



# TOP 10 EXPERIENCES

THAILAND



## Exotic and tropical Thailand has something for everyone.

From the postcard-perfect beaches to the bustling streets of Bangkok, Australians are drawn to the country's diverse culture and beauty.

1

### Cities to visit

**Chiang Mai** - The 'Rose of the North' is surrounded by mountains and lush countryside.

**Kanchanaburi** - Home to the Bridge over the River Kwai, Kanchanaburi is incredibly beautiful with easily accessible waterfalls and national parks.

**Bangkok** - Thailand's capital city is full of hidden gems to explore, including temples, palaces, vibrant markets and nightlife.

**Phuket** - At 48km long, it's one of Thailand's largest islands and famous for beautiful beaches and the party destination Patong.

**Ko Samui** - An island of great natural beauty and variety. A perfect place to hang out on the beach all day with a cold drink.

2

### Animal encounters

In Thailand you'll encounter many exotic animals. Orphaned or rescued elephants roam free in the **Elephant Nature Park**, Chiang Mai. Giant Mekong catfish try to avoid fisherman on the Mekong River. And monkeys dine in style in November at the Monkey Festival in Lopburi where residents lay banquets of food to honour them.

3

### Thai street food

Thai markets and busy shopping streets sell an array of street foods. Here's some treats for the brave:

**Laarb Mote Daeng** - Prepared with red ants and their eggs (it's said to be delicious!).

**Durian** - This popular fruit is found everywhere — and it's known as one of the smelliest fruits in the world.

**Deep Fried Insects** - Usually crickets, grasshoppers, worms and sometimes small deep fried frogs.

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### Festival fever

With so many festivals to celebrate it's little wonder that Thailand is known as the Land of Smiles.

**Songkran Festival** - Hugely popular with tourists, it involves splashing water between friends and relatives. During April you will see people with water guns and buckets ready to playfully splash a passer-by.

**Loy Krathong** - A beautiful festival, usually held in November, where people head to the water at night to float flowers and candles or lit lantern balloons.

**Phi Ta Khon** - Thailand's most colourful festival, held in the Dan Sai district, is better known as the Ghost Festival. Locals dress up as spirits in bright costumes and masks and dance the night away.

Global Assistance

Allianz



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## Hundreds of beaches

One of the most popular drawcards to Thailand is the beautiful beaches that line the south of the country. The tropical humid weather ensures popularity with tourists ready to cool off in the beautiful waters. With a bit of research online, a spoiled-for-choice traveller can find their 'perfect beach'. From party beaches with beachside bars and nightclubs (Pattaya, Patong and Koh Phangan) to relaxing beachside bungalows and jungle fringes (Ko Lanta or Prachaup), there really is something for everybody.

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## Fields and jungles

In contrast to the beautiful beaches, **Khao Yai National Park** in central Thailand offers excellent trekking and wildlife observation opportunities, or head to **Doi Inthanon National Park** in north Thailand for the country's tallest mountain and beautiful waterfalls. The Thai jungles aren't as wild as those in Africa, but you will still find elephants, exotic birds and monkeys and perhaps come across a jungle or hill tribe. The scenic countryside also includes many rice fields, where you will see locals working (rice is one of the major exports and local people pride themselves on the quality).

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## A country of temples

You cannot go to Thailand without visiting one of the estimated 400,000 Buddhist temples that are spread around the countryside. A Thai temple is known as a *wat* and usually consists of a collection of buildings, shrines and monuments enclosed by a wall.

**Wat Phra Kaew | Temple of the Emerald Buddha** - Located in Bangkok, this temple is in the grounds of the Grand Palace and holds a Buddha carved from a single jade stone.

**Wat Pho | Temple of the Reclining Buddha** - Holds a golden Buddha that measures 46m long and 15m high.

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## Get pampered

What better place to get a Thai massage than in Thailand itself. Thai massages usually involve deep massage and stretching on the floor or a firm mattress. A good Thai massage results in lowered stress levels, relief of tension and stiffness in muscles, and improvements in energy levels and blood circulation. In short, it makes you feel really good, which is perfect for holidays!

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## Watch Muay Thai boxing

Witness the most popular spectator sport in Thailand as professionals take each other on in the martial art of Muay Thai. Muay Thai attracts a mass of visitors and tourists who come not only to view the passion of the fighters but to hear the musical and ceremonial aspects that accompany the fight.

Upon entering the ring and performing prayers, competitors commence the *ram muay*, which is a personal ritual appearing like a dance. It is usually accompanied by music, providing a rhythm to the boxer's movements. **Lumpinee Boxing Stadium** in Bangkok is considered the home of modern Muay Thai and is the best place to watch a fight.

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## ANZAC history

Walk in the paths of our ANZACs by visiting the **Bridge over the River Kwai**, **Hellfire Pass** and the **Death Railway Museum** located in Kananchaburi. You can visit the Australian-owned museum, walk across the bridge and walk through the tracks of the pass. Australian Prisoners of War worked on the cutting at Hellfire pass — one of the deepest and most dramatic cuttings — for the Thai-Burma railway during World War II.

