



CMR
SAMPLE

A Guide to
Rock Climbing
in Northern Thailand



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FOREWORD

In October of 1999, I arrived in Chiang Mai, an eager English teacher fresh out of university. Though I knew I would climb during my time in Thailand, I thought it would be on the sea cliffs of Railay Beach - or perhaps in Luang Prabang, where my brother Dan had just led a bolting expedition that January. If someone had told me that thirteen years later, I would still be in Chiang Mai and would be climbing at a crag named Crazy Horse Buttress, described by Climbing Magazine as “the Other Thailand,” I would have thought they were crazy.

In the past twelve years, there has been a tremendous amount of development. The parking lot, once filled with head-height grasses, is now a cozy lunch-time / siesta area where climbers convene to share stories of the day. Loong Nan’s handywork can be seen throughout the area with excellent trails, rest areas and road maintenance. The annual Crag Clean-Up Day is now a major local event, often with more than 70 people in attendance. Drinking water is available at the crag to help the community reduce the amount of waste we produce as climbers.

An unbelievable amount of dust at the main crag has been converted into cozy belay platforms with the assistance of local and visiting climbers. A standard for bolting has been put in place and the climbing experience is comfortable and fun (read more about this in our “Bolting / Development Philosophy” chapter). What used to be a small overgrown crag of six routes now boasts nearly 200 routes on 16 different walls.

Yes, many other crags develop at a faster pace. However, Crazy Horse’s development is about much more than the quantity of routes. The focus at Crazy Horse is committing to environmental stewardship, developing an active and diverse community, and creating a sustainable approach to an outstanding climbing experience. These three values are at the core of the place, and all of our actions at Crazy Horse are built upon them. We think you will appreciate the results.

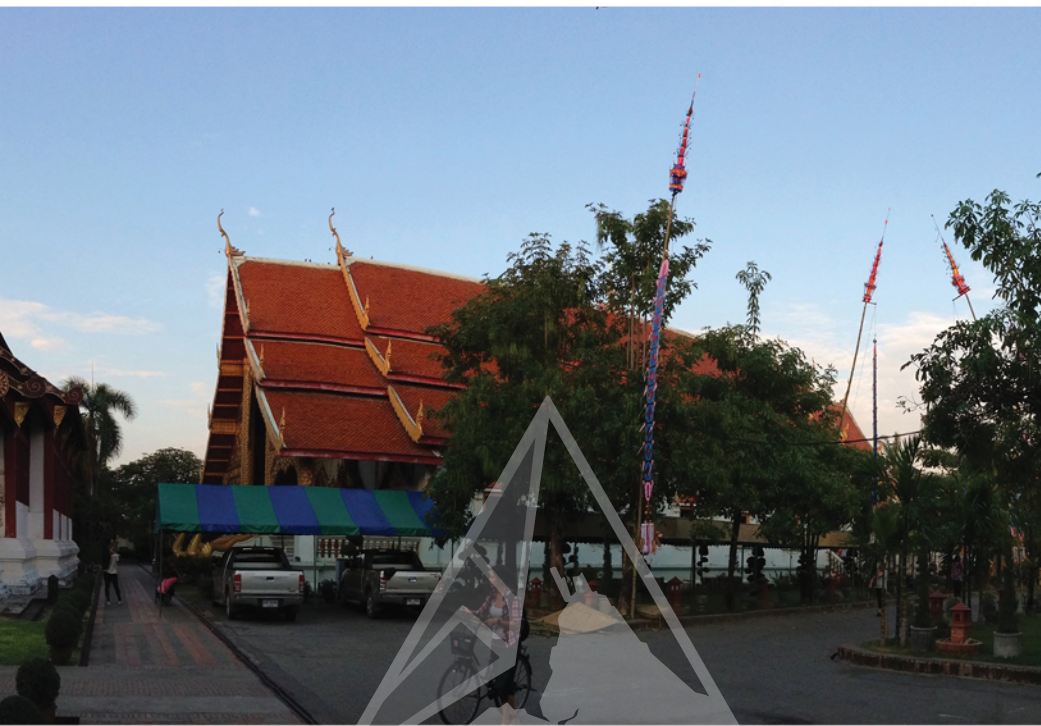
There is much to be done at Crazy Horse Buttress and in Northern Thailand. Our vision is to create a vibrant climbing community and multiple climbing areas near Chiang Mai. We hope this will engender a love of the outdoors and open opportunities for local climbers to travel the world climbing and adventuring like so many of the foreign climbers visiting Thailand are able to do. Northern Thailand is an exciting place with endless potential. The projects already exist - they just need a little help getting cleaned, bolted and climbed. We look forward to climbing with you as we work toward this goal. See you at the crag!

- Josh Morris -



CLIMBING IN NORTHERN THAILAND

Northern Thailand is full of valleys and mountains and endless karst limestone formations. A relatively quiet and unknown destination just a few years ago, the past 11 years have seen steady, sustainable development. With more than 200 routes established and more development every month, Crazy Horse Butress is now known as one of Asia's international climbing destinations. The North of Thailand allows climbers a chance to climb while experiencing day to day Thai life at the same time. In Chiang Mai, don't expect to roll out of bed and be at the base of the crag. Rather, get ready for an adventure that includes local sausage, an exciting motorbike ride to the crag, and a taste of what



tasty northern treats and witnessing the ebb and flow of Thailand's northern capital.

Travel To and From Chiang Mai

It's hard to imagine a time when it was a challenge to get to Thailand. Flights into Bangkok are available on many different airlines. The Asian airlines tend to be cheaper than European or American airlines and in our opinion the service is much better. Thai Airways tends to have the most direct flights into Bangkok, making the travel time as short as possible. Korean Air, Mandarin Air, and Air Asia all have international connections directly to Chiang Mai. There are also a number of new budget airlines for both international and domestic travel. Flight schedules and routes are changing constantly, so we recommend searching on the internet for the best deals and connections. For the most current information on getting to Chiang Mai check our travel page at: www.thailandclimbing.com/travel

DON'T GET FOOLED!

Many tourists often choose to purchase extremely inexpensive bus tickets from their guesthouses or travel agencies. We do not support these buses in any way. The buses are often not allowed to travel on major highways resulting in travel times up to 40% longer. They also often stop at a restaurant halfway to the destination that is owned and operated by the company with exorbitantly priced food. All of the money spent goes straight to the bus company. The reason that your bus ticket is so inexpensive is due to the fact that a guesthouse or operator at your destination has paid for the remainder of your seat. When you arrive, you will certainly be taken to a guesthouse that you did not choose and at 5 AM, you may not have the willpower or even a choice to look for another option. This ensures that you stay and potentially purchase tours at a later date.

By Bus

Bus travel is still the most common method of travel for the majority of Thai people. The Thai bus system is outstanding with buses leaving on time and also offering nice perks including fully reclining massage chairs, movies, and a bus hostess serving food and snacks. On average bus service takes about 9 hours between Chiang Mai and Bangkok with departures every hour by many different companies.

In Chiang Mai, head to the Arcade Bus Station to book tickets. Many of the companies are upgrading their booking system to include online bookings.

The government certified buses mentioned above run on time and stop at major bus stations where local vendors are able to sell excellent Thai food at an affordable price. While the bus ticket is more expensive than the tourist bus, you will be supporting a larger community and spend less time on board.
















MAE ON

Ban Sahakon

Crazy Horse Buttress is located in the district (Amphoe) of Mae On and the village of Ban Sahakon. Ban Sahakon has a small population of about 3,000 people while there are approximately 30,000 people in the entire district. Mae On is relatively undeveloped compared to other parts of Chiang Mai. While driving through rural rice paddies in this area there are myriad options. Stop at a roadside stand for some Chiang Mai sausage (Sai Ooa), soak in

Mae On Amenities

AMENITIES KEY

Icon	Meaning	Icon	Meaning
	Lodging		Less than THB 50
	Thai Food		THB 50 - 200
	Northern Thai Food		Above 200
	Western Food		Less than THB 200
	Vegetarian Food		THB 200 - 500
	Coffee		THB 500 - 1000
			Above THB 1000

1. The Log of Paradise

เดอะ ล็อก ออฟ พาราไดส์

This cowboy inspired resort features unique lodging options such as teepees, a treehouse or log home and serves breakfast, lunch and dinner at their Steakhouse restaurant.

053 880 999

18° 44.186'N, 99° 11.844'E

     BBB

3. Laab Gai Laab Blah Lung

Whang ลาบกี้ ลาบล่า ลุงหลวง

A series of natural wooden huts that offers sour and spicy meat salad (Laab) and other Northern Thai dishes and coffee.

080 125 4446

18° 44.901'N, 99° 13.061'E

   BBB

2. Pa Sri Khao Soi Rot Det

ป้าศรีข้าวซอยรสเด็ด

A roadside restaurant that offers Chiang Mai's famous curry noodles (khao soi) and noodle soup (kuey teow).

087 187 9765

18° 44.886'N, 99° 12.928'E

   B

4. Mae On Pochana

This is the restaurant where CMRCA orders its lunch. It serves a wide variety of Thai dishes and provides tents to camp on the property.

053 859 608

18° 45.144'N, 99° 13.611'E

 B    BB

Drinking Water

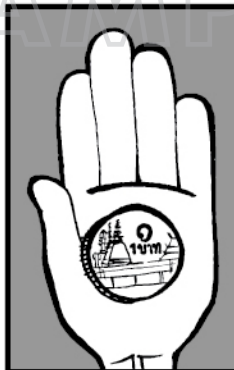
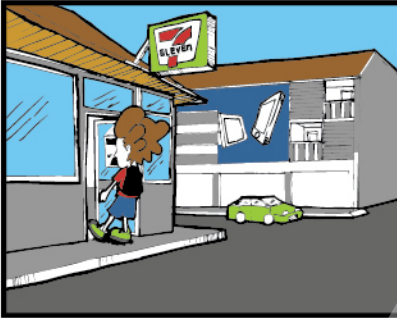
Be sure to plan on how much water you will need. One bottle may not be enough. Consider a larger bladder such as the MSR Dromedaries as a solution. For climbers who are on a CMRCA course or taking the CMRCA transport service, water is free. For climbers getting to the crag on their own, we encourage you to drink as well. At the end of your trip to Chiang Mai, please stop by the shop and make a payment to the Crazy Horse water fund.

Crazy Horse is not the only place you can/should minimize your use of plastic. Consider how many bottles you may purchase while traveling and help us limit that amount by looking out for the blue water dispensing machines located throughout the city. We have created an iPhone and Android app called “Water Refill” that will help you locate the nearest water refilling station. You can also help us by marking the location of a station that is not in the app. Refilling from the dispensing machines can cost as little as 0.5 baht/liter. The math is simple. If you are traveling for 30 days and purchasing 4 bottles per day, your trip will deposit an additional 120 plastic bottles into the trash system of Thailand. By using a single bottle and a bladder, you could lower that amount significantly. Visit www.thailandclimbing.com/refill to find out more about how you can help make less impact while you travel. As climbers we are meant to set the example as environmental stewards. Please help us show others how it can be done.

PLASTIC BOTTLE USAGE

A few years ago, we continually found ourselves in the parking lot at the end of the day with a ridiculous number of empty plastic water bottles. Climbers did a great job of bringing the bottles out with them. What we realized however, was that the average climber was purchasing up to 4 bottles of water each day. On days with 30 climbers at the crag, we would find ourselves holding more than 100 empty plastic bottles. There had to be another way. With our core value of Practice Sustainability in mind we decided to provide drinking water at the crag. Our intention is that climbers will bring a reusable water bottle and refill it throughout the day from the water tank.

WATER REFILL APP



deals. The other advantage of the rainy season is fewer crowds and the sun's position higher in the sky. This means the south facing walls are shaded most of the day. The rain is often a welcome event as it cools the temperatures for comfortable nights and crisp mornings. The rock tends to dry out pretty quickly and a rain storm doesn't have to end your climbing day and certainly won't interfere with your trip. As Thailand is an agricultural economy, being here for the rainy season offers an opportunity to see the entire economy in action and maybe even find the opportunity to plant some rice!



The Bees, The Trees And The Monkeys

One fascinating insect at Crazy Horse Buttress are the wax bees. They are tiny bees that build wax tunnels into the rock. They are harmless and want nothing from you other than a few bits of your sweat.

If you need to get them away from you, just light a mosquito coil or a small fire and the smoke will drive them away. Do be careful of their wax homes as they are very brittle.

Mosquitoes are not a huge hassle at the crag, but depending on the season you should definitely take some mosquito coils and repellent especially just after the rainy season. Some of the shady crags get mosquitoes in the late afternoon. However the mosquitoes are worst between May and October.

There are occasionally large beehives which consist of many very large, scary-looking bees. They tend to nest under the big roof at Crazy Horse and also on the right side of the Ant Hill. Be sure to scan for bees before you start a route. These bees generally mind their

Getting To Crazy Horse

The only way to get to the crag is to drive. Going to Crazy Horse Buttress is quite easy. It is roughly 36 kms from Chiang Mai Rock Climbing Adventures and should take no more than 45 minutes. To get to the crag, you can either hire a car driver, rent a car, or rent a motorbike.

Chiang Mai Rock Climbing Adventures offers a carpool service when possible. On days that they are guiding, you are welcome to purchase a round-trip seat in the truck, a delivered lunch and drinking water. If no trip has been scheduled, CMRCA can arrange transportation in a red truck for you on that day for an additional fee. You can often meet up with other climbers and arrange rides from Chiang Mai Rock Climbing Adventures in the mornings around 08.30. Check the website for the most up to date rates for the service.

There are a number of car rental places along the eastern side of the moat on Chaiyapoom Road. The most economical and entertaining way of getting to the crag is to rent a small Honda Dream motorbike. These are quite easy to drive, even if you have never driven a motorbike before. There is no clutch so shifting doesn't require a lot of coordination. These cost anywhere from 100-250 baht per day depending on the condition and type of the motorbike.

There are a number of ways to get to the crag. Either way you will end up on route 1317 heading towards Muang On Cave and the Sankamphaeng Hot Springs. All major Thai Super Highways have white kilometer markers on the side of the road. Use these as a reference point as you drive along.





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BOLTING / DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHY

“Are the bolts safe?”

It is no longer easy to find a climber who is not aware of and concerned about the problem of bolt degradation, especially in Southern Thailand in sea cliff areas. It's not a surprise that this is one of the most popular questions we field from climbers visiting Chiang Mai. Our ultimate goal is to make climbing at Crazy Horse Buttress and Northern Thailand for that matter, an enjoyable experience where people end their trip saying, “That is the most sustainable, well-bolted and well-developed crag I've ever climbed.”

We believe that an outstanding sport climb should provide an enjoyable and safe climbing experience. Routes should be bolted with climbers of all sizes in mind who are at their limit while trying to onsight that grade. We believe it is unfair to ask a 6a climber to risk a broken limb trying to project a 6a that was bolted as a warmup for a 7a climber.

We want each new route we bolt to last for thirty years or more. This means spending a little more at the beginning to put in proper gear and save us the hassle of having to rebolt later. We do not have the same issues with weather as our friends in the south, but we adhere to a similar standard. We only use marine grade stainless steel or titanium bolts when developing new routes. Unexpired Hilti RE-500 is the glue of choice. While we used expansion bolts and threads in the past, we are in the process of rebolting everything at Crazy Horse according to the new standard and this has helped us realize the value of doing it right the first time. Why spend a day rebolting, when you could spend that day putting up a new route?

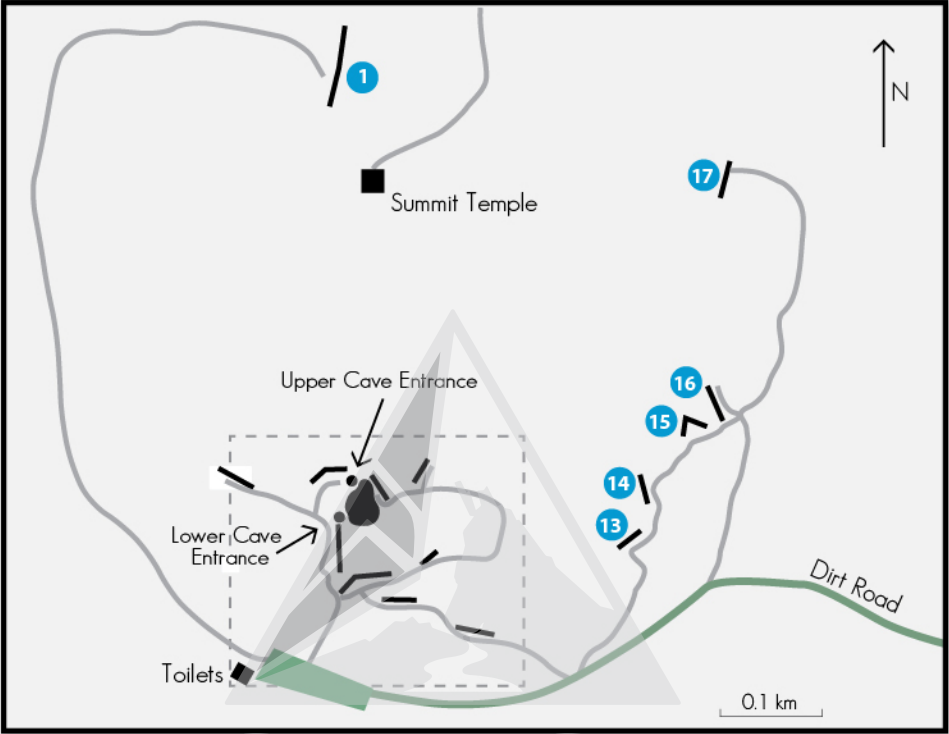
ANCHOR STANDARDS AT CRAZY HORSE BUTTRESS



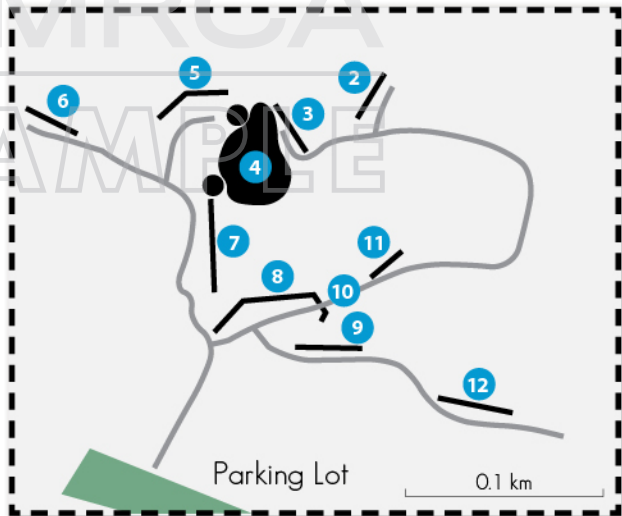
CRAG INFO KEY

Icon	Angle	Icon	Approach	Icon	Aspect
	Slab		5 min.		North
	Vertical		10 min.		South
	Off-Vertical		15 min.		East
	Overhang		20 min.		West
					Cave

CRAZY HORSE BUTTRESS AREA MAP



- 1 - Heart Wall
- 2 - Rooftop
- 3 - Gatekeeper
- 4 - Anxiety State Crisis Cave
- 5 - Reunion Buttress
- 6 - Buddha Buttress
- 7 - Aircon Wall/Windy Cave
- 8 - Crazy Horse Area
- 9 - The Hoof
- 10 - Archway
- 11 - Evening Terraces
- 12 - The Furnace
- 13 - The Junkyard
- 14 - Hanging Gardens
- 15 - Tamarind Village
- 16 - Little Monkey Cove
- 17 - The Anthill





The Gatekeeper Buttress

(ก้นฟ้าประตูดุสน)



Access: Same as route as The Rooftop. However turn left and walk down the hill when you reach the cliff band at the top of the hill. There is an older access trail that comes from The Aircon Wall. It is a steep and slippery access gully with lots of loose rock. Caution is recommended if you take the old path.

The climbing at The Gatekeeper Buttress is beautiful, technical, and long. Also, the fact that you climb next to the opening of a monstrous cave adds a little bit of excitement to this crag. There are 2 resin anchors located at the edge of the cave allowing a 55 meter rappel to the cave floor. You can then pull your ropes and walk out of the cave at The Aircon Wall. You will need 2 60 meter ropes for this rappel. If you only have one rope, you can rappel to the rap anchors of Space Manoeuvres located in the Anxiety State Crisis Cave.

1. The Gatekeeper

6b, 20m, 8 bolts, 1 thread. ★★★

Follow the wide crack to the left as the ground below you disappears into the cave.

FA: Josh Morris, Khaetthaleeya Uppakham (Kat), Francis Haden, Uthit Yodkhaman (Son), Steve Coates, March 2002.

2. Inferno

7a 29 m, 9 bolts, 1 thread. ★★★

The sustained technical groove.

FA: Josh Morris and Francis Haden, March 2002

3. Unleash the Phat Physique

7a, 29m, 9 bolts, 1 thread. ★

"The whole roof and nothing but the roof." Long move for the short.

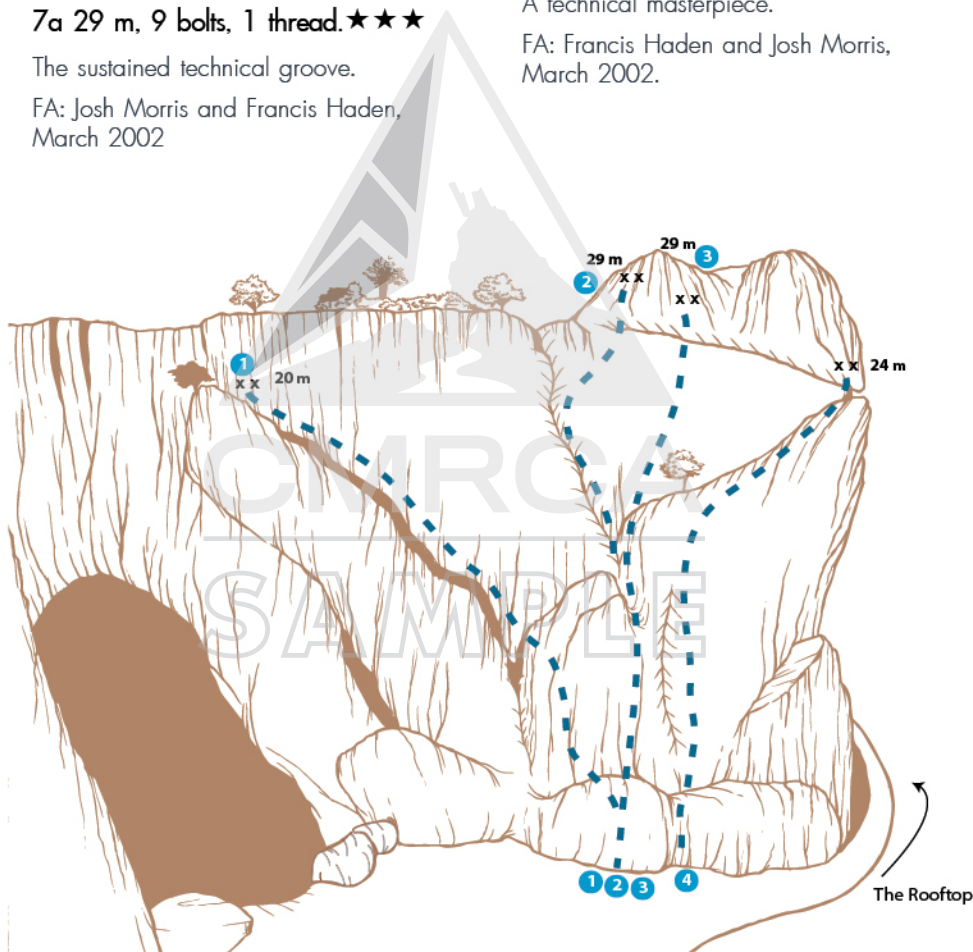
FA: Francis Haden and Josh Morris, March 2002.

4. All Quiet on the Eastern Front

7a, 24m, 8 bolts, 1 thread. ★★★

A technical masterpiece.

FA: Francis Haden and Josh Morris, March 2002.





Khaetthaleeya Morris on The Gatekeeper, 6b, Gatekeeper Butress.



Thai Cultural Considerations

Thailand is a truly fascinating place. Few places in the world have such friendly people, diverse natural beauty, and complex culture. On the surface, Thailand seems easy. It's the land of smiles and people seem laid back. In actuality however there are many subtle cultural characteristics at play. So many facets of Thai culture can take a lifetime to understand. The moment you think you get it is the moment you discover just how much there is to learn. Trust us on this one. This fact is perhaps what makes Thailand such an incredible place for self-discovery and cultural awareness.

Foreigners (or *farang*, derived from the word for French - farangses) are often given a bad rap, and are stereotypically considered dirty, loud and rude. Walk around during the Songkran festival and watch the behavior of tourists vs. Thais and you'll understand what we mean. Let's be honest, climbers don't always help in dispelling this impression. Thai culture demands softer, kinder interactions dictated by *greng jai* (the guilt one feels when imposing upon another person or causing that person to lose face). The result is that foreigners can act inappropriately for extended periods of time while *greng jai* prevents their Thai hosts from correcting (and embarrassing) them. Mastery of this concept will help you to navigate through Thailand and be as respectful and appropriate as possible. Below are a few tips that we feel can help you begin to navigate the complexity of the culture.



Festivals And Holidays

Some of the best things about traveling to Thailand are the fantastic festivals which are held almost monthly. Here is a schedule of a few of the major festivals celebrated in Chiang Mai.

Loi Krathong (November Full Moon Festival)

This is one of Thailand's most beautiful festivals and is most celebrated most spectacularly in Chiang Mai. The festival is marked by intricately designed floats with incense, flowers, lotus leaves and candles. Lovers will float their wishes down the Ping River and rice paper lanterns are often released in such numbers that you can't tell the difference between stars and the lanterns. Fireworks are plentiful as well.

Sunday Tha Phae Street Market (Rachadomnoen Road)

Every Sunday Tha Phae Road is closed to traffic and vendors sell handicrafts and food along the street. This is a great place to get good deals on all kinds of Northern Thai Goods.

The Chiang Mai Food Festival

The food festival is held during the first two weeks of December every year in two locations. You can sample pretty much any Thai dish at this venue for next to nothing prices. This festival is fantastic if you have spent a day cranking at the crags.

APPENDIX

Useful Thai Language Phrases

Here are a few Thai phrases to help you get through the day. As always, check Google Translate or the many free Thai iPhone and android apps available for more detailed info. You can also grab yourself a pocket sized phrase book as a speaking aid.

In order to be polite while speaking Thai, the person who is speaking must end his or her sentence with the particle *ka* (if you're a woman) or *krup* (if you're a man).

GREETINGS

Hello	Sawat-di	สวัสดี
How are you?	Sabai di mai?	สบายดีไหม
I am fine.	Sabai di	สบายดี
Thank you.	Khawp khun	ขอบคุณ
Excuse me	Khaw thoht	ขอโทษ
I (for men)	Phom	ผม
I (for women)	Di chaan	ดิฉัน
You	Khun	คุณ
Who	Krai	ใคร
What is your name?	Khun cheu arai	คุณชื่ออะไร
My name is.	Phom / Di Chaan cheu	ผม/ดิฉันชื่อ
Like	Chawp	ชอบ

QUESTIONS

Yes	Chai	ใช่
No	Mai chai	ไม่ใช่
Do you have?	Mi ... mai	มีไหม
No, I don't have	Mai mi	ไม่มี

A Guide to Rock Climbing in Northern Thailand

- The most recent update to cragging in Northern Thailand
- All new topos to 18 different sectors and more than 150 pitches of outstanding Thailand limestone
- Plus new and necessary tips for exploring Thailand easily written by those living in the area for more than 13 years

