

Open to
The
New **Shades**



From Bangkok's ultramodern urban offerings to the tropical beaches, palatial royal palaces, ornate Buddhist temples and ancient ruins interspersed across the Islands, there has never been a shortage of beautiful options to entice travellers.

But for years it has had a cost on the nation's natural resources. Fortunately, a growing movement towards responsible travel has made it possible to experience the beauty of this Southeast Asian kingdom in an environmental, sustainable, socially-conscious way.

This is your guide to going green in Thailand. From conservation activities that combine fun with feel-good, to low-impact dining options designed to benefit the locals, this guide to eco-travel in "The Land of Smiles" is sure to keep the country (and your conscience!) clean and create a happy holiday for all involved.





SUSTAINABLE INITIATIVES

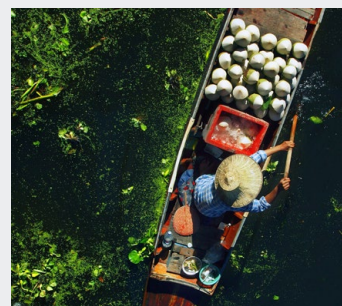
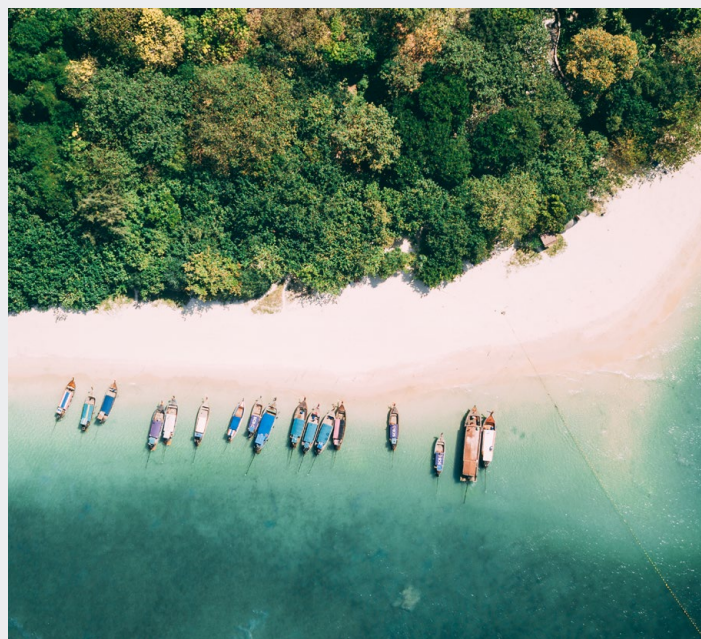
Want to lessen your carbon footprint? Before you even step onto your flight, take a few lessons from the locals who have adopted a number of environmentally and socially conscious initiatives designed to keep travel to Thailand as eco-friendly as possible.

Start by looking into the work done by **Thailand Responsible Tourism Association (TRTA)** - a Non-Government Organisation that champions lifestyle choices that contribute towards a cleaner, greener future. Or that of the **Mae Fah Luang Foundation (MFLF)** - a Thai not-for-profit that manages numerous projects within the kingdom with three main missions focusing on: 'improving social and economic development; preserving the environment; and supporting local art and culture.

Then kick off your trip by butting out! With cigarettes a known pollutant to the marine life, in February 2018 Thailand **banned smoking** and the littering of packets across 24 beaches in 15 provinces - including several in major tourist destinations such as Phuket, Koh Samui and Krabi, in an effort to protect its coastal environment.

Time to tuck into traditional Thai food? The government of Thailand has made it easier than ever before to go green when you eat. As well as an excellent range of restaurants, taking a sustainable approach to food service (see page 3 for some of the best suggestions) Phuket's 'No Foam, No Plastic' effort (effective as of 14 February 2019) has been implemented to encourage local shops to give foam packaging the flick, and to switch entirely to paper or eco-friendly bags by 1 October 2019.

Finally, finish by raising a glass to toast your effort by taking your tips from '**Zero Waste Thailand**.' But do it without a plastic straw! This campaign, which started as the passion project of a mother-daughter duo selling reusable straws has since snowballed into an initiative that has convinced many local restaurants and shops to replace their disposables with those made of metal and bamboo. Among the eateries supporting this drive towards reducing single-use plastic are Toby's on Soi Sukhumvit 38, The Missing Burro Mexican, and Plern Plern in Bang Na, with Broccoli Revolution and El Mercado also selling Zero Waste's glass, bamboo and metal straws.





ANIMAL CONSERVATION

For a wonderful way to get up close and personal with some of the most impressive wildlife in the world (while also decreasing the risk towards any endangered species), check out these conservation-committed travel options.

ELEPHANTS

Elephant sanctuaries are among the most popular eco-destinations in Thailand. They are great for travellers looking for an experience that combines intimate interactions with the chance to contribute to the conservation of these majestic creatures. For a truly authentic and ethical experience, **ChangChill** is a must-visit! Here, visitors are able to observe elephants in their natural habitat, learn about the history of the resident elephants and meet the people who care for them. Nestled in the hills of Chiang Mai and originally established to provide better living conditions for elephants in captivity, today the park, known as Happy Elephant Valley, is a safe haven for elephants to graze, bathe, socialize and roam freely. As well as educating visitors, park owner Mr. Supakorn Tananseth aspires to positively improve the industry as a whole by serving as an ethical tourism model for other elephant camps in Thailand. Working in collaboration with World Animal Protection and other environmental organisations allows the park to actively improve the living conditions, infrastructure and practices ensuring the best possible care for the animals. And happy animals, make for a happy experience!

MARINE LIFE

A number of Thai organisations have committed to the conservation of the country's marine life through volunteer-driven programs. This has given travellers the opportunity to enjoy the amazing oceans of Thailand's islands, while also protecting the precious inhabitants within. Among the most pro-active of eco-warriors is the **Pure Blue Foundation** led by Aleenta and Akyra hotel brands, which have directed funds exceeding \$70,000 to aid multi-faceted marine conservation efforts - including marine turtle conservation at Phang Nga, via the turtle sanctuary in Thai Muang. As well as an integrated coastal management plan that allows for reef cleaning, recycling and educational workshops, hundreds of endangered leatherback turtles have been raised and released into the Andaman Sea. Similarly, the **New Heaven Reef Conservation Program** and **Mai Khao Marine Turtle Foundation** both promote responsible marine and environmental practices among the coral reefs around the island of Koh Tao, Sirinath National Marine Park and the surrounding areas. Conservation efforts include regular monitoring, beach and reef cleaning (to remove potentially damaging debris) and rebuilding opportunities, recycling projects, as well as educational workshops for the local communities and visitors.

BUTTERFLIES

Thailand is committed to the protection of all creatures great and small - and they don't get much tinier than the army of insects found all over the country. The 1,100 species of butterfly in Thailand may be bitty, but they are essential to animal ecology as they cross-pollinate flowers separated by large distances. Overdevelopment and the use of pesticides have led to a decrease in the abundance of these cute critters, so to ensure their continued existence Phuket Marriott Resort & Spa, Merlin Beach has established the **Merlin Butterfly Sanctuary** - a unique conservation project in collaboration with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The central strategy of this scheme is to strengthen the wild population of native butterflies by providing the host plants for developing caterpillars, as well as flowering nectar plants for adult butterflies. Guests are given the opportunity to experience guided tours of the onsite sanctuary - with its special breeding cage - and are also encouraged to learn about the life cycle and diversity of these unique creatures, in order to truly appreciate their importance in terrestrial ecosystems.

GIBBONS

Intelligent, agile and unfortunately endangered, a number of Thai-based organisations have committed to the cause of gibbon conservation. Called "Gentlemen of the Forest" by indigenous natives, today The Gibbon Rehabilitation Project (GPR) in Phuket has responded to the threat of extinction among these swinging primates with a mission to rescue, rehabilitate, release and repopulate them. At **GPR's Rehabilitation Site and Center for Conservation Education and Fundraising** visitors are encouraged to visit and view some of the gibbons. Although interactions with the animals are limited, there are plenty of other ways to get involved and help! The Gibbon Adoption Programme offers participants the chance to contribute towards the care, wellbeing and livelihood of orphaned and rescued gibbons and langurs from afar, receiving regular email updates, photos, and an official certificate in return. Alternatively, for those who would rather invest their time, the volunteer programme offers visitors a once-in-a-lifetime experience to learn about and encounter the endangered animals, educate others, and contribute to fundraising efforts at the **Gibbon Information Center** at Bang Pae Waterfall.



FOOD

Get a taste for Thailand's commitment to green-tourism with an eco-eating experience. Whether your contribution is to go organic, raw, sustainable, locavore or paddock-to-plate you'll find all these options available on menus across the country.

BANGKOK

Bangkok is bang on when it comes to ethical dining. At **Bo.Lan** (number 19 on the list of Asia's 50 Best Restaurants, 2019) traditional yet upmarket Thai food is served without compromising the chefs' commitment to keeping a zero carbon footprint. To achieve this, they have built a vegetable garden, water filtration system and waste recycling scheme. Meanwhile, **80/20** restaurant (which once followed an 80/20 ratio of Thai to imported ingredients), is now completely committed to using 100 percent locally grown-and-raised produce and meat. Carnivores who want to eat ethically should check out **100 Mahaseth** (though, with only 8 tables, booking is recommended) for delicious nose-to-tail Thai meals, inspired by the north and northeast regions of the country. While those with a palate for fresh produce should head to **Haoma** - whose approach to eco-eating centres around zero waste, sustainable food and responsibly-grown produce, (they have an organic urban garden on site). For something new, recently opened **TAAN** pioneers 'hyper-local innovative cuisine' - inspired by high-quality, seasonal ingredients sourced from independent local farmers.

PHUKET

Some of most eco epicurean offerings on this mountainous island can be found at the restaurants housed within its luxe resorts. **The Plantation Club at The Pavilions** continually seeks sustainable alternatives and their menu is 100% locally sourced. They even have a new garden and farm with organic herbs, agriculture and dairy. Similarly, **DiVine (inside Thanyapura Health & Sports Resort)** offers all-day dining with free-range eggs, locally sourced fish, and all-organic produce grown through sustainable, local farming methods. **PRU in Trisara Resort** - Phuket's first and only Michelin-starred restaurant - serves dishes made entirely with ingredients sourced from around the country - including those from the resort's private farm, while **Mala Restaurant in Keemala Resort** plates up healthy meals with ingredients grown directly in its own gardens. For food that feels as good as it tastes, **Seedlings at Laguna** was established as a social enterprise to empower locals through vocational training within the hospitality industry. Or for excellent out-of-resort options, try **We Cafe** - where products adhere to a strict code of Good Agriculture Practices (called G.A.P), **Atsumi Raw Cafe** or **55 Pure Vegan Heaven** in Chalong.

CHIANG MAI

Most travellers head to Chiang Mai in mountainous northern Thailand for its spectacular temples, but the fertile terrains also make for divine dining options that'll impress those seeking ethical eating opportunities. Start with a smoothie at **Free Bird Cafe** - an organic vegan and vegetarian cafe supporting local NGO Thai Freedom House (a language and arts learning centre for indigenous people and Burmese refugees). Or go against the grain and try a ball of **Sticky Rice** for breakfast at the cafe by the same name - they donate 5% of every bill to Local Alike (an organisation which gives opportunities for locals to better their livelihoods through tourism). If you're hungry by lunchtime, head to **Akha Ama**, a socially empowered enterprise with sustainable coffee, grown using organic agricultural practices and sourced from a small community of 30 Akha households. Then work up an appetite for dinner at **Pun Pun**, an organic farm and sustainable-living and learning centre that supplies produce to this modest open-air eatery in the heart of town. Celebrated as pioneers in the region's locavore (local food) farm-to-table movement, they also serve some of the best vegetarian slow food in Thailand.

CHIANG RAI

This popular city near the borders of Laos and Myanmar is considered by many the agricultural hub of Thailand - and a dream destination for gourmands interested in eating green. At **Locus Native Food Lab**, chef Kongwuth Chaiwongkachon applies a dedication to all things regional to every aspect of his restaurant - starting with a location constructed entirely from provincially sourced materials and culminating in a menu based on local produce that transforms traditional Thai dishes with innovative techniques. Similarly, **Blackitch** is a small restaurant big on seasonal, sustainable ingredients. Chef "Black" Bulsuwan has even been known to visit diners to educate them on the origins of each ingredient, as they eat! Those on the hunt for fair-trade coffee (and mountain-friendly farming) should grab a cup at **Yoddoi** - a cafe that also utilises organic ingredients to create vegan and vegetarian dishes. If you have a hankering for something sweet head to **Baan Chivit Mai** or BCM (meaning 'home for a new life'). This bakery serves delicious cakes and pastries and also donates profits to a foundation by the same name - with a mission to save at-risk youth from a life of drug trafficking and prostitution.



OUTDOOR & ADVENTURE

Thailand is the ultimate playground for outdoor adventures! From the jungle, to the sea and everywhere in between, discover the raw and natural beauty of this untamed destination with these eco-friendly experiences!

SNORKELLING AND DIVING

The crystal clear waters surrounding Thailand are without question beautiful, and for many the opportunity to explore the rich marine-life and thriving coral reef beneath the surface is among the top reasons for visiting this idyllic destination. A little off the beaten path and far quieter than its neighbouring island of Koh Phi Phi, **Koh Lanta district in Krabi Province** encompasses several underdeveloped islands boasting untouched stretches of coral-fringed shores. Boasting bountiful dive sites such as Koh Haa and Koh Rok, Koh Lanta also champions an eco-friendly approach, with projects such as Trash Hero encouraging visitors to get involved in cleaning up the beach. Encompassing 42 islands off the coast of Surat Thani Province, **Mu Koh Angthong National Marine Park** is another beautiful area and conservation that promotes a respectful and responsible connection with the ocean. A few simple and easy ways you can contribute when visiting includes using biodegradable reef safe sunscreen, removing anything that could leave a lasting mark on the reef, and be sure to take only photos, and leave only bubbles!

CYCLING

No matter where you go in Thailand, the streets are a near-constant hive of activity, buzzing with tuk-tuks, motorbike taxis, cars and foot traffic. While it can be tempting to jump aboard a tuk-tuk when out and about, other options including cycling allows you to get back to nature and reduce your carbon footprint, whilst getting fit all at the same time. One of Thailand's most popular spots for a two-wheeled adventure, Chiang Mai offers something for cyclists of all abilities. Home to the highest point in Thailand, keen cyclists can challenge themselves to a testing ride to the top of **Doi Inthanon**, whilst those who prefer a more relaxed ride can traverse the scenic countryside at their own pace. For a breath of fresh-air the 13th-century town of **Sukhothai** is a biker's paradise! The rural trails used by local farmers make ideal bike paths for those who don't mind venturing off-road, and the lush paddy fields, ancient ruins and winding canals provide a welcome escape from the hustle and bustle of the bigger cities. Leave the navigating to someone else with a **Best of Chiang Mai Bicycle Tour**, or **Half-Day Lanna Countryside Cycling Tour**.

TREKKING

Thailand is home to some of the most unique and diverse landscapes in the world, and there is no better way to experience and appreciate the outdoors than putting on the walking shoes and exploring. From lush emerald rainforests to cascading waterfalls, there are so many natural wonders waiting to be discovered. Just a little over 19kms from the city of Trang (southern Thailand), **Khao Chong Wildlife Development and Conservation Park** is home to numerous walking trails, as well as a botany museum and exhibition. Undoubtedly the highlight of these trails are the three main waterfalls found along their paths: Ton Yai, Ton Noi, and Ka Chong. Making a name for itself as the first ever established national park in the country, **Khao Yai National Park** is a haven for nature-lovers and keen hikers alike. A scenic three-hour drive from Bangkok, the park boasts mountains, woodlands, wildlife and several hiking trails of varying difficulty and length. Enjoy a leisurely stroll along Trail 8, opt for a more grueling hike along Trail 11 or for something more challenging head to Mae Hong Son, known for its rugged mountainous terrain.

YOGA RETREATS

As well as promoting physical strength, flexibility, and stress-relief, yoga also encourages self-reflection, kindness, self-compassion, and self awareness which is believed to lead to a more fulfilling life. Whether achieving a more balanced lifestyle, learning some new techniques, or spending a week relaxing and rejuvenating is the goal, Thailand offers an incredible choice of yoga retreats. Hosting both teacher training and yoga workshops, as well as daily massages, and nutritious juices and meals, **Absolute Sanctuary Yoga** in Koh Samui is suitable to first-timers and practised yogi's alike. Located on a remote beach on the island of Koh Phangan, The Sanctuary invites guests to relax and unwind by teaching self-care through healing, yoga, detox, massage and healthy plant-based diets. For the ultimate digital detox, **Jungle Yoga** in Praidon hosts a range of yoga retreats in remote and serene surrounds.



ATTRACTIONS & CULTURE

Embrace the Thai way of life and warm and genuine hospitality of the Thai people with these local attractions and cultural experiences that promise to instill a sense of wonder and appreciation.

HOMESTAYS

Nothing provides a more authentic feel for local life than a homestay. As well as being a much needed source of income for locals, particularly those in remote rural areas, you get the opportunity to give back to the community, create genuine connections, and get first-hand tips and hints from those in the know. Located in Trat Province, **Chang Thun** settlement practices community based tourism, engaging visitors in traditional practices and regional history while preserving the integrity of the local culture. For a whole different pace of life, just an hours' boat ride from Phuket, the **Koh Yao Noi** community welcomes guests with open arms. Here, you get the rare opportunity to meet a unique group of locals and learn about their life on the island, as well as take part in fishing and rubber-making activities, and taste homemade southern Thai dishes. **Mae Kampong** village in Chiang Mai offers a similar experience, allowing guests to live with locals and get a feel for the culture, traditions and community! Each homestay in Thailand promises a totally unique and soul-warming experience.

SUSTAINABLE COFFEE JOURNEY

Coffee production is a way of life in Thailand, with origins dating back as far as the 1970's. Initially established as a means to support struggling farmers in remote areas, today the coffee industry and consequent agro-tourism that it promotes, widely benefits the local economy, particularly in areas like Chiang Rai Province. If coffee is your thing, a visit to **Ban Mae Chan Tai Agro-Tourism Centre** in Chiang Rai is a must! Famous for being the home of the coffee plantation that produces Akha Ama Coffee, the centre takes visitors on a three-day journey through the story of Akha Ama Coffee, from bean to cup! In addition to following the entire journey, from the growing of the coffee plant to the harvesting and processing of the beans, you'll also learn about the culture of the local community, how to cook and eat local food, and of course get to sample the delicious, organic, free-trade coffee. Nothing tastes sweeter than knowing that by visiting, you're supporting local farmers, and sustainable agricultural practices.

SILK FARM TOURS

Thailand is known for a number of unique characteristics, one of which is its smooth silk. A staple of the culture and economy, it is a coveted and highly sought after item locally and globally. Thai silk and the name Jim Thompson go hand-in-hand, and one of the best places to learn about both is the **Jim Thompson Farm** in Nakhon Ratchasima Province. Established as a production site for silkworm cultivation and mulberry plantations, each year in December the farm opens its doors, inviting visitors to immerse themselves in nature, and experience life on a silk farm. While there, visitors can learn about the life cycle of silkworms and the silk making process, and purchase seasonal and organic products. To see silken textiles in their finished form a visit to the first dedicated textile conservation laboratory, the **Queen Sirikit Museum of Textiles** in Bangkok is a must. As well as preserving the beauty of traditional Thai textiles, the gallery also builds awareness of the Thai identity and culture through rotating exhibits and collections. When purchasing silk, be sure to look for a gold, silver, green or blue peacock. The emblem is used to authenticate genuine Thai silk, and serves as a guarantee of quality.

LOCAL COOKING CLASSES

From traditional hawker stalls to michelin-star restaurants, Thailand's diverse and exciting foodie reputation extends far beyond its borders. But beneath the exotic flavours and fresh herbs and spices, lies a rich history of family traditions, culture and recipes passed down through generations. While eating your way through classic Thai dishes is one way to appreciate the local cuisine (and highly recommended), going a step further and taking a local cooking class enables you to recreate your favourite Thai dishes while mastering local cooking techniques. Set amongst a lush, organic farm and garden, just 45 minutes from Chiang Mai old city, **Smile Organic Farm Cooking School** offers classes that not only teach you how to cook, but how to grow your own organic vegetables and get a taste for fresh herb combinations. Using fresh, organic vegetables and herbs from the garden, and under the guidance of experienced teachers, you'll whip up curry paste, stir-fry, spring rolls and soup from scratch, before enjoying the delicious finished product!

ACCOMMODATION



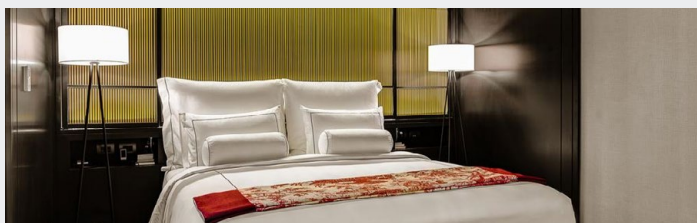
The Siam, Bangkok

★★★★★ Bangkok, Thailand



The Tubkaak Krabi Boutique Resort

★★★★★ Krabi, Thailand



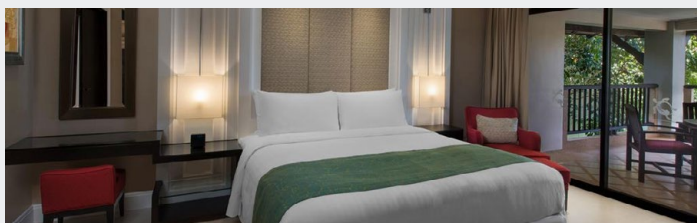
Akyra Manor Chiang Mai, Chiang Mai

★★★★★ Chiang Mai, Thailand



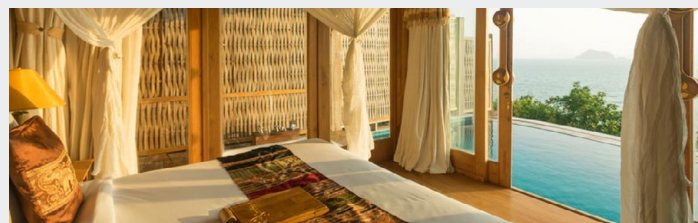
The Ritz-Carlton, Koh Samui

★★★★★ Tambon Bophut, Thailand



Marriott's Mai Khao Beach Phuket

★★★★★ Phuket Island, Thailand



Santhiya Koh Yao Yai Resort & Spa, Phang Nga

★★★★★ Phangnga, Thailand



ACTIVITES



4-Waters Eco-Adventure Trip
from Phuket Including Lunch



Chef Leez Traditional Thai
Cooking Class in Bangkok



Best of Chiang Mai by Bicycle



2-hour Spa Package at
Kiyora Spa in Chiang Mai



Day Trip to Ang Thong National
Marine Park from Koh Samui



Canoe Cave Explorer Phang
Nga Bay Tour from Phuket