

137

PILLARS
HOUSE

NEIGHBOR
HOOD
PROGRAM

CULTURAL GUIDE CHIANG MAI.

NIMMAN- HAEMIN.

WAT GATE.

CULTURAL GUIDE CHIANG MAI

Wat Doi Suthep: Fifteen kilometers west of Chiang Mai town, this mountaintop temple 1,053 meters (3,500 feet) above sea level provides exceptional vistas of the surrounding Himalayan foothills and is also visible from most anywhere in Chiang Mai. A holy place for at least the last 1200 years, Doi Suthep Mountain was originally inhabited by the Lua people, who believed the souls of their ancestors lived at the summit. The temple was built in the late 14th century when Buddhism became the dominant religion here. According to legend, King Geu Na ordered that a relic of the holy Buddha be strapped to the back of a sacred white elephant that was turned loose. The elephant stopped at the summit of Doi Suthep and the king ordered that a golden pagoda be built here to house a sacred Buddha relic. Climb 306 steps up an almost vertical staircase, or take the cable car to this magnificent Lanna-style shimmering gilded chedi, or pagoda, that is today one of the most sacred in Thailand.

Wat Phra Singh: One of the grandest and most famous Lanna temples in Chiang Mai, this site known as the Monastery of the Lion Buddha built in 1345 is located on the western side of the medieval walled city of Chiang Mai. Inside and to the right you'll find the three-tiered roof Ho Trai, or scripture repository, considered the finest of its kind in northern Thailand. Continue on to the exquisite gold lacquered.

Wat Chedi Luang: Originally built in 1481, this temple in the old city once enshrined the sacred Emerald Buddha now displayed in Bangkok's Wat Phra Kaeo, back when the chedi towered to more than 300 feet. Though it was partially destroyed by an earthquake in 1545, it remained the city's tallest structure for 500 years. These days the quiet temple's grounds house a Buddhist university where visitors come from around the world for daily monk chats.

Wat Chiang Man: Built in the 24th century by King Mengrai the founder of Chiang Mai, this temple is believed to be Chiang Mai's oldest. Students of architecture will note the multiple styles present. Some look entirely Lanna while others show foreign influences that reflect the transmission of Buddhism from as far away as Sri Lanka. Wat Chiang Man is most famous for its two Buddhas: the miniature crystal White Emerald Buddha, or Phra Sae Tang Khamani and the marble Phra Sila Buddha.

Wat U Mong: Built in the forested foothills of Doi Suthep Mountain, this 14th century temple is named for its distinguishing feature, as among the Thai word for tunnel. The forested grounds beneath and surrounded the gilded chedi are crisscrossed with tunnels, allegedly because this temple was built to keep one of its original monks who was highly regarded but slightly mad, from wandering off.

Wat Suan Dok: Otherwise known as Flower Garden Temple, this 14th century Lanna complex is known for its pleasant tropical surroundings as well as its 4.7 meter high bronze Chiang Saen Buddha. The 48 meter Sri Lankan style chedi is said to house a relic of the Buddha and is surrounded on the outside by seven-headed nagas, or snakes emerging from

the mouths of sea creatures known as makaras, typical of classical Lanna style.

Darabhirom Museum Palace: Her Highness Princess Dara Rasmi was born in 1873 to Phra Chao Indavijayanonda, the 7th Ruler of Chiang Mai's Lanna Kingdom. When Chiang Mai became part of Siam, the ruler presented Dara Rasmi to be the consort of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), as was the practice of the day. This European style building was the last home of Her Highness who filled it with her regal clothing, favorite musical instruments, period furnishings and Lanna handicrafts from surrounding communities she helped support in her later years. Her offspring turned the palace into a museum after her death. Visiting is a peaceful and enlightening wander through the past.

Wat Gate Khar Rham Museum: Wat Gate Khar Rham Temple, housed in a fine teak building from 1796 when Chiang Mai was still a colony of Bangkok, was saved from the wreckage by Jack Bain, the last owner of what has become 137 Pillars House. Bain organized thousands of historical items into the museum's collection that ranges from coins dating back hundreds of years to an old gramophone with a Dinah Shore 78 rpm still on the turntable. Wander here among walls and shelves crammed tightly with ancient farm tools and pottery, antique drums, piles of rare fabric and period clothing some of which once belonged to Chiang Mai royalty, Buddhist wood carvings and an extensive gallery of old Chiang Mai photographs.

Iron Bridge: Just next to Nawarat Bridge over the Ping River, this architectural landmark makes a scenic spot from which to view Chiang Mai's sublime sunsets.

Chiang Mai Gymkhana Club: Records show that in 1898 around fifty foreigners lived in the north of Thailand. That year, one well connected Thai and thirteen British teak wallahs including Louis Leonowens founded the Chiang Mai Gymkhana Club on 40 acres of riverfront parkland with its stated mission “the encouragement of sport in Northern Siam.” There was horse racing and polo, golf, cricket, tennis, a now unknown activity called Bumble Puppy and of course parties, dances and drinking. The Club also became the center of foreign women’s lives in the north, a gathering place while their husbands spent months at a time deep in the jungle. Today, the sleepy Gymkhana Club is open to men and women of all nationalities and boasts facilities that include a 9-hole golf course, a driving range, two flood lit clay tennis courts, two squash courts, a cricket ground with four turf wickets of international standard, an artificial pitch and practice nets.

Warorot Market: Chiang Mai’s largest daily market is located near the Ping Riverside and was built in 1910 by Jao Warorot of the Lanna royal family. Inside, the market is divided into three levels with each floor for different goods: First floor for food and highland preserved fruits, second for clothing and textiles and at the top, wooden carvings and other artifacts. The most famous souvenirs here are edible, northern style foods like kaeb mu (crispy pig skin), moo yor (traditional Thai pork sausage), and nam phrik num (traditional northern style green chilly paste). Alongside the market on Praisani Road, hill tribe people sell authentic tribal handicrafts plus tropical fresh fruits and flowers from the highlands.

Vieng Kum Kam: Frequent flooding caused King Mangrai to move the northern capital from here to Chiang Mai in around

1288 but this settlement remained important throughout the Lanna period. The surrounding rice paddies and traditional village houses make this a peaceful and easy day’s escape from Chiang Mai.

Chiang Mai National Museum: Open Wednesday to Sunday with a large collection of religious antiques and royal artifacts, the national museum provides a pleasant historical overview of the Lanna kingdom and hill-tribes through straightforward displays with English explanations. The structure itself is decorated with colorful porcelain chips and is believed to represent five Buddhist monks’ alms bowls that symbolize the Lord Buddha.

Chiang Mai by Bicycle: One of the best ways to see real Chiang Mai, around the city moat and into the old city, is on two wheels. Allow us to organise your transport and provide a detailed map, as well as make recommendations for worthy cultural, shopping and dining sites along your route.

Make Merit in the Morning: Rise before the sun to join worshippers at Srisoda Temple at the foot of Doi Suthep Mountain for the daily ritual of providing food to monks who study here. Every morning these monks walk up and down the streets around Srisoda Temple with empty bowls, giving people the chance to gain merit by filling that bowl with food as monks are not allowed to store or cook food. The person gains merit, a vital part of life for most Thai people, and the monk gets fed.

NIMMANHAEMIN ROAD GUIDE

Follow in the footsteps of Thai trendsetters to the boutiques of Nimmanhaemin Road on the far side of Chiang Mai's old city for some of Southeast Asia's most desirable designs. This one convenient stretch is easily accomplished on foot and can be broken up with lunch and snack breaks. New shops and cafes open almost daily while other venues disappear in a flash. We intend this 137 Pillars House guide to lead you to our favorites while encouraging you to discover your own by detouring down the soi, or alleys, off Nimmanhaemin Road, every one of them chock-a-block with Thai style.

Starting at the top of Nimmanhaemin Road...

Nandhakwang

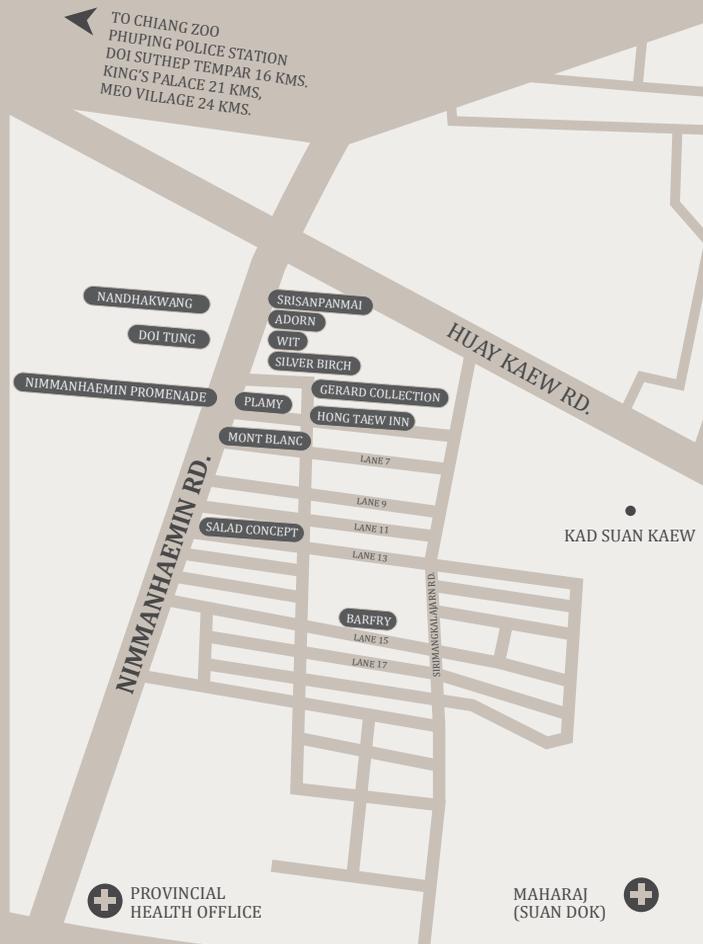
(#6/13-14 Nimmanhaemin Road; 053 222 261)

Find colorful soft furnishings galore inside this reasonably priced, homespun haven of bedspreads, table linens and teddy bears.

Doi Tung

(Pls call for address; 053 217 981; www.doitung.org)

Profits from the sale of these Issey Miyake-inspired clothes and shoes, raffia rugs and stylishly slouchy handbags support livelihood development projects for northern Thai communities under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. Downstairs, settle into the comfy



seating to sip mangosteen juice and nibble macadamia nut cookies, a specialty of the house.

Hong Taew Inn

(#95/16-17, Nimmanhaemin Road, 053 218 333) Minister Taksin Shinawatra, this homey, fan cooled eatery serves authentic northern Thai fare like pomelo salad, coconut curry with minced pork and the signature Hong Taew fish.

Gerard Collection

(#6/23-24 Nimmanhaemin Road, 053 220 604) Walls are lined with woven bamboo and leather bags at this sustainably chic shop, each one finished with buffalo horn, sterling silver or both. See the second showroom down Soi 3 (#2/8 Soi 3, Nimmanhaemin Road, 053 221 151)

Turn down Soi 1 to find....

Srisanpanmai

(#6 Soi 1 Nimmanhaemin Road, 053 894 717) Hilltribeparaphernaliagets piled high at this ethnic emporium. Rummage around for vintage sarongs and intricately engraved silver jewelry or opt for more practical items such as hand loomed scarves in a rainbow of soft cottons and traditional pillow squares to support the back on long car rides around the region.

Adorn

(#22 Soi 1 Nimmanhaemin Road, 66 53 895 136) Traditional ikat inspires men's and women's clothing and accessories here, all of them handmade around the Golden Triangle, with custom tailoring available.

Wit

(Apartment F, Soi 1 Nimmanhaemin Road, 66 53 217 544 and a second outlet at Soi 3, 12 Nimmanhaemin Road, 053 222 468) French artist Fabienne Jouvin displays her quirky yet sleek modern ceramics, geometric carpets and shiny lacquered Asian inspired furniture in these inviting white-washed spaces.

Silver Birch

(#28 Soi 1 Nimmanhaemin Road, 053 227 474) Prepare for a smile to cross your face upon entering this Gepetto's workshop of toys, each one hand carved from locally grown mango wood, from tiny pigs to the oversized dragonfly.

Returning back onto the main drag....

Palmy

(Soi 5, Marche on Nimmanhaemin Road, 081 472 0607) Pitiporn Batpim combines her training at London College of Fashion with indigenous influences like Thai nun shoes for a consistently stylish footwear selection in butter soft leathers that can also be made to order.

Nimmanhaemin Promenade

(Soi 4, Nimmanhaemin Road) offers kitsch in a convenient mini-mall. The street facing Chabaa (14/32 Nimmanhaemin Road, 053 221 824; www.atchabaa.com) is a closet size space overflowing with a kaleidoscope of cotton sundresses, Nepalese bejeweled belts and piles of shimmeing Indian bangles. Cross the courtyard to Boho Rhapsody (Promenade Room 4, 081 167 6768) where two sweet sisters sell their intricately

embroidered dresses and accessories. At the back you'll find Maneeslip (053 289 252) for bespoke shoes for men and women, plus ready to wear too.

Mont Blanc

(Soi 7, Nimmanhaemin Road, 053 210 776)

Nip into this Japanese dessert café for the triple chocolate cake, blueberry cheesecake, tiramisu and coffee cookies. If you feel the need for sweets before Soi 7, there is a larger story branch down Soi 2.

Salad Concept

(Soi 13, Nimmanhaemin Road, 053 894 455)

Plates here overflow with healthy, edible delights grown locally. Customize your salad or select one of their reliable combinations. All of these crunchy creations taste even better wash down with a fresh fruit shake.

Barfry

(Nimmanhaemin Road Soi 15; 085 000 8503)

Sometimes nothing solves a snack attack like French fries, upgraded here with swanky dips like anchovy mayonnaise, spicy Mexican salsa and Japanese samurai sauce.

WAT GATE

Along Charoen Rat

ComeDara

(#193; 66 53 248 751; www.comedara.com)

Eye-catching, sometimes psychedelic, contemporary Thai art in a sprawling riverside European mansion. (ART GALLERY)

Lan La Moon

(#160-162; 66 53 262 263)

Original paintings and photographs by Chiang Mai born artist Ruchipat "Pop" Suvansai and his friends. Next door at Mou Moon his wife purveys her delicately chic hand tooled leather goods. (ART GALLERY & SHOP)

Color Factory

(#154-156 Charoenrat Road;

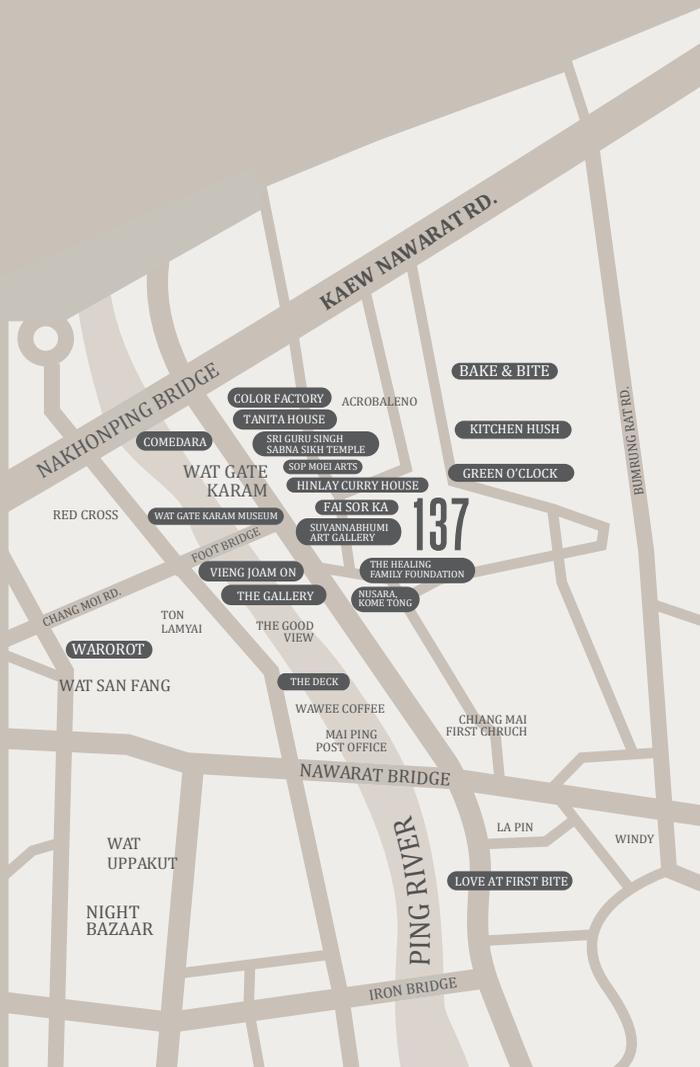
66 53 246 448; www.colourfac.com)

Kaleidoscopic elephant sculptures designed by bold face names like Mark Jacobs and Isaac Mizrahi with 20% of profits donated to support Asian elephants in need. (SHOP)

Tanita House

(#152; 66 53 243 755; www.anteaks.com)

Palm fringed compound of old Thai houses filled with local antiques and artifacts. (SHOP)



Sop Moei Arts

(#150/10; 66 53 306 123; www.sopmoeiarts.com)
 Profits from the sale of these magnificently woven baskets and stunning silk textiles support Pwo Karen villagers living in hills surrounding Chiang Mai. (SHOP)

Sri Guru Singh Sabha Sikh Temple

(#134; www.thaisikh.org/)
 Mr. Ishar Singh, the first Sikh to travel to Chiang Mai, made his way from India through Burma into Thailand in 1905 and others followed. Chiang Mai's first Sikh 'Gurdwara' or temple was built here in 1908 and still serves as the Sikh's temple and community centre. (TEMPLE)

Suvannabhumi Art Gallery

(#116-118; 66 53 260 172; www.suvannabhumiartgallery.com)
 Head here for a sneak peek at the next generation of artistic talents from neighboring Myanmar. (ART GALLERY)

Wat Gate Khar Rham Museum

(#96 Baan Wategate; Open daily 8- 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. Admission free)
 Wander among coins dating back hundreds of years, ancient farm tools and pottery, Lanna royal costumes plus captivating black and white photographs of old Chiang Mai. (MUSEUM)

Circle Source Paper

(#86/1; 66 53 302 719; www.online-natural-paper-shop.com)
 The German ownersources light as a feather organic papers that are art themselves, then invites international artists to print their works on these stunning sheets. (SHOP)

Nussara

(#66; 66 53 302 072)

Moss covered stones leading over the fish pond are a challenge worth facing to arrive at the back atelier piled high with Missoni-inspired kaleidoscopic cotton scarves, indigo dyed fisherman pants and thick day glow wool variations on traditional Thai monk bags. (SHOP)

Kome Tong

(#64; 66 53 302 401; www.kometong.wordpress.com)

Thai designer Rattanaphol Taja turns out striking ikat printed pottery and Thai paper lanterns here while his fighting fish swim alongside the cash register. (SHOP)

Vieng Joom On

(#53; open daily 10 am to 7 pm; 66 53 303 113; www.vjoteahouse.com) This riverside teahouse offers romantic nooks for indulging in their sublime sips and indigenous blends that make aromatic souvenirs. (RESTAURANT & SHOP)

The Gallery

(#25,27, 29; 66 53 248 601; www.thegallery-restaurant.com)

The neighborhood's most famous restaurant has welcomed luminaries like Hilary Clinton to its Ping Riverside tables for reliably delicious Thai and Western fare. (RESTAURANT)

Oriental Style

(#36; 66 53 243 156; www.vilacini.com/orientalstyle/home.html) High quality Thai home wares are elegantly displayed in a historic six pillar teak wood house. (SHOP)

Vila Cini

(#34; 66 53 246 246; www.vilacini.com) Original Thai hand woven textiles and quality antiques fill this stylish, high ceiled boutique. (SHOP)

Deck 1

(#14; 66 53 302 788; www.thedeck1.com) Romance fills the air at this open-air eatery with an extensive international menu and a creative chef willing to accommodate special requests and food sensitivities. (RESTAURANT)

Love At First Bite

(#28 Soi 1, Chiang Mai-Lamphun Road; 66 53 242 731; Open Tue-Sun 10:30am to 6pm; www.loveatfirstbite-cm.com/) Family run dessert eatery owned by an affable Thai couple who lived in the United States for nearly thirty years, then returned here with recipes for quickly addictive homemade cookies, molten chocolate cake, Oreo cheese cake and coconut cream pie. (RESTAURANT)

Nha wat gate road

The Healing Family Foundation

(#2 Watgate Road; 66 53 244 393; www.hffcm.org)

For seriously cute hand embroidered tees with elephants heads on the front, tails at the back, drop by this uniquely abled artisans workshop adjacent to our hotel. (SHOP)

Fai Sor Kam

(#7; 66 8 3319 7321)

Thammasat University textile professor Thitichai Arkara-oilapin selects his students' best pieces to display alongside his natural dyed scarves, slouchy cotton carrier bags and chic raw silk hats. (SHOP)

Hinlay Curry House

(#8/1; 66 53 324 621)

Owned by another offspring of the Bain family, this homey eatery offers a shaded patio with views of flopping palm fronds and tropical flowers on which to dig into chicken tikka masala, pumpkin curry and aloo ghobi. (RESTAURANT)

Kaewnawarat Road

Kitchen Hush

(#18/1, Soi 2; 66 53 247 731)

Japanese chef Kenji Fujita slices delectable slabs of fresh tuna, salmon and octopus sashimi inside a two-story Thai wooden house with private dining rooms and a sleek wood clad sushi bar. (RESTAURANT)

Green O'Clock

(#10, Soi 2; 66 53 242 922; www.greenoclock.com/)

Climb the rickety staircase to a cozy nook kept cool by open windows onto the lush greenery. A chalkboard wall lists the surprisingly extensive menu from thick American style sandwiches to classic indigenous dishes like pad Thai and stir fry chicken with cashews. (RESTAURANT)

Bake & Bite

(Kaewnarat Soi 3/2; 66 53 249 689)

A homey café helmed by an American trained Thai chef who excels equally at homemade bagels, buckwheat pancakes, omelets and scrambles, lunchtime veggie wraps, and salads as well as authentic Mexican enchiladas and quesadillas. (RESTAURANT)

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PILLARS HOUSE

CHIANG MAI

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