodation, hillside houses and waterside houses, all with magnificent views of the spectacular mountains and natural streams of Kanchanaburi. Tune in to the simple joy of life in a beautiful natural setting inhabited by a mix of ethnic groups living harmoniously side by side.

Khun Nui, Prasit Saen-Ngoen, an ethnic Mon who is the trainer of **THE TIE-DYE**

TEXTILE ACTIVITY, sits waiting for visitors on a wooden bench in the reception area of the resort. Tie-dyed products of many colors are displayed as examples of the work.

"It is not so difficult to make a tie-dyed cloth. The key is in the tying to make patterns in accordance with your imagination," says Khun Nui. He uses plain white fabric and T-shirts as the basis of his work. The material is folded and tied with straw cords, then boiled in a solution of dyes and salt for about half an hour, and constantly stirred so that the action of the dyes is consistent throughout the fabric. The material is fished out and untied, revealing the patterns

Clockwise from Top Left: Learn the beauty of the local's way of life while enjoying the natural beauty of the forest at Phuiyara Resort

Bottom Left: The locals share the impressive craft of traditional embroidery

Opposite Page (Clockwise from Left): The little villager smiles at her own creativity on the traditional embroidery frame, Black sesame is the heart of the delicious "thong yo", Mortar is the important aspect of lower Clity village's way of life. The villagers of Lower Clity welcome visitors with their sweet smiles



resulting from the tying of the cords. The fabric is thoroughly washed and dried, producing sometimes spectacular souvenirs of your own creation.

Other crafts on display here are glass-carving/etching and embroidery. These are both difficult arts and the resort has ways to assist visitors to participate in them. For glass-carving/etching, there are prepared patterns, such as the Thai elephant, for visitors' use. For embroidery, you can choose to labor painstakingly on the traditional embroidery frames as people did in the past or you may use the modern embroidery machines to more quickly produce elaborately-patterned work resulting from your own imagination.

If guests wish to venture from the resort to explore the surrounding areas, Kanchanaburi has much to offer. It is a region of limestone mountains, dense forests, exotic animals, and numerous ethnic groups. One of these is the Karen group, people who have for many years lived harmoniously with nature. A 4-wheel drive vehicle takes you to Ban Nong Bang, a small Karen village in the hills. The center of the

village looks like a small amphitheater. Tourists are welcomed by Manas Raksombat, head of the village, and soon the sweet sounds of a Karen harp, na dei, can be heard. This harp was invented by the Karen people themselves but, at the moment, only two persons at Ban Nong Bang can play the instrument as the younger generations become immersed in modern culture and no one seems to have an interest in such folk music. Even though it is difficult for outsiders to fully understand the Karen way of life, everyone understands the warm hospitality shown by the people to the visitors.

There is the opportunity to select hand-

'Phuiyara' is the mountain home of elephants – just the place to see herds of wild elephants roaming the forests searching for food in the night.

woven textiles and basketry products created by the Karens. You can also take an elephant ride through groves of bamboo to explore the surroundings. An elephant ride through the forest is one of the new activities introduced by

Manas Raksombat that also include elephant-drawn cart-rides through the village itself. For those wanting to make the adrenalin really pump after the elephant experience, have a go at riding the rapids on bamboo rafts through Huai Ta Tha.

There are more adventures available as you enter the Thung Yai Naresuan Wildlife Reserve, an area rich in wildlife. One of these includes a trip to Lower Clity, a **KAREN VILLAGE** in the middle of deep jungle. Inhabitants here live a basic traditional life, growing their own rice and other food crops. Sample a snack called 'thong yo,' the staple food of the Karen people. It is

The villagers of Lower Clity have a high regard for visitors. They perform a large collection of Karen folk dances and sing songs that contain blessings for everyone and everything.

made from glutinous rice and black sesame mixed together in a mortar. The dark rice flour is kneaded into dough and fried in hot oil until it's crispy on the outside and soft on the inside. It is eaten with honey or condensed sweetened milk. It is delicious and provides the people with energy – fresh, warm thong yo is a welcome snack after a long trek.

The villagers of Lower Clity have a high regard for visitors. They perform a large collection of Karen folk dances and sing songs that contain blessings for everyone and everything. Even though their lifestyle is very simple, they value respect for others, are sincere, and are aware of their obligations to nature in exchange for their food and water.

At harvest time, you can assist by participating in the cutting and collecting of the upland rice crop. In the late afternoon, after a hard day's work, relax on the platform in the middle of the plantation – you may be lucky enough to see a few tapirs coming to the saltlick in the village. They are almost extinct in the rest of Thailand but are a familiar sight here in the village of Lower Clity.

When the rain clouds have cleared, hundreds of butterflies enjoy the warm sun and accompany you back to the resort. As you trek along the rough path from Lower Clity, the fluttering wings of the butterflies wave farewell and remind visitors of the pure joy of life in nature.

Bottom: The Lower Clity villagers shows their local customs through the folk dance performance



Trip Summary



Learning Tie-dye Techniques

Transform a plain piece of white cloth or T-shirt into a wondrous specimen of your imagination and new-found tie-dyeing skills. You will be amazed at the impressive artwork that is produced by such simple techniques.



Observe Karen Lifestyle in Lower Clity

Lower Clity village is remote and inhabitants lead a traditional lifestyle close nature. You can learn how to pound rice in a mortar to make and taste the popular 'thong yo' snack and then watch the villagers at their intricate textile weaving.



Phuiyara Resort

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Rose Garden Riverside Central

Opposite Page: Making Som O Mue Inhalant in traditional way is well kept in the resort

Left: The guestroom in Thai traditional house

Bottom Right: Hiding away from busy world, the guest can stay calm among lush vegetable

ROSE GARDEN RIVERSIDE Nakhon Pathom

In the embrace of lush orchards and the calm Tha Chin River, Rose Garden Riverside shows the ease of the Thai way of life.

"Life is easy here. The river is always calm like this, no matter if it is a weekend or weekday, rush hour or any time," says Thanyaluck Kijbumroong, Marketing Communications Manager of Rose Garden Riverside Hotel. She does not exaggerate. Look at the calm river and watch the farmer collecting morning glory in his boat, the fishing folk staking out the best spots, and kids swimming and waving to anyone who passes by. Lush orchards of tropical fruits and plenty orchids line both banks of the river, with some houses and Buddhist temples spotted here and there.

"A bit later in the morning, you may come across some merchants' boats cruising around here. There are selling noodles, ducks, and

ice-cream. You have to try the delicious coconut-milk ice-cream."

Fed by the waters of the Tha Chin River, Sam Phran District of Nakhon Pathom is blanketed by fruit orchards and orchids. Even though it's only 30 minutes drive from the bustle of Bangkok, it retains its greenery and serenity. The concept of Rose Garden Riverside originated from Mr Arrut Navaraj who grew up in a traditional Thai environment. He has a strong preference for living in a 'back to nature' style that involves such things as using homemade coconut-milk and home-grown vegetables straight from the garden.

"I hope that the guests who experience the authentic Thai way of life at the resort not



Clockwise from Top Left: Tourist gets glimpse of floating market, Tropical fruits and Thai traditional cuisines come on boat, Tourist can learn about Thai traditional medicine, Thai traditional inhalant is kept in the container



Clockwise: Fresh coconut juice right from the coconut tree, Exploring tropical fruit orchard is an unforgettable experience
Bottom: Water buffalo at rest



only enjoy themselves during their visit but also take back home some of the ideas," says Arrut, Director of Rose Garden Riverside.

Floating shops and markets are a common feature of life in the Central Plains area of Thailand where canals and waterways are a constant factor in the landscape, agriculture, transport, commerce, and relaxation of the region. Rose Garden Riverside hosts **A SMALL FLOATING MARKET** allowing visitors to observe the goods and select their purchases in a comfortable setting.

The resort is a center of knowledge open to anyone who wishes to learn about any topic. For example, take traditional Thai medicine.

"That is som o mue, a traditional Thai inhalant," says chemist Thiyada Chanchad. **SOM O MUE IS A REMARKABLE MEDICINE** made from fingered citron mixed with other herbs and chemicals offering a distinctive, refreshing

A bit later in the morning, you may come across some merchants' boats cruising around here. There are selling noodles, ducks, and ice-cream. You have to try the delicious coconut-milk ice-cream.

fragrance. A couple of tourists are interested in making this inhalant so Thiyada teaches them step by step.

"During the process, the maker is forbidden to talk otherwise the inhalant may be spoiled by mouth water," she advises. After grinding fingered citron and the peel of pomelo, she pours in some cinimao powder, camphor, borneol camphor, stevia, and other herbal ingredients and lets the guests grind it well until blended. She scoops the mixture into a piece of cloth, ties

it with a thread, and puts the finished product in a small silver container.

On the other side of the river, a fruit orchard is run by the village headman, Chaiwat Thamthanachit. It is the ideal place to observe a **TROPICAL FRUIT ORCHARD** in operation.

"There are a lot of things to eat and enjoy here," Chaiwat says while accompanying guests into the lush orchard. Besides various kinds of vegetables and herbs, the orchard is packed with tropical fruit trees such as coconut, banana, betel nut, pomelo, mango, and santol. The orchard is fed by a system of small waterways. For local people, the orchard is their kind of supermarket where they can conveniently pick up their food supplies. His staff easily climbs to the top of a coconut tree and throws down young coconuts. Chaiwat cuts off the tops and fresh coconut juice is ready to drink.

"The fragrant coconuts of Sam Phran are





Trip Summary



Explore a Small Floating Market

The floating market in Rose Garden Riverside opens daily. Tourists can enjoy shopping for tropical fruits, Thai traditional sweets, and various handicrafts.



Thai Traditional Medicine Classes

The class to make some o mue inhalant is available daily. Booking in advance is required. Chatting during the class is forbidden as it is believed that water from the mouth spoils the medicine – so, please keep quiet!



Visit a Tropical Fruit Orchard

Excursions to the fruit orchards can be arranged whenever the weather allows. Tourists can learn about tropical fruits and various vegetables, and sample the products.



Thai Cooking Classes

Cooking classes are available daily. Booking at least half a day in advance is recommended. The menu includes pad Thai, tom yam kung, green curry, and fried bread with pork.

I hope that the guests who experience the authentic Thai way of life at the resort not only enjoy themselves during their visit but also take back home some of the ideas.

the most famous in the country. Its juice is a little sweet," says Chaiwat.

Visitors are always curious when coming across a plantation of betel palms. Climbing up one betel palm is not a problem but having to climb hundreds is a big task.

"We don't climb all of them – that would kill my staff!" Chaiwat explains. "The betel palms are planted and grow close together, so we simply climb one tree then swing to the others. In this way, we can collect betel nuts from hundreds of trees just by climbing up one."

Single orchards provide a great variety of fruit and vegetables, sufficient for the chef to make one visit and get everything for the kitchen. Rose Garden conducts **THAI COOKING LESSONS** for guests using these fresh supplies.

"Some groups of tourists come to learn and some to show which of them can cook the best dishes," says chef, Prakaikaeo Pinituwan, smiling while preparing vegetables from the orchard. "Clown featherback fish in green curry," she says. "Don't be afraid, it's easy." She boils the coconut-milk in a pan, adding chili paste, herbs, and vegetables. When the curry is boiling, the clown featherback fish meat is added. Seasoned with fish sauce, soya sauce, and sugar, it is ready in a few minutes.

Yes, life here is easy – easy and enjoyable as you open your mind to the Thai way of life.

Left – Right: Enjoy cooking and dining Thai traditional cuisine





Opposite Page: The fisherman proudly shows the shining body of the freshly caught squid

Right: The flawless combination of sky, sea and coconut trees is at Shantaa Resort

Bottom Left: The colorful pillow adds more life to the cozy bedroom



SHANTAA RESORT, KOH KOOD Trat

Shantaa is a quiet, secluded place that opens up the lives of the people of Koh Kood as they eke out a living from land and sea.

In Hindi, 'shantaa' means serenity. Shantaa Resort on Koh Kood in Trat province is a response to the growing needs of people to escape from their hectic city lives to a peaceful serenity under the shade of coconut groves on the beach. Only 15 villas are dotted around this 30 rai property, giving more than enough space to enjoy the blue skies and crystal-clear sea in exquisite quiet and privacy. The full-sized guest rooms are comfortable and decorated in a Thai style inspired by the ever-present sea.

Shantaa welcomes its guests by inviting them participate and develop an understanding of the Thai way of life in the eastern region. Life here is strongly focused on the ocean and the land, the same features that attract many of the

guests. One of the ways the resort assists this development of understanding is through the experience of different unfamiliar local dishes, once tasted never forgotten.

"This is the most popular dish at the resort ordered by Thais and foreigners, 'pla phla,'" explains Ms Korakot Wattana, the co-owner. It is a spicy herbal fish salad that she chooses to be the main dish taught in the resort's cooking classes.

THE THAI COOKING CLASSES AT SHANTAA are conducted by the Head Chef. 'Phla' refers to the way that Thais cook their food, requiring a lot of different kinds of herbs, especially lemongrass and kaffir lime leaves. The purpose of this cooking is to preserve the





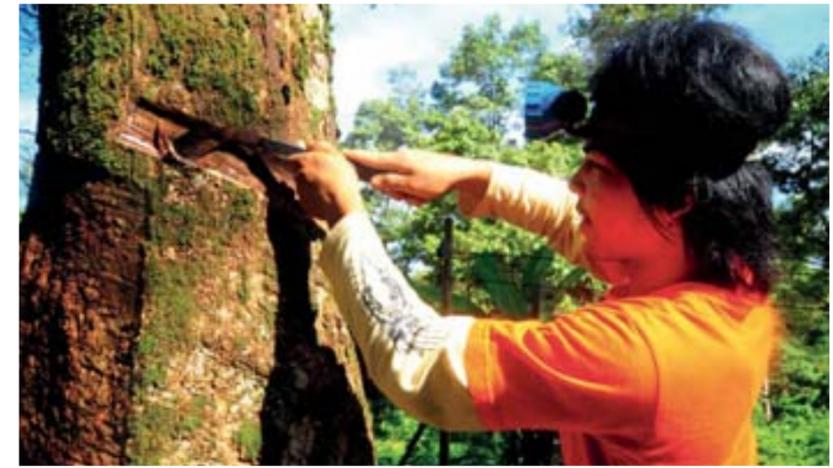
Top Left - Bottom Left: Shantaa is embraced with the great ocean, introducing you to the new world of magical spell
Clockwise: The guest gives "pla phla" one last stir before serving on the cabbage, Pan fried chan noodles with crab is the famous dish taught at the cooking class
Opposite Page (Clockwise from Top Left): Ko Kood waits for you to discover its stunning ecology and the fascinating way of life



freshness of the meat and the main advice given is that whatever kind of meat you choose, you must ensure that it is really fresh when you buy it. Once topped with the sauce, you can really taste this freshness. In this class, the large, fresh fish is sliced into pieces of fillet that are then marinated in vinegar. Assorted herbs and vegetables, chopped kaffir lime leaves, lemongrass, and carrots are added and the fish is cooked slowly. Shantaa has a secret sauce that involves the use of peanuts instead of dried chilly paste, making the dish delicious.

Another dish that is popular in the resort's classes is chan (Chanthaburi) noodles with crab. This dish looks similar to the famous phad Thai but uses a particular chan noodle famous for its firm texture. The addition of a large, fresh crab makes it a mouth-watering dish.

After the excitement and hard work in the kitchen, it is time to explore Ko Kood. The island is the last one before the Thai border with Cambodia. It is a natural treasure rich



in biodiversity and geographical features. Here you can enjoy the attractions of waterfalls, fine beaches, and pristine forests filled with flora and fauna.

A significant destination for Thais in this area is the waterfall at the 'Khlong Chao-Royals' Canal.' It was here that King Rama VI visited and left his initials on a rock as a memento of his time at this beautiful location. The falls are a source of recreation and relaxation for many local people. For us, however, time is limited and we need to move on quickly.

Another prominent place on Ko Kood is 'Khao Din Daeng-the Red Soil Hill.' This location

Shantaa welcomes its guests by inviting them participate and develop an understanding of the Thai way of life in the eastern region. Life here is strongly focused on the ocean and the land, the same features that attract many of the guests.

is named after the red soil found in the area that is very fertile, illustrated by the gigantic evergreen trees and the size of the banyan trees with their long, established roots as tall as a fully-grown person.

The fertility of Ko Kood provides valuable resources from land and sea. Humans have recognized this for a long time and have enjoyed a prosperous livelihood based on the area's natural resources. The humid climatic conditions and the heavy rainfall in the wet season make **KO KOOD A SUITABLE PLACE FOR RUBBER TREES**, an important industry in Thailand. You are able to see the complete process of making rubber sheets starting with the nighttime and early morning tapping sessions to collect the latex.

The locals also derive income from the coconut tree plantations. Coconuts were collected by the use of an iron hook but now

Bottom Left: The little monkey shows its great skill in picking the coconut for the visitors
Bottom Right: The fisherman lifts the cage that caught the big squid out of the water

The use of bunches of squid roe camouflaged by coconut leaves and hung in cages as bait is one of the techniques practiced by the people of the island.



monkeys have been trained to select the best coconuts and kick them to the ground. You will be **AMAZED BY THE ABILITY OF THESE SMART CREATURES** from the moment they climb the tree, studiously inspect the coconuts, pick them, and sometimes even peel them! A visit to Salat Bay is a rewarding experience to witness the fishing skills and wisdom of the only fishing village on Koh Kood. Locals fish the seawaters and have fish farms to supplement their industry.

A BOAT TRIP TO CATCH SQUID with the local people exposes you much of the local knowledge gained from years of fishing. The use of bunches of squid roe camouflaged by coconut leaves and hung in cages as bait is one of the techniques practiced by the people of the island. The cages are suspended at strategic places in the ocean and then you wait! The squid, lured by the bait, enter the cages but are unable to find their way out. It is amazing to see the cages lifted out of the water, full of squid with shining bodies, ready for the market and the kitchen.

This trip is more than simply traveling from one place to another but it is a journey full of experiences that give you a rich understanding and appreciation of the life and culture of Ko Kood.



Trip Summary



Seafood Cooking Classes

You learn to choose fresh ingredients and then to use them in local dishes such as 'pla phla,' a spicy, herbal fish salad, or pan-fried 'chan' noodles with crab. These 2 are the most popular dishes on the menu.



Production of Rubber Sheets

The climate is perfect for rubber trees and many locals earn income from the collection of latex and the manufacture of rubber sheets. They are happy to have your assistance tapping the trees.



Monkey Show

The coconut industry on Koh Kood is a significant business. It uses the services of trained monkeys to climb up the trees and pick the best coconuts.



Squid-catching Boat Trip

Work as crew on the local fishing boats to catch squid. You get the chance to assist in the baiting of cages with squid roe and the setting of them in the water. After this, be part of the group that lifts the cages to inspect the magnificent catch.

Shantaa Resort, Koh Kood

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Suan Silp Baan Din **Central**

Opposite: Khru Nai illustrates the art of wearing 'hang-kra-ben'

Left and Bottom Right: The simplicity of Suansilp Baan Din is reflected through the bamboo houses and garden



SUAN SILP BAAN DIN Ratchaburi

Suan Silp Baan Din brings together the diversity of traditional Thai folk arts with modern art all in the one place.

This artists' haven in Tambon Chet Samian, Ratchaburi province is the inspiration of Manop Meechamras, or 'Khru Nai,' a Silpathon Award-winning artist who established it in 2005. Khru Nai wanted to create a place where different arts could be developed, exchanged, and learned to sustain the soul of Thai arts for future generations.

"I like simplicity and everything to reveal its identity in an honest and uncomplicated way," said the artist. With this in mind, Suan Silp Baan Din is not a luxurious resort but a simple home-stay with a natural atmosphere.

It is a place where you can learn and practise Thai arts in its many various forms. Accommodation consists of a few simple mud

houses. The first was a pink one, originally designed by the sculptor 'Nai Dee' to house his own works. This was soon followed by a yellow one. The area is dominated by a large sala surrounded by a shady garden used for workshops. In another corner bamboo houses accommodate the increasing number of visiting artists.

A child plays on a bamboo Thai xylophone early in the morning but it is not only Thai music that can be studied here. Classes include painting, sculpting, Thai dance, and even 'THE ANCIENT METHOD OF WEARING THE CHONG,' a long garment wrapped around the hips. Khru Nai himself teaches this. A 3-metre-long red wrap of cloth is in a few



Clockwise from Top Left: Art lovers come to learn basic body movement class at Suan Silp Baan Din, The best waist knot is the smallest knot possible, Thai musical instruments have their own charm and help to focus your mind, Tying the "hang-kra-ben" needs to be done tightly and neatly



Clockwise – The children regularly come to learn this magnificent Thai dance
Bottom – Khru Nai's students show their skills in the monthly "All about Arts Fair"



seconds amazingly turned from something ordinary into an elegant piece of art, all to the accompaniment of music.

"I learned this method of wearing the Chong from the best teacher who taught a way I'd never seen before. The correct method allows comfortable, vigorous movement, and the cloth fits well, keeps its shape, and doesn't come undone. I feel very proud when I wear the Chong. Everything has to be done exactly, starting with tying the waist knot. My teacher said that if I could get it right first time, then I would get it right for the rest of my life," Khru Nai explained.

Those who come to learn how to wear the Chong learn every step, from tying the smallest possible knot to winding it into a 'hang-kra-ben' (ray's tail). If the hang-kra-ben is wrinkled, a simple movement quickly makes it unwind. You then learn how to tuck in the 'kra-ben.' After all these processes, it becomes the beautiful

Breathing is the basis of everything. When we learn to control our breathing, we can then perform any art we wish.

'Chong-kra-ben'. Wearing the Chong correctly, you can then perform Thai dance with confidence.

TRADITIONAL THAI DANCE CLASSES of Khru Nai differ from others as they teach the core of traditional Thai dance, how to breathe properly, not the bending of fingers gracefully, inclining the body, or stepping slowly. Here, Thai dance is simply the next step after learning to breathe correctly.

"Breathing is the basis of everything," explains Khru Nai. "All living things breathe but

it is usually overlooked when talking about the arts, whether it's dancing or not. It not only helps the performance but also helps us realise and concentrate on what we're doing. When we learn to control our breathing, we can then perform any art we wish," he says with a knowing smile. Learning traditional Thai dance with Khru Nai therefore starts with practising breathing and getting to know the relationship between mien and breathing before refinement of the dance postures.

Another enjoyable activity is **LEARNING TO PLAY THE DRUMS**. The beating of a drum is like practising meditation. It shows us the correct way to channel our energy. More importantly, the drum teaches rhythm. Precise rhythm leads to correct demeanour and unites the soul with the song. Khru Nai has brought the drum to modern art by adding it to other Thai instruments like soprano bamboo xylophone and





Chong Wearing Lessons

In the past, Thais wore a single piece of cloth wrapped around the hips in an amazing style. Learn every step of how to wear the Chong correctly.

Thai Traditional Dancing

Thai dance forms part of the body movement class that Manop Meechamras teaches, but there are also specific Thai dance classes that begin with a basic understanding of breathing and its development in the different aspects of Thai dance.



Drum-Beating Lessons

Drum-beating is an activity demanding lots of energy. It has been adapted from the use of the northern ceremonial bass drum and the large signal drum, teaching rhythm and timing. It also has a meditative effect on the performer.

Experience the Chet Samian Local Way of Life

Tambon Chet Samian has its own distinctive culture. You can enjoy rarely-seen traditional silk weaving and knife-forging, and enjoy shopping for ceramics at the factory. If you visit on the last Friday, Saturday or Sunday of each month, you are able to watch the 'All about Arts Fair' combining folk and modern arts.

Thai arts will be sustainable if we make them consistent with the time period. Only then will the Thai soul persevere.

dulcimer, both of which have their own unique sounds. When these instruments unite, a grand performance is guaranteed.

You can see the effort to sustain the soul of Thai arts at the 'All about Arts Fair,' a small activity at Wat Chet Samian every final Friday, Saturday, and Sunday of each month. It showcases Khru Nai's works of art and helps awaken the community.

TAMBON CHET SAMIAN is a small sub-district in Ratchaburi province. Here you can see many interesting aspects of Thai life. There is traditional Pha-Khao-ma weaving, knife-forging, and an old market has been re-opened.

Chet Samian market is more than one hundred years old and even King Rama V visited it. In the evening, people come out to sing and dance on the 1,000-year old Bodhi Ground where a distinctive Bodhi tree stands. Khru Nai's stage is located near the river and is decorated according to the theme of the month. Opposite the stage are small tables and chairs for the audience to enjoy the art and eat local food. The festival attracts people representing many forms of art.

"Thai arts will be sustainable if we make them consistent with the time period. Only then will the Thai soul persevere. I created Suan Silp Baan Din as a learning center rather than a resort because we are artists not resort-makers," stressed Khru Nai. Those who choose to be part of this artist's world discover that sometimes you don't need much in your lives – just a small room with a warm bed is enough for contentment, especially with artistic souls dancing around.

Suan Silp Baan Din

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Left: The cultural performance of the elderly is truly enjoyable to watch

Right: When the night falls, the local shows "Kan Khao Phi", the rarely seen traditional performance



SOUTH

Visiting the Southern region is like a dream of turquoise seas lined by white, sandy beaches. The region is positioned on the peninsula between the Andaman Sea on the Indian Ocean side and the Gulf of Thailand on the Pacific side. This dramatic setting shows off a natural beauty that attracts tourists from around the world to places like Ko Samui, Ko Pha-ngan, and Phang Nga Bay. Alongside the tourism industry are rubber and coconut plantations, fishing, and mining activities. A large Muslim population gives the area a distinctive religious, architectural, and culinary atmosphere different to the rest of the country.

SOUTH

Timeless Peace in the Golden Paradise



୧. Batik Cloth

Artistic batik fabrics made up of intricate designs and rich colors dominated by blues and browns are a distinctive product of the Southern region. Many groups of females have formed co-operatives to manufacture batik textiles as a means of earning supplementary income.



୨. Pearl Farming

Sea and freshwater pearls are cultivated in the Southern region producing a variety of types, shapes, sizes, and colors, including cream, pink, and black. The main production centers can be found in the provinces of Ko Samui, Phang-nga, Phuket, and Surat Thani.



୩. Offshore Fishing

Fishing is a major income-producer for large commercial organizations and an important source of food for many of the local people. The waters of the Andaman Sea and the Gulf of Thailand yield a rich variety of seafood caught by methods ranging from highly-sophisticated equipment to basic rods and lines.



୫. Rubber Plantations

Rubber is the principal agricultural occupation in the Southern region. Many rubber farmers are happy to show their skills to visitors as they carefully tap the trees and catch the latex drop by drop. Observers have to up early though as most of the work is done before daylight.



୫. Coconut Plantations

Lush coconut palms are a symbol of the south. Coconut plantations are an important factor in the local population's economy providing resources for construction, cooking, and craft-making. Monkeys assist too, climbing and collecting coconuts in spectacular fashion. Fresh, chilled coconut juice is perfect while you watch them.



୬. Southern Cuisine

Southern food tends to be hot compared with food from other regions. Curries are popular and made with lot of spices and condiments. Coconut is a prominent ingredient in many recipes as their milk tempers the heat of the chilies. Other common dishes are Khao Yam raw vegetables and fermented fish sauce or *boo doo*.



Akanak Resort South

Opposite Page: Tha Len Bay's way of life of the fisherman that passes through generations

Left: The simple yet comfortable guest room at Akanak

Bottom Right: Explore the breathtaking surroundings of Tha Len Bay's mangrove with the kayak



AKANAK RESORT Krabi

At Akanak Resort, you can relax amidst superb mangrove forests and experience the colorful lifestyle of the local fishing community.

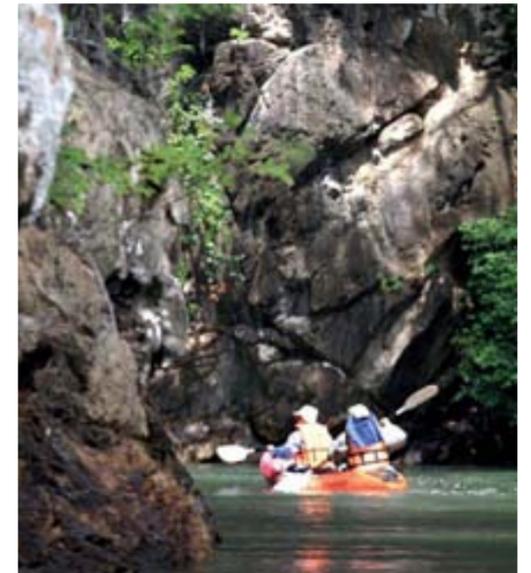
At Tha Len Bay, Krabi, the beautiful natural environment consists of towering limestone karsts among lush mangrove forests. The scenery of Tha Len Bay is like a work of art that enriches one's spirit but the area is also a significant source of food that has sustained the locals for many generations.

In one corner of the fishing village at Tha Len Bay is Akanak Resort, a compact hotel of 10 rooms that fits snugly into the community. The hotel was the brainchild of Chamaiporn Kekina, a resident of the village before leaving to work in Bangkok. On a visit to her home, she realized her love for the village and decided to leave the big city and return home permanently. She persuaded her close friend Pasanan

Pengpinit to help her establish Akanak Resort. They have developed the area for ecotourism with an emphasis on maintaining the way of life and the beautiful natural environment of Tha Len Bay for future generations.

Akanak Resort hosts many interesting activities that allow visitors to experience and gain an understanding of the local fishing lifestyle, one of the most important sources of income and food for the villagers.

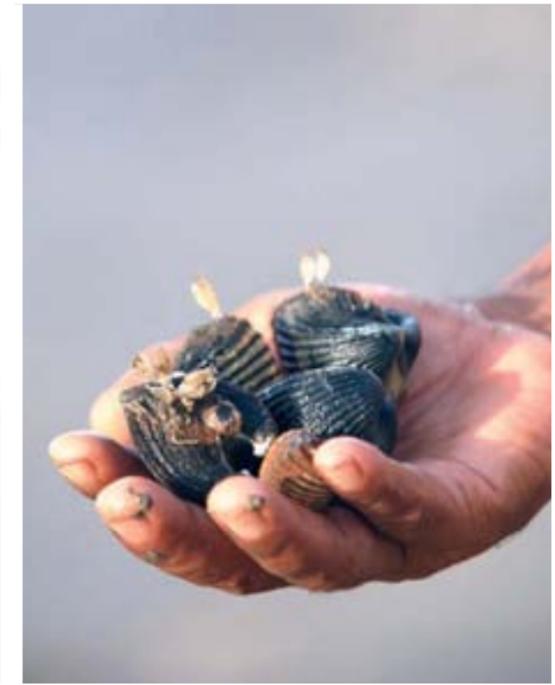
THA LEN BAY IS A FAMOUS KAYAKING AREA IN KRABI complete with rich mangrove forests, superb limestone mountains, and clean, clear seawater. Under your own power, you paddle between the towering limestone karsts finding amazing hidden lagoons, each a natural



Clockwise from Top Left: A cozy place to relax at Akanak, Little cute monkey that resides around the mangrove, The tranquil atmosphere of the villa at Akanak, Fascinating sight of emerald-green water at Khlong Tha Pom or Khlong Song Nam



Clockwise: Conches and cockle, the scrumptious gift of nature
Bottom: You can learn the traditional fishing techniques by using the villagers' equipment



maritime classroom. The only sounds that you hear are your own breathing, the splash of your paddles, and the birds. You may be lucky enough to see some wildlife relaxing in the shade of the mangroves-long-tailed macaques, the occasional dusky langur, and several species of unfamiliar birds. The beauty of the surroundings will make your 2 to 3 hours of kayaking seem to pass in the blink of an eye.

For those keen on other forms of exercise, there are some beautiful cycling trails. Akanak Resort has **MOUNTAIN BIKES** that you can use to visit different parts of the neighbourhood.

It is an opportunity to see the life of an Islamic fishing community while experiencing a beautiful natural environment along the way. A not-to-be-missed destination is Khlong Tha Pom or Khlong Song Nam in Tambon Khao Khram, a site where freshwater meets seawater. This stream has clear, emerald-green water, a

They have developed the area for ecotourism with an emphasis on maintaining the way of life and the beautiful natural environment of Tha Len Bay for future generations.

result of the combination of dissolved limestone (calcium carbonate) in solution and sulphur. The area has a rich biodiversity due to the range of ecosystems, including freshwater peat swamps, wetlands, evergreen forests, and mangrove forests.

On your return to Tha Len Bay, it's time to fish. The fishing community of Tha Len Bay offers the chance to **LEARN SOME FISHING SKILLS** and eventually accompany them on their boats out to sea. However, your first lesson is on the

beach at low tide **COLLECTING SEA SHELLS.** Several shells such as conches, a famous local food, and appetizing big blood cockles can be found on the sand bars and muddy beaches. The collection of shells requires no special tools – just your bare hands and a sharp pair of eyes is enough for you to find the beginnings of a delicious meal.

"Living here, if you are hard-working and know how to earn a living, you will not be hungry," an old fisherman says.

If you want, a more intensive fishing lesson awaits you. In the evening, the long-tailed fishing boats wait at the end of the wooden pier. You can learn the traditional fishing techniques by using the villagers' equipment. Setting a drift net requires endurance, skill, and local knowledge. The first step is to arrange the net and then place it in the water against the drift. The surface of the water is struck vigorously with





Trip Summary



Kayaking at Tha Len Bay

Admire the richness of the mangrove forests as you kayak between limestone karsts and canyons to discover magnificent lagoons. You may also encounter some of the wildlife.



Mountain Biking

Stop off at nearby communities on the way to see Tha Pom, Klong Song Nam in Tambon Khao Khrum where freshwater meets seawater, creating magical clear, emerald-green water.



Catching Fish and Collecting Shells

Experience the lifestyle and learn the ways of the local fishing community. Join them on a boat and learn their skills using local instruments and wisdom. Collect shells such as conches and blood cockles from the sand bars at low tide.



From early evening to about ten o'clock at night, you may also take a boat out to catch shrimps and cephalopods.



poles to scare the fish into the net. After this happens, the net is pulled out of the water and the fish are removed from the net by hand.

From early evening to about ten o'clock at night, you may also take a boat out to catch shrimps and cephalopods. You can try your hand at 'mullet drawing,' requiring you to use speed and skill to catch fish with a dip net. Come and try your skills – some of your catch may be important ingredients in the southern Thai cooking lessons you can take the next day.

Southern Thai food is famous for its strong flavors. Fresh fish is excellent when cooked with a variety of Thai herbs. Dishes that are cooked in the lessons include fried fish with tamarind sauce and shrimps in tamarind soup with pineapple, as well as other appetizing meals with which you can impress your friends when you return home.

Akanak Resort and Krabi offer you white sandy beaches and emerald seawater, and much more. The culture and local way of life provides many interesting experiences. You go home with more than just photos and souvenirs – you receive friendships, skills, knowledge, and a deep satisfaction that remains with you forever.

Left: Fisherman's village of Tha Len Bay

Right: The grouper is always ready for your meal, fresh from the creel

Akanak Resort

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At Panta Phuket South

Opposite Page: Let your imagination guide you to make your own colorful Batik

Left and Bottom Right: At Panta's cozy guestroom that invites you to be in touch with the original Thai experience

AT PANTA PHUKET Phuket

Try the experiences at "At Panta Phuket" and discover your hidden skills of batik, the lure of Phuket, and the beauty of pearls.

"At Panta Phuket," a hotel with a traditional Thai atmosphere, is located in historic Thalang. The area is the site of the legendary battle waged by the courageous patriots Kasattri and Srisunthorn to drive the enemy out of the land and it still attracts many visitors who pay their respects to the warriors.

The hotel features a cluster of beautiful ancient teak villas in a peaceful tropical garden surrounded by tranquil natural canals. Here you can relax and, in addition to exploring the long history of Phuket, experience the simple lifestyle of nearby local communities, their villages, temples and lively fresh markets. There's also the attraction of the white, sandy beach and the beautiful Andaman Sea.

"At Panta Phuket" offers the opportunity to exercise your imagination and gain skills in the **MAKING OF BATIK**, a well-known product of Phuket and the south. Ms Aom, a batik specialist and teacher, starts by showing the guests how to coat a wooden frame with candle wax and then to firmly stretch fabric over the frame. Natural fibers such as cotton and silk are ideal for batik because of their color-retaining characteristic. Patterns of the guests' choices are drawn in pencil on the fabric, the most popular designs being of fish, birds, and/or flowers.

Paraffin is heated to the correct temperature and placed in a "janteung," a brass teapot-shaped piece of equipment



Clockwise from Top Left: The ambiance inside the Thai Villa of At Panta Phuket, The old town Phuket is embraced with Chino-Portuguese style buildings, At Panta Phuket introduces you to the fantastic art of fruit carving, Enjoy creating your own Batik masterpiece



Right: The history of Phuket is reflected by the Chino-Portuguese style of the buildings
Bottom: The Phuket Pearl Farm that produces second to none quality pearls



with different-sized spouts. The paraffin is poured through these spouts onto the fabric closely following the pencil lines.

Paint is mixed to a consistency thick enough that it does not run beyond these paraffin-coated lines and is carefully spread on the fabric. When dry, the fabric is soaked in a color-fastening solution and again allowed to dry. It is then boiled to eliminate the paraffin. You now have a beautiful batik scarf or a distinctive T-shirt of your own design to take home.

Following your artistic efforts, you may wish to change the pace of your holiday a little. Beach-lovers may opt to visit Bangtao or Surin beaches, not too far from the hotel, to discover some of the reasons why Phuket is so valued by tourists from throughout the world.

Those more interested in the historical and cultural background of the area may be more inclined to make their way to **OLD TOWN**

“At Panta Phuket” offers the opportunity to exercise your imagination and gain skills in the making of batik, a well-known product of Phuket and the south.

PHUKET. Here, the buildings show their links to the Chinese and Portuguese traders who inhabited the area in the past, especially in the Rommani Road neighborhood. The town was also once the center of the prosperous tin mining industry and much of this prosperity is evident in the beautiful features of much of the architecture.

Try the “Phuket Thaihua” Museum for interesting information about the evolution of the area, relax, have a coffee, and watch the world passing by.

The Museum at Thalang has information about antiques found in Phuket and you are able to see the story of the area before it became a world-popular tourist destination. At “Wat Phra Thong,” have a look at “Phra Phut,” a gold Buddha image that appears half buried in the ground. Close by there is a Chinese temple widely respected among local people. This area is a true melting pot of arts, cultures and beliefs.

Phuket is known for its pearl farming industry. One kilometer east of Ko Phuket, off Ao Sapam, is the **NATURAL PEARL FARM** of Phuket Pearl Industry, one of the first in this business started over 30 years ago.

Mr Saran Somrak, a representative of the company, explained that there are 3 kinds of oysters used for pearl farming, Mabe, Akoya, and South Sea, each type determining the quality, color, and size. Mabe produces semi-circular pearls and Akoya a round pearl between 2 and





Trip Summary



Batik Experience

Learn the techniques of batik and display your creative imagination by producing a masterpiece on fabric at "At Panta Phuket."



Old Town Phuket Tour

Visit Thalang Museum to discover the history of the area and the origins of the Chino-Portuguese-style buildings. A glorious era of the city as the center of the tin mining industry is revealed before it developed into one of the world's leading tourist destinations.



Pearl Farming Tour

Discover the process of oysters producing pearls in a farm off Ao Sapam. You can also see how pearls are transformed into ornaments and have a go at making your own pearl bracelet.



Weather and water conditions on the east side of Ko Phuket are said to be ideal for pearl farming, producing good pearls of exceptional quality.

9 mm. South Sea is the best quality and the largest, ranging from 8 to 10 mm, and proves to be the most popular and expensive. Colors vary from white, pink, cream to black, depending on each oyster.

The pearl farmers implant a foreign object, often a piece of freshwater shellfish, into the selected oysters that produces a nacre, a substance that covers the foreign object to form a pearl.

These oysters are then transferred to a farm where they are suspended at a depth of 3 to 5 meters in clean, plankton-rich water to provide a natural source of nutrients. Farmers clean up all parasites and remove any fouling organisms that grow on the shells. This whole process takes between 1 and 2 years.

Weather and water conditions on the east side of Ko Phuket are said to be ideal for pearl farming, producing good pearls of exceptional quality. Many examples of these can be viewed at the showrooms of Phuket Pearl Industry. This is a dazzling display of glossy, gleaming pearls of various colors and a chance to select a souvenir for that special person or even yourself.

That Phuket is known as the Pearl of the Andaman is no exaggeration. It has a rich history, much handicraft expertise, a diversity of cultural background, a thriving pearl industry, and numerous natural attractions to entice tourists from all corners of the world.

Left: The modest life of pearl farmers in the Andaman Sea

Right: Treading the bracelet pearl is a way to make the perfect gift for the one you love



Above: Delicacy is important in getting beautifully carved fruits
Right and Opposite Page: Ban Sabai Sunset Beach Resort & Spa and its extraordinary scene of the beach



Ban Sabai Sunset Beach Resort & Spa **South**

BAN SABAI SUNSET BEACH RESORT & SPA Surat Thani

Experience a combination of leisure and Thai culture on the beach at Ban Sabai Sunset Beach Resort & Spa, Ko Samui.

"Sawatdee khrap, Sawatdee kha," say the two foreign tourists as they exchange greetings and raise their hands in the traditional Thai 'wai' gesture. Both then practise other basic Thai phrases to develop confidence in communicating with the locals in general conversation, hoping to make their holidays more enjoyable and experiential. These **THAI LESSONS** are one of the special activities offered at Ban Sabai Sunset Beach Resort & Spa.

Ban Sabai Sunset Beach Resort & Spa is set amidst the natural beauty of Ban Taling Ngam Beach where you can enjoy the

splendid spectacle of an island-dotted sea, the white sands, and according to many the most beautiful sunsets in Ko Samui.

The resort consists of 21 rooms in a peaceful ambience. All rooms have modern décor, a respect for guests' privacy, and in keeping with the 'Sabai' name, an atmosphere of health and spiritual relaxation.

During your stay, you not only have the chance to enjoy the beauty of the beach, the clear water, and the pleasant breeze in the coconut trees but can also take the opportunity to participate in programs that the resort



Clockwise from Top Left: The tranquil ambiance of Ban Sabai Sunset Beach Resort & Spa
Bottom: Colorize your trip by learning how to “wai” and speak Thai words
Opposite Page (Left – Right): Experience the remarkable art of southern culinary and authentic Thai dessert in the cooking class



provides for guests to experience various forms of ‘Thainess.’ These include lessons in Thai language, etiquette, southern food cooking, and fruit carving, and visits to observe the lives of workers on the fruit plantations.

Ban Sabai Sunset Beach Resort & Spa has prepared a basic Thai language course for tourists and you quickly discover that a few Thai words create an enormous impression and bring smiles to all the locals you meet.

For those who worry about learning a second language, it is not as hard as you think in this specially-designed intensive class. Within a couple of hours, you are able to greet, thank, count, and venture into some basic bargaining for souvenirs, adding an authenticity to your holiday that you never expected.

As well as learning some basic language, you can also start to learn the etiquette that underlies the use of the Thai ‘wai.’ This distinctive form of greeting is used at 3 levels. The first is when paying respect to monks or holy images. This involves pressing

the two palms together and raising the hands until the tips of the index fingers touch the upper forehead. The second level is in greeting parents, grandparents, teachers, and those for whom you have high respect. This ‘wai’ is performed by pressing the hands together and raising them until the top of the index fingers reach between the eyebrows. The third, more general, type of greeting is in meeting those of equal social status and involves raising the hands so the tops of the index fingers touch the nose.

Thai food is another aspect of Thai living that you are able to study. The chef at Ban Sabai Sunset Beach Resort & Spa loves to share the

Within a couple of hours, you are able to greet, thank, count, and venture into some basic bargaining for souvenirs.

DELICATE TECHNIQUES OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CARVING with the guests. This carving requires nothing more than a simple knife and some imagination. A variety of fruit, such as papayas,

pears, watermelons, sapodillas, and dragon fruits, and many vegetables, such as tomatoes, carrots, cucumbers, small chillies, bottle gourds, wax gourds, radishes, ginger, and pumpkins, are suitable for carving. Thais mainly carve fruit and vegetables to decorate meals to make them look more inviting. Flowers, leaves, animals, and other inventive patterns are popular, all showcasing a cultural tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation.

After carving food, you may feel ready to cook and eat it. Ban Sabai Sunset Beach Resort & Spa encourages its guest to **LEARN HOW TO COOK SOUTHERN DELICACIES.** With your

You can surprise yourself and your friends with dishes such as southern dried and sweet shrimp chilli paste sauce, sour yellow soup, and fried fish with turmeric.

enthusiasm and the willing teacher, you can surprise yourself and your friends with dishes such as southern dried and sweet shrimp chilli paste sauce, stir-fried sato (nitta) seeds with egg, sour yellow soup, and fried fish with turmeric, and various desserts such as bananas in coconut milk.

Southern food is famed for its strong taste and fragrant spices and is generally different from other regions. You may have to tone down its hot and spicy taste by reducing some of the ingredients to make it more palatable for you. Some dishes like fried fish with turmeric are not too difficult – simply grind fresh turmeric, salt and garlic together and use it to marinate the fish, leave for a while and then fry. Before your eyes, a tasty Thai dish materializes without too much effort.

The resort encourages guests to experience the lifestyles of local Samui villagers by **VISITING LOCAL FRUIT PLANTATIONS**. Here, you see a variety of tropical fruits that are grown in an integrated system. This may be the first time you have seen many of these fruit trees such as durians, mangosteens, rambutans, longongs, bananas, salaccas, and coconuts. If you are lucky enough to visit during the fruit season, take the opportunity to taste fresh fruit straight from the tree. Fresh coconut juice is a thirst quencher you can't afford to miss.

Late afternoon is the best time to stroll along the beachfront and judge for yourself the claims that this area has the most beautiful sunsets in Samui. Later, a romantic beach BBQ by candlelight is specially arranged for you as the sun sets in celebration of your special holiday in Thailand.



Left – Right: Taking a walk in the tropical fruit plantation of Samui truly gives you a memorable experience



Ban Sabai Sunset Beach Resort & Spa

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Trip Summary



Talking Thai

Develop your skills in speaking basic Thai phrases so that you can confidently greet people in an appropriate Thai style, giving you the chance to impress and bring a smile to the faces of the locals.



Fruit Carving

Learn the Thai art of fruit and vegetable carving, a skill that has been handed down from the past yet allows modern creativity and imagination.



Southern Cooking

Learn to cook local southern food for yourself under the tuition of the chef at Ban Sabai Sunset Beach Resort & Spa. Try your hand at the distinctive dishes of southern dried and sweet shrimp chilli paste sauce, stir-fried sato seeds with egg, sour yellow soup, fried fish with turmeric, and bananas in coconut milk.



Visiting Tropical Fruit Plantations

Visit integrated fruit plantations in the villages of Ko Samui. Here, you see a range of fruit trees such as durians, rambutans, longkongs, salaccas, and mangosteens. You may catch the fruit in season and be able to try them straight from the tree. Make sure you try fresh coconut juice – a real thirst quencher.



Opposite Page: The visitors are given warm welcome from Samui's trained monkey

Right: The panoramic view of the sea with no boundaries can be seen at The Kala Samui

Bottom Left: The carving of wooden monkey at The Kala Samui reflects the identity of Samui perfectly



THE KALA SAMUI Surat Thani

"The Kala Samui" allows you to experience the many uses of coconuts in the local lifestyle, all in a beautiful tourists' paradise.

Ko Samui has magnificent sand beaches fringing deep blue seas, making it a popular destination for domestic and international tourists. Many of the beaches are lined with luxurious groves of coconut trees. These provide relaxing shade for a range of hotels and resorts that welcome people from all over the world to this paradise in the southern part of the Gulf of Thailand. The coconut trees also play an important role in the everyday lives of the people of this area.

"The Kala Samui" clearly illustrates the beauty of the island and the significance of coconuts on Ko Samui. The hotel is situated on a secluded, picturesque spot between Chaweng and Lamai Beaches. It is built in a contemporary southern

architectural style and prominently features the coconut, an ever-present symbol of the area. The name of the hotel itself means 'coconut shell.' The owners owned a coconut business on the island and have used the coconut as a theme throughout the hotel. All the parts of coconut trees, shells, trunks, and even coconut oil mixed in soap and shampoo, are a constant reminder that you are on the coconut island.

There are many coconut-related activities included in the numerous attractions offered to guests. These include **VISITING THE HOMES OF ISLANDERS** to observe their use of coconut wood for construction, leaves for roofing, shells for bowls, and husks for fertilizer.

Products of coconuts, such as oil from the





Top Left: The touch of coconut can be seen everywhere in The Kala Samui

Middle Left – Bottom Left: Learning the art of local culinary that uses coconut as the main ingredient

Right: The Kala Samui's chef guides the guest on cooking the curry with coconut milk

Opposite Page: Michael, the little monkey is enjoying the coconut he was rewarded after his performance



flesh and sugar from the flowers, form an integral part of the Ko Samui cuisine. **COOKING CLASSES AT THE KALA SAMUI** show guests the importance of coconuts in the local food and the secrets of Thai curry paste. The paste consists of different kinds of Thai herbs, lemongrass, white ginger, tumeric, shallots, bergamot leaves, garlic, one spoonful each of salt and black pepper, and a little shrimp paste. Don't forget the chilly peppers! These come in different sizes and colors chosen to suit the occasion and the purpose. Red chilly peppers are used for red curries, green for green curries, and the yellow curries have additional tumeric. All the ingredients are mixed together in a mortar and crushed, producing a beautiful aroma and a delicious curry paste ready for cooking.

Once you have the paste, it's time to learn to prepare the coconut milk. This involves taking the flesh out of the coconut and extracting the milk, all part of the preparation for



mouth-watering local dishes such as local curries and pan-fried Samui noodles.

Coconut trees thrive for decades and grow to a height of over 20 meters. Climbing the trees is difficult and requires exceptional skill. As a result, many monkeys have been taught to collect coconuts, giving rise to a unique monkey training school that has become a popular tourist attraction. The monkeys found to be the best ones for this type of work are the short-tailed kind. They are sent to school when they are about one year old and are trained for 5 months before they are employed collecting coconuts. The trained monkeys are capable of

All the parts of coconut trees, shells, trunks, and even coconut oil mixed in soap and shampoo, are a constant reminder that you are on the coconut island.

selecting the ripe and best coconuts, making the animals valuable and effective parts of numerous businesses, often enjoying the status of family members.

As the afternoon sun gets stronger, try a

young coconut juice to quench your thirst. On the way back to the hotel, you have a chance to relax and cool down at the beautiful "Na Mueang Falls" and walk through beautiful natural surroundings.

You can also see lines of rubber trees along the road, their cuts showing another important and traditional way in which the people in the south earn their livelihood.

After a long day full of interesting and entertaining activities, enjoy a **MASSAGE WITH PURE COCONUT OIL** to help eliminate fatigue and nourish your skin. It is a perfect way to end a day full of coconut experiences.



Bottom Left: Coconut oil massage leaves you an incredibly relaxed sensation with soft and silky skin
Bottom Right: Experiencing the local way of life while riding an elephant through the orchard

Cooking classes at “The Kala Samui” show guests the importance of coconuts in the local food and the secrets of Thai curry paste.

The next morning, you may choose to relax on the balcony or participate in some of the beach activities on offer, such as kayaking, snorkeling near the rocks in front of the hotel, or taking a dip in the infinity-edged pool tiled with black volcano rocks from Bali. You can also **TRY AN ELEPHANT RIDE IN A BEAUTIFUL SCENIC AREA** and through durian, mangosteen, langsat, zallaca and coconut orchards on the way “Hin Lat Falls.”

Back at the hotel, enjoy the beachfront view but don’t forget the afternoon appointment to explore the market in town. There you can shop for fresh ingredients to show off your newly-acquired culinary skills and then start to learn how to cook famous Thai foods such as “Tom Yam Kung” and green chicken curry.

A visit to “The Kala Samui” on Ko Samui is a worthwhile, interesting insight into the way of life of the people of the southern region, allowing you to experience their skills developed over many years and their beautiful part of the world.



Trip Summary



Thai Lifestyle Experience

Visit the homes of local people to experience their simple way of life and watch their many uses of coconuts in cooking, building, handicrafts, and farming. Don’t miss seeing the monkeys collecting the coconuts.



Thai Cooking Classes

Learn to cook famous Thai dishes such as “Tom Yam Kung” and green chicken curry with coconut milk and try your own specialty at dinner time.



A Coconut Oil Massage

Enjoy the relaxing experience at Agarin Spa of a coconut oil massage to relax your muscles and nourish your skin.



An Elephant Ride to Local Orchards

Get to know Ko Samui from a different angle on the back of an elephant. Visit different types of tropical orchards near the “Hin Lat Falls”.

The Kala Samui

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Opposite: Learning the fishing people's way of life is surely a once in a lifetime experience
Right: Embraced by nature, the room of Koyao Island Resort & Spa gives you a romantic ambiance you cannot find anywhere else
Bottom: Witness the magnificent scene of the sun setting to the Andaman



KOYAO ISLAND RESORT & SPA

Phang-Nga



Escape to Koyao Island Resort & Spa and explore the local fishing, rubber, and craft industries in a thriving Muslim community.

On an undisturbed beach on Ko Yao Noi, 15 Thai/Balinese-style villas sit under the coconut trees catching the refreshing sea breeze. Koyao Island Resort is an ideal location for those who like to spend their vacations in a tranquil setting, diving coral reefs, relaxing on white sandy beaches, and swimming in crystal-clear waters. The resort provides activities to fulfill all of these passions and much more.

Ko Yao Noi is a well-known island in Phang Nga Bay on the Andaman Sea. This island is prominent in the dreams of numerous travelers because of its pristine natural areas, lush rice paddies, secluded beaches, beautiful waters, and interesting Muslim village with its mosque sheltered under coconut groves and rubber

trees. The community is a hive of activity with villagers involved in tending their rice fields, tapping their rubber trees, scouring their traps for fish, and shopping at the markets, all in a friendly and hospitable manner.

Almost all of the people living on the island are Muslims and have lived here for generations leading simple and peaceful lives in perfect harmony with nature. Residents of Ko Yao Noi are renowned for their friendly attitude and warm welcome to visitors. Several families offer home-stay accommodation for tourists eager to gain first-hand experience of local lifestyle and there is a successful ecotourism program.

Guests at Koyao Island Resort enjoy the option of relaxing in their own private setting or





Top Left – Bottom Left: Ko Yao Noi residents love the natural environment that nourishes their identity and are very conscious of keeping it undisturbed
Right: Be amazed with the abundant natural resources of the Andaman Sea
Opposite Page: The rubber sheets show how important the rubber industry is to this community



involving themselves in the many community activities. These include accompanying the crew on the villagers' fishing boats, observing rubber tapping, trying their hands at batik-making under the instruction of the housewives of Ban Tha Khao, and making craft items from coconut shells.

Before dawn, the local **FISHING** boats are ready to try their luck in the waters not too far from shore. These fishing people are very conscious of their obligations to the world of nature and are careful and selective about their methods, equipment, and fish, both for their own consumption and for sale at the markets.

Fishing depends on a combination of nature, skills, and luck. On a good day when all these factors are favorable there is plenty of fish, crabs, prawns, and shrimp; other days may be not so good. In addition to sea-fishing, there are numerous fish farms that use a 'krachang,' a



cage suspended in the sea. These farms usually produce snapper and trout but the most popular is lobster farming because of the high demand and price. Lobsters however take almost a year to reach full size. This idyllic way of life is not without its problems though. More than a decade ago, Ko Yao Noi experienced severe depletion of its coastal resources by large fishing vessels. Villagers united to oppose these large, commercial organizations and also re-examined their own methods of fishing to help the conservation of nature. Today Ko Yao Noi and its surrounding areas are again rich in marine life and the villagers' intimate relationship with the

This island is prominent in the dreams of numerous travelers because of its pristine natural areas, lush rice paddies, secluded beaches, beautiful waters, and interesting Muslim village with its mosque sheltered under coconut groves and rubber trees.

sea is strong.

"If we catch small fish that we cannot use, we return them to the sea so that they are available for us in the future. If small lobsters are caught, we nurture them in the krachang to

be sold when they fully mature," says one of the fishing people.

The rubber industry is another sustainable industry that forms an integral part of the livelihood of Ko Yao Noi. **RUBBER PLANTATIONS** started over a century ago in the south and have developed into a significant economic factor for the region. On a Rubber Plantation Visit, you see how farmers tap the trees and collect the latex to be processed into rubber sheets. The rubber plantations are distinctive as the trees are planted in orderly lines making it convenient for tapping and maintenance. Rubber trees produce latex at 6 years of age and keep producing for 30 years with care.



Bottom Left: 'Tha Kao' locals are more than happy to share the unique batik painting techniques to the visitors
Bottom Right: Making souvenir from coconut shell is another activity you can enjoy

If we catch small fish that we cannot use, we return them to the sea so that they are available for us in the future. If small lobsters are caught, we nurture them in the krachang to be sold when they fully mature.



Tapping the trees is done before sunrise when latex production is at its maximum. The farmer scores the trunk of the tree at an angle of 30 degrees with a sharp knife allowing the latex to run into a small bowl below. The latex is mixed with water and formic acid in a ratio of 50:40:10 respectively and then left in a block or mold for half an hour. It is twice pressed and dried between rollers then allowed to dry outside for a week and inside for another week. The rubber is eventually used in the manufacture of such things as tires and condoms.

There is also a thriving craft industry on Ko Yao Noi producing **BATIK AND SOUVENIRS FROM COCONUT SHELLS**. The group of 'Tha Kao' housewives gladly gives tips about the manufacture of beautiful batik. Sawitree Benamnat, the group leader, says that the batik class is very popular among tourists. They learn to draw the patterns on the fabric in pencil and then coat the lines with melted paraffin running from a 'janteung,' a brass tea-pot shaped container. The final process is the painting to produce a unique work of art. If you're not happy with your own production, then you may select one of the professional pieces of work from the group's own store.

In the village, they make souvenirs from coconut shells. The items include earrings, belts, wind chimes, and lamps. They also provide a workshop on the manufacture of a key chain from coconut shells for those who wish to experiment.

An interesting and serene world of nature awaits you at Ko Yao Noi, only 40 minutes from the bustle of Phuket.



Koyao Island Resort & Spa
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Trip Summary



Boat Trip to a Fishing Village

The boat trip gives you an unforgettable experience of a fishing village. You can learn to set the fish net in the sea and be fascinated by the abundance of natural resources.



Muslim Community & Rubber Plantation

Visit the Muslim community on Ko Yao Noi and observe their work on the rubber plantation. You can learn how to tap the trees and collect the latex to be processed into rubber sheets.



Batik Workshop

Visit 'Tha Kao' village and the housewives' craft shop where you can make your own batik on a handkerchief and a key chain from coconut shell, as well as selecting local souvenirs.



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CREDIT

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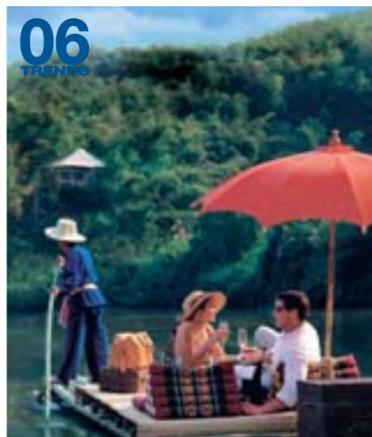
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