



TRAVEL PLANNER

THAILAND—CHIANG MAI & THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE TO TROPICAL ISLAND BEACHES



BIKING | Premiere Hotels

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 **BACKROADS**



STRAIGHT *talk*

We want to make sure you're on the right trip and that you have the best experience possible. Every Backroads trip is unique and this one is no exception.

ACCOMMODATIONS

We've included two nights at the Maekok River Village Resort, a Casual Hotel. Although it offers simpler guest rooms than the other hotels on this trip, it is by far the nicest lodging in the area and has been selected because of its access to the best riding in the region.

COMMERCIAL FLIGHT SCHEDULES

This trip includes travel on a commercial flight so that we can explore the best of your destination. Please note that flight schedules can change with little advance warning, which may require us to adjust our activities on a travel day. Your Trip Leaders will provide more details on any changes should this occur.



DAY 1

Meeting Time: 9:30 a.m.

Meeting Location: Le Méridien Chiang Rai Resort (+66-(0)53-603333), located at 221/2 Moo 20 Kwaewai Road in Chiang Rai, Thailand.

Additional Details: Meet your Backroads Trip Leaders (the folks in Backroads T-shirts) in the hotel lobby.

Attire & Luggage: Please arrive dressed in your biking clothes and bring your luggage and a daypack with your rain gear and anything else you may want for today's ride.

LATE TO THE TRIP START? See "Arriving & Departing" for more information.

SHUTTLE TO BIKE RIDE START 30 Minutes

BIKING OPTIONS:

Happy Buddha Route: 9 Miles * (400' elevation gain)
Golden Triangle Route: 28 Miles (1,000')

**with shuttle*

Welcome to Thailand! After meeting in Chiang Rai, we shuttle into the countryside for our first Thai meal together. Here your Backroads Trip Leaders fit your bike and give a brief talk on biking techniques and safety, including a reminder to ride on the left side of the road in Thailand! Then pedal over rolling terrain past a succession of rice and tapioca fields, and rural villages en route to the Golden Triangle, the northern limits of Thailand. Located at the junction of Thailand, Laos and Myanmar, the region is so named because it lies at the confluence of the Sop Ruak and Mekong Rivers, which creates a triangle of land. As for the origin of "Golden," the area was once the center of the lucrative opium trade—a drug that was worth its weight in gold.

Make your way in the shuttle or on two wheels to Anantara Golden Triangle Resort, our home for the next two nights, where you can gaze across the river to Myanmar and also take in views of the mist-covered mountains of Laos. We gather this evening for a welcome reception and dinner at the resort's outstanding restaurant. *Lodging: Anantara Golden Triangle Resort*

DAY 3

SHUTTLE TO RIDE START 1 Hour

BIKING OPTIONS:

Goddess of Mercy Route: 25 Miles (700' elevation gain)
Chiang Rai Remix Route: 33 Miles (1,000')

MAEKOK RIVER LONGTAIL BOAT RIDE 2 Hours

Today we explore the countryside of northern Thailand by boat and bike. Following a morning shuttle ride, immerse yourself in natural beauty with a ride past corn and pineapple plantations, then onward through the town of Chiang Rai.

After a fresh lunch and short shuttle, hop in a traditional longtail boat and travel the steady Maekok River, passing through a scenic canyon thick with green forest and orange plantations. (Bring an extra layer of clothing and a hat; it can be chilly on the water.) Drift through gorges and past riverside villages such as Mae Salak, an old tea-loading station affiliated with the hillside plantation near Wawi.

We spend the next two nights at the charming but casual Maekok River Village Resort, authentic Thai accommodations on the Maekok River, just below the Myanmar border. Our day is topped off with a Thai cooking class at our resort. Then retreat to your bungalow for the evening and listen to the tranquil river as your head hits the pillow. *Lodging: Maekok River Village Resort*

DAY 4

BIKING OPTIONS:

River Route: 18 Miles (800' elevation gain)
Maekok Resort Loop: 26 Miles (1,600')

LAHU HILL TRIBE CHOIR PERFORMANCE 45 Minutes

Today's bike ride offers the chance to get up close and personal with wide variety of local crops—like peanut, rice, papaya and garlic—and the people who grow them. As you pedal along the rolling hills, take in spectacular views over the fields to the Burmese border.

We re-energize with a Thai barbecue lunch, where we



DAY 2

BIKING OPTIONS:

Wat Chedi Luang Route: 13 Miles * (600' elevation gain)
Wat Chedi Luang Loop: 20 Miles (800')
Chiang Saen Long Route: 26 Miles (1,200')

OPTIONAL ELEPHANT EXPERIENCE 2 Hours

**with shuttle*

Hop on your bike this morning for a ride that curls through the small town of Chiang Saen, the former first capital of the Lanna Kingdom, and along the Mekong River. This vital Southeast Asia artery starts in the Yunnan Province of China and cuts through Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia before spreading into a delta as it reaches the South China Sea in Vietnam. The river, host to commercial shipping and fishing, is responsible for creating the floodplains so important for rice production throughout the region. Take a break and watch the ancient-looking trade boats traveling from China to Thailand, loaded with apples and pears, and returning upriver with Thai concrete for China's growing provinces. Then savor lunch on your own in Chiang Saen, where incredible street food and local restaurants abound.

In the afternoon, you can opt to swing by the Hall of Opium to learn the history of the area's once lucrative opium trade or spend more time with your new friends at Anantara's Elephant Camp. In the evening we take you out for the amazing experience of street food for dinner. *Lodging: Anantara Golden Triangle Resort*

practice the art of eating with sticky rice. Then it's a quick bike or shuttle ride back to our resort, where there's plenty of time this afternoon for a dip in the pool or an in-room massage.

This evening we gather on patio, where we're treated to a traditional performance by the members of the Lahu Hill Tribe Church Choir, whose songs are performed in the Lahu language. Afterward our friend opens up their family home to us, where we experience an unforgettable Thai dinner cooked in their open-air kitchen. *Lodging: Maekok River Village Resort*

DAY 5

WAT THATON MORNING ALMS GIVING & MARKET VISIT 1 Hour

BIKING OPTIONS:

Fang Chill Route: 26 Miles (800' elevation gain)

Fang Meditation Route: 31 Miles (1,100')

SHUTTLE TO FOUR SEASONS 2½ Hours

If you'd like starting your day with one of the highlights of the trip, your leaders will head out early with you to a local market to purchase food that we will offer as alms to novice monks at the Wat Thaton temple complex. After receiving a chanted blessing from the monks, we walk to see the Serpent Buddha, the Sanka Gai (happy monk) and on to the white Buddha, which looks out over the river to Myanmar. From here it's a scenic *songthaew* (traditional vehicle) ride back to the hotel for breakfast.

Following breakfast, cycle past orange plantations and through serene countryside into the 1,000-year-old trading center of Fang, whose lively markets and stores serve both the local communities and passersby. We stop for lunch along the way, sampling another famous Northern Thai dish.

Rest your legs in the shuttle ride to the extraordinary Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai, set away from the bustling city in the bucolic Mae Rim Valley. The hotel's fantastic location allows us to bike through the valleys and foothills around Doi Suthep and enjoy genuine Thai cuisine and hospitality. Settle in at this luxurious getaway with terraced rice paddies, a canopy of evergreen trees,

multiple swimming pools, tennis courts and skilled massage therapists who employ a form of Thai massage once reserved for the royal family.

Tonight expand your culinary horizons—and taste incredible flavors—with a chef-led, in-depth presentation of beloved Thai dishes. *Lodging: Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai*

DAY 6

BIKING OPTIONS

Wat Huay San Route: 18 Miles* (800' elevation gain)

Ban Saluang Loop: 25 Miles (1,100')

Mae Rim Valley Countryside Loop: 40 Miles (1,700')

**with shuttle*

We continue exploring the verdant hills at the base of Doi Suthep mountain that form part of the Mae Rim Valley today. Setting out from the hotel, ride along rural roads through small communities, passing by acres of rice paddies in various stages of cultivation. This area is known for its fertile farmland and its verdant landscape and slower pace of life feels worlds away from nearby Chiang Mai.

We stop for a special lunch among rice paddies at a favorite roadside eatery before making our way back to the hotel. The afternoon is yours to relax at the Four Seasons with a swim or a massage.

Tonight join your leaders as they take you into Chiang Mai for dinner on your own—now's your chance to check out what vibrant night market offers! Or you can opt to stay back and enjoy dinner on your own at one of the Four Seasons' excellent restaurants. *Lodging: Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai*



DAY 7

BHAI SRI CEREMONY 30 Minutes

SHUTTLE TO CHIANG MAI OLD CITY 45 Minutes

CHIANG MAI GUIDED WALKING TOUR & TEMPLE VISIT 2 Hours

FLIGHT TO PHUKET 2 Hours **

***Note that our flight may be routed through Bangkok, resulting in longer travel time.*

This morning we participate in a special ceremony to gather our 32 guardian spirits for our journey to Southern Thailand later in the day. Then we get to know Chiang Mai Old City, the cultural heart of the city that was once the capital of the Lanna Kingdom. Accompanied by our local guide, enter the gates and explore the centuries-old temples, welcoming shops and lively markets along its streets. Along the way we gain insight into the rich history that shaped this city and stop for a delicious Thai lunch.

This afternoon we fly south to the dreamy island of Phuket, home to enticing white sandy beaches. Our home for the next two nights is the exquisite Anantara Mai Khao Phuket Villas, a tropical Thai-style hideaway that delights with stunning ocean views and a pristine beach. Tonight, kick back and enjoy dinner at the resort's restaurant at your leisure. *Lodging: Anantara Mai Khao Phuket Villas*

DAY 8

PHANG NGA BAY NATIONAL PARK KAYAKING & BOAT TOUR Full Day

Our last full day is dedicated to exploring the turquoise waters of Phang Nga Bay, situated in a spectacular national park. We take to the seas with a scenic boat right among the famed limestone karsts islands that dot the pristine waters. After a quick demonstration of basic kayaking techniques and safety, we head out on the calm bay. As you paddle, keep your eyes peeled for myriad bird species, as well as finless porpoises, smooth-coated otters and crab-eating macaques.

Back at our resort, we reconvene tonight for a toast to our Thai adventure and a celebratory dinner. *Lodging: Anantara Mai Khao Phuket Villas*

DAY 9

MORNING YOGA CLASS 1 Hour

Relish a morning yoga class or opt to sleep in, linger over breakfast or indulge in a spa treatment. We say our goodbyes before boarding a shuttle to the Phuket airport. Please see "Arriving & Departing" for end-of-trip logistics.

YOUR LOCAL GUIDES

Along with your Trip Leaders, we are delighted to introduce you to our longtime friends and exceptional local guides. Our local guides are an important part of our Backroads family, and it is our privilege to know—and work with—such wonderful individuals. Backroads relies on them for their expertise, ingenuity and good humor. We're certain that you'll feel your experience has been enhanced by their acquaintance, just as thousands of other Backroads guests have for over 20 years.

KEEPING YOU UP TO DATE

We are always seeking opportunities to enhance this itinerary. We'll be certain to notify you of any important changes prior to departure; other changes may be communicated on trip by your leaders.

SHIFT GEARS

Our trips are designed to be flexible, giving you the freedom to experience the best of the region the way YOU want. Feel like you're ready to go, go, go? We can show you the way! Want some downtime or prefer to head out on your own? No problem!

Your Trip Leaders will make sure to tell you the best days to take time for yourself (if you want it) without feeling like you're missing out.

So feel free to shift gears and make it your day!



TRIP ACCOMMODATIONS

Premiere Hotels*



2 Nights Anantara Golden Triangle Resort

Described by the *Hideaway Report* as a "stylish hill country retreat amid 160 acres of tranquil gardens in the Golden Triangle overlooking Burma." (pool, spa) | Chiang Saen | www.goldentriangle.anantara.com | +66-(0)53-784084

2 Nights (Casual Hotel) Maekok River Village Resort

Nestled amid lovely landscaped gardens, this bungalow-style riverside retreat offers sweeping views of the verdant valley. (pool) | Ban Thaton | www.maekok-river-village-resort.com | +66-(0)53-053628

2 Nights Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai

This impeccable hotel, amid rice paddies, mountains and lush gardens, sets the industry standard for luxury. *Condé Nast Traveler* Gold List. *Travel + Leisure* World's Best. (pool, spa) | Mae Rim | www.fourseasons.com/ChiangMai | +66-(0)53-298181

2 Nights (Pictured) Anantara Mai Khao Phuket Villas

Contemporary elegance awaits at this hillside resort set among lush palms and greenery with delightful ocean views and Thai cuisine. (pool, spa) | Phuket | www.anantara.com | +66-(0)76-336100

*With 2 Casual Hotel nights at Maekok River Village Resort

ARRIVING & DEPARTING

After reviewing the following information, please inform us of your arrival and departure plans on your *Personal Information Form*.

All prices are in US dollars and subject to change.

Meeting Time & Location

Meeting Time: 9:30 a.m.

Meeting Location: Le Méridien Chiang Rai Resort (+66-(0)53-603333), located at 221/2 Moo 20 Kwaewai Road in Chiang Rai, Thailand.

Additional Details: Meet your Backroads Trip Leaders (the folks in Backroads T-shirts) in the hotel lobby.

Attire & Luggage: Please arrive dressed in your biking clothes and bring your luggage and a daypack with your rain gear and anything else you may want for today's ride.

Arriving Late to the Trip Start?

If you have a delay or emergency on the day your trip starts and need to contact Backroads, please email your Trip Leaders (you'll receive an email 48 hours prior to the trip start with their contact info) or call the Backroads office at 800-462-2848 (domestic) or 510-527-1555 (international).

Conclusion of the Trip

Trip End Time: 12 p.m.

Trip End Location: Phuket International Airport

Additional Details: Backroads provides transportation from Anantara Mai Khao Phuket Villas to Phuket International Airport, arriving at approximately 12 p.m.; if you'll be taking this shuttle, please schedule your flight for after 2:30 p.m.

Flight Arrangements

This trip starts in Chiang Rai and ends in Phuket, Thailand. We recommend flying into Chiang Rai Airport (CEI); and flying out of Phuket International Airport (HKT).

Another option is to buy a round-trip ticket to Bangkok's

Suvarnabhumi International Airport (BKK; www.bangkokairportonline.com), then two one-way tickets: one from Bangkok to Chiang Rai (CEI) and one from Phuket (HKT) to Bangkok. There are several daily flights available to and from both destinations.

We highly recommend that you arrive in Thailand at least a day or two before the trip starts. An early arrival will give you a chance to explore Bangkok and/or Chiang Rai, as well as adjust to the time difference.

If you're traveling on your own before or after the Backroads trip and would like to store extra luggage, facilities are available at the Bangkok airport.

For help arranging air transportation to and from your Backroads trip, please work with your own travel advisor, or you may work with our preferred travel agency. Their professional expert travel advisors are ready to assist you with any of your travel needs. Please note that they are an independent travel agency and consulting and ticketing fees may apply, based on the services requested. Simply ask your Backroads Trip Consultant to connect you! You can also book directly with the airline, or through a travel website.

Getting to Le Méridien Chiang Rai from the Airport or Downtown

A taxi ride from the Chiang Rai airport or downtown hotels to Le Méridien Chiang Rai Resort takes about 10 minutes and costs less than \$20. It isn't customary to flag taxis down yourself, but they're readily available at the airport or your hotel can call one for you.

PRICES & SCHEDULES

All prices and schedules were current at the time of printing, but are subject to change at any time.



DURING YOUR TRIP

Backroads On Trip App

Enjoy the convenience of your itinerary details in one place, including daily snapshots, routes, elevation profiles and more. We'll send you an email seven days before your trip starts with the link and code for your itinerary. We encourage you to download the app and the trip experience before you depart (your leaders can help you on trip if needed). Just search for "Backroads" in the Apple App store or the Google Play Store.

Trip Leaders

Each of your Trip Leaders plays many roles during your vacation: guide, host, caretaker, naturalist, chef, historian, troubleshooter, interpreter. These remarkable individuals have highly developed instincts for making people comfortable, for seamlessly handling the logistics of travel and for successfully navigating a wide range of unexpected situations. They're passionately committed to ensuring you enjoy an exceptional vacation—smooth, flexible and tailored to your needs. According to past guests, the caliber of our leaders is what sets Backroads apart from all other travel companies. With their knowledge, professionalism, enthusiasm and service ethic, they're the number-one reason people return to travel with us again and again. We look forward to having you meet them.

A Word about Gratuities

We think our leaders are unparalleled at what they do—you be the judge.

Gratuities for most services during your trip are included in the price, including all tips for local support staff (guides and drivers). While we've thought about including a Trip Leader tip as part of the overall trip cost, we acknowledge that gratuities are often customary as a way to recognize excellent service on a more personal level.

We offer specific Trip Leader tip recommendations because our guests have consistently asked for them.

Our recommended gratuity for this trip is \$250 per guest.

While cash gratuities are always preferred, PayPal is

another available option. If you prefer to tip via the PayPal app or website, please note that your account must be set up prior to departing the US. At the beginning of the trip you'll receive a contact list with your leaders' email addresses, which also serve as their PayPal IDs. Regardless of the number of leaders on your trip, you can pay the full amount to any one of them. All gratuities are then divided among your leaders.

As in North America, it is now customary in Thailand to tip for good service. A tip of 5–10 percent is appreciated at luxury hotels and restaurants where a service charge is not included in the bill.

Accommodations

This trip with Premiere Hotels includes two nights at Maekok River Village Resort, a Casual Hotel. Although it offers much simpler accommodations than the other hotels on this trip—especially the lavish Four Seasons—it's by far the nicest lodging in the area and provides access to the best riding in the region. Plus, it's hard to find staff that smile bigger or try harder and you'll quickly see how worthwhile it is to stay here.

Throughout the trip we have selected hotels that, in addition to being both comfortable and authentic, allow us to provide you with an itinerary that flows naturally and with purpose, becoming a genuine travel experience and not simply a collection of sightseeing events. Want to ride from Day 1 until the end of the trip with limited shuttling? We have a great trip for you. Want to move slowly through the countryside in order to meet locals, explore markets and contemplate temples? We have that trip for you, too. Want to relax by the pool, take in a massage and eat some truly delicious food? We even have that trip for you. And it's the proximity of our hotels that allow for this flexibility.

In the case of Maekok River Village Resort, there may be nicer hotels a few hours away, but their location would severely limit the flow of our itinerary by vastly increasing shuttle times, diminishing the quality of our cultural experience (which comes from spending time outside a vehicle), and reducing the flexibility for you to choose whether to ride or relax.

All rooms in our hotels have private bathrooms. On most nights your room will have a Western-style bathroom with

a bathtub and shower; the Maekok River Village Resort offers more open Thai-style bathrooms with only a shower. Single room availability is limited.

Cell Service & Internet Access

Cell phone and data service is limited in some of the locations we visit on this trip. Internet access is available at all of our hotels, although the connection may be slower than ideal.

Meals

Food is an important part of the Backroads experience. For lunch we look for the best way to capture the essence of the region. It may be a Backroads Grand Picnic, when your Trip Leaders prepare the freshest and healthiest local fare at a carefully chosen setting along the day's route; a boxed lunch; a packed lunch; a meal together at a favorite restaurant; or the opportunity to have lunch on your own.

Thai food is one of our passions. From local noodle soup restaurants to à la carte meals, we offer as much variety on this trip as possible. Thai food is often best experienced family style, with many dishes ordered to allow for sampling, and most hotels serve meals in this manner. Should you ever tire of Thai food or the way in which it is served, let your leaders know and they'll do their best to find alternatives. Western food is occasionally available—it's just not consistently good in the regions we bike through.

All breakfasts, seven lunches and seven dinners are included in the trip price. One lunch and one dinner are on your own.

Be aware that vegetarian/vegan, gluten-free and low-carb dishes are not always available. If you have special dietary requirements, please indicate them on the *Personal Information Form*. Your Trip Consultant will pass on the information to your Trip Leaders. Alcoholic beverages at meals are not included in the trip price, unless otherwise noted.

Recommended Dinner Attire

On most evenings we dine in restaurants where "sophisticated-casual" attire is appropriate. We recommend collared shirts with slacks, dresses, skirts or dressy pants.

We dine outside on some nights. Because there's a chance of a chilly evening or two, you may want to bring along a sweater or jacket.

Lost Luggage

On any flight, there is the possibility of lost luggage. Backroads believes that it's a great idea to take a small carry-on bag with enough clothing and supplies to last a day or two. Also be sure to bring with you any personal gear you deem indispensable on the trip. This way, in the event of lost luggage you won't have to spend time replacing essential items and miss activities while you wait for your bags to catch up. Please note that Backroads does not assume responsibility for any luggage lost or damaged during your trip.

Security

When traveling, there is always a possibility of theft. While you're enjoying the sights, remember to stay alert and always be aware of your immediate surroundings, especially in crowded locations and tourist areas. The best rule of thumb is to carry only the cash you need for the day, along with a copy of your passport, on your person and leave the rest in a locked safe in your room. If no safe is available, it's a good idea to keep your cash and passport in a money belt worn under your clothes. For more safety tips, refer to the Country Specific Information page on the US State Department's website at travel.state.gov.

Trip Guest List

During the trip, leaders will distribute a guest list that includes the names and contact information of everyone on the trip. If you do not want your contact information to appear on the guest list, please inform your Trip Consultant at least 30 days prior to the trip start.

Spa Treatments

Spa treatments are not included in the trip price. Advance reservations are recommended. Also, be sure to review the spa's cancellation policy to avoid any unexpected charges on your credit card.

Days 1 & 2

Anantara Golden Triangle Resort: On **Day 1**, book an appointment for after 4 p.m. if you plan to only ride the short route; we meet for dinner at 6 p.m. On **Day 2**,

book an appointment for after 2 p.m. or after 3:30 p.m. if you opt to participate in the afternoon activity. Reservations are recommended (+66-53-784-084; spa.agt@anantara.com).

Day 4

Maekok River Village Resort: Although there is no spa at this resort, in-room massages are available. Book your appointment for after 2:30 p.m.; we meet for dinner at 5 p.m.

Day 6

Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai: Book an appointment for after 2 p.m. if you opt to skip the rice planting activity; dinner starts at 7 p.m.

Days 7 & 9

Anantara Mai Khao Phuket Villas: On **Day 7** book an appointment for after 4:30 p.m.; dinner is on your own. On **Day 9**, book an appointment for any time in the morning if you plan to skip yoga; checkout from the hotel is at noon.

Bicycles

You'll be riding a Backroads Titanium touring bike on this trip. Most of our rides are on paved roads, with shorter off-road sections with varying degrees of difficulty.

Restrooms in Thailand

You'll be happy to note that our hotels—and their restrooms—are some of the nicest in the Thai countryside. It's when we leave them that we have some challenges. For the most part, there just aren't public restrooms along our rural bike routes. As for the very occasional toilet attached to a gas station—well, let's just say that the cleaning attendant is often on a very long vacation. Toiletries will be provided to you for use in the great outdoors—the most convenient and hygienic restroom available to us. Just think of the view and fresh air!

Why do we bring up this issue? Because the more hydrated you are, the more you'll enjoy your rides through the Thai countryside. Drink, drink and drink—assured that a "green latrine" is just around the corner.



DESTINATION DETAILS

Climate

Compared with other Asian countries, northern Thailand's weather is cooler and less humid, thanks to the elevation (1,000–3,000 feet), the northern latitude and the time of year we visit. Lightweight clothing is suitable for Thailand's tropical daytime climate, but a fleece jacket or warm sweater and long pants are essential for the cooler evenings and mornings in the north, which can drop to as low as 40 degrees. Rain is always possible, even though we visit during Thailand's "dry" season. Come prepared for all types of weather to ensure that your trip is as enjoyable as possible.

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1 of 5 GRAND PRIZES

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\$250 in Backroads Trip Credit awarded to 75+ photos

FOR RULES GO TO [BACKROADS.COM/PHOTO_CONTEST](https://www.backroads.com/photo_contest)

Chiang Rai

Average:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
High °F	81	87	92	95	92	90
Low °F	53	55	60	67	71	73
Precip. In.	0.6	0.2	1.1	3.1	8.5	9.8
Average:	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
High °F	87	87	87	86	84	80
Low °F	73	73	72	69	63	55
Precip. In.	11.7	17.4	10.1	5.3	1.9	0.5

Chiang Mai

Average:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
High °F	84	90	95	97	93	90
Low °F	55	57	63	70	74	74
Precip. In.	0.3	0.2	0.6	1.8	6.0	5.3
Average:	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
High °F	89	87	88	87	86	83
Low °F	74	74	73	71	66	59
Precip. In.	6.6	8.9	9.9	5.2	1.7	0.6

Phuket

Average:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
High °F	88	89	90	90	88	87
Low °F	73	73	74	75	75	74
Precip. In.	1.0	0.8	2.3	4.5	8.2	8.2
Average:	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
High °F	86	86	86	86	86	86
Low °F	74	74	73	73	73	73
Precip. In.	8.4	9.8	12.4	10.8	6.7	2.9

Temperatures in this region are measured in degrees Celsius. Zero degrees Celsius is 32 degrees Fahrenheit. For a quick conversion, double the Celsius reading and add 30 to determine the approximate temperature in degrees Fahrenheit.

Time Zone

Thailand is 7 hours ahead of Greenwich mean time, 12 hours ahead of eastern time and 15 hours ahead of Pacific time.

Phone Facts

Many US cell phones can operate internationally. Check with your service provider before leaving home for information about international calling and data plans, and on making and receiving international calls. If your cell phone is unlocked and operates using a SIM card, you may want to consider purchasing a SIM card from a local cell phone company. These should be readily available at airports and convenience stores, and typically come loaded with prepaid credit which can be used for domestic and international calls and data service. Rates will vary.

Alternatively, it may also be possible to rent a phone for use during your international travels. We recommend Cellhire, which offers a wide range of wireless rental options in more than 180 countries. Visit www.cellhire.com or call 877-244-7242 for details and reservations.

International Dialing Instructions

The international phone numbers in this Travel Planner are listed using the following format:

+66-(0)##-#####

66 is Thailand's country code, followed by a 0 (used only when calling from within the country), a one- or two-digit *area code* and a six- or seven-digit *local number*.

To place an international call to Thailand, dial + or the *international access code* of the country from which you're calling (e.g. 011 from the US) - 66 - *area code* - *local number*. **Important note:** Always omit the 0 when calling from outside the country or your call will not go through.

To place an international call from Thailand, dial + or 001 (Thailand's *international access code*) - *country code* of the country to which you're calling (e.g., 1 for the US) - *area code* - *local number*. For example, to call the US, dial 001-1-*area code* - *local number*.

To place a call within Thailand, drop the code 66 and dial 0 - *area code* - *local number*. When calling from within the same local area, just dial the local number.

For additional information on placing international phone calls, visit www.countrycallingcodes.com.

Money Matters

The standard unit of currency in Thailand is the baht (THB). There are 100 satang in 1 baht. Coins are issued in 1-, 5- and 10-baht pieces and 25- and 50-satang pieces. Notes come in 10-, 20-, 50-, 100-, 500- and 1,000-baht denominations. **At the time of printing, 36 THB = 1 USD.** For the most up-to-date exchange rate, visit www.xe.com (Universal Currency Converter).

Note that Thailand is very much a paper money-heavy economy and not all places accept credit cards. It may be difficult to change 1000 baht bills in some of the smaller villages we visit, so it's advisable to carry smaller denominations. The exchange booths in Thai airports are open 24 hours a day and are a good place to change money. The best way to access cash is by ATMs, which are common throughout Thailand and are readily available even in many rural areas. (Be sure to check with your bank to ensure that your PIN is compatible with Thai ATMs.) We highly suggest you do not accept the offered ATM exchange rate, as your credit card issuing bank will give you a more favorable rate.

Electric Current

Thailand's electricity runs on a 220-volt, 50-cycle current.

A plug adapter is necessary if you plan to bring appliances from home. You may also need a converter, but many newer appliances, such as computers and digital devices are designed to work/charge over a wide range of voltage levels. Check the manufacturer's label on the back of your appliances to see what level of input they can handle. Converter/adapter kits can be purchased at travel, hardware or electronics stores for \$40–60; an adapter alone costs about \$4.

Cultural Considerations

As with any international destination, there are cultural considerations to keep in mind while you're on this trip. Do your best to observe these customs and you'll not only feel closer to the host culture and have a more enjoyable experience, but you'll also earn the appreciation of the locals.

- Ninety-five percent of the Thai population is Buddhist and religion is an important part of everyday life. Out of respect for the more conservative culture, we ask that you please show discretion with your cycling attire. (Women should not bike in sports bras without shirts over them.)
- If you'd like to visit wats (temples) en route, keep in mind that strict dress codes are sometimes observed. Long pants and covered shoulders are often required to enter the temples or the grounds, so don't forget to pack some lightweight pants or a sarong in your bike bag to wear at these holy sites.
- Feet are considered the lowest part of the body, both physically and spiritually. Try not to point your feet at other people or at Buddha images. The head is considered the highest and most sacred part of the body; therefore, it's inappropriate to touch someone on the head, even small children. When posing for photographs in front of Buddha images, try to remain lower than the Buddha, crouching down if necessary.

Health Precautions

As country-specific entry requirements for COVID change, please see the latest information at www.backroads.com/why/testing.

For travel to this region, it is highly recommended to check with your doctor to make sure your diphtheria-

tetanus vaccination is up to date. Your doctor may recommend you take the hepatitis A vaccine, get an immune globulin shot (administered one week before leaving), or both.

Because we travel outside urban areas, you may want to consider taking precautions for **malaria**. (Note that the areas of risk in Myanmar are confined to the forested regions near the Thai border, far from where we travel on this trip.) Check with your doctor on the advisability of taking a malarial prophylaxis. The **Zika** virus is also currently a risk in Myanmar; visit wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/zika-information to learn more. To reduce the chance of mosquito bites, use a good insect repellent and cover bare skin at night. If you get sick within a year after your trip, you should let your doctor know that you have traveled to a foreign country.

Backroads continues to carefully monitor the **avian flu** situation in Asia. Please be assured that if we feel an area is not safe, or that health concerns might cause quarantines, we will cancel trips in the region. Travelers are advised to avoid contact with animals in live food markets and poultry farms (our trips don't visit poultry farms) and we'll choose not to serve/eat chicken if avian flu seems to be a concern at the time of a trip. For the latest reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) visit www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu and from the World Health Organization (WHO), see www.who.int/influenza/human_animal_interface.

The most common health risk for visitors is "traveler's diarrhea," which can be caused by bacteria, parasites or viruses transmitted through food or water. In addition, some food in this region is exotic and spicy and may be different from what you are used to at home, causing stomach reactions.

Tap water is **not** safe to drink. Do not drink water from any tap, whether in a hotel or out in the countryside. Also, do not wash toothbrushes or contact lenses in tap water. Filtered or bottled water is always available at our hotels and in Backroads vehicles. Water and ice served outside of our hotels (e.g. from a roadside food stand) are generally not safe. In these situations, always insist on sealed bottled water and go without ice.

It is usually risky to purchase food from street vendors unless the food has been cooked and is still hot. However, if you purchase fruit or vegetables from street vendors, we recommend that you buy products that you can peel

or wash in purified water, and always wash your hands before eating. All foods served as part of the trip are prepared and washed with purified water.

The combination of warm temperatures, humidity and strenuous exercise greatly increases your body's need for fluids. It's extremely important to drink plenty of liquids to protect yourself against heatstroke and dehydration. Drink as often as possible—don't wait until you are thirsty!

If you're taking any medications, be certain to bring enough to last throughout your trip. Note that most basic medications are not readily available in Myanmar. Your Trip Leaders will carry full first-aid kits, but supplies are limited. In addition to basics like ibuprofen, we highly recommend bringing some over-the-counter remedies for diarrhea and upset stomachs to have on-hand in an emergency.

For more specific and up-to-date information on health precautions, consult your doctor, the consulate in your area or the CDC at wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel or 800-CDC-INFO (232-4636). For World Health Organization disease outbreak reports, visit www.who.int/csr/don/en. For general travel advisory information, visit the US State Department's website at travel.state.gov.

Air Quality

The end of January through March becomes increasingly dry in Northern Thailand. It's during this time when farmers prepare their land for the coming harvest, which results in more **dust and smoke (from burning vegetation) in the air**, especially in the rural areas. As we bike and hike on dirt roads that are subject to **higher levels of particulates**, there may be a moderate health concern for anyone who is unusually sensitive to air pollution. It's a good idea to bring a bandana or mask to wear over your nose and mouth, and a pair of sport sunglasses to protect your eyes from dust and debris, especially if you wear contact lenses.

Helpful Information

Visit www.backroads.com/trip_prep for links to other websites offering helpful travel information.



TRIP DOCUMENTS & MORE

Travel Documents

A valid passport is required for travel to Thailand. A visa is not required for US citizens, provided you are staying in the country less than 90 days.

Note that some countries require your passport to be valid for a specified amount of time beyond your departure date (up to 6 months). Be sure to check the expiration date and physical condition of your passport and verify the travel document requirements with the consulates of the countries you are planning to visit during your trip. Passports issued to minors under the age of 16 are set to expire every 5 years. Check your expiration dates carefully!

The best way to ensure that you have the most current information on entry requirements is by contacting the Royal Thai Embassy in Washington, DC (202-944-3600; washingtondc.thaiembassy.org) or the Thai consulates in Chicago, Los Angeles, or New York City. You may also find helpful information on the US State Department's website: travel.state.gov.

IMPORTANT: Each time you renew your passport, you are issued a new passport number. Depending on the trip, some of our service providers (like hotels or airlines) may require current passport information for each guest, so if you renew your passport after booking your trip, please make sure to update us with the new information prior to your departure date.

We recommend that you make two photocopies of your airline ticket/e-ticket confirmation and your passport. Leave one set of copies at home with a friend or relative, and bring one set with you, keeping it separate from the original documents.

Travel Protection Plan

Backroads' travel protection plan, offered through our preferred insurance company, provides coverage for trip cancellation or interruption, trip delay, medical expenses and evacuation/repatriation, lost baggage and more. We know that the unexpected sometimes happens and we

strongly recommend protecting your travel investment. If you're interested in purchasing the plan, give us a call at 800-462-2848.

Cancellations & Refunds

If you must cancel your reservation, a fee will be charged. Please review your trip invoice for cancellation policy details. **Exceptions to this policy cannot be made for any reason**, including those of weather or personal emergencies. There is no refund for joining a trip late or leaving early. Private rooms and staterooms, bike rentals and internal air charges are considered part of the trip price and are subject to cancellation fees. You are required to provide a signed *Release of Liability*, *Assumption of All Risks and Arbitration Agreement* and a completed *Personal Information Form* prior to your trip departure. If you fail to provide a signed release form, you will not be allowed to join the trip and will be subject to Backroads' cancellation policy. For complete details on our cancellation policy, see www.backroads.com.

Transfers

With the exception of Private and Custom Trips, you may transfer from one trip to another without penalty, within the parameters of your trip's transfer policy. When transferring to a different date or trip, if the trip costs more than your original trip, you are responsible for the difference in cost. Please review your trip invoice for additional transfer policy details. After the allowable transfer date, our cancellation policy applies. Cancellation penalties will not be charged if you are able to fill the vacancy with another guest(s).

Itinerary Changes

If unforeseen circumstances require a change in the trip itinerary, Backroads will make every effort to select alternative accommodations of the same quality and to keep the activity modifications minimal.

Electronics & Other Valuables

It is best to leave valuables at home. If you must bring valuables on the trip, please understand that they are 100 percent your responsibility, regardless of what anyone (including leaders) might tell you. Cash, jewelry and passports are especially important to keep in your possession. It's not safe to leave valuables in Backroads vans; while not common, break-ins do happen. You may choose to lock them in your room's safe, if one is

available to you. If you're concerned about forgetting items in the safe (easy to do!), a good trick is to leave something on top of it that you can't forget, such as a single shoe.

On Biking and Multi-Adventure Trips, if detachable bike bags are available to you, you can store your valuables in the bag and take it with you when you're not biking.

Please note that our bike bags are water-resistant but not waterproof. Be sure to protect your valuables from the elements accordingly.

Although we will transport your valuables during your trip as a convenience, **we do not assume responsibility for any damage or loss.** This policy applies to personal electronics as well as other items, such as luggage, jewelry, and fragile and delicate accessories, whether purchased on the trip or otherwise.

After your trip ends, if you realize that you've accidentally left an item behind in Backroads' possession, we'll do our best to honor return requests. However, we're not able to guarantee returns based on leader availability, limitations to find and send items (our leaders are on the go!) and possible shipping issues. If you've left an item at a hotel, please contact that hotel directly to make arrangements.

On-Your-Own Activities

During the trip, there may be time for you to enjoy some of the region's favorite physical activities on your own. These activities may be a highlight for those who choose to do them, but due to liability and because they're not to everyone's liking, these activities are not included in the price of the trip. Backroads does not run these activities and is not responsible for their operation, and makes no representation concerning that entity's liability insurance or the existence of any such insurance. Participation is at your own risk.



WORLD BICYCLE RELIEF®

MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT

We are delighted to support World Bicycle Relief's mission of providing bicycles to rural workers, students and healthcare providers worldwide, especially women. Our involvement with WBR complements our efforts to promote and improve biking in communities where our guests live and visit.

VISIT WORLDBIKICLERELIEF.ORG

GETTING ACTIVE FOR YOUR TRIP

NAVIGATION OPTIONS ON THIS TRIP

Turn-by-turn paper directions included.

Downloadable GPS files available for use on your own device—log into your account at www.backroads.com 2 weeks before your trip for more details.

Activity Level

The routes on this trip are rated Levels 1–3.

ACTIVITY LEVEL	Avg. Time in hours	BIKING		WALKING	
		Avg. Miles	Max Elev. Gain in feet	Avg. Miles	Max Elev. Gain in feet
1	2-3 hrs	8-22	1000'	2-5	800'
2	2-4 hrs	18-32	2200'	4-7	1300'
3	3-5 hrs	26-42	3400'	5-9	2000'
4	4-6 hrs	36-54	4400'	6-11	3000'
5	5-7+ hrs	48-70+	4400'+	7-13+	4000'+

Review the "Activity Level" section on the web for more details on daily route options.

Route & Terrain Notes

The terrain on this trip ranges from level to rolling with a few steeper hills.

Remember, take your time and go at your own pace—you're on vacation! Your Backroads Trip Leaders are there to provide the support you need when you're

ready for a snack, a cool drink, or a lift back if you're done for the day. Most days you'll have a choice of mileage options, so you can decide how active you want to be—it's always up to you.

Conditioning Tips

Preparing for Your Trip

Every Backroads trip is designed to appeal to a wide variety of interests and fitness levels. We know your pace may vary from one day to the next—and your traveling companions' may differ somewhat from yours. So we present a range of mileage options, and each day you decide exactly what and how much you want to do.

Before your trip, we suggest biking regularly and hitting a few hills whenever you can. Review the route options in the daily itinerary for the range of mileages offered on this trip. But mostly, just show up and have fun!

Cadence & Gearing

The steady rate at which you pedal is called "cadence." Ideally you should try to maintain a constant high cadence in any gear. This technique not only lets you bike for longer periods without tiring, but also puts less strain on your knees. Shifting to lower gears when riding up hills will help you maintain the same cadence you established on more level terrain and get you up the hills without overextending yourself. Using lower gears also helps you to be more efficient when riding against the wind.

Pacing & Endurance

It's important to pace yourself throughout the day, so you have the stamina to ride or walk as far and as long as you'd like. Keep your energy level constant by eating high-energy snacks (your leaders will have plenty on hand). Drink fluids often—before you are thirsty—to avoid dehydration.

Resources

One book we recommend is *The Bicycling Big Book of Cycling for Beginners* by Tori Bortman. It offers valuable advice for new cyclists, from choosing the proper clothing to basic riding and etiquette skills.

Visit *Bicycling* magazine's website at www.bicycling.com to browse for tips on how to

improve your technique—as well as advice on nutrition, gear and safety, and basic bike maintenance.

Your local outdoor store can be an excellent resource too; ask to speak with an experienced employee.

Staying Comfortable: FAQs

Q: How do I prevent soreness while bicycling?

A: Think padding! Padded shorts make sitting on the bicycle seat a lot more comfortable, and padded bicycling gloves help prevent blisters and hand numbness.

Q: Should I buy a pair of biking shoes for my trip?

A: Rigid shoes maximize the power of your pedaling stroke, but there's really no need to purchase a pair of biking shoes just for this trip. Any athletic shoes—provided they have stiff soles—will be sufficient.

Q: It's not really going to rain during the trip, is it?

A: Well, it just might! Rain is possible no matter where you travel. Your best bet for staying comfortable during a shower is to wear quality rain gear that is both waterproof and breathable.

Q: Does wearing layers really make a difference?

A: Yes! The trick for staying comfortable in fluctuating temperatures is to wear three basic non-cotton layers of lightweight clothing: innerwear (to wick moisture away from your skin), insulating garments (for warmth) and outerwear (to protect against wind or rain). The different layers let you add or remove clothing in response to changes in the weather or your internal temperature.

BIKING SAFETY & GEAR

Rules of Biking Safety

Good judgment and alertness are the most important factors for safe bicycling. Follow these rules at all times to ensure your safety and the safety of those around you.

- **Wear a helmet. Bicycling without a helmet is extremely dangerous. Backroads requires that all guests wear helmets while biking.**
- Ride predictably, defensively and in a straight line.
- When biking with others, ride single file and maintain several bike lengths between cyclists. Allow more distance when riding downhill.
- Do not use headphones while biking; you might not hear traffic coming up behind you.
- Be as courteous to motorists as you would like them to be to you, and get completely off the road when you stop.
- Keep your speed under control on downhills. Use both brakes simultaneously, but be aware that the front brake is more powerful than the rear. Gently pump your brakes on long descents for maximum effectiveness. Check brakes frequently to make sure nothing is loose or dangling.
- Wet slippery roads require extra caution and greater stopping distance—especially on downhills. Wet brakes must be dried by pumping before they have an effect, so start braking early in damp weather.
- When riding on sand or gravel, downshift into low gear so you can spin your pedals faster while still going slowly.
- Obey all traffic regulations. Stop at all stop signs and red lights, yield the right-of-way and use hand signals when turning, slowing down or stopping. Ride on the right side of the road (except in countries where traffic moves on the left), at a safe distance from traffic.

- Do not ride too close to the bike in front of you; keeping several bike lengths between you and the bike ahead gives you more time to brake or go around obstacles.
- Be cautious around road obstacles. It is safest to dismount and walk your bike across railroad tracks and cattle guards. If you decide to bike across them, do so at right angles. Avoid potholes, metal grates, glass, rocks and thorns. Ride at a safe distance from parked cars and watch for vehicles pulling out and/or doors opening in your path.
- You must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians. Do not ride on sidewalks.
- When making a left turn (or a right turn in countries where traffic moves on the left), it is safest to pull off the road, dismount, look both ways for traffic and then walk your bike across the road. Never follow other riders when turning without confirming for yourself that it is safe to do so.
- Listen carefully for approaching motorists. (Look over your shoulder only if you can do so without swerving.)
- We do not bike after dark on Backroads trips. If you decide to do so on your own, you must bring your own bike equipped with a white light on the front, a red light on the rear and reflectors on the spokes and pedals.
- If a dog chases you and you are not able to ride away quickly, stop your bike and walk out of the dog's territory, keeping the bike between you and the animal.
- Wear appropriate clothing for bicycling. Brightly colored clothes make you more visible to motorists. Double-tie shoelaces and tuck them inside your shoes.
- You should wear corrective lenses while bicycling if you use them while driving.

in the activities on this trip. If you'd prefer to have your own pedals (and you're comfortable riding with them), helmet or seat, feel free to bring these along. Your own gear can help to make your time on the bike as comfortable as possible, especially if you're someone who likes to log a lot of miles. Your Backroads leaders will be happy to put on your pedals and seat for you at the beginning of the trip.

Bike Equipment

The following items are included with all Backroads titanium bikes. Trip Leaders also have full tool kits on hand and are available to do mechanical repairs.

- bike helmet
- two water bottles
- safety triangle
- lock and cable
- tube and patch kit with tire levers
- pedals (with toe clips/straps, if requested)
- rear rack and reflective trunk bag
- wide range of gears
- GPS device



Bringing Your Own Gear

Backroads provides everything you'll need to participate

WHERE TO STAY BEFORE & AFTER YOUR TRIP

For help arranging hotel accommodations for before and after your Backroads trip, or an extension to your trip, please work with your own travel advisor, or you may work with our preferred travel agency. Their professional expert travel advisors are ready to assist you with any of your travel needs. Please note that they are an independent travel agency and consulting and ticketing fees may apply, based on the services requested. Simply ask your Backroads Trip Consultant to connect you! You can also book directly with the hotel, or through a travel website.

Please note that Backroads does not block rooms and does not offer special rates for pre- and post-trip stays. If you plan on extending your stay at our first night's hotel before the trip starts or our last night's hotel when the trip ends, let the hotel reservations agent know that you're traveling with Backroads—you may be able to avoid changing rooms. **We recommend booking your rooms as early as possible, especially during peak travel season!**

The following is a selection of recommended properties that span a range of prices, amenities and locations. Refer to the Hotel Room Rates guide for the starting double-occupancy rates, which were accurate at time of printing. Note that rates are subject to change and some hotels may require a minimum stay.

HOTEL ROOM RATES
IN US DOLLARS PER NIGHT

- \$501 and up..... ◆◆◆◆
- \$300 to \$500..... ◆◆◆
- \$201 to \$300..... ◆◆
- Up to \$200..... ◆

Chiang Rai Area

Hotel map: bit.ly/ChiangRaiHotels

Four Seasons Tented Camp Golden Triangle

This leading hotel chain's foray into luxury tent accommodations is impressive, giving guests an exotic experience not available in a brick-and-mortar hotel. A two-night minimum stay is required. *Condé Nast Traveler* Gold List. (pool, spa) | 499 Moo 1 Tumbol Wieng Amphur, Chiang Rai | www.fourseasons.com/goldentriangle | +66 (0)53-910200 | 15 tents | Rates: ◆◆◆◆

Phuket

Hotel map: bit.ly/PhuketPPH

Anantara Layan Phuket Resort

Treat yourself to a stay at this luxury resort, set on a lush hillside overlooking a pristine beach. (pool, spa) | 168 Moo 6, Layan Beach Soi 4, Cherngtalay | www.anantara.com | +66-(0)76-317200 | 91 rooms, suites & villas | Rates: ◆◆◆◆

Banyan Tree Phuket

This lovely resort features Thai-inspired villas—each with their own private pool—nestled around a lagoon and next to a golf course. (pool, spa) | 33, 33/27 Moo 4, Srisoonthorn Road, Cherngtalay | www.banyantree.com | +66-(0)76-372400 | 217 rooms | Rates: ◆◆◆◆

JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa

Just steps from Mai Khao Beach, this upscale hotel offers easy access to the islands of Phang Nga Bay, Old Town Phuket and the Royal Phuket Marina. (pool, spa) | 231 Moo 3 Mai Khao, Talang | +66-(0)76-338000 | www.marriott.com | 262 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆◆

Bangkok, Thailand

Hotel map: bit.ly/BangkokPPH

Mandarin Oriental Bangkok

With a prime location overlooking the Chao Phraya River, the illustrious Mandarin Oriental features one of the world's finest spas. *Condé Nast Traveler* Gold List; *Travel*

+ *Leisure World's Best*. (pool, spa) | 48 Oriental Avenue | www.mandarinoriental.com/bangkok | +66-(2)-659-9000 | 393 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Peninsula Bangkok

The Peninsula features outstanding city views and spacious colonial-style guest rooms. *Travel + Leisure World's Best*. (pool, spa) | 333 Charoennakorn Road | www.peninsula.com | +66-(2)-861-2888 | 370 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

AriyasomVilla

Recently refurbished into a boutique hotel, AriyasomVilla maintains many of the attributes and all of the charm of a traditional Thai-style house but with all the modern facilities and amenities. (pool, spa) | 65 Sukhumvit Soi 1, Klongtoey | www.ariyasom.com | +66-(2)-254-8880 | 25 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆

Four Seasons Hotel Bangkok

The Four Seasons Hotel Bangkok is highly regarded for its flawless service, sophisticated décor of Thai antiques and silks, state-of-the-art health club, elegant boutiques and variety of restaurants. *Travel + Leisure World's Best*. (pool, spa) | 155 Rajadamri Road | www.fourseasons.com/bangkok | 800-819-5053 (from the US) or +66-(2)-126-8866 | 354 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆

Sukhothai

A member of Leading Hotels of the World, Sukhothai takes both its name and its architectural inspiration from Sukhothai, the first capital of Siam, founded in 1238. The hotel is situated in the prestigious South Sathorn Road neighborhood near Lumpini Park in the heart of Bangkok. (pool, spa) | 13/3 South Sathorn Road | www.sukhothai.com | +66-(2)-344-8888 | 210 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆

Arun Residence

This four-story boutique hotel stands alongside the Chao Phraya River in Bangkok's old city. If you're a light sleeper, keep in mind that the nearby river is a bustling thoroughfare and you *will* hear the noise of water taxis, river barges and crowing roosters, so earplugs may be in order! Consider calling ahead for directions to Arun, as

many taxi drivers have not heard of it. | 36-38 Soi Pratoon Nok Yoong (off Maharat Road), Rattanakosin Island | www.arunresidence.com | +66-(2)-221-9158 | 6 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆

Landmark Bangkok Hotel

Set in the heart of Bangkok, this modern 31-story hotel offers many amenities. You can walk to several major shopping complexes and a variety of great restaurants, and the Nana Skytrain stop is right outside. (pool) | 138 Sukhumvit Road | www.landmarkbangkok.com | +66-(2)-254-0404 | 414 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆

Metropolitan Bangkok

The Metropolitan Bangkok offers chic accommodations near Lumpini Park, the Skytrain and subway. Guests can dine at acclaimed chef David Thompson's Nahm restaurant (whose London location has earned a Michelin star). (pool, spa) | 27 South Sathorn Road | www.comohotels.com/metropolitanbangkok | +66-(2)-625-3333 | 171 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆

Novotel Suvarnabhumi Airport Hotel

The Novotel is a 5-minute walk via an underground walkway or a short shuttle ride from Bangkok's international airport. (pool, spa) | Moo 1 Nongprue Bang Phli | www.novotel.com | +66-(2)-131-1111 | 612 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆



SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

LUGGAGE REMINDERS

Please limit your luggage to one medium-sized suitcase (we recommend 25"–28", preferably not hard case) and one small carry-on bag. Be sure to mark your luggage with your contact information.

Essential

Travel Items

- international travel documents (i.e. passport, visa, etc.)
- photocopy of front page of passport (kept in a separate place from passport)
- wallet (credit cards, bank cards, etc.)
- cash for incidentals & leader gratuities
- airline tickets/e-ticket confirmation details
- sealable, quart-size plastic bags for stowing small liquid containers, swimsuit, etc.
- toiletries (including sunscreen & lip ointment)
- medications & copies of prescriptions
- list of important addresses & contact numbers

Biking Clothing & Gear

Some of these items, such as biking shoes and pedals, are suggested only if you're accustomed to and feel safe riding with them.

- stiff-soled sneakers or biking shoes (& pedals)
- biking socks
- biking shorts (preferably with padding/chamois)
- short-sleeved biking jerseys
- non-cotton base layers of varying weights
- short-fingered biking gloves
- sunglasses (with retention strap)
- lightweight biking jacket or vest

Active Clothing (Non-Biking)

- walking/hiking shorts and/or lightweight pants
- walking/running shoes
- hat with brim
- swimsuit

Rain Gear & Cold Weather Clothing

You may not need all of the items listed here, but they are necessary to stay comfortable in case of rain or unseasonably cold weather.

- waterproof (breathable) rain jacket & pants
- arm & knee/leg warmers (for biking)
- toe covers/booties (worn over bike shoes)
- waterproof/water-resistant warm gloves
- lightweight, but warm, cap that fits under helmet (skullcap) or headband that covers ears

Non-Active Clothing

- clothing & shoes for downtime & restaurants
- lightweight jacket (like fleece) or warm sweater
- warm hat

Backroads provides water bottles & cyclometer or GPS device.

Optional

- camera & charger (**remember to enter our Guest Photo Contest!**)
- cell phone & charger (consider a battery pack for on-the-go charging)
- voltage converter/plug adapter (if applicable)
- helmet and/or saddle (if you prefer your own)
- bike mirror and/or flashing daytime bike lights
- clear glasses/replaceable lenses for rainy days
- sport sandals and/or flip-flops
- notebook/travel journal & pens
- guidebook and/or field guides
- reading material
- earplugs